



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Summary Records of the Proceedings of the 149th IPU Assembly

Geneva, Switzerland
13-17 October 2024

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Introduction

Delegations from 129 Member Parliaments took part in the work of the Assembly:

Afghanistan*, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, 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), Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar*, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Palestine, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Parliament of Brunei Darussalam also attended the 149th Assembly in an observer capacity, with a view to future affiliation.

The following eight Associate Members also took part in the Assembly: the Arab Parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), the European Parliament, the Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO), the Parliament of MERCOSUR (PARLASUR), 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, International Labour Organization (ILO), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), and the World Health Organization (WHO);

(ii) parliamentary assemblies and associations: African Parliamentary Union (APU), Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), Collective Security Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly (CSTO PA), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Forum of Parliaments of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (FP-ICGLR), 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 Mediterranean (PAM), 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;

* 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 Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) for Myanmar. The corresponding delegations attend Assemblies in a non-voting observer capacity.

(iii) international non-governmental organizations: Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI);

(iv) other partner organizations: International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Development Law Organization (IDLO), League of Arab States, and Sovereign Order of Malta.

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

Of the 1,267 delegates who attended the Assembly, 631 were members of parliament (615 from Member Parliaments and 16 from Associate Member delegations), including 53 Presiding Officers, and 36 Deputy Presiding Officers. Member Parliaments' delegations included 224 women MPs (36.4%) and 153 young MPs (24.9%).

Opening of the 149th Assembly

SITTING OF MONDAY 14 OCTOBER 2024

(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 11:05, with Dr. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania), President of the IPU, in the Chair.

The IPU Anthem was played.

Opening remarks

The President, again welcoming participants to the IPU's home city, said that, as a constant melting pot that continued to foster an environment for scientific and technological intersection, Geneva provided the perfect setting for the 149th Assembly's General Debate: *Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future*. History had shown that STI promised immense opportunities but could bring world-threatening perils if misused, weaponized or poorly governed. Currently, artificial intelligence (AI), quantum computing and biotechnology were fast transforming societies, with scientific knowledge and expertise also critically advancing evidence-based policymaking and helping to address the biggest challenges facing humanity. Innovation and technological developments came nonetheless with very real risks, given their potential to undermine democracy, jeopardize human rights, widen socioeconomic disparities and inequalities, and adversely affect global peace and security.

History would inevitably be repeated if its lessons were not learned to ensure that STI were harnessed for the greater good towards a more peaceful and sustainable future. As policymakers, parliamentarians must come together to address the profound ethical, security and societal questions associated with STI and act decisively in three key areas, namely: legislation and regulation; oversight and accountability; and public engagement and education. To those ends, they must craft laws to guide technological developments responsibly and protect against their potential risks; vigilantly monitor the implementation of technologies and hold private companies and governments accountable for their actions; and foster informed and inclusive societies, including through funding appropriate digital literacy and science education initiatives, and promoting the participation of all groups and communities in STI. With technology governance requiring the collaborative spirit embodied in the IPU, she urged parliamentarians to engage thoroughly in a whole-of-society effort and in the General Debate with the aim of building consensus on actionable strategies to harness STI for a more peaceful and sustainable future.

The Secretary General, heartily welcoming participants to Geneva for the second time in 2024, said that to succumb to desperation and hopelessness was perhaps tempting in the face of the daunting challenges posed in a world fraught with crisis, but the Assembly brought together IPU Member Parliaments with the aim of working to improve that world. If properly harnessed and utilized, STI could help to resolve many intractable problems and benefit humankind, for which reason the STI potential formed a key focus of the 149th Assembly. As during the COVID-19 pandemic, outside-the-box solutions were needed to overcome such problems, an endeavour to which the global parliamentary community could contribute significantly. Set to be launched at the current Assembly, the *World e-Parliament Report 2024* provided the usual biannual review of the use of digital technology to improve parliamentary working methods, which the IPU was helping to promote as part of its mandate. In that context, its Centre for Innovation in Parliament had devised a unique Digital Maturity Index to monitor progress in the digital transformation of parliaments and would continue to foster cooperation towards bridging the divide born of unequal access to technologies.

Concerning the Pact for the Future adopted at the recent United Nations (UN) Summit of the Future in New York as a blueprint for action on global issues, its emphasis on deepening UN engagement with national parliaments, including through the IPU, was a very satisfying outcome and a remarkable achievement for parliamentary diplomacy and inter-parliamentary cooperation. The IPU was committed to supporting Member Parliaments in the challenge of rising to the expectations of UN Member States in respect of furthering that engagement begun in 2000.

The Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, to be held in Geneva in 2025, would be a good opportunity for the highest parliamentary authorities to rededicate themselves to actively deploying more robust efforts to live up to the expectations of the people for development, peace,

security and a just welfare system. He and his colleagues would continue to do all within their power to merit the trust of the IPU membership and to help the Organization deliver on its noble mandate of promoting global peace and security, dialogue and peaceful coexistence for the good of all.

Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, providing in line with customary practice a gender perspective on the topic of the General Debate, said that Member Parliaments must commit to ensuring that women and girls were not left behind in the rapidly evolving world of STI. Technology could either improve gender equality or deepen the gender digital divide and exacerbate discrimination. With a sustainable future unattainable unless the needs, interests and perspectives of one half of the world's population were prioritized, its potential must be leveraged to promote equality. Digital tools, AI and other emerging technologies could enhance education, healthcare and other services for women and girls and identify gender biases across sectors, including parliament, to promote better outcomes. Gender-responsible technological advancements required greater efforts, however, to secure women's education, leadership and employment opportunities in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). High ethical standards must be applied in the development of new technologies, with risks such as technology-facilitated gender-based violence, harassment and trafficking confronted head on.

Against that backdrop, parliamentarians would be working hard at the Assembly to ensure that technology benefited women. The IPU must break the glass ceiling by providing more opportunities for women and seeking a gender balance in all its structures. In addition to pursuing its ongoing efforts to promote more gender-sensitive parliaments and gender-balanced delegations, the IPU would be organizing its first Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians in 2025 in Mexico, which had recently elected its first-ever woman president. She saluted the 12 women Speakers of Parliament present at the Assembly, including the IPU President, and looked forward to their support for that conference.

Mr. D. Carden (United Kingdom), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, also providing in line with customary practice a youth perspective on the topic of the General Debate, said that the tendency to believe that new developments brought unprecedented uncertainty was not necessarily wrong. Technological changes with the potential to untangle every weave of the social fabric had been seen before, as in the case of the industrial revolution that had shattered his country's social equilibrium before being remoulded and harnessed to serve the interests of the many. The fundamental truth was that technological advancements had no intrinsic moral character of their own and that their impact depended on in whose interests they were made.

A similar test was currently posed by the rise of AI, which had the potential to revolutionize the whole of society, and of social media, which provided a level of global connectivity only recently considered unthinkable. The impact of those technologies on society was, however, potentially catastrophic. With their built-in bias towards sensationalism and discord, social media algorithms had poisoned public debate and detached people from their communities, while AI threatened jobs and encouraged deeper reliance on technology. The challenge was to avoid repeating past mistakes and to act decisively to manage the development of technology, which should remain a tool for human progress, serving people's needs rather than dictating the direction of society. As history had shown, technological progress without such efforts could disrupt rather than empower. It was up to Member Parliaments to ensure that the power of innovation was harnessed for the benefit of all.

A short film on the pioneering work of the Solar Impulse Foundation, including to identify clean and profitable climate solutions to protect the environment, was screened.

Mr. B. Piccard (Explorer and technology pioneer, Founder of the Solar Impulse Foundation), special guest, said that the profitable solutions that existed for protecting the environment offered all countries the opportunity to increase their competitiveness. Those solutions were profitable because they were efficient and contrasted with the inefficiency that, coupled with the wastage of energy and natural resources attributable to mismanagement and obsolete technologies, constituted the world's main problem.

Profitable solutions facilitated a shift from a quantitative to a qualitative economy that created jobs instead of social inequalities and waste, and that generated profit while protecting the environment instead of polluting it. They also facilitated a new narrative around a profitable

ecology, clean industry and new business opportunities. To implement those solutions would promote modernization, with decarbonization as the logical consequence. The goal was to switch from sacrifice for future generations to profit for the current generation, assisted by such economic models as servitization whereby developing countries with limited resources could simply pay for their use of renewable energy rather than having to invest in the necessary infrastructure.

Economy, finance, industry, ecology and politics would not, however, begin to coalesce as desired unless parliamentarians updated what was an antiquated legal framework with a view to encouraging solutions, efficiency and a transition to a qualitative economy. Protection of the environment should be adventurous and driven by an overriding desire for a better quality of life, both features of his new project. Named Climate Impulse, that project involved flying a hydrogen-powered aeroplane around the world, with no fuel and with zero emissions. Although still under construction, the aeroplane was already sending an important message of hope to a world beset by eco-anxiety and eco-depression. A nine-day non-stop round-the-world flight fuelled by hydrogen alone would show that much more could be done than thought, and that decarbonization and modernization could be exciting. The aim was to debunk the idea that the decarbonization of aviation was impossible.

Throughout history, all dreams had been considered impossible until accomplished. It was imperative to create a desire for clean fuel use to drive projects such as Climate Impulse and to show that hope was possible if there was action, which would flow from solutions. With legislation essential to creating the right incentives, parliamentarians were – without knowing it – considered important co-pilots of the hydrogen aircraft. Industry did not want distorted competitiveness but an even playing field, comparable prices and incentives for solutions that were not yet profitable. Parliamentarians were in fact the adventurers and explorers of the twenty-first century to whom he appealed to put in place the legal framework needed to promote the solutions required for success.

The President, thanking Mr. Piccard for his inspiring words, for showing what was possible and for highlighting the need for intensified efforts to harness opportunities for forging a better future for current and future generations, said that she wished him all the best in the endeavours ahead of him.

Item 3 of the agenda

General Debate on the theme *Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI)* *for a more peaceful and sustainable future* (A/149/3-Inf.1)

PRESIDING OFFICERS OF PARLIAMENT

Ms. R.M. Mtshweni-Tsipane (South Africa), commencing the high-level segment of the General Debate, said that recent health pandemics had underscored the importance of global cooperation in science and technology and exposed disparities among countries. That in turn had also underscored the vital role of parliaments of the Global North in facilitating technology transfer, on mutually agreed terms, to increase equity and inclusiveness, promote knowledge sharing and minimize the risk of leaving developing countries behind. A fair and equitable accord should be finalized to prevent a recurrence of the socioeconomic impact experienced during COVID-19, with concerted parliamentary efforts made in the realm of science and technology to dismantle gender inequalities, address work environments hostile to women, and guarantee women's equal access to investment and opportunities in research and publishing. Women's involvement in STEM at institutions of higher learning must also be furthered, as was happening in South Africa through initiatives to enhance women's development and participation in technology-related fields.

Thanks to its remarkable strides forward in STI over the preceding 30 years, South Africa had been recognized for its exceptional performance in innovation. It was demonstrably committed to contributing significantly to global efforts towards vaccine development and manufacturing capacity, was championing ambitious advancements in astronomy, and remained determined to enhance its innovation capacity, empower its research enterprise and leverage partnerships through science diplomacy. With regard to AI, parliamentarians must enact thoughtful, ethical and forward-looking regulations to harness its potential for the collective well-being while mitigating any harmful effects. Through working together on that basis, the benefits of technological progress could be shared by all.

Mr. S. Ghobash (United Arab Emirates), describing STI as a crucial pillar of sustainable development and human well-being, said that access to the powerful tools that it provided for tackling modern-day problems, bridging gaps and affirming moral values was not a privilege but a universal right. Technological advances, especially in the AI sphere, offered unprecedented opportunities for furthering socioeconomic and other development. The trick was to keep pace with and harness such advances to benefit humanity as opposed to creating harm or instability. His country's responsible and ethical approach to its substantial investment in digital and emerging technology initiatives was aimed at promoting sustainable development, security and prosperity, which required greater international cooperation to enhance AI capabilities for addressing shared global challenges. Its newly adopted AI charter established principles for AI development and use to ensure a lasting positive impact on society. Parliamentarians must be boldly innovative in legislating to encourage investment in STI, in regulating cybersecurity governance and in working to enhance global cooperation on STI for improved well-being, peace and development.

In that context, the civilians long deprived of peace in Palestine and Lebanon must not be forgotten. The United Arab Emirates called for an immediate end to the war in Gaza, for the protection of civilians and the delivery of aid to Gaza, and for the implementation of all UN resolutions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with a view to a two-State solution and of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) for the sake of peace and security in Lebanon and the wider Middle East.

Mr. O. Birla (India), highlighting his country's success in leveraging STI to drive socioeconomic change, said that voter turnout in its recent parliamentary elections featuring the use of technology and electronic voting machines had set a new world record. Committed to tackling climate, environmental and energy security issues, India had launched numerous green initiatives, including globally, and tripled its renewable energy capacity over the preceding decade. Thanks to its incentives to encourage technology and innovation in entrepreneurship, moreover, it was now the world's third largest unicorn startup nation. It had also made unprecedented advances in digitizing its financial services and expanding financial inclusion through a three-pronged scheme linking bank accounts, mobile telephone numbers and biometric identity cards to facilitate the direct transfer of benefits to many millions of poor households. In addition to public service delivery, the leverage of technology had notably enhanced good governance, transparency and accountability.

Using an AI-powered application, his Parliament had increased its efficiency by digitizing its workflow and proceedings and by creating a single integrated platform for all stakeholders, strengthening in turn its connection with the people. Green technology had also been employed to the utmost in the construction of its new premises. All parliaments, however, faced the challenge of establishing an appropriate regulatory system for protecting data privacy and ensuring proper AI use and equitable sharing of the benefits of technology. The Indian Parliament had enacted several laws relating to technology, science and the environment. Ever the firm proponent of multilateralism, India subscribed to the philosophy that the world was one family.

Mr. A. Bictogo (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the new AI technology and large-scale digital transformation were instrumental in modernizing economies and improving public actions and policies. His country was consequently prioritizing the use of technical innovations in its sectoral development policies and youth training programmes. The STI potential must, however, be weighed against its social impact and ethical consequences for peace and humanity, evidenced in conflict by the civilian damage inflicted by the latest generation of weaponry. STI needed to be human-centred and regulated by law to guarantee the preservation of values and human rights. To that end, parliamentarians could follow the example of Ivorian legislation adopted to protect data privacy, secure digital equality and combat cybercrime. Scientific and technological progress must also be harnessed to promote peace, social justice and environmental sustainability, including through national legislative frameworks shaped to maximize the benefits of STI while minimizing its risks.

In addition to the persistent and destructive wars in parts of Africa and Europe, violence in the Middle East was escalating, notably in Gaza and Lebanon, and could end in generational trauma, a global imbalance and a new geopolitical order posing an existential threat to the United Nations. In the inexorable march towards STI development, the lesson from history was that peace and respect for human dignity must supersede indifference and the inability to imagine a more just and equitable world. It was time to end all hostilities worldwide by prioritizing dialogue and the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law.

Mr. M. Al-Mandalawi (Iraq), noting that the achievement of international peace and security posed the biggest challenge of all and was key to the attainment of other goals, said that his country had repeatedly warned of the all-out global war that now loomed, threatening to disrupt the international order and bring dire global consequences. With its daily acts involving killing, displacement and destruction of homes and infrastructure in Gaza and Lebanon, the Zionist entity was clearly intent on war and expansion, in disregard of international legitimacy and in breach of international law, as further evidenced by its attacks on UN peacekeeping forces in Lebanon. Iraq was engaged with partners in exceptional parliamentary and diplomatic efforts to prevent the wider war into which that entity was seeking to drag the region, if not the world, by arrogantly imposing its will and targeting specific countries and leaders.

The Zionist entity's aggression and flagrant violations of UN resolutions must be roundly condemned and urgent calls made for Security Council resolutions demanding an immediate end to the genocidal war against Lebanon and Palestine and accountability for the perpetrators. The IPU should dispatch a fact-finding mission to those countries, where humanitarian aid was badly needed, and work towards criminalizing the use of AI as a deadly war weapon. It must also endeavour to increase inter-parliamentary cooperation and emphasize the importance of efforts to create stability, resolve conflicts, protect democracy and human rights, and set legislative standards relating to the peaceful uses of AI and to cybersecurity challenges.

Mr. D. Zvizdić (Bosnia and Herzegovina), after appealing for support to his country in the aftermath of its recent flooding disaster, said that scientific and technological discoveries had facilitated development and bettered living standards but that a host of environmental, socioeconomic and other challenges had more recently arisen owing to over-exploitation of resources, ecological destruction, and violations of international law and democratic standards. Data showing that Earth's human carrying capacity was under strain pointed to the need for improved global security and living conditions, which would be best achieved using STI to build sustainable green cities and agriculture, a green economy and renewable energy sources.

For a more peaceful and sustainable future, parliaments should allocate no less than 1% of gross domestic product for investment in science, amend and enhance regulations, reduce bureaucracy, facilitate patent registration and copyright protection, and upgrade study and research conditions. They should also establish scientific and technological research institutes, committees and offices, taking their cue from the IPU's Centre for Innovation in Parliament, and participate in multilateral activities and events that addressed the issues at stake. In that regard, specific actions relating to STI and digital cooperation were a welcome inclusion in the recently adopted Pact for the Future. Parliaments should also use their oversight to demand government policies for addressing twenty-first century challenges, enabling adaptation to rapid change and protecting ordinary individuals from the effects of such change. Lastly, they must remain consistently mindful of the dangers as well as the advantages of AI.

Mr. N. Kurtulmuş (Türkiye) said that STI developments could unlock fresh solutions for achieving the common good but could also adversely affect the course of history, with discoveries in nuclear physics serving as a stark reminder. To fulfil aspirations for a utopian future in which freedom, equality, peace, prosperity and respect for human rights and dignity prevailed, STI must be imbued with ethical values to ensure tranquillity alongside material growth. Knowledge without wisdom had no value and produced no meaningful outcomes. Investment in STI was not enough to eradicate injustices and inequalities; it could also magnify and highlight them. As for the striking digital divide, it was attributable in many Global South countries, especially in Africa, to lack of infrastructure and connectivity.

The ongoing AI-assisted genocide in Gaza and the appalling reports of Israel's deliberate misuse of technology to conduct indiscriminate attacks on civilians were utterly dismaying. That technological brutality explained the catastrophic atrocities and scale of mass destruction in progress. Firm condemnation of such applications of technology, which should be strongly controlled, was a legal and moral duty. The unbridled aggression against Lebanon and the rampant killing and wounding in Gaza must be stopped, with all necessary measures taken to address the situation. For its part, the IPU must support the two-State solution as the only way forward for regional peace and security and avoid turning a blind eye for the third time to what was a critical issue by supporting the inclusion of an emergency item on that issue in the Assembly's agenda.

Mr. P. Žiga (Slovakia) said that his highly industrialized country would suffer socioeconomic consequences if it failed to react to the major challenges posed by technological development, robotization and AI, which came with both advantages and risks. The use of AI was fast expanding

but its limits were unknown. The revolutionary progress it promoted in fields such as medicine, environment and agriculture was counterbalanced by its manipulation of consumers, public opinion and elections, for example, and its potential use in military conflicts. All technologies rolled out on a massive scale were risky and needed effective regulation setting ethical and other boundaries for their use. In the case of AI, caution was also needed to ensure that its use was not restricted to government and corporate stakeholders alone.

To those ends, proactive global and institutional efforts were essential to stemming the risks of AI before it grew unmanageable and made it impossible to distinguish fake from reality. Digitization, personal data protection and innovation were all crucial issues under discussion among European Union countries, including Slovakia. In their vital role in that context and as representatives of the general public, parliaments must remain prudent and flexible. STI were upending society, which called for targeted investment and regulation. Logically speaking, investment and development posed a regulatory challenge. The changes under way were being monitored, however, with the current IPU Assembly providing an excellent forum for serious discussion of the crucial issues at stake.

The sitting rose at 13:05.

Sitting of Monday, 14 October 2024

(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 14:30 with Mr. T. Tavares-Finson (Jamaica) in the Chair.

Item 3 of the agenda (continued)

General debate on the theme of *Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future* (A/149/3-Inf.1)

PRESIDING OFFICERS OF PARLIAMENT

Mr. M. Nadir (Guyana) said that, without a mechanism for organizations like the United Nations (UN) and the IPU to take ownership of STI and make them readily available to the Global South, the disparity between the developed, developing and least developed countries would increase. The work of the Assembly would be in vain without collective ownership of STI.

Mr. B.O. Kalu (Nigeria) said that STI were key to addressing the most pressing challenges and must be harnessed for the public good to drive sustainable development and ensure no one was left behind. Nigeria had passed legislation to support start-ups and was working to adopt the national artificial intelligence (AI) policy, which would pave the way for ethical AI use, including in agriculture and healthcare. Nigeria envisioned a future where automation created, rather than undermined, jobs. AI impacted democracy, human rights and governance, and presented challenges and opportunities. In Nigeria, it was emerging as a powerful tool in governance, finance and public administration. However, despite efficiency gains, AI threatened data protection, jobs and electoral processes, particularly through misinformation, disinformation, deepfakes and cyber vulnerabilities. Nigeria continued to support international efforts to develop inclusive, transparent and ethical AI frameworks to protect human rights and democratic values. It sought to lead discussions on how AI could protect the rule of law, and how the national AI policy would help protect citizen's rights and foster innovation.

Despite their enormous potential, STI could widen the gap between developed and developing nations. Nigeria stood ready to help bridge the technological divide, particularly in Africa. Knowledge transfers, capacity-building and infrastructure investments could help in that regard. It advocated for regional cooperation to create digital economy hubs that would empower African countries to compete globally. It was committed to increasing investment in digital infrastructure, particularly in underserved rural areas, and sought partnerships with global stakeholders to build a resilient STI ecosystem that accelerated sustainable development and created opportunities.

Adaptive, inclusive and forward-looking regulatory approaches were necessary to navigate the complexities of fintech, AI and other emerging technologies. In 2019, the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation had been introduced. Nigeria was committed to harnessing the power of STI for a more peaceful and sustainable future. Through international collaboration, robust legal frameworks and digital infrastructure investments, STI could drive global peace and prosperity. The global community should support those efforts.

Mr. J.M. Sama Lukonde Kyenge (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that STI enriched humanity, built peace and provided states with skills and opportunities to cooperate. STI had prompted the rise of AI which was revolutionizing the world, particularly in terms of youth employment and security. To promote STI, his Government had established a national fund for scientific research and technological innovation, the annual Congolese Scientific Genius Forum, a ministry for digital affairs and various agreements and partnerships concerning the minerals needed to produce batteries. Meanwhile, his Parliament had worked on STI policies and legal frameworks, and had recently adopted a digital code.

His country had some of the largest critical mineral deposits in the world. However, certain neighbouring countries, particularly Rwanda, hindered the contribution his country could make to AI development. They were aggressive, and they pillaged and exploited Congolese natural resources. The situation, which had persisted for 30 years, threatened peace and international security – the

prerequisites for progress. His delegation had therefore requested the inclusion of an emergency item on the agenda of the 149th IPU Assembly concerning the security and humanitarian situation in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He urged delegates to adopt the subsequent resolution unanimously, and called for greater solidarity, and inter-parliamentary and inter-governmental cooperation to promote STI and protect the environment.

Mr. P.H. Katjavivi (Namibia) said that STI were central to human development and to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Parliaments were responsible for ensuring that the benefits of STI reached all of society, and they must promote and adopt effective and inclusive people-centred STI policies and legislation. With the digital divide a worldwide concern, parliaments must collaborate through partnerships and funding to build cooperative projects, unify digital regulations and standards, and establish frameworks for cross-border digital trade and cooperation. Parliaments needed to enhance their use of scientific evidence in legal drafting and oversight by establishing STI committees, strengthening parliamentary research services, developing stronger relationships with research institutions and by training parliamentarians. Doing so would ensure that laws were grounded in reliable and up-to-date knowledge.

Current actions would shape the future; it was therefore imperative that parliamentarians anticipated the benefits of development. By establishing and leveraging legislative and policy databases, foresight and scenario-planning tools, and public and stakeholder engagement platforms, parliamentarians could better anticipate and navigate the long-term impacts of decisions and ensure that STI benefited future generations. Member Parliaments must establish ethical standards and oversee the implementation of ethical guidelines and laws. Ethical considerations were integral to developing and implementing STI frameworks.

With his time as head of the Namibian delegation coming to an end, he was pleased that Namibia, and he himself as Speaker, had played an active part in promoting the IPU global vision, including through the IPU Strategy. He thanked the Namibian Parliament for having granted him the rare opportunity to participate in the work of the IPU as a global organization. What had mattered most to him was that, through their commitment to uphold the ideas and vision of the IPU, Member Parliaments had been able to overcome important and profound differences. He was therefore leaving the IPU community with a clear mind that the IPU would continue to overcome many challenges and make the world a better place for each and every one of those represented in the Organization.

Mr. A.R. Abdulla (Maldives) said that rapid technological advances presented opportunities and challenges, and STI must be used to create a peaceful, sustainable and just world. The UN Pact for the Future emphasized the critical role of STI in that regard. SDGs 9 and 17 provided a road map and, alongside the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, were a reminder of the collective duty to ensure that scientific progress benefited all. As a small island developing State, the Maldives recognized that STI were essential to driving development, addressing challenges such as climate change, and ensuring the survival of the Maldives. The Maldivian Government planned to produce 33% of national electricity from renewable sources within the upcoming five years. It had leveraged technology during the COVID-19 pandemic, becoming the first parliament to transition online fully, and AI was enhancing public services and monitoring the environment. It had also established a standing committee on information and communication technology, which evaluated the performance of national organizations including the National Centre for Information Technology and the Communications Authority of the Maldives. The Maldives had invested significantly in advanced digital infrastructure to empower youth through access to cutting-edge technologies, and work was underway to create a digitized, AI-driven economy that would contribute up to 15% of the national gross domestic product by 2030.

Parliaments were vital to closing digital gaps – particularly in digital access and infrastructure – that persisted between countries. However, parliamentarians must balance innovation with regulation. Disinformation and misinformation threatened democracy; it was therefore important to keep abreast of AI developments and work with experts to ensure AI benefited humanity. Parliaments must develop ethical STI frameworks in line with the IPU draft Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology. Research and innovation must respect human rights. A shared commitment to justice, equity and human dignity should guide STI for a more peaceful and sustainable future.

He called for an immediate and lasting ceasefire in Palestine and urged the international community to support stability in Lebanon, where a humanitarian crisis was unfolding. All parties must work to end the conflict and halt strikes to prevent further civilian suffering. Such conflicts had profound and far-reaching consequences.

Ms. S. Gafarova (Azerbaijan) said that STI had always been central to social development, and were critical to achieving the SDGs. However, despite the global community's proven determination to achieve the SDGs, only 17% of the SDG targets were on track to be met by 2030. Moreover, the gap between developed and developing countries had widened, and several challenges had even slowed down and set back progress. It was therefore time to provide viable solutions. The accessibility and affordability of STI for all were crucial to building a more peaceful and sustainable future, and to achieving the SDGs. The way in which certain countries had tried to use their technological advantage to prioritize their vaccine needs during the COVID-19 pandemic should not be forgotten. Developing countries should identify measures to integrate STI policies into national development strategies. Financial and technical assistance, capacity-building, technology transfers, and the sharing of experiences and best practices should support that integration. Parliaments must promote STI, create national development programmes, share technology and strengthen national partnerships. She commended the IPU for its political will and practical tools to drive joint parliamentary efforts and ensure voices were heard.

STI were central to Azerbaijani development, and national development plans included SDG-related goals. The 2030 socioeconomic development plan included innovation and competitive human capital among its priorities, and envisaged a digitally focused society that supported cutting-edge technology and innovation. STI would drive renewable energy and the establishment of green energy zones after the liberation of Karabakh and East Zangezur. Countries were interdependent and therefore morally obligated to help meet each other's development aspirations. Since 2020, Azerbaijan had provided US\$ 330 million in economic and technical assistance to some 140 countries. At the Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement Contact Group on the fight against COVID-19, Azerbaijan had made two global calls to support post-pandemic recovery in Africa and small island developing States through direct financial support, education and capacity-building, among others. The Azerbaijani presidency of the 29th session of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) considered technology to be crucial to mitigating and adapting to climate change, which was the most pressing issue for present and future generations and the most important aspect of sustainable development. The presidency had proposed 14 initiatives, including on green digital action. COP29 would celebrate the first-ever Digitalisation Day – which would include a high-level round-table discussion and ministerial declaration – to elevate the discourse on the indispensable role of digital technologies in confronting the climate crisis. Given the significance of climate change, the IPU would also host a meeting at COP29.

Ms. L.T. Dlamini (Eswatini) said that STI use should be advanced and deepened to navigate social challenges, enhance good governance and promote civic engagement for the sake of humanity and the planet. In accordance with the SDGs, STI should be harnessed to tackle issues such as climate change, food insecurity, the COVID-19 pandemic, escalating military and technological competition, and conflict. During 2021, social media platforms had stoked civil unrest in Eswatini, highlighting the double-edged nature of technology in modern governance. Such platforms could rapidly spread misinformation and complicate efforts to maintain peace globally. The unrest had revealed the need for a framework to respond to information processing in the era of fake news, and to invest in digital literacy programmes. However, during the 2023 national elections, Eswatini had successfully leveraged mobile technology, which was essential to promoting democracy and civic engagement, to disseminate election results in real time. That had reinforced public trust in elections, produced peaceful outcomes and reduced post-election tensions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Eswatini had used STI to provide contact-tracing applications, telehealth services and important health information. Rapid deployment of those technologies, alongside effective disease surveillance, had mitigated the impact of the pandemic and underscored the importance of robust health infrastructure and timely information sharing, which were key to peaceful and sustainable societies. The innovative PrEP ring had helped Eswatini become one of the first countries to attain the 95-95-95 milestone in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

She made the following recommendations. First, governments and organizations should prioritize digital literacy programmes to help citizens navigate technology and to mitigate the impact of misinformation and fake news during crises. Second, technologies facilitating real-time reporting should be adopted during elections and governance processes, as they bolstered transparency, reduced tension and built trust between governments and citizens. Third, collaborative innovation between governments, businesses and civil society should be encouraged to maximize resources and enhance the impact of technologies: public-private partnerships could drive sustainable development initiatives across sectors. Fourth, innovations that enhanced healthcare delivery and

crisis management should be embraced: investment in telehealth services, data analytics and research was crucial to improving public health outcomes. Fifth, governments should actively involve youth in policy-making processes: digital platforms could help foster accountability and inclusiveness. Sixth, given that climate change drives violent conflict, governments should prioritize opportunities to use technology to support peacebuilding.

Ms. E. Spiropali (Albania) said that parliaments played an increasingly essential role in strengthening systems, institutions and democratic values, and supporting economic and social advances. Scientific and technological progress increasingly supported national development. Recent rapid developments in technology and knowledge had led to large population groups, particularly youth, enjoying greater access to knowledge, technology and AI. Never had technology exerted such influence on human and social development, nor presented such great legislative and regulatory challenges. In Albania, some 95% of public services were online, which saved time, reduced corruption and increased effectiveness. However, some groups – particularly the elderly and marginalized, and those based in rural areas – had struggled to keep pace with that transition. Albania was addressing that challenge and the Parliament promoted enhancing the population's knowledge, skills and capacities in that area.

The incidence of cyberattacks had increased due to the unwavering and clear stance of Albania against terrorism. With partners' assistance, Albania would continue to mitigate cyber risks, which were a stark reminder that advanced technologies could be used for malicious purposes. Work was underway to provide legislative and oversight functions and regulatory frameworks to ensure technology and innovation were used ethically and responsibly. The Parliament had established an ad hoc committee to coordinate institutional efforts to fight disinformation and other forms of foreign interference in national democratic processes, and work on the legislative and oversight framework to protect the public and the national system. The COVID-19 pandemic had demonstrated how supporting parliamentary functions, activities and processes through science and technology, such as online meetings, was imperative to the legislative process. Committee meetings continued to be broadcast live, ensuring transparency and public involvement. To create further synergies between parliamentary processes, science and technology, the Parliament was exploring how to incorporate scientific achievements into the legislative process, create special structures within parliamentary services to assist parliamentary processes and oversight, and collaborate with universities. Experts had made effective and useful contributions to legislation in various fields. The use of scientific achievements in lawmaking and parliamentary scrutiny provided added value and benefited Albania. Relying on expertise, knowledge and technological novelties fostered legislative cohesion and a just, democratic and inclusive society.

Mr. N.P. Dahal (Nepal) said that the rapid development of STI could improve lives and help achieve the SDGs. Parliamentarians therefore needed to draft and help implement laws to ensure equitable access to technology and its benefits. Significant divides persisted within and between countries, and some 2.6 billion people worldwide remained offline. Legislatures must shape the development of science and technology while addressing risks and challenges, including data privacy, cybersecurity, misinformation and the spread of harmful content. Efforts should concentrate on fostering international cooperation and collaboration in research, development, resource mobilization and youth engagement in STI, and implementing regulations to ensure equal access to technology. Parliaments must share lawmaking experiences and best practices to bridge the divide between developed and developing countries. IPU efforts to incorporate AI into its action plan and to formulate the IPU draft Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology were commendable. Developments and achievements in STI benefited humankind and rose above narrow nationalism; cooperation and the exchange of knowledge and experiences could minimize the adverse effects of STI.

Climate change seriously affected the Himalayas, and the IPU helped to foster cooperation among nations, facilitating technological and financial transfers, and ensuring capacity-building from developed to developing nations. The international community should provide Nepal with adequate financial resources and climate-resilient technologies to mitigate climate-related loss and damage. Nepal had embraced a foreign policy of friendship to all and enmity to none. It needed additional international capacity-building assistance to no longer be a least developed country by 2026. He was confident that the IPU would continue to work effectively on international issues, and Nepal would support the IPU in that regard.

Mr. M.B. Ghalibaf (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that criminal Zionists were using science and technology for war, mass civilian killings and state terrorism. New technologies should help achieve the SDGs to improve human welfare and ensure peace. However, abusing those technologies threatened the achievement of the SDGs and violated human rights. Northern and southern regions of Africa were involved in fateful developments that would profoundly affect the global system. Although the world may fail in its responsibility to address events in the Middle East, it could not escape the consequences of those events. The Zionist regime disregarded international law and was proud of killing people, including children and refugees. It had occupied and usurped Palestinian lands, continued to destroy homes and cities, and was attempting to normalize crime. If it persisted, the situation in the region would escalate and have global consequences. In Lebanon, the resistance lived on and enjoyed public support. Given the violation of every international rule and regulation, the people of Lebanon expected support and action to bring the Zionist regime's inhumane acts under control. His country would support any ceasefire that the Lebanese Government and Parliament supported. Resistance groups were the guardians of peace, and his country was proud to be at the centre of efforts to stop the criminal regime. It would fulfil its historic duty and wait to see how the world would act to defend human rights. The Zionist regime had failed to ensure security in the occupied territories and, sensing its imminent end, disregarded what was in its own interest. His country called on those countries that supported the regime to stop and force it to accept a sustainable ceasefire. Parliaments worldwide should act and ensure they were on the right side of history.

Ms. E. Spiropali (Albania) took the Chair.

Mr. K. Al Maawali (Oman) said that he hoped that the current debate would help achieve common objectives to ensure citizens' medium- and long-term well-being. Sustainable development must consider the need for quality, particularly in education. Technology should be leveraged to develop and implement strategies that enable people to live with dignity. International cooperation was crucial to ensuring everyone benefited from science and technology. STI were key to Omani strategies up to 2040. Oman had endeavoured to foster innovation and a knowledge-based economy, established a knowledge centre and a centre dedicated to the fourth industrial revolution, and had developed secure electoral processes. AI, which the Shura Council used, had enabled the development of indicators for security and sustainable development.

Many delegates had discussed the need for preparing to reap the benefits of science and technology. However, the countries that those delegates represented often contributed to destroying the future. Given the destructive potential of technology, it was important to prioritize humanitarian issues and well-being. The destruction in Gaza and Lebanon, which AI had facilitated, could not be ignored. The international community, whose deafening silence on that topic was difficult to comprehend, had enabled Israel. A genocidal war was being waged, in which respect for human life was disappearing and infrastructure was being destroyed. It was impossible to discuss women's and children's rights, and sustainable development in light of the death, injury, displacement, occupation, and lack of peace and security experienced in Gaza. Some countries were flouting the principle of equality. The occupation authorities had destroyed Christian and Muslim places of worship, as well as water sources, and held no respect for international law. He urged support for the emergency item that would be submitted on that issue by Palestine on behalf of the Arab Group.

Mr. A.T. Gessesse (Ethiopia) said that the scientific and technological revolution presented opportunities and risks. In many areas, the speed of that revolution had outpaced existing national and international rules and regulations. Concurrently, with less oversight and control, technological innovations were increasingly unpredictable and complex. The current AI revolution required effective governance, and parliaments were responsible for establishing legal and regulatory frameworks for innovations and new technologies. States must collaborate to better address challenges and harness the benefits of those developments. The IPU draft Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology and the Pact for the Future represented progress. The IPU should support parliaments in adopting relevant legislation and overseeing the executive branch of government. The Ethiopian Government had undertaken ambitious initiatives to leverage science and technology for socioeconomic development, including Digital Ethiopia 2025 and the national AI policy. The national digital ID initiative aimed to register 17 million citizens by 2025, enhancing access to services and supporting national development. However, inadequate digital infrastructure and capacity gaps presented challenges; it was therefore imperative to strengthen cooperation and

partnerships in line with the Ethiopia Digital Foundations Project. Scientific and technological advancements could bridge the socioeconomic development gap between developed and developing nations, and parliamentarians must therefore ensure the safe use of technologies through dedicated subcommittees. Strengthening parliamentary cooperation to build capacity and share experiences was critical. Ethiopia remained committed to supporting the IPU in furthering science and technology and achieving the SDGs.

Ms. C.G. Hara (Malawi) said that, as national representatives and stewards of progress, parliamentarians must ensure STI fostered growth, peace and sustainability. The experiences of Malawi demonstrated how STI could accelerate sustainable development and improve lives, and parliamentarians' crucial role. Malawi was committed to harnessing STI, as demonstrated through its national policies and frameworks which promoted STI as a driver of economic growth, social inclusion and environmental stability. The national science and technology policy emphasized the need for an enabling environment for scientific exploration. The first, second and third editions of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy underscored the importance of infrastructure development, innovation and institutional growth, with STI supporting agriculture, health, energy and education. The Strategy particularly aligned with SDGs 9 and 13, and identified STI as crucial to accelerating economic growth and developing sustainably. The national information and communications technology (ICT) policy had increased access to digital technologies, facilitated e-money solutions, and enhanced business transactions and economic inclusion. The National Commission for Science and Technology coordinated and regulated the promotion of research and innovation. The national climate change policy focused on using technology and innovation to increase food security and economic growth. The Malawi 2063 vision and its first 10-year implementation plan outlined a road map in which STI helped Malawi become a wealthy, industrialized, middle-income country. The Malawian Government provided desktops and mobile software to students, and had adopted the Connect A School Project to ensure universal and affordable internet access. Hospitals used the mobile network to send antenatal appointment reminders to women in rural areas, which was producing positive results. The Malawian Parliament had been integral to promoting STI for peace and sustainability, as underdevelopment could lead to social unrest. It had introduced legislative and regulatory frameworks, enacted laws, allocated budgets with oversight, developed policies and engaged with stakeholders.

However, STI also presented challenges. E-waste and natural resource depletion required proper management and sustainable sourcing. Rural areas had poor internet and digital service access because of economic constraints and, in some cases, social norms. Many women in those areas did not own mobile phones or computers, and therefore missed opportunities to learn, develop businesses and access critical services. Closing that digital divide was essential for inclusive development. Automation and AI could lead to unemployment in traditional industries, and required policies to promote retraining and new employment opportunities. Through sustained investment, policy support and international partnerships, STI would undoubtedly transform the future. Collaborative efforts, such as the IPU Assemblies, could help parliamentarians share knowledge and build a more sustainable, prosperous and peaceful world.

Mr. A. Farrugia (Malta) said that STI were important to improving lives. However, it was important to consider whether they were used properly, and fostered peace and sustainability. They were crucial to creating innovative solutions – including for challenges concerning education, healthcare, clean water, food security and clean energy – that helped eradicate poverty. They drove economic growth, created jobs for highly skilled professionals and promoted social inclusion. STI had enabled the creation of a vaccine in record time to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. However, although quick to react to challenges, humans were less effective at ensuring equal access to innovations. It was unacceptable that poverty persisted and millions of people continued to die of hunger.

Technological innovation demanded social responsibility and it was parliamentarians' duty to ensure no one was left behind. For example, digital transformation had obviated the need for physical bank branches, the closure of which presented challenges for the elderly who did not use smartphones and for the less educated. The purpose of international institutions was to ensure social responsibility at the global level, as global challenges required global solutions. Climate and environmental challenges should transform into opportunities for a cleaner, greener world. Ocean health, resilience and sustainability should be improved to address sea level rises, which disproportionately impacted small island developing states. The benefits of STI and digital cooperation should be harnessed to improve lives and monitor threats. Progress should proceed

on two fronts: (1) countries should invest in better education, which was key to building inclusive societies, and ensure education was life-long to keep abreast of scientific and technological developments; (2) parliamentarians should assess the impact and inclusivity of policies and legislation. Although humans could develop solutions to challenges, they did not always use those solutions effectively. They must be guided by their morals, which would improve lives, societies and the world.

Ms. N.B.K. Mutti (Zambia) said that sector committees would, for the first time ever, scrutinize the 2025 national budget, which would enhance research and development financing. It was universally acknowledged that STI contributed to a peaceful and sustainable future, as reflected in SDG 9 and Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The IPU draft Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology would guide legislation and decision-making to ensure science and technology benefited humanity, society and the environment, especially in the age of AI.

The theme of the current IPU Assembly was apt, particularly given the severe drought in Zambia. The agriculture, water and energy sectors had been devastated, affecting some six million people. In response, the Zambian Government had harnessed STI to develop high-yield, climate-smart, and disease- and pest-repellent seeds that matured early; water-harvesting technologies and high-tech irrigation models; and a net metering system for the energy sector. The Zambian Parliament had enacted legislation governing the STI sectors to help build a more peaceful and sustainable future. It had allocated resources to the Strategic Research Fund and the STI Youth Fund, both of which enhanced research, encouraged youth and women to develop STI, and focused on innovations that sustainably created wealth and employment. It had been among the few legislatures in the region to continue conducting parliamentary business through the e-chamber system during the COVID-19 pandemic, which demonstrated its commitment to harnessing STI. The system generated attendance and speakers lists, and facilitated raising points of order and electronic voting. Alongside the SMART Zambia Institute, the Parliament had installed Starlink internet devices in the 156 constituencies of Zambia, enabling effective and remote communication with parliamentarians on important matters. Parliaments must help harness STI and mitigate risks, such as those associated with AI.

Mr. M. Dick (Australia) said that Australia had long recognized the importance of STI to economic growth, social well-being and national cohesion. In 2022, it had ranked among the top 20 countries for STI, and its scientific institutions consistently ranked among the top 1% globally in 15 research fields. Science and research increased productivity, sustainable growth, jobs and national well-being. In August 2024, Australia had released its National Science Statement, which helped shape science, policy and leadership for the next decade, and highlighted the collaborations necessary for Australia to solve its greatest challenges. One of the five priorities accompanying the statement was building a secure and resilient nation by strengthening democratic institutions and freedoms, and addressing foreign interference, misinformation and disinformation, and polarization. Doing so would better enable Australia to respond to climate change, natural disasters, political tensions, rapid technological changes and increased competition for resources and supply chains. Another priority was evaluating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems to ensure that Indigenous scientists contributed complementary approaches to gathering knowledge and interpreting the environment. The Statement recognized Indigenous people's 65,000-year-old connection to nature as a deep and unique source of knowledge.

Discussion opportunities for policy makers and scientists enhanced the value of science to the future of Australia. Science Meets Parliament was an opportunity for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) professionals to share developments at the forefront of Australian scientific discovery with parliamentarians. Parliamentary Friends of Science, a bipartisan group, met quarterly at Parliament House to consider new and emerging technology, the future of STEM research and the STEM workforce. It ensured that scientific knowledge and expertise informed parliamentary decision-making. The annual National Science Week, during which over a thousand events were held across Australia, encouraged greater community engagement in and awareness of science. Australia was deepening social, economic and scientific ties with Pacific nations to address common challenges, including climate change, digital connectivity and the net zero transition. Scientific and technological collaborations were key to supporting regional economic growth and prosperity. The Australian Government had committed to providing a grant worth AU\$ 10.5 million to coordinate and elevate Pacific participation in science globally. Climate change was the greatest threat to livelihoods and well-being in the region. Australia supported

regional and global advocacy for sustainable development and ocean conservation through funding, partnerships and advocacy support. Australia provided AU\$ 30 million to the Climate and Oceans Support Program in the Pacific to support 14 Pacific meteorological services to monitor, analyse and communicate information about the climate and oceans. Combining traditional Pacific islander knowledge with conventional scientific forecasts mitigated the impacts of climate variability and tidal events. Parliamentarians and policymakers must harness the potential of people at all levels in order to solve problems and work towards a more peaceful and sustainable world.

Mr. F.M. Romualdez (Philippines) said that STI – which should be considered together as one – provided hope, supported the achievement of the SDGs, shaped future peace and could help solve global issues. STI enabled and accelerated the global transformation towards prosperous, inclusive and environmentally stable economies in developed and developing countries. They were central to international cooperation and global development partnerships. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) involved transformation that would be impossible without sustained efforts to close technological gaps between developed and developing countries.

The Philippines had implemented policies, reforms and initiatives through legislative measures to improve national innovation governance. They included the Philippine Digital Workforce Competitiveness Act and the Philippine Technology Transfer Act. The former addressed gaps in digital technology and skills through programmes, supported the digital workforce through co-working facilities and loans with concessional terms, and facilitated public-private partnerships to plan and implement training, skills development and certification programmes for digital careers. The latter promoted and facilitated transferring and commercializing intellectual property, technology and knowledge resulting from Government-funded research and development programmes. The National Innovation Council ensured that national socioeconomic development prioritized innovation. It administered the National Innovation Agenda and Strategy Document, which contained a 10-year innovation vision and goals, and a road map to improve innovation governance, deepen and accelerate innovation efforts, and integrate and foster public-private partnerships. The Philippine Development Plan for 2023–2028 emphasized the importance of innovation for socioeconomic transformation. The Department of Science and Technology had launched PAGTANAW 2050, the first department-funded interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary project of the Philippine-focused STI Foresight and Strategic Plan. It was a compendium of STI megatrends, global and national societal goals, and transdisciplinary operation areas. As a result of those laws, policies and innovation, the Philippines had increased its ranking in the Global Innovation Index of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The Index had recognized the Philippines as a top innovation performer of the decade, and one of the middle-income economies with the fastest innovation catch-up.

As nations continued to work towards their sustainable development ambitions, they should collaborate to achieve common global goals and harness the technological tools to build a more sustainable and peaceful future. They should capitalize on the potential of STI and use them to address modern challenges. Innovations and technological advancement should be accessible to all.

Mr. S.S. Al-Barkani (Yemen) said that he was deeply saddened. Houthi militias, which the Islamic Republic of Iran funded, had caused wars and suffering in Yemen, and his region was experiencing the horrors of war at the hands of Israel. The genocide of Palestinians in Gaza had spread to Lebanon, with the support of the United States of America. Millions were displaced and deprived of their basic needs, yet the world remained silent and inactive. Israel, the United States of America and the Islamic Republic of Iran had devastated the Middle East and were driving the world to the brink of destruction. Peace would be unattainable unless the war ended and Palestinians enjoyed the right to self-determination and an independent State. Israeli attacks against the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the Charter of the United Nations posed challenges to the world and could not go unsanctioned.

It had been hoped that technology would benefit the world but some States used it unethically and in conflicts. He condemned Israel's use of STI to destroy peace and human lives. Destruction had always accompanied science, and the world must not forget the Chernobyl disaster, or allow a new Hiroshima or Nagasaki to occur. National parliaments must adopt legislation to end the misuse of technology, including AI. Developed states in particular should help bridge the digital divide between themselves and developing States. To ensure justice and equity, developed countries and international organizations must prioritize scientific and technological

capacity-building for developing countries to ensure technology was used for the greater good. He thanked the UN Secretary-General and the regions, countries and people that had taken a stand against Israel.

Ms. L. Dlamini (Eswatini) took the Chair.

Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe) said that STI were interconnected and drove social progress and development. The theme of the IPU Assembly was key to addressing blatant inequalities between developed and developing countries, and Member Parliaments should therefore deploy STI. Zimbabwe had launched its National ICT Policy 2022–2027 and national digital technologies strategy. Over the previous five years, Education 5.0 – the educational curriculum review underpinned by STI deployment – had bolstered those initiatives and had helped create industrial and innovation hubs. Parliament had legislated accordingly to enable all tertiary institutions to be AI-driven hubs of industrial and innovation excellence. The Zimbabwe National Geospatial and Space Agency had been established to develop digital infrastructure for precision agriculture, weather forecasting and climate adaptation to secure national food sovereignty. The Agricultural Research Council and the National Biotechnology Authority had successfully worked on drought-resistant crop varieties, livestock disease diagnostics and renewable energy.

However, the potential to misuse AI to spread misinformation and disinformation, damage reputations through deepfakes and pornography, and wage war could not be ignored. The Zimbabwean Parliament would therefore establish the Committee of the Future to map 50-year strategies for harnessing STI through AI. He commended the IPU for authoring the draft Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology to ensure the responsible, ethical and sustainable development and deployment of STI. In the spirit of that Charter and Article 1 of the IPU Statutes, he called for an immediate end to hostilities in Eastern Europe, the Middle East and parts of Africa, particularly Sudan and the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The devastation of the two world wars should serve as a reminder that only dialogue could end wars.

Mr. E. Sinzohagera (Burundi) said that the application of science and technology, particularly AI, in the political, economic, security and social fields could benefit humanity and development. However, recent major AI advances presented immediate risks to democracy, human rights, the rule of law and security which legislators worldwide must tackle. AI would undoubtedly revolutionize the economy, stimulating productivity and global growth, and enabling humans to perform more creative, strategic and interpersonal tasks. However, it risked increasing unemployment and deepening inequality. AI therefore required mechanisms to ensure humans benefited safely from its huge potential. In that regard, parliaments could help significantly by introducing preliminary AI regulation to protect humanity, cultures and employment. The Burundian Government promoted AI as part of its vision to become a developed country by 2060. It had launched a digitalization programme to improve public service efficiency and access, and the Parliament had passed a law to prevent cybercrime and support technology related to e-commerce, fraud detection, cybersecurity and financial services.

STI were necessary to achieve the SDGs. Science and technology could change our way of life, particularly in the workplace through the automation, mechanization, analysis and optimization of processes. They continued to offer powerful capacities that were not fully understood. However, according to *Compassionate Artificial Intelligence*, the rise of AI required a parallel increase in leaders' emotional intelligence. AI regulation – despite its challenges – was essential to ensuring a peaceful and sustainable future. Regulators would need to balance AI-related risks and opportunities, and adapt to different contexts. Regulation was not synonymous with restriction; it would be possible to regulate AI and the use of personal data, protect democracies, and help citizens avoid disinformation. AI creators should ensure linguistic justice. Unity – through AI regulation and frames of reference, exchanges between countries, and improved cooperation – would create strength.

Mr. B. Boughali (Algeria) said that science helped to understand the natural world and was the cornerstone for sustainable development and the fair use of natural resources. It was important to consider how humans could benefit socioeconomically from technological progress. Humans must build a better future together and implement a unified vision for the safe use of technologies, particularly those based on AI. Given the negative impacts of technologies, it was important to share experiences and best practices to meet development needs and ensure that everyone could benefit from technology and innovation. Parliamentarians contributed to technological development

by ensuring that technologies were used safely and sensibly, and by promoting STI in education and relevant sectors. The national AI strategy 2020–2030 promoted the safe use of technology in agriculture, healthcare and public services. Algerian educational institutions, including universities, had helped develop a strategy to support STI in education. It was hoped that AI could strengthen national infrastructure, and the Government incentivized start-ups to use AI and had established a national STI centre. Algeria was due to host the African Start-up Conference, which would focus on the role of STI in African development.

The events unfolding in Gaza and Lebanon demonstrated how science and technology could be used malevolently. Israel continued to commit crimes, enjoy impunity and defy UN resolutions. Palestinian rights and relevant UN resolutions, particularly UN General Assembly resolution ES-10, must be respected. He called for an immediate ceasefire in Palestine and Lebanon, for humanitarian aid, and the implementation of a two-State solution. It was regrettable that efforts at the 148th IPU Assembly to adopt an emergency item had failed and he hoped that it would be possible to take a clear stand at the current Assembly. It was parliamentarians' duty to seek peaceful solutions to conflicts worldwide, particularly those unfolding in Africa.

Mr. L. Dorji (Bhutan) said that the theme of the General Debate was a call to harness the positive power of STI to address global challenges and build a more harmonious and sustainable world with societies that promoted peace, well-being and sustainability. Bhutan's Gross National Happiness Index emphasized the need to balance economic progress with environmental sustainability, cultural preservation and good governance. The COVID-19 pandemic had underscored the importance of science and technology to tackling global challenges and had exposed the inequalities that small and developing countries faced in accessing scientific and technological developments.

Bhutan, which was particularly vulnerable to climate change, recognized the importance of leveraging technology and innovation to counter the impacts of climate change and build resilience. It had leveraged science and technology to achieve development goals. It had harnessed hydropower and used satellite technology and data analytics to address the impacts of climate change and develop resilience. It had launched a national identity initiative, introduced a national policy to foster research, innovation and STEM education, and the Parliament had embraced an e-Parliament initiative and was transitioning to a paperless parliament. Bhutan supported the IPU draft Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology, which would provide a framework ensuring technological advancement was ethical and respectful of human rights and societal values.

The discussions of the IPU Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights on AI were critically important. Despite its transformative potential, AI threatened democratic values, privacy and human rights and therefore required an approach that balanced its potential with ethical standards, democratic principles and the rule of law. The IPU was essential to fostering understanding, building consensus and facilitating collective action on global issues. Given the current climate of rapid change and uncertainty and the crucial role of multilateralism and global cooperation, Bhutan remained committed to constructive dialogue and international cooperation for promoting peace, democracy and sustainable development. Its participation in UN peacekeeping operations reflected its commitment to multilateralism.

Mr. A. Gashi (North Macedonia) said that rapid technological advancements had transformed lives, work and government. Although STI held great potential and could help achieve SDGs 9 and 17, they could also exacerbate global inequalities and tensions and undermine work towards SDG 16. It was therefore important to reflect on the responsibility to ensure that STI benefited everyone and left no one behind. Parliaments were critical to addressing challenges, including the widening technological divide between developed and developing nations. Given that millions continued to lack access to basic digital infrastructure, parliaments must advocate for policies promoting equitable access to STI, particularly for women, youth and marginalized groups. Those policies should cover investments in digital literacy, the expansion of broadband infrastructure and public-private partnerships to support technology transfers to developing nations. The Science for Peace Schools exemplified how inclusive educational initiatives could turn potential conflicts into opportunities for peaceful coexistence.

However, technologies such as AI, machine learning and automation could lead to unemployment, data privacy issues and misuse. The potential use of AI in civilian and military contexts raised complex questions about security and governance. The IPU Working Group on Science and Technology, and its work on the proposed IPU draft Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology, could help ensure that technology served humanity. Parliaments must address the socioeconomic impact of technological change and unemployment, particularly among

vulnerable groups. In accordance with SDG 8, economies must adapt while upholding workers' rights. Parliaments should focus on programmes helping workers to transition to new jobs in the digital economy, and support policies ensuring STI education for women and young people, as well as gender equality in STEM fields.

STI could be a force for good or a tool of division. It was therefore important to consider the ethics of STI policies and to foster safe online environments, particularly for women and marginalized groups. North Macedonia had witnessed how innovative solutions could help resolve conflicts and build communities. Fostering scientific and technological collaborations could transform potential sources of conflict into opportunities for dialogue and cooperation. Parliaments must enhance their capacity to use scientific evidence in lawmaking and oversight, and it was essential to improve communication and collaboration mechanisms between scientists, policymakers, civil society and the private sector. Parliamentarians were key to facilitating that communication and ensuring that evidence supported legislative work. STI could foster a more peaceful, just and sustainable future but only through responsible, inclusive and ethical action. Parliamentarians were responsible for ensuring that STI served the common good and addressed global challenges.

Ms. C. Sacramento (Sao Tome and Principe) said that STI – including AI, biotechnology and the Internet of Things – presented opportunities and challenges, which complicated efforts to strike a balance between technological innovation and regulation. It was essential to use and develop STI globally while adhering to ethical principles that guaranteed a fair and sustainable future for all. STI were linked to the SDGs and the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and must be recognized in policies and the Pact for the Future. Their indispensability to socioeconomic and environmental development demanded the introduction of regulatory measures to harmonize cooperation between developed and developing countries. Those measures would ensure the happiness of societies, promote youth and women's inclusion, and guarantee STI risks were managed and controlled. The measures should be flexible and adaptable to countries, protect fundamental rights, guarantee transparency and promote ethical AI use. In that regard, parliaments were crucial to creating evidence-based public policies and a favourable regulatory environment in order to promote sustainability, social inclusion, education, training, international cooperation, environmental protection, proper STI use and long-term planning. Collaborations between governments, the private sector, experts and civil society – governed by clear and comprehensive guidelines – would ensure fair and safe AI development. Her National Assembly had legislated to establish the National Agency for the Protection of Personal Data as part of efforts to balance rapid AI development with regulation to prevent discrimination, violence and the spread of false information. The Agency monitored compliance with laws and regulations to protect data and uphold human rights and constitutional freedoms and guarantees.

Mr. R. Mancienne (Seychelles) said that STI could strengthen economies, organize societies and ensure happiness. Although mankind had proven more resilient to technology than in *Brave New World*, where technology destroyed individuality and personal freedom, recent technological progress, including AI, posed the same questions as how the dangers of technology could be avoided and how a better world could be built. STI could solve global problems while harming the planet. Industrial progress had led to climate change but technology could help develop clean energy. The hope that had been expressed at the current debate had impressed him.

It was particularly important to ensure that small island African States, such as his own, were not left behind or at the mercy of events in developed countries, as had often been the case. They must keep abreast of technological advancements, derive benefits from them, and protect themselves from harm. Education was key to ensuring that technological advancements benefited entire populations and contributed to national prosperity. All children should have access to education, and parliaments were key to ensuring that access and improving education quality. Efforts should focus on those children in Africa who lacked good access to education. Science and technology should be better incorporated into education.

Mr. M. Surasajja (Thailand)¹ said that Thailand sought to leverage STI to propel national development, eradicate poverty and inequality, and equally distribute wealth – particularly to the most vulnerable and marginalized. STI would create growth, opportunities and a prosperous future,

¹ Summary based on written submission. The speech was delivered in Thai but no interpretation was available.

and would help achieve the SDGs. In accordance with the current five-year national strategy for STI and legislation passed in 2019, Thailand was determined to promote STI to enhance self-reliance, boost adaptability and strengthen readiness for new challenges. The strategy provided a road map to escape the middle-income trap and produce a highly skilled workforce while protecting the environment. Thailand Vision 2030 would boost national growth and transform Thailand into a global industrial hub through investment and technology transfers in the digital, wellness, medical, agricultural and clean energy industries. It would also help Thailand become a key player in technology and innovation in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). By 2027, Thailand hoped to become an AI hub in Southeast Asia.

The Thai Parliament had taken legislative initiatives to leverage STI and increase national competitiveness. The Thailand Research and Innovation Utilization Promotion Act encouraged greater commercial use of research and development that governmental agencies had funded, and increased technology transfers to the private sector which benefited the wider public. The lower house of the Thai Parliament had recently approved a bill to establish a national STI research institute and the Senate was due to read the bill. Over the years, the Thai Parliament had increased investment in digital technologies to provide online solutions for citizens and transparent, efficient, smart and inclusive parliamentary functions. It stood ready to work with other IPU Member Parliaments to foster knowledge-based societies and a people-centred development agenda, while minimizing environmental impacts. It was parliamentarians' mandate to ensure science fostered more balanced, just, equitable, inclusive and sustainable growth for a brighter future.

Mr. A. Frick (Liechtenstein) said that scientific and technological breakthroughs were reshaping the world and pushing the boundaries of what was possible. However, the way in which humans leveraged those breakthroughs would determine the future. The climate crisis signified that humans had pushed the world to its limits. However, science and technology offered solutions, such as renewable energy, agricultural innovations and smart cities. It was essential to address inequalities in science and technology distribution and ensure equal access. Although technology could enable conflicts, it could also foster peace, including through satellite communications, cybersecurity, blockchains and AI technology track, and verify peace agreements, tackle misinformation and improve transparency in governance. It could educate, foster cross-cultural connections, amplify marginalized voices, and promote tolerance, diversity and empathy. It was essential to invest in education – particularly in STEM subjects – to foster innovation and ensure future generations could address challenges. Governments, businesses and civil society should also collaborate as current challenges were too complex to solve alone.

However, technological advancement entailed ethical dilemmas. It was therefore important to ensure that technology did not infringe upon privacy and human rights, and was not misused. Robust frameworks for ethical STI decision-making and governance should be developed and would require international cooperation. With wise use, STI could help build a more peaceful and sustainable world.

Mr. R. Gonzalez Patricio (Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO)) said that the threat to international peace and security had increased since the previous Assembly. The genocide of Palestinians continued with impunity while the number of civilian victims increased. The arms industry was thriving and the possibility of another world war was greater. Lessons should be learned from those who, during the Second World War, had looked the other way until the war had directly affected them. Rapid technological developments could both benefit and threaten international peace and security, and efforts to mitigate those risks should be based on international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

AI was radically changing the world and could facilitate sustainable development. Parliamentarians should maximize its potential by increasing international cooperation, collaborating with relevant authorities, and promoting an inclusive, responsible and sustainable digital future. They must contribute to international AI governance, adopt a balanced approach, consider risks and ensure equal representation, particularly from developing countries. He recalled paragraph 25 of the Universal Declaration on Democracy. The UN was essential to facilitating and supporting international AI governance, which required a multilateral, agile, multidisciplinary and adaptable approach. International cooperation was necessary to promote synergies between governmental AI frameworks, as were international, regional and national initiatives for safe and trustworthy AI systems. The potential opportunities and risks of AI to sustainable development, well-being and rights should be evaluated and addressed inclusively.

In 2024, PARLATINO had developed an agenda addressing regional AI challenges, had hosted an inter-parliamentary conference which had resulted in a declaration of principles, and had formulated model laws, including on AI, that recommended equitability and inclusivity and took into account frameworks such as the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence. The immense potential of AI to accelerate progress in achieving the SDGs should be harnessed. AI should promote different cultures and languages, and support the production of local data to support national- and community-level development. Developing countries should receive AI capacity-building, including to tackle the negative impacts of technologies on employment, the environment, peace and international security. The IPU could greatly contribute to local AI governance. It could establish an expert group on AI that would send periodic reports to Member Parliaments and Associate Members about scientific and technological advances and their potential effects on international security and disasters.

Ms. F. Martín (MERCOSUR Parliament (PARLASUR)) said that STI could renew the hope that the SDGs would be achieved within five years. The digital divide was largely due to differences in technological skills, insufficient frameworks ensuring equal access to technology, and economic, social and climate inequality. The Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) had a specialized forum on STI that launched initiatives to promote, research and innovate within science and technology with a view to developing national capacities. Since capacities were not equal among member States, MERCOSUR sought regional integration. Regional advances in agricultural biotechnology ensured food security and sustainability, and health-related innovations had increased equality between MERCOSUR States. Since irresponsible AI use risked political violence, hate speech and polarization, PARLASUR had produced recommendations on the ethical and responsible use of AI from a human rights perspective. The PARLASUR Democracy Observatory – alongside electoral tribunals in member States, academia and civil society – had analysed the impact of cybercrime on democracy and electoral processes. All parliaments should address that issue because society had the right to information about political candidates, and technology must uphold the will of the people following elections. The Brazilian Parliament was currently grappling with the issue of social media regulation during elections.

PARLASUR had supported the fourth industrial revolution to promote regional economic growth, especially in terms of employment. It was important to strike a balance and ensure that technology did not undermine human skills. PARLASUR was due to launch a regional border security project based on technological innovation to prevent organized crime. She hoped that member States would support that parliamentary initiative.

History had demonstrated the link between wars and technological advances. There were currently 56 armed conflicts involving some 100 countries. It was important to bear in mind that link, which perhaps existed because STI were slower to find solutions to economic, social and climate challenges, and that increasing resources were directed to helping STI spread conflict. Parliaments worldwide should therefore promote, update and ensure respect for disarmament and anti-nuclear treaties. Voters had undoubtedly elected the parliamentarians present to work towards peace. PARLASUR was firm in its conviction that it was part of the necessary and urgent process to restore peace worldwide.

Mr. A. Al Asoomi (Arab Parliament) said that AI had become essential to keeping pace with development. The Arab Parliament understood the importance of governing AI and implementing strategies to benefit from AI that were tailored to Arab societies and values. At its sixth conference, the Arab Parliament had issued its vision for the safe use of AI, including recommendations for good AI governance. The Arab Parliament had also established a parliamentary committee to deal with science and technology and adopt legislation in that field.

At the 147th IPU Assembly, the Arab Parliament had condemned the massacres and genocide that Israel was committing against civilians in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territory. No one had expected those actions to continue for a year without the international community helping to end those blatant violations of international and human rights law. The occupying forces were using STI to kill civilians and destroy infrastructure rather than to work towards a peaceful and sustainable future. It was unacceptable for a regime to adopt double standards, and there must be respect for international laws, instruments and agreements. Parliamentarians must speak out against international hypocrisy. The crimes committed in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territory were leading the region into uncharted territory and undermining international law and legitimacy. The IPU must take a clear stand out of solidarity with Palestinians and in the interest of humanity. He called on parliamentarians to support the emergency item on Palestine, submitted on behalf of the Arab Group, and to boycott the statement of the delegate of Israel.

Mr. D. Illouz (Israel) said that every time the Jewish people had challenged tyranny, the world had asked for surrender in the name of peace. Today, Israel was fighting to ensure its survival and to defy the tyranny that had threatened the Jewish people for millennia. The attack carried out in Israel on 7 October 2023 had been unimaginably brutal and inhumane. The world must demand the release of the 101 hostages still in captivity. Yet instead of condemning Hamas' barbaric acts, the world questioned the right of Israel to defend itself. The International Criminal Court threatened to prosecute Israeli leaders for defending their people from terrorism. Some at the International Court of Justice accused Israel – a country that embraced international law – of genocide amidst open calls for, and attempts to commit, genocide against Israel. Israel took extensive measures to avoid civilian casualties whereas Hamas used its own people as human shields. For Israel, every civilian death was a tragedy; for Hamas, it was part of its strategy.

Throughout history, tyrants had singled out and attacked the Jewish people for their belief in freedom and justice, but the Jewish people had resisted. They had introduced the concepts of Shabbat to enable slaves to rest, limited government to prevent all-powerful leaders, and human dignity as all individuals were made in the image of God. Today, Israel refused to bow to the modern tyrant of the Middle East – the Ayatollah regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran – which sponsored Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis, sought the destruction of Israel, and wished to control the region and eventually the world. If it obtained nuclear weapons, it would have the power to destabilize civilization. The Middle East could either pursue a future of hope, based on the Abraham Accords, or of endless wars driven by Iranian ambition and terror. He urged the world to choose the former.

A delegate from Rwanda, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that insecurity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo stemmed from the lack of political will to address the causes of conflict, and the ongoing collaboration between the Congolese Government and armed groups, particularly the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). Such collaboration aggravated fundamental rights violations among Congolese Tutsi communities and threatened regional security. At the fourth Tripartite Ministerial Meeting for Peace and Security in the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo had unexpectedly refused to endorse the harmonized plan to neutralize the FDLR and had opposed a follow-up meeting. However, the minutes of the fifth Ministerial Meeting had been signed. Those resolutions must be effectively implemented and the Congolese leadership should address the conflict through dialogue rather than blame. Although committed to peace, Rwanda would always defend itself against national threats.

A delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that his country never had or would stoke regional tension, and it supported peace in Yemen through the National Salvation Government and political unity. Western States, particularly the United States of America, were exacerbating regional tensions and spreading disinformation to hide the undeniable crimes of the Zionist regime. The United States bombing of Yemeni infrastructure, including ports, blocked access to humanitarian aid. Iranian action in Yemen had been carried out alongside the National Salvation Government. He agreed with Mr. Al-Barkani concerning Zionist crimes in Gaza and Lebanon, and the Islamic Republic of Iran would support Yemeni resistance against Israeli bombardments. The leaders and military commanders of the Zionist regime should be put on trial and the IPU Assembly should expel delegates from Israel.

The IPU Secretariat said that 131 delegations were present. In accordance with Rule 33 of the Rules of the Assembly, the quorum of the Assembly was set at 66 delegations.

The sitting rose at 18:30.

Sitting of Tuesday 15 October 2024

(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 09:00, with Mr. A. Salman (Bahrain) in the Chair.

Item 3 of the agenda (continued)

General Debate on the theme *Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI)* *for a more peaceful and sustainable future* (A/149/3-Inf.1)

PRESIDING OFFICERS OF PARLIAMENT

Mr. A. Simonyan (Armenia) said that amidst complex geopolitical challenges, his country was leveraging science and technology to promote not only economic growth, but also national security, resilience and sustainability. It was paramount to harness STI to maximize its social, economic and environmental benefits, while managing its downsides. Developing renewable energy, especially solar power, was a key priority for Armenia. The country had used science and technology to manage resources efficiently and mitigate risks posed by climate change, for example by enhancing agricultural productivity and improving disaster management, thus protecting the environment and securing a better future. Embracing sound technological solutions was essential. Reducing carbon dioxide emissions, conserving resources and promoting environmental responsibility were areas of focus for Armenia and should be a collective effort. All countries had a role to play in ensuring that technological advancements were widely used to protect the planet. Highlighting the ambitious peace agreement to be signed between Armenia and Azerbaijan, he underscored that his country was committed to using STI to build peace and meet people's needs. It was time for peace. Armenia stood ready to sign the peace agreement that day and invited Azerbaijan to exercise political will to do the same.

Ms. T. Narbaeva (Uzbekistan) said that the current item was important in light of the rising number of serious challenges and global uncertainty. Developing STI played a key role in ensuring sustainable development and global stability. The Uzbekistan 2030 strategy defined the country's development path and prioritized the accelerated introduction of modern technologies and digitalization of various sectors. There was a legislative base for education, science and innovation to expand higher education, modernize the educational system and develop science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education. The funding system had been diversified, with increased funding for science from the private sector and industrial enterprises. There were designated innovative districts and innovation facilities, which opened up opportunities for entrepreneurs. The Government allocated significant funds for research and start-ups and had introduced mechanisms to commercialize scientific and technological developments, considerably increasing their commercial value. All those efforts had helped rank Uzbekistan a strong 82nd on the Global Innovation Index.

Given the IPU's important role in shaping policy in that field, it should leverage the potential and authority generated by bringing parliaments together, and coordinate information exchange on experiences in legislation, governance, education, science, innovation and the development of parliaments' human resources. Global dialogue on science and technology should be strengthened and parliaments should promote international cooperation, encourage innovation and strengthen public awareness of science and technology issues. Uzbekistan was ready to share its experience and review and adopt foreign best practices. Parliamentarians should increase budget expenditures to promote investments in science and innovation. Coordinated efforts and active implementation of advanced scientific solutions were necessary to address the urgent challenges of the day. It was her hope that close international cooperation within the framework of the IPU would ensure that countries' efforts were effective.

FIRST SPEAKERS FROM DELEGATIONS AND INVITED ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. A. Almodóbar Barceló (Spain) said that for STI to address climate change, poverty and inequality, a comprehensive and equitable approach was necessary. Parliamentarians needed to ensure that STI was ethical, sustainable and accessible to all, especially to vulnerable and marginalized communities. Investment in research, development and knowledge-sharing were necessary in areas such as health, clean energy, sustainable agriculture, education and tourism, which was a key sector in many countries and strengthened peace. Spain had designated Benidorm as a smart city, which had improved tourists' experience while promoting citizen participation and contributing to sustainable development through the appropriate use of human, natural and urban resources. Smart tourism boosted sustainable economic and social development. Parliamentarians should regulate new technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), to maximize their benefits and minimize their risks. The ethical and security issues linked to AI should be addressed urgently. International cooperation should be prioritized so that countries could share knowledge and resources, given that many challenges, such as climate change and pandemics, knew no borders. Parliamentarians could promote international agreements to facilitate technology transfer and equitable access. Education and training were important, especially to prepare younger generations to reap the benefits of STI. Parliamentarians could pass legislation to ensure that their work, particularly on STI and engineering, was inclusive and forward-looking.

Mr. S.S.K. Njie (the Gambia), underscoring that STI was a global imperative and collective responsibility aligned to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 (peace, justice and effective institutions), said that his Government was grateful for the relentless advocacy and support of the international community, including the IPU, in rejecting a private member's bill to reverse the ban on female genital mutilation (FGM) in the country. Their collective efforts reaffirmed the shared vision to eliminate harmful practices, protect human dignity and foster a more equitable society for all. Given that global challenges transcended national borders, international cooperation was critical to harness STI's full potential. In light of the Gambia's commitment to achieving universal electricity access and expanding its renewable energy capacity, the world could learn from the country's community-based natural resource management and climate resilience. It had met its national climate goals under the Paris Agreement in 2017 owing to its proactive approach to environmental challenges, which focused on local climate adaptation solutions. It had carried out efforts to integrate STI in key sectors, such as energy, waste management and agriculture, to boost food security in rural areas, address climate change, promote a local food sufficiency mechanism and digitalize social protection systems by creating a unified database that identified vulnerable households and ensured their access to key social protection programmes, such as cash transfers and entrepreneurial loans.

The international community must do more to harness STI for peace in regions plagued by violence, resource competition and political instability, and adopt a unified resolution recognizing Palestine as a sovereign State under the two-State solution. The United Nations (UN) Security Council should stop politicizing issues and embody its founding ethos and values. It required urgent restructuring to grant Africa, the Middle East and Asia permanent seats if it truly cared about a more peaceful and sustainable future. The African Union and Arab League should collaborate to advance the UN reform agenda. It was the duty of all parliaments to ensure that STI became a force for good, built bridges and secured a peaceful and prosperous future for all.

Ms. M. Valente (Angola) said that global challenges required STI-based solutions to prevent conflicts, improve diplomacy and create a more peaceful, harmonious and sustainable future for all. Cooperation between countries, based on knowledge sharing and technology transfer, was indispensable. Food security and access to education, healthcare and drinking water required efficient innovative and sustainable solutions. Given that agriculture was the backbone of the Angolan economy, intelligent and sustainable farming practices could ensure food safety through increased production and preserve the soils and water resources, promoting a more balanced rural development. The country's considerable potential in solar, wind and hydroelectric energy could diversify the energy matrix and provide electricity access for millions. Angola was committed to promoting STEM by investing in skills and training to ensure the youth were agents of change and innovation in their communities.

The advance of technology and innovation posed ethical challenges, which were compounded by irresponsible use. Such advances must be accessible to marginalized communities. AI regulations should provide for digital education, the promotion of innovation, and

above all, deep dialogue between governments, companies and scientific institutions in the Global North and South. Parliamentarians played a key legislative and oversight role in ensuring that legal frameworks and international agreements involved all stakeholders in protecting constituents swiftly and effectively. STI should contribute to economic development that did not rely on the uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources, and to peace that was underpinned by social justice and environmental protection. That would create opportunities for all and provide the tools needed to tackle global challenges collaboratively, and would guarantee a stable, safe and liveable planet.

Mr. S.J.-C. Apithy (Benin) said that the current theme demonstrated the importance the Organization attributed to STI's contribution to strengthening human rights and tackling inequality. Science and technology were key to development, as reflected in the African Union's *Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024*. Investment in science, technology, research and innovation was critical in Africa. Benin had shown political will to develop its digital economy and make the country a regional platform for digital services by ensuring internet access throughout the country, creating digital tools to improve youth employment, establishing legal and institutional frameworks, including the *National Artificial Intelligence and Big Data Strategy 2023-2027*, and ensuring access to education and information in a timely manner. Parliamentarians should pay serious attention to STI through legislation that would promote new technologies in accordance with human rights. All countries should implement parliamentary initiatives for vocational training and education and carry out research. Benin would support any IPU initiative to that end.

Ms. M. Ibrahima (Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)), highlighting the issues West Africa faced relating to security, political stability and social and economic progress, said that STI provided new ways to address the current complex and interdependent challenges, such as climate change, education and training, and public health issues, to ensure faster diagnosis, better treatment and an improved quality of life. STI could also promote large-scale political initiatives to manage elections. Caution was required to ensure that humankind was not overtaken by the development of technology that posed a threat to humanity, such as weapons of mass destruction. Stability, peace and dialogue were necessary and interdependent. Technology helped and did not harm job creation. Parliamentarians should establish a strategic STI framework, organize briefing sessions and work with the scientific community to ensure that technology was not used for ill intentions. The IPU needed to enhance its dynamic approach which was vital to ensuring international dialogue and countries should work together for the benefit of all.

Mr. Nguyen Manh Tien (Viet Nam) said that STI's infinite potential for development could be harnessed to meet people's growing needs. The National Assembly of Viet Nam had played a critical role in establishing a legal framework promoting STI to address socioeconomic development and environmental challenges. The goal was to continuously improve people's lives and well-being, ensure happiness and secure the future. Science should not be used against other countries but to foster cooperation, peace, development and justice. Through international cooperation and joint efforts, science and technology would be powerful peacebuilding tools. Parliaments and the IPU were urged to work together to promote STI. Parliaments should encourage policy that ensured that everyone, particularly women, children and vulnerable groups, benefited from scientific and technological advancements. Investment in the research, development and application of new technology should be prioritized in sectors such as renewable energy, education, healthcare, sustainable agriculture, digital transformation and green transition. The technological gap between countries and their communities should be reduced. There should be increased international cooperation regarding technology transfer and knowledge sharing with a focus on developing countries. Scientific and technological advances must respect human rights and biodiversity. Furthermore, the IPU and Member Parliaments should establish a mechanism for new technologies that would contribute to a prosperous and sustainable society. Public-private cooperation was essential to better address global issues. Viet Nam looked forward to strengthening cooperation with other Member Parliaments.

Ms. S. Paunovic (Serbia) said that Member Parliaments had to ensure that STI drove global change that would bring about peace and sustainability. The current challenges required bold, coordinated and sustainable solutions, shared commitment and global cooperation. Harnessing the power of science had been a cornerstone of Serbia's national development strategy, leading to an

increase in exports and employment. The country had established a national AI strategy, which included the introduction of AI into primary and secondary school curricula to equip future generations to navigate and shape a technology-driven world.

Serbia's approach to innovation did not simply aim for economic progress, but also a society in which technology served humanity. Innovation was essential for stability and peace, which was inextricably linked to sustainability. Underscoring the need for technological advances to be responsible, she highlighted that Serbia had adopted ethical guidelines for AI, ensuring that its development and application guaranteed respect for human rights and fairness. Ethical technology was key to maintaining trust and equity. Serbia was committed to responsible AI governance and was determined to ensure that such technologies served as forces for peace, sustainability and prosperity worldwide. The IPU provided a platform for global cooperation that was pivotal in advancing economic development, peace and sustainability through STI.

Mr. Lee In Young (Republic of Korea), said that AI was developing so rapidly that it was difficult to keep up with. While science and technology could improve people's quality of life and address economic and environmental challenges, it presented certain risks, such as unequal access which could exacerbate economic and social inequality and discrimination, the violation of fundamental rights, the spread of bias and misinformation, infringement of privacy and copyright, and technological unemployment. As technology was increasingly integrated into people's lives, it was crucial to establish a foundation for social cohesion and sustainable development, including by preventing and addressing the digital divide.

The Korean National Assembly had established a robust legal framework to promote STI, while safeguarding businesses and individuals against potential negative impacts. Other legal steps included potential framework bills on responsible AI development and digital inclusion. The Republic of Korea was providing free STEM education for low-income families, support for women scientists, digital job training for marginalized groups and STI talent development programmes for the youth. The country prioritized public and private education. Despite commendable efforts contributing to SDG 4 (inclusive and equitable quality education), more needed to be done. The Korean National Assembly stood ready to work with other Member Parliaments and reflect on all views to ensure that all of society could be represented.

Mr. Yoshii Akira (Japan) said that his country was working towards economic development and solutions to social challenges through the advanced fusion of cyberspace and physical space, thus promoting the well-being of all and creating a human-centred society in which no one was left behind. While promoting tourism was important, tourism-driven cities, such as Kyoto, faced challenges including overtourism, a declining population and an ageing society with a low birth rate. STI was necessary to build smart cities that rectified regional disparities. Securing transport for locals without cars, especially the elderly, was challenging. Parliamentarians in Japan had been advocating for policies to protect local infrastructure and enhance communities' sustainability, for example, by incorporating autonomous driving into public transport. They were continuously monitoring progress in that regard. When adopting STI policies, it was essential to take each regional situation into consideration and consult with stakeholders, including residents and the IPU Member Parliaments.

Mr. A. Abshir (Somalia) said that challenges such as climate change, inequality and conflict required collective action. To harness STI effectively, inclusivity and equity must be prioritized, ensuring that marginalized communities had access to technology and could participate in the digital economy. There should be investment in education fostering critical thinking and innovation from the ground up to empower the next generation. Member Parliaments needed to share knowledge, resources and best practices to accelerate progress and leverage platforms such as the SDGs to foster a global commitment to innovation while prioritizing the well-being of all. Parliamentarians should address the ethics of technological advancements, ensuring that they were guided by justice, equity and sustainability; advocate for research and development policies, particularly those addressing pressing global challenges; promote public-private partnerships; and support scientific research. Parliamentarians could catalyse innovation to enhance economic growth, social cohesion and environmental sustainability.

The ultimate goal of harnessing STI was not merely to advance technology, but also to put peace and sustainability within everyone's reach. To that end, Somalia had launched a mobile money platform to provide access to secure, reliable and instant financial services, thus empowering small businesses, facilitating trade and ensuring more economic participation across

urban and rural areas. Regarding governance, the country's digital platforms had improved transparency and accountability, enabling more direct and effective engagement between the Government and citizens, rebuilding trust in institutions and ensuring progress was grounded in good governance and inclusivity.

Mr. A. Koponen (Finland) said that while scientific innovations had improved people's quality of life, society should consider how to continue to work in an increasingly passive environment and care for the environment while the demand for raw materials kept growing. STI presented potential solutions, such as renewable energy. Finland had taken a comprehensive approach in its commitment to increasing funding for research and development to promote sustainable growth. Developments in STI required new ideas and investments and could be achieved by any country. Sustainability and peacebuilding could close development gaps, and policymakers could take steps to that end. Parliaments should provide a legal framework for AI use where governments would be responsible for ensuring the transparency of the operation of AI systems. Development was not a zero-sum game; rather, one country's progress created opportunities for all other countries.

Mr. J. Ntakirutimana (East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)) said that everyone had the right to partake in scientific progress and its benefits. The EALA had established specialized centres to promote scientific knowledge, research, innovation and development. In light of the importance of digital transformation, the EALA was actively working to bridge the gap between institutions and people by implementing initiatives to enhance public engagement, transparency and accountability. With imminent challenges such as resource allocation, gender disparities, capacity building, regulatory lag, data privacy, inequality and cybersecurity, the EALA focused on emerging technologies, leveraging digital tools to streamline the legislative process, monitor parliamentary activities more efficiently through data analytics and AI, advocate transparency as a key to achieving accountability, and to promote efficiency and cost-effectiveness in its work. International collaboration was crucial to foster equitable access to the benefits of STI. Regulatory frameworks should adapt to the rapidly evolving technology landscape. Parliamentarians must continue to play a pivotal role in fostering a safe and inclusive environment in which technology supported human rights, while broadening access to careers in STI so that women and young people in particular could engage meaningfully.

Mr. D. Diallo (Burkina Faso) said that people in Africa, in particular, had to deal with the downside of STI developments. Parliamentarians should consider how to use STI for peace, especially as those funding research did not have good intentions. Powerful countries had harnessed STI for economic dominance and to intervene in the affairs of, terrorize and destabilize less powerful countries, thus undermining sustainable development. Universal access to scientific assets was necessary. Security and peace were unattainable unless humankind remained in control of its advances. Parliamentarians needed to uphold the principles agreed to while respecting and treasuring people's lives, and take bold actions within the framework of the IPU Assembly. Burkina Faso welcomed efforts to promote dialogue over war. The Organization should ensure that solving the world's problems was at the heart of its mandate. Parliamentarians should ensure that their resolutions and recommendations allowed for genuine progress.

Mr. A. Tavares Correia (Cabo Verde) said that technology could help to develop economies and businesses, strengthen land, sea and air surveillance, monitor and prevent natural phenomena and deal with their effects. Climate-related technology required constant improvement. Technological progress presented risks such as growing inequality, technological unemployment and data privacy, which threatened global peace. Global technology companies commercialized people's personal data; parliamentarians could not leave citizens in that fragile position and should ensure that technology created a fair, inclusive and peaceful world.

In view of SDG 9 (infrastructure, industrialization and innovation) and SDG 17 (global partnerships), it was parliamentarians' responsibility to ensure that STI benefited everyone, particularly women, young people and vulnerable groups. To overcome the technological divide between the Global North and South, it was vital to promote investment in science and technology in developing countries and support initiatives boosting local research and innovation to mitigate brain drain. Given that the pace of progress often outstripped regulatory frameworks' ability to adapt, parliamentarians should legislate preventively. Including all social actors was essential to harness STI's transformative potential in an ethical and balanced way. Policymaking should be

people-centred, as outlined in the IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology. Considering that scientific cooperation and access to knowledge were crucial to prevent conflicts and promote sustainable development, projects such as schools for peace could turn differences into opportunities for dialogue and cooperation. Harnessing STI consciously and inclusively would create a fairer, safer and more sustainable world. In the Global South, and Africa in particular, there should be increased technological interconnection for social, economic and political processes, while remaining people-focused.

Ms. M. Lauri (Estonia), highlighting her country's efforts to streamline operations through technology, said that politicians were crucial in bringing governments closer to citizens. A digital public sector enhanced the transparency, accountability, accessibility and inclusivity of political processes, leading to policies that better reflected citizens' needs. By using technology to tackle contemporary challenges, countries would become more resilient to hostile actors and better prepared to face risks. With AI-generated material constantly challenging evidence-based information and as public opinion was often shaped by media narratives, it was crucial for democracies to improve media literacy. Fake news intensified societal divides, polarization and instability, and young people and women in particular were being frightened and silenced. Cooperation was the most effective way to tackle the issue. To limit disinformation, Estonia had restricted access to Russian television channels and websites instigating war and supported independent Estonian media outlets in creating content in Russian. Further efforts included fact-checking and exposing false information, publishing annual reviews on issues affecting Estonian society and raising awareness of media literacy. Disinformation was a threat to security stability, dignity and humanity and could not be tolerated. Parliamentarians should commit to a digital future to minimize such threats.

Mr. V. Klein (Germany) took the Chair.

Mr. J. Mhagama (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his Government had set ambitious targets to increase renewable energy, had launched mobile health initiatives to improve access to healthcare in underserved regions, and had leveraged STI to foster regional cooperation in areas such as sustainable fisheries and pollution. Challenges to STI included ethical and environmental issues, limited and unequal access, especially in remote rural communities, organizational and institutional resistance to adopting new technologies, and insufficient investment. Continued investment in STI and well thought-out policies would be key to creating a harmonious, resilient world. Parliamentarians should ensure that STI promoted equity, inclusivity and environmental stewardship. The IPU was crucial in fostering collaboration among countries and other stakeholders, facilitating the exchange of best practices and supporting policies that encouraged responsible innovations and addressed disparities regarding access. Policy and governance played a critical role in translating scientific and technological advances into tangible benefits. Through collective efforts, science and technology could be drivers of economic and social progress, peace and sustainability.

Mr. K.J. Skriver (Denmark) said that politicians' most important task should be holding trust-based dialogue. Only the sensible use of technology could pave the way forward. Using technology for misinformation and disinformation was worrisome and dangerous in terms of democracy because it created division and undermined trust in political institutions. It was parliamentarians' responsibility to ensure that people could trust the information being published, and to set clear rules and requirements for the use of new technology by defence forces. Technology should be used to build bridges instead of defeating political opponents. The world left much to be desired. Populations made judgments based on the actions of parliamentarians, who should stick to the decisions agreed at the IPU. That the President of the IPU had spoken to the President of the Russian Federation was regretful, as was the uncertainty as to whether she had referred to the relevant IPU resolutions on Ukraine. Cooperation could ensure that the world was making progress and left no one behind.

Mr. F. Fakafanua (Tonga) said that policymakers should use STI to foster sustainability, prosperity and peace. The issue for small island developing States (SIDS) was the availability of science and technology through technological transfers and capital infrastructure investments. While countries had committed to strengthening resource mobilization to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, more needed to be done. The digital divide persisted between

developed and developing countries. Several developing countries had underscored the need for enhanced technology development and transfer to transition to renewable energies and long-term low-emission development in accordance with their nationally determined contributions. By prioritizing STI, SIDS could enhance their climate resilience through advanced early warning systems and sustainable agricultural practices, thus ensuring food security and safety; protect fisheries and ocean ecosystems with marine resource management technology; increase healthcare access in isolated constituencies; equip the young workforce by strengthening STEM education; implement sustainable tourism practices; foster peace and collaboration by engaging communities through participatory governance and data-driven policies; and improve conflict resolution. Parliamentarians, in their scrutiny and advocacy, should legislate to ensure equitable sharing of STI.

Ms. J. Pejović (Montenegro) said that technology was governed by outdated laws. All countries struggled to provide sufficient legal protection for online workers and needed new laws to reflect current realities. While some algorithms reinforced gender inequality, people continued to rely on them without fully understanding the consequences. Given that misinformation spread quickly, that social media could foster hate and distrust and that AI could be weaponized, it was necessary to build unity, ethics and love to ensure a peaceful and safe world in which technology uplifted humanity. Countries' literacy and technological capacity must be enhanced to better serve the youth and the elderly. Everyone deserved and needed to create a future shaped by cooperation, humanity, ethics and shared commitment for the well-being of all.

Mr. J. Fakhro (Bahrain), deploring that STI was not being used for people's benefit, said that to achieve stability and safety, parliamentarians needed to shift from talking about partnerships to taking action through enhanced multilateral cooperation under the auspices of the IPU, which would restore the balance between society's need for development and technical progress. Technology should not be used to develop weapons. Bahrain had taken steps to promote development and peace through STI, including approving a global plan to meet the needs of the digital economy and ensure that AI benefited citizens by modernizing government services, adopting data privacy legislation regarding cloud storage and digital services, and incentivizing proposals for peaceful solutions to conflicts.

In light of the international community's silence regarding the carnage being carried out by Israel in Palestine and Lebanon, the IPU needed to reaffirm its commitment to human rights and clarify how it endorsed international human rights organizations. On behalf of the Arab Group, he called for an immediate ceasefire in Palestine and Lebanon and an end to Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territory. The IPU should adopt resolutions to protect the Lebanese and Palestinian populations, put an end to those crimes and promote the creation of a Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital. While STI would provide a safer world, peace must first be restored. It was therefore crucial to stop the actions of certain countries that threatened the future.

Ms. M.d.C. Alva Prieto (Peru) said that in aiming to achieve social and economic objectives, citizens' quality of life should be the priority for parliamentarians and environmental factors should be monitored. Technology should decrease inequalities and be inclusive. Parliamentarians had a duty to regulate the use of technology to prevent and sanction its unlawful use without prejudice, such as in cases of harassment, disinformation and violations of privacy. The Peruvian Parliament had, among other efforts, aligned itself with parliaments around the world, established a committee on science and technology to ensure the intelligent, sustainable use of technology, and amended its legislation to consider the misuse of science as a serious offence.

Mr. F. Salim (Libya) said that while science and technology could contribute towards achieving the SDG targets, the international community had shamefully failed to put an end to the war in Gaza and Lebanon and prosecute or punish the criminals who continued to commit genocide against, starve and displace defenceless, unarmed civilians. There could not be development, peaceful coexistence or stability in the region given that the Zionist entity was disregarding international rules, destabilizing international peace and security, and committing heinous crimes using science and technology. Also, the UN Security Council was in a state of paralysis in implementing resolutions on the Zionist-Arab conflict. Technology reflected the greed of certain countries and their need to seize others' resources under the pretext that the end justified the means. Peace, stability and development depended on economic and natural resources, as well as the international community's ability to disseminate beneficial science and technology without discrimination, particularly following conflicts and disasters.

To promote sustainable development, and therefore security, peace, stability and prosperity, Libya had enacted science and technology laws to build capacity in implementing development projects and regulating technical and vocational training to improve indicators and rebuild the country's infrastructure. Given that STI could accelerate the achievement of peace and development, countries should implement the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States. Member Parliaments were called upon to ensure all perpetrators of crimes against humanity were prosecuted and punished, to address the risks of technology, including by adopting legislative measures to prevent the harmful use of technology against humans, and to support developing and low-income countries in implementing the SDGs.

Ms. M. Tender (Portugal) said that parliamentarians should not allow STI's significant impact on people's lives to distract them from its potential risks and ethical issues. Legislation should guarantee rights and freedoms regarding data privacy and intellectual property, and reduce inequalities in access to and training in the use of STI. Parliamentarians could establish processes to monitor the implementation of STI training programmes, support local community initiatives to respond to real needs and solve specific problems. Parliamentarians could also promote initiatives that brought together the scientific community, political decision-makers and civil society to share information on the latest technologies, which could be incorporated into creating and monitoring public policies and legislation. It was important to train and build parliamentarians' capacity in that regard.

Sharing technologies and good practices through international cooperation would reduce the digital divide between countries. Her country welcomed the inter-parliamentary cooperation to train parliamentary staff and parliamentarians. The Organization could promote investment in the construction of digital infrastructure in less-developed regions, ensuring that STI policies enshrined access to information as a fundamental right. Parliamentarians should envisage the medium- and long-term impacts of decisions related to STI by establishing impact assessment methodologies and identifying areas that could violate personal rights and freedoms.

Mr. A. Kolotou Chaimi (Chad) said that STI was key to his country's approach to tackling challenges, such as poverty, environmental degradation, poor economic diversification, youth unemployment and neighbouring conflicts, and to ensuring a prosperous and stable future. Chad's Parliament had encouraged the Government to earmark cross-cutting funds for STI and monitored them to ensure proper implementation and peaceful sustainable development. Such funds could be used to improve agricultural yield, avoid post-crop losses, deal with the effects of climate change, promote renewable energy, improve the provision of public health services in rural areas and, in light of the country's chronic water shortage, help to manage water resources, develop irrigation technologies and deal with flooding.

Chad had, among other efforts, invested in innovation, encouraged cooperation among universities, the private sector and research institutes and established a school for science, technology and communication to train engineers to deal with new technologies. It encouraged young people to turn to STEM and had hired additional teachers in that field. Parliamentarians must ensure that they took a serious, responsible approach to STI, laying down a clear national strategy so that the public sector could mitigate all risks inherent to STI.

Mr. N.J. Mohamed (Malaysia) said that in line with Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, parliamentarians should ensure that the benefits of STI were accessible to all, most notably by addressing disparities between the Global North and South and encouraging participation from women and youth. Inclusion was not only morally imperative, but also essential to foster innovation and economic growth. Parliaments should proactively create robust legal frameworks to regulate dual-use technologies to ensure their peaceful application without stifling innovation. Malaysia had made great strides to that end, establishing frameworks on cybersecurity and data privacy, including in commercial transactions, and committing to international and regional nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament frameworks.

More agile approaches to regulation were necessary to keep up with the pace of technological change. Parliamentarians should prepare for the socioeconomic impacts of STI, such as technological unemployment, and ensure that policies protected vulnerable groups in line with SDG 8 (economic growth and decent work for all). As the collection and use of personal data expanded, the benefits of data-driven innovation should be balanced with the need to protect

individual rights. Effective privacy safeguards were essential to maintaining public trust and ensuring the responsible use of technology. With misinformation and disinformation undermining public trust in institutions and public health and safety, parliaments must uphold evidence-based decision-making and provide mechanisms to combat false information, including intimate deep fakes and AI-generated content that propagated hate speech or violence. In addressing those challenges, it was vital to foster communication and collaboration between parliaments, governments, civil society, the scientific community and the private sector. Their diverse perspectives would lead to more informed and effective policy-making.

Ms. P. Glover-Rolle (Bahamas) said that STI's potential to accelerate progress could only be realized through bold international cooperation and by bridging the growing divide between developed and developing countries. STI was critical to economic growth and societal development. Since many people, particularly in developing nations and in rural and underserved areas, lacked access to life-changing technologies, parliamentarians should make such advancements affordable and accessible to all. STI could deepen inequalities, particularly the gender gap and discrimination. Parliamentarians had the collective duty to ensure that technology fostered equity, human rights and development for all. Partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society could create an inclusive, responsible and resilient digital future.

With the need for labour and innovation to progress hand in hand, parliaments should consider how to equip workers to thrive in an evolving landscape by embracing renewable energy, advancing medical research and using technology to foster global collaboration, efficiency and equity. Parliamentarians needed to use STI responsibly and ethically, while remaining committed to sustainability in the environment and labour practices. It was crucial to advocate for just labour transitions, ensuring that workers displaced by technological or environmental changes were supported through comprehensive retraining programmes and social protections. Members were encouraged to continue sharing ideas and developing actionable steps within the framework of the IPU to ensure that STI produced growth, peace, sustainability and human dignity.

Mr. A. Gajadien (Suriname) said that investment in scientific research, particularly in biodiversity, conservation and climate resilience was essential to safeguarding forests. To fully embrace the benefits of science and technology, parliamentarians must address the digital divide persisting in rural remote areas. Suriname was committed to closing that gap. In Suriname, information and communications technology (ICT), especially digital financial inclusion, would be the engine of productivity, innovation and global competitiveness as it would enable remote communities to participate in the formal economy. Suriname's national development plan had clearly outlined how to use ICT to build a knowledge-based economy that empowered people through digitalization, promoted inclusive development and enhanced social, political and economic resilience. The country had made tangible progress, including the deployment of safe city services in key urban areas, thus advancing security and urban management, the roll-out of cloud services within government ministries and a digitized payment system, enhancing transparency and efficiency. The journey, however, was far from complete, as full digital inclusiveness remained the country's ultimate goal. International and regional cooperation was important to strengthen resilience.

Mr. O. Korniyenko (Ukraine) said that the people of Ukraine had been fighting for freedom in the country's occupied territories, as the Russian Federation was using illegal practices such as arbitrary deprivation of liberty, torture, extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances to instil fear in the Ukrainian population. Ukrainian children had been forcibly transferred or deported to the Russian Federation. The humanitarian, economic and environmental harm inflicted by the Russian aggression affected Ukraine and the rest of the world, causing trade disruptions, price hikes, food and water shortages, the displacement of people and blackouts. Civilians would continue to be affected despite the tireless efforts by energy companies to repair damaged installations.

Ukraine was grateful for the resolutions adopted at the 144th and 145th IPU Assemblies strongly condemning the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine and calling for the withdrawal of its forces from Ukrainian territory. The Government of Ukraine had developed a peace formula that outlined the conditions necessary to end the war and ensure just, comprehensive and lasting peace that was grounded in the key principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, and reflected the collective political will of the global majority. Implementing the peace formula required effective instruments, such as the Summit on Peace in Ukraine and its outcome document, the Joint Communiqué on a Peace Framework, which

addressed nuclear safety, food security and the release of prisoners and deportees, including children. The international parliamentary community could make a significant contribution to achieving the aims of the peace formula. Just, comprehensive and lasting peace would only be possible through joint efforts and by placing pressure on the Russian Federation.

The Crimea Platform could also ensure justice and territorial integrity for Ukrainians and achieve peace and stability throughout the region. The liberation of Crimea was integral to a peaceful settlement. The Parliamentary Summits of the International Crimea Platform had demonstrated that parliaments could send powerful messages of unity and solidarity. Member Parliaments were invited to participate in the third Parliamentary Summit of the International Crimea Platform due to take place later that year. He thanked Ukraine's allies.

Ms. N. Andrianasolo Vve Andriano (Madagascar), underscoring the importance of STI as a driver of sustainable development, said that developing countries faced challenges such as access to electricity, a lack of research and development in science, and school dropout, particularly among girls. The only way to build a prosperous and safe future was to ensure that everyone, especially girls, studied science and technology, and promote initiatives to support girls. Investing in girls' education was not sufficient for them to fulfil their goals. Parliamentarians also needed to pursue national sustainable goals by addressing the economic and social inequalities between urban and rural areas to ensure technological access. STI was crucial in that regard. Her Government had launched initiatives and reforms to promote renewable energy, increase access to electricity and modernize agriculture to boost yields and protect the environment. It had also taken legislative measures to regulate the digital sphere, tackle cybercrime and protect private data, and sought to support innovative companies, adapt legislation to protect digital rights and encourage public-private partnerships. A country could adapt to the digital era only if the government carried out specific initiatives and if the parliament guaranteed equitable access to technologies by strengthening education and the protection of people's digital rights.

Mr. P. Haces Barba (Mexico) said that STI was the best means of dealing with climate change, disease and the productivity slump. A rational and fair use of STI was necessary to achieve unprecedented levels of well-being. Parliamentarians had to bear the relevant threats in mind and understand their countries' needs. Mexico had adopted a general law on STI to guarantee the right to science and integrate a national technology agenda on the social needs regarding scientific progress through a coordinated, people-centred approach. World governance should be updated to take advances in STI into account, which would ensure that the fundamental rights of all were protected and would require investment in research for development. There was a need for international cooperation, which was the only way to address that global challenge. Mexican legislators would do their utmost in that regard. Parliamentarians should put their best foot forward to work together to meet common objectives and ensure enhanced technology and innovation.

Mr. X. Iacovelli (France) said that science was increasingly needed to inform political decisions. Reliable science-based information was needed to understand current changes, anticipate their impact and legislate accordingly. Science and politics needed to work together despite their different practices and timelines, as scientific research was for the long term whereas political decision-makers wanted immediate results. However, politicians and scientists should carry out only their respective roles. France had established a parliamentary office for the evaluation of scientific and technical choices, which was an interface between science and politics that produced reports to inform the decisions of both houses of Parliament and held sessions where the public could pose questions. A bilateral approach between scientists and politicians was not enough, as it could open the door to doubt, relativism and an overload of sometimes unreliable information. It was therefore important to consult civil society, particularly citizens, in such science-related interactions.

Mr. A. Tbaishat (Jordan) said that parliamentarians needed to ensure that STI contributed to long-term sustainable development, improved natural resource use to boost productivity and deal with climate change more effectively, and enhanced education in science through the reasonable and ethical use of technology. Parliaments should take into account the effect of STI on human rights and democracy. An ethical regulatory framework was necessary for STI to benefit all. Rule of law should be strengthened and respect for human rights increased, especially in the Middle East. Parliamentarians should do their utmost to end the region's protracted conflict and ensure the implementation of the two-State solution. The people of Palestine could no longer be exiled,

homeless, dispossessed and victimized. STI should be used for construction and progress. Holy Islamic and Christian sites needed to be protected. Parliamentarians could not talk about progress in the Middle East without granting Palestine the rights granted to it in several internationally adopted resolutions. Countries could not take a stance based exclusively on the events of 7 October 2023. Israel had been occupying Palestinian territory for over 70 years and perpetrating crimes against all in the region. In Israel's arrogant approach, it had seized goods belonging to the UN in Palestine. Thus, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) had been unable to maintain schooling for young Palestinians. Parliamentarians needed to ensure that STI protected humanitarian values to create a more sustainable, peaceful and humane world.

Dr. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania), President of the IPU, took the Chair.

Special segment of the General Debate
Marking the 10th anniversary of the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments

The President said that 10 years prior, the IPU and its core working group of partners had consulted with parliaments and partners to establish guiding principles to ensure more coordinated and impactful parliamentary support based on parliaments' needs, inclusivity, gender equality and sustainability. Parliaments and various institutions from over 77% of countries in the world had endorsed the principles and applied them in support projects. She invited parliamentarians to share how the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments had enhanced their work.

Ms. V. Duby-Muller (France) said that her country's Parliament had greatly invested in inter-parliamentary cooperation, having assisted several foreign parliamentarians, for instance in monitoring and evaluating laws. Such parliamentary diplomacy was important, as was meeting the needs of partners. Parliamentarians could not impose a model, which did not even exist, but should work on the basis of the Common Principles, which were recognized and useful.

Mr. S. Kawimbe (Zambia) said that in 2019 his country's Parliament had, in collaboration with the IPU, conducted a self-assessment of its capacity and performance using the Common Principles. That study, along with the work of Zambia's Parliamentary Reforms and Modernization Committee, had produced several recommendations, most notably to embrace modern ICT platforms such as social media to increase engagement with the public. The country had launched its My e-Parliament platform where the public could interact with members of Parliament and Parliament as a whole in real time. Infrastructure had been installed to ensure continuous internet access in all constituencies, and it was possible to submit online petitions to Parliament. Zambia was also working towards improving access to ICTs.

The President invited the Secretary General to provide insights on the 10th anniversary of the Common Principles.

The Secretary General said that to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Common Principles, the IPU had created products and new forms of communication to share experiences and good practices to amplify success stories in implementing the Common Principles. A brochure had been published on the Common Principles to encourage parliamentarians to continue applying the Principles and remind them of the growing trend of democracy backsliding in many democracies. The erosion of democratic norms challenged parliaments' ability to represent the people, make laws and oversee governments. The IPU should always update its approach to supporting parliaments and its ability to deliver in order to meet the expectations of the people. Renewed commitment to the Principles would ensure stronger parliaments for the benefit of the people.

The President said that almost a quarter of Member Parliaments were yet to endorse the Principles, but the door was not closed. The Principles had been created by parliaments for parliaments, belonged to all parliamentarians and put them in control of their development. The 10th anniversary should push parliamentarians to aim for universal endorsement. She encouraged Member Parliaments to advise other Member Parliaments within their regional group to increase endorsement of the Common Principles.

A video commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments was played.

The sitting rose at 12:55.

Sitting of Tuesday 15 October 2024

(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 14:30 with Mr. B.O. Kalu (Nigeria) in the Chair.

Item 3 of the agenda (continued)

General Debate on the theme *Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future* (A/149/3-Inf.1)

FIRST SPEAKERS FROM DELEGATIONS AND INVITED ORGANIZATIONS (continued)

Ms. D.-T. Avgerinopoulou (Greece) said that science and technology were great allies in addressing major global challenges such as poverty, pandemics and the climate crisis. Advances in technological fields such as artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, renewable energy and space technologies held immense potential to transform industries, enhance education and communication, improve healthcare, manage natural resources and contribute to the well-being of citizens. However, the world must also confront the risks posed by the rapid development of technology. AI, for example, while enhancing performance and learning, also raised profound ethical questions such as: (1) how to ensure fair and transparent use of AI systems; (2) how to address biases, the digital divide and job displacement, all of which could exacerbate existing inequalities; and (3) how to mitigate the negative impacts of technology on the natural environment. Those were not mere technical questions but governance-related and legal questions that required urgent political response and normative action.

Noting that legislation played a crucial role in shaping the future of STI, parliamentarians must work together to create frameworks that promoted technological innovation and kept pace with advancements while also safeguarding human rights and protecting individuals and communities from potential risks. To that end, international cooperation was essential. The international community was encouraged to share best legislative practices, develop global standards and ensure that the benefits of science and technology were distributed equitably. Every country must be empowered to leverage science and technology towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive development that left no one behind, it was necessary to invest in education and skills training, thus equipping present and future generations with the knowledge and tools they needed to thrive in a digital and interconnected world. Delegates must commit to a future where science and technology served humanity and the natural environment. Science and technology must be developed based on ethical principles and regulated by legislative frameworks that prioritized the common good and contributed towards a better, safer and more equitable world. The role of the IPU and national parliaments was pivotal in that regard.

Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada) said that the opportunities presented by STI were unquestionably boundless, with the potential to benefit humanity and make the world much more sustainable. Wishing to give a few examples of science in action, he drew attention to a company operating in Quebec City, which was developing the means to charge electric cars in just 15 minutes. The company would be rolling out a network of rapid charging stations across Canada, helping the country meet its target of phasing out the sale of gas and diesel cars by 2035. In addition, over the past year, China Medical University Hospital in Taichung, Taiwan had used AI to develop an intelligent anti-microbial system that detected infection-causing bacteria in just one hour, as compared to the standard 72 hours. The system had resulted in a very steep decline in patient mortality rates and antibiotic use.

Despite the many reasons for optimism, a cautionary note was also necessary. It was essential to develop regulations that incentivized AI safety while ensuring access to its many benefits. According to a leading American researcher, no sovereign State was currently in a position to regulate AI alone. There was therefore a vital need for international cooperation,

including on potential intergovernmental oversight mechanisms and standard setting. The view was also echoed by the United Nations Secretary-General following the recent publication of the report of the High-level Advisory Body on Artificial Intelligence entitled *Governing AI for Humanity*.

Noting that technological advances were happening fast, with scientific knowledge doubling every four to six months, he said that the world was in a perpetual state of accelerated disruption. The power of STI must be harnessed for the benefit of the people and the planet.

Mr. Xuejun Tian (China) said that science and technology stood as a catalyst for social progress but also posed challenges. Drawing attention to the challenges, he pointed out that some developed countries had imposed export restrictions, extraterritorial jurisdiction and unilateral sanctions which gravely undermined the legitimate rights of developing countries to utilize technology for peaceful purposes. The technological divide between countries and regions also continued to widen, inhibiting implementation of the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda).

In light of the above, he wished to make several proposals. First, governments worldwide must make STI a strategic priority in national development, increase policy support and guarantee significant investment in the field. Parliaments must use their oversight function to ensure the successful implementation of national policies and create a society-wide legal environment that championed scientific and technological innovation. Second, it was vital to follow a people-centred approach to technology, taking the enhancement of human development as a driving force. International equity and justice required that developing countries had dividends in technological progress. Third, noting that science and technology must be used for the good of people, it was important to employ ethical governance. Governance structures must seek to increase human welfare, respect the right to life, advance fairness and justice, manage risks and maintain openness and transparency while also ensuring multistakeholder participation and collaboration. Fourth, parliaments must foster open, win-win cooperation, rejecting the decoupling of technological supply chains. Politicization and ideologically driven approaches did not mitigate risks but in fact negatively impacted the stability of global trade, investment and supply chains. Instead, channels should be created to facilitate inclusive exchanges and mutual learning on scientific and technological innovation for common security and development.

Over the past several decades, the Communist Party of China had built a moderately prosperous society through science and technology reforms. Further reforms placing science and technology in an even more prominent position were expected in the near future. China had always advocated for a balanced approach to technological development and security having championed the adoption of UN General Assembly resolutions 76/234 and 77/96 entitled *Promoting international cooperation on peaceful uses in the context of international security*. The resolutions sought to enhance dialogue and cooperation, and promote the inclusive sharing of benefits related to technological advancements.

Mr. S. Rachkov (Belarus) expressed concern that only a certain group of countries, usually leaders in the field, were creating the rules of the game, adding that access to peaceful and responsible use of technologies should not be blocked on discriminatory grounds. It was particularly important for States to refrain from using unilateral, coercive measures. Such measures contradicted the Charter of the United Nations and severely limited global cooperation, thus undermining sustainable development and international peace and security.

He welcomed the conclusion and implementation of long-term agreements on the protection and promotion of investments in developing countries, with clear, defined and effective guarantees for investors, noting that the successful involvement of those countries in the global world economy was crucial. The role of parliamentary diplomacy in achieving a mutual understanding between countries and peoples was increasingly manifold. Parliamentarians, who represented the entire spectrum of political and social forces in society, were able to establish communication on sensitive and controversial issues.

Belarus was actively developing science and technology cooperation with dozens of States and organizations and implementing many mutually beneficial projects. It had adopted a whole set of measures to improve the investment climate of the country and introduced a State programme on innovative development which contained a number of strategic goals. Legislative measures to facilitate the development of new technological industries had also been taken. There were, for example, laws creating new infrastructure for the production of electric vehicles and establishing centres for hybrid cardiac surgery. The goal of legislators was to improve public-private partnership mechanisms with a view to stimulating high-tech sectors of the economy.

To boost economic growth, Belarus maximized the involvement of regional and local authorities in the innovation process. It supported the education system, specifically by investing in the training of personnel and providing access to high-quality education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The State, including the legislative branch, was doing all it could to create a favourable environment for the development of business and innovation.

Belarus had significant scientific potential in the field of informatics and cybernetics, with a developed information and communication technology sector. It had placed 34th out of 166 countries in the SDG Index and 80th out of 132 in the Global Innovation Index. Results had been achieved in fields such as information and communication technologies, aerospace, nuclear energy, microelectronics and environmental security, amongst others.

Belarus was a reliable partner in the international arena that had always been ready for mutually beneficial and constructive interaction in all formats. It fulfilled its international obligations responsibly and did not create threats to international peace and security. Only together, using the best world practices, would it be possible to withstand unfavourable circumstances related to science and technology.

Mr. I. Cupșa (Romania) said that STI were shaping the present but would also define the future. The way those tools were utilized would dictate whether the world moved towards a peaceful, sustainable and equitable future or towards one that deepened divisions and conflicts. He underscored the necessity of cross-sector collaboration between parliaments, governments, scientists, civil society and the private sector to ensure that STI served humanity.

Romania was determined to advance AI and foster innovation. The Government, with parliamentary support, had established a strategic framework for research and innovation talent development focused largely on education, economic growth, smart specialization and public-private collaboration. At the European Union level, Romania had promoted the adoption of the Artificial Intelligence Act, which gave AI developers and deployers clear guidance on obligations regarding AI, the goal being to ensure that AI systems respected fundamental rights, safety and ethical principles while also addressing risks.

STI in areas such as AI, renewable energy and biotechnology offered remarkable opportunities to address global challenges such as climate change, disease eradication and sustainable growth. To fully harness the benefits, it was vital to reach all sectors of society, particularly vulnerable groups and marginalized communities. Strengthening research and innovation in the Global South was crucial for closing the development gap and promoting global peace. Along with the opportunities, AI also presented risks, such as security breaches, jobs losses, criminal activity and loss of creativity. As such, regulation must be kept in step with rapid technological advancements.

Parliamentarians played an important role in shaping legislation that prioritized ethical, inclusive and sustainable practices in the domain of STI. Regulating AI was particularly important. Noting that AI was shrouded in secrecy, the first step was to make it a legal obligation for decision-makers to have full and transparent access to accurate information concerning AI. Without transparency, effective regulation of AI was impossible and lacked social value.

Mr. A. Minnich (Austria) said that rapid technological advancements presented opportunities for prosperity and security but also significant ethical, social and environmental concerns. For instance, innovative technologies were vital to achieving a sustainable green future but also contributed to environmental degradation and pollution. Breakthroughs in automation and AI had revolutionized many industries, increased productivity and created high-skilled jobs but were also causing job displacement, particularly in sectors such as manufacturing, transport and retail, thus aggravating social inequality. Information and communication technologies had transformed global connectivity, leading to advancements in e-commerce and social interactions, but raised critical issues around privacy, human rights and democracy. Parliaments had a duty to ensure that technological advancements benefitted society while safeguarding against potential harms – a task that demanded thoughtful governance. Legislative frameworks and financial incentives for innovation must be aligned with ethical, social and environmental standards.

AI in particular was reshaping politics and society in unprecedented ways with profound implications for foreign relations and international security. One serious concern was the possibility of AI being used in autonomous weapon systems. It was essential for the international community to establish clear norms and guidelines to ensure responsible and ethical use of AI both nationally and internationally. Austria was making steps in that regard having supported several UN and IPU initiatives.

Mr. A. Ruhunda (Uganda) said that, in the spirit of collaboration, countries in the advanced stages of technological development must share their knowledge with those further behind. Uganda was still developing its technological capacities but was making progress through its national development plan which acknowledged that the economy could not move forward without science and technology. The country was looking for funding to establish internet infrastructure throughout its territory and to integrate science and technology into the education system. Given that young minds could easily adapt to innovations, Uganda's young population (72% of the total population being below 30 years old) presented an opportunity to boost economic development. Efforts were also being made to make use of environmental innovations such as electric and solar buses, but more investment and resources were required to continue that work.

It was absolutely essential to use AI for the good of all, helping to make life easier rather than to create fear. He condemned those countries using AI to kill and destroy lives, urging them instead to find peaceful means of settling conflicts.

Mr. R. Gamarra (Paraguay), noting that parliamentarians were struggling to keep pace with advancements in AI, said that it was high time to address the matter more profoundly.

Paraguay wished to express its solidarity with Israel. Like Israel, Paraguay had previously gone to war, not for pleasure, but out of a moral obligation to defend its people and its sovereignty. Israel had a right to self-defence. Self-defence was justified following the attacks of 7 October 2023 and in the face of a situation where terrorists were using civilians as human shields.

Mr. D. Naughten (Ireland), drawing attention to Ireland's recent history of conflict, said that the primary technique that had helped maintain peace in his country had been building relationships between neighbours and communities. Science as a universal, non-religious truth had been useful in that regard since it had provided a common platform for impartial engagement, established robust facts and did not recognize borders. Ireland used science at the policy, political and citizen level not only on its own territory but also in communication with the islands of Britain. He had seen first-hand how science had brought people together.

Peace and science, though seemingly different, were deeply connected. Peace allowed science to thrive, and science, in return, could lay the groundwork for lasting peace. However, science could only help in building peace if it was open, transparent and accessible to all. The COVID-19 pandemic had exposed how unequal access to technology could worsen social inequalities in areas such as education and healthcare. A regulatory regime was needed to promote social justice, ensure equal access to technological benefits, bridge the innovation divide and address social inequalities.

Every year, between five and seven million patents lapsed, causing innovative ideas to disappear when they could have been adapted and utilized globally. A repository of water solutions and best practices, including lapsed patents, should be created, as recommended by the IPU Science for Peace Schools, but that repository must be accessible in both developing and developed countries. He called on delegates to ensure that the World Trade Organization Agreement on the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights was implemented, supporting indigenous innovation as well as its global application.

Mr. A. Neofytou (Cyprus) said that parliamentarians must ensure that the benefits of science and technology reached all segments of society, including women, young people and other disadvantaged groups. To that end, there was a need for inclusive policies which taught digital literacy and promoted equal access to innovative tools such as the internet, AI and renewable energy. Bridging the digital divide between countries was equally important, requiring collaboration with the Global South to promote technology transfer and support international research partnerships. Acknowledging that those efforts would only succeed if parliaments themselves were well-equipped, parliaments must enhance their own capacity to utilize scientific evidence in lawmaking and law scrutiny. Evidence-based legislation was the cornerstone of good governance. He fully supported the establishment of mechanisms, such as parliamentary offices for science and technology, which could provide objective assessments of the long-term impacts of science and technology policies.

While AI presented enormous potential, it also brought risks, for example, discrimination, violence and the spread of false information. Parliaments had a moral duty to design and implement robust and ethical regulatory frameworks that safeguarded human rights and the rule of

law while allowing innovation to flourish. Those efforts would require constant coordination between parliamentarians, the scientific community and civil society. The IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology provided a valuable starting point.

Overall, STI must be used to build a better future for all, not just for the privileged few. Collectively, it was possible to create a universe where technology served the whole of humanity.

Mr. P.F. Casini (Italy) said that the AI-led technological revolution was a radical transformation impacting various different sectors, from medicine, war and culture to labour, the environment and politics, significantly affecting not just the economy but society overall. Technological advancements came with opportunities but also risks. It was vital to emphasize the positive aspects while avoiding simplification or outdated approaches. Addressing technological change with a narrow-minded, nationalistic agenda or through the lens of war was not the way forward.

He drew attention to the risks that could come with technological progress, including greater inequality and conflict between developed and developing countries, shifting economic dynamics such as greater unemployment, and disruptions to democratic processes. It was crucial to remember that innovation was never neutral. A global framework to regulate technological progress in an ethical manner was therefore needed. Creating such a framework would be no easy task. States must strike a balance between protecting individual rights, security and privacy while also avoiding overly rigid rules that stifled innovation. Institutional mechanisms must be put in place to ensure sustainable growth through the use of technology.

In the context of UN General Assembly resolution A/78/L. 49 on AI, which underscored the role of technology in advancing the 2030 Agenda, parliaments were key to promoting legislative initiatives that supported advanced technology while also ensuring ethical and social responsibility, data protection and reliable information-sharing. It was the duty of parliamentarians to establish guidelines, engage in science-based decision-making, promote international dialogue, and align legislative models and strategies globally. The technological revolution must remain human-centred where individual dignity was a core value, thus serving the common good.

Mr. H. Mahjoub (Tunisia) said that, to address the challenges of the times such as conflict, economic downturns and migration, it was vital to make the best possible use of STI which could help in global efforts towards the SDGs, especially SDG 4 on quality education and SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions.

Tunisia had always given priority to education and training, including in science and technology. There were laws guaranteeing equal access to education for boys and girls, promoting a culture of human rights in educational curricula and ensuring freedom of research. The Government did its best to subsidize research, although the financial policies in place were not always supportive. Using science and technology to build strong democratic institutions based on gender parity and respect for diversity was also important for Tunisia.

STI, despite their many benefits, could become a threat to human life, democracy and the rule of law. It was vital to tackle the spread of dis- and misinformation often facilitated by technology along with any other technology-related phenomenon that undermined social stability, such as cybercrime. To that end, the Tunisian Government had adopted the Convention on Cybercrime. There was a vital need for cooperation, particularly between the Global North and South, in order to bridge the digital divide. Ongoing communication between politicians and scientists was also needed.

He gave his unconditional support to the Palestinian people who continued to be subjected to campaigns of war and destruction by the State of Israel. Tunisia would do its best to ensure that the Palestinians could enjoy all of their rights, including the right to live in dignity in a Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital. The international community must call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and bring those responsible for the atrocities to justice. He also condemned the attacks in Lebanon.

Ms. E. Nyirasafari (Rwanda) said that the Government of Rwanda, aiming to transform the country into an upper-middle-income economy by 2035 and into a high-income economy by 2050, had adopted a policy on STI as well as a policy on AI. The policies served as a road map enabling Rwanda to harness the benefits of technology. Additionally, Rwanda was set to become a hub for AI research in Africa. It had, for instance, established various science and technology institutions, notably the Carnegie Mellon University Africa; formed partnerships with high-end vaccine manufacturers such as BioNTech; and set up research and innovation funding programmes,

including through the National Research and Innovation Fund. Other initiatives included using drones to deliver life-saving health products to remote health centres, introducing smart classroom initiatives aimed at digitalizing education, and making government services easily available online. Women and young people were particularly involved in technological innovation as it provided them with opportunities and allowed their voices to be heard. Parliaments had a shared duty to promote the use of technology for the benefit of humanity. The spread of hate speech and misinformation online should be condemned in the strongest terms.

Her delegation strongly rejected the emergency item proposal submitted by the delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo entitled *The security and humanitarian situation in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo* which was in total disregard of discussions by the African Group and ongoing regional peace processes. The proposal was inadequate, both in procedure and substance, and had no other purpose other than to spread false accusations against Rwanda. She called on the Assembly to dismiss the item altogether as well as any repeated attempts to introduce similar items in the future.

Ms. F. Belhirsch (Netherlands) said that there were both risks and opportunities associated with STI. New technologies, if applied wisely, could help address global challenges and achieve the SDGs. For instance, they had the potential to promote equality by providing better access to education, healthcare and economic opportunities; protect human rights by amplifying the voices of marginalized communities; and eradicate poverty by opening up new pathways for sustainable development, especially in the most underserved regions. However, the world must always remain vigilant to ensure that technological advances respected human rights and prioritized the well-being of the planet. To unlock the potential of science and technology, it was vital that innovation reached every nation, not just the wealthiest ones. The role of parliamentarians in that regard was critical.

Underlining that lawmakers had a responsibility to create frameworks to regulate STI, those frameworks should be ethical and human rights-based, helping to build inclusive and just societies. In the Global North, that meant fostering fair global partnerships that facilitated the transfer of technology and boosted research capacities in low-income countries while also holding governments accountable to their SDG commitments and ensuring that international cooperation and investments went where they were needed most. In the Global South, it meant advocating for increased domestic investment in research and development despite limited resources, creating regulatory environments that encouraged innovation and attracted global partnerships, and ensuring that the benefits of science and technology were felt not just in urban centres but also in rural and marginalized communities. Parliamentarians from the North and South must work together to close the global innovation gap. Collaboration across borders was essential to encourage the free flow of knowledge and technology and ensure that global research and development efforts benefitted all of humanity. The gap between political promises and real action in international forums must be closed.

New approaches to innovation and development were needed. The systems that had perpetrated global inequality and exclusion must evolve. Science and technology must be democratized, giving every person, no matter their background, access to opportunities. Together, through the power of STI, it was possible to create a world that was not only more advanced but also more just, equal and compassionate.

Mr. E. Teirumnieks (Latvia) said that parliamentarians, as actors who transformed society's concerns into relevant legislative acts, could not afford to slow down the pace of development. They must think strategically and in the long-term while adapting to the increasing demands of society.

To tackle international challenges, it was vital to build and strengthen international research and development networks. With that in mind, the key goals of Latvian research and development policy were boosting human capital and fostering international collaboration. Latvia was focusing its investments in doctoral and postdoctoral grants, increasing activity in Horizon Europe and related programmes, and enhancing public-private research and development collaboration. During the past five years, Latvia's research and development system had undergone reforms, leading to the introduction of a new doctoral studies model, a new results-driven funding model, and a new typology of higher education institutions.

Efforts had also been made to strengthen Latvia's position within key international science and technology organizations. The country had become a full Member State of the European Molecular Biology Conference and European Molecular Biology Laboratory and was strategically moving towards full membership of the European Space Agency (ESA) and the European

Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), which it also supported with a dedicated long-term national research programme in high-energy physics and acceleration technologies.

In addition, the country was proud of its excellent performance in quantum algorithms and language technologies having implemented programmes in those fields. The Latvian language technology firm, Tilde, had recently won the European Commission's Large AI Grand Challenge and was working to develop a large language model for European languages.

AI and robotics could have positive effects but needed to be carefully managed. It was for that reason that the European Union had developed the Artificial Intelligence Act, which was the world's first regulation on the topic. AI could help improve healthcare, produce more sustainable goods, promote access to information and education, and make workplaces safer. However, it also had a destructive side and was being used, for instance, in the creation of autonomous weapon systems. Advancements in STI could only be justified if they benefitted the people. Political will was needed to find the right solutions.

Mr. S.S.H.J. Amaral (Timor-Leste) said that parliaments must use STI to build a more peaceful and sustainable future. It was important to balance the challenges associated with technology with its potential and harness technological progress in a way that benefitted all.

Timor-Leste was doing all that it could to promote STI in line with international standards and for the benefit of its population. It had recently organized the Sci-Tech EXPO 2024 on the topic *Science, Technology & Innovation: Path to Transformation and Sustainable Development in Timor-Leste* which brought together renowned experts from around the world. Noting that effective STI policies were fundamental to national development, the debate in Timor-Leste was centred around understanding the importance of technology for economic growth, social well-being and sustainable development.

Parliaments must have the knowledge and tools to tackle challenges associated with STI, and to play their part in creating inclusive public policies that brought the benefits of innovation to all segments of society, especially women, young people and other vulnerable groups. To that end, parliaments must: (1) identify national objectives and priorities to guide national STI policies; (2) foster collaboration between governments, academic institutions, industry and civil society; (3) promote public consultations and social participation; (4) allocate financial resources; (5) establish a legal and regulatory framework to protect intellectual property rights and promote innovation with a view to facilitating technology transfer processes and maintaining ethical standards; (6) pass inclusive legislation; (7) set out education policies; and (8) put in place monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the impact of STI policies on different segments of society, then adjusting those policies accordingly. The above measures would ensure that STI policies promoted social inclusion and reduced inequalities.

He reminded delegates of the recently adopted Pact for the Future which sought to reduce global disparities in the field of STI. The Pact aimed to improve women and girls' access, participation and leadership in those fields; recognize the importance of human rights and ethical principles in the development and use of new technologies; and increase the use of science in policymaking, amongst other things. The IPU must be in tune with those objectives and act as a global partner in the implementation of the Pact.

Ms. M. Guerra Castillo (Mexico) took the Chair.

Ms. F. Mussoni (San Marino) said that the world was at a moment in history when the very technologies that should promote progress were being used to fuel conflict and destruction. Drones, autonomous weapons and AI systems used for the purpose of war had become instruments of death, often employed without ethical scrutiny or consideration of humanitarian consequences. It was vital to build a world where technology was channelled into peace, justice and sustainability rather than destruction.

San Marino, through its active participation in international bodies, had always promoted those principles. It had repeatedly reiterated its stance against the use of force, advocating for dialogue and mediation as the primary tools for conflict resolution. In addition, the country had a continued commitment to election observation missions and peacekeeping operations and had been one of the first States to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty. Those commitments reflected San Marino's conviction that true strength lay not in military might but in the ability to build bridges between peoples. History had taught San Marino that peace was never a foregone conclusion but required continuous and concrete efforts. It was for that reason that the conscious use of technology was essential.

Technology could be a powerful tool to alleviate suffering and improve people's lives. It could, for instance, be used to predict humanitarian crises, improve access to health services and support relief efforts during natural disasters. Digital platforms should be developed to facilitate the distribution of aid, improve education and combat inequality. Overall, technology could help create a more just society in which no one was left behind.

To achieve peace and development, human dignity must be placed at the centre of technological development which could only be done through the conscious and responsible use of science and technology.

Mr. C. Cajado (Brazil) said that 10 years had passed since the World e-Parliament Conference 2014 where the Parliament of Brazil had set out its plans to make itself more transparent. At the time, it had been putting in place measures to broadcast its deliberations on television, radio and social media channels but had since implemented other initiatives, such as LABHacker, which was responsible for collaborative and experimental projects in the areas of transparency, social participation and citizenship. There was also an e-democracy portal, which, among other things, allowed citizens to propose changes to the wording of bills, as well as an open data hub operating within the framework of the IPU Centre for Innovation in Parliament, which facilitated the exchange of data between parliaments.

Given its cross-border nature, the regulation of AI required interparliamentary cooperation. Brazil had already passed a law criminalizing the use of AI in crimes against women, for instance, in the creation of deepfakes, and was considering a legal framework for AI which guaranteed security, transparency and equity, promoting both innovation and human rights.

In the context of continuous improvement, other related laws had been approved, including a digital government law, which supported the digitalization of public services and accessibility to those services. Measures proposed in the bill included the use of unique citizen identification numbers and the promotion of innovation laboratories. A law seeking to stimulate private investment in research and development was also in place along with a law supporting start-ups and innovative entrepreneurship. Two further bills were under consideration, both submitted by the parliamentary committee on STI: one to establish a digital youth programme and the other to launch a national research support programme and fund.

Lastly, his Parliament had approved several projects aiming to modernize the Brazilian industry with a focus on the transition to a low-carbon economy. To ensure that the benefits of science reached everyone, it had unveiled a national digital education policy and was giving free internet access to students from the most vulnerable families. Overall, the Parliament of Brazil was working hard to ensure science and technology were never a threat but a tool for preserving democracy and human rights.

Mr. V. Vojtko (Czechia) said that parliamentarians must be aware of the opportunities as well as the threats associated with science and technology. One of their most important roles was to pass legislation which was not too restrictive but which dealt with the threats efficiently – a challenging task given the fast-changing environment of science and technology, and the advent of more and more advanced technologies such as AI, genetic engineering, human augmentation and quantum computing. As technology continued to progress, parliamentarians must ask themselves how they would adapt in a way that protected humankind and democracy. Above all, they must be open-minded and prepare for all possible futures, both good and bad. He listed a number of science fiction authors such as Ray Bradbury and Robert Heinlein whose thought-provoking books could help the world prepare for the future. Similarly, disciplines such as system dynamics could be used to determine the probable future consequences of certain actions and decisions. By making use of such tools in political debates and beyond, STI could absolutely be harnessed for a more sustainable and peaceful future.

Mr. A.-E. Ntugu Nsa (Equatorial Guinea) said that STI were key to the peace and sustainable development agenda. Equatorial Guinea considered it a matter of great importance and had launched a number of projects and initiatives aiming to make national and international aspirations in the area a reality. For instance, its Scientific and Technological Research Council had been in place since 1987, the purpose of which was to promote a culture of STI in development efforts and whose work was supported by a number of other national bodies. A new policy on STI had also been introduced, which would be particularly important in addressing SDG 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure as well as Aspiration 1 of Agenda 2063 of the African Union on building a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development. Aspiration 1 acknowledged the need to educate citizens using STI.

Overall, Equatorial Guinea's plans, programmes, legislation and projects had four objectives: (1) make STI part of the national development strategy; (2) develop and consolidate a national system for STI by creating an environment conducive to creativity, implementation and knowledge-sharing; (3) build the capacities and infrastructure necessary for innovation to flourish; and (4) promote entrepreneurship within national and international networks.

The Parliament of Equatorial Guinea was assisting the Government in the implementation of STI policies and had adopted a number of laws on the topic.

Mr. K. Kosachev (Russian Federation) said that western achievements in STI had not been used to promote sustainable development for all but to consolidate the global superiority of the West. Noting that those technologies could be turned off at any moment and the movement of goods and capital blocked, it was clear that western machines, computers, payment systems, software, equipment, medicines and even food were not so much a benefit for humanity, as globalization had promised, but in fact chains of dependence used as geopolitical weapons against States with whom the West did not agree.

Unilateral restrictive measures against the Russian Federation had failed to change the country's strategic course and the Russian economy had managed to overcome the resulting pressure. The same could not be said about the European economy which was in deep crisis. It was, however, problematic that western restrictions had not hit the European economy alone but also the economies of the Global South and were affecting progress towards the SDGs. Instead of a global economy, the West had achieved deglobalization and the desire of States to protect themselves within alternative associations such as BRICS and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The Russian Federation remained interested in the implementation of the SDGs but pointed out that the best mechanism for that was the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation in conjunction with specific measures set out in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. At the very minimum, the international community, including the IPU, must highlight the inadmissibility of sanctions and their impact on sustainable development. Unilateral coercive measures by the United States of America and the G7 countries ran counter to one of the key principles of the 2030 Agenda: to leave no one behind.

Another threat to sustainable development was the United States dollar which was being weaponized through the confiscation and freezing of sovereign assets and the introduction of sanctions against companies and individuals. The tide, however, was turning as many countries were openly announcing a transition to other currencies. Effective steps should be taken to reform the international financial architecture.

Overall, a universal consensus-based approach was needed to regulate neural networks, AI and other similar technologies. Technologies and innovations must be a space for mutually beneficial cooperation.

Mr. A. Schäfer (Germany) said that the Russian Federation's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine was a violation of international law and a profound disgrace for the entire international community. Peace, not national interests, should be at the forefront for all countries at all times. Reminding delegates that the First and Second World Wars had begun as a conflict between just two countries, he drew attention to the unprecedented nature of the current global crisis. There were 56 active conflicts worldwide and as many as 115 million people displaced. Climate change was reaching critical levels, the COVID-19 pandemic had been spreading on a scale unseen over the past century, and digitalization, particularly AI, was comparable to an atomic bomb accelerating nearly every sector. Given the interconnectedness of the above issues, individual countries could not realistically come up with peaceful solutions on their own.

Germany was conscious of its responsibility to serve world peace as an equal partner in a united Europe – a lesson drawn from its own history as a country responsible for two world wars and some of the worst crimes against humanity. Its past had shown that human dignity for all people worldwide was a principle that must remain inviolable.

Mr. J. Osei-Owusu (Ghana) said that it was important to define science, technology and innovation separately. Science was devoted to the pursuit of knowledge through the study of the structure and behaviour of the physical, natural and social world. Technology involved the application of knowledge for a given end. Innovation was concerned with new ways of producing, delivering or using goods and services based on new technologies, business models or ways of economic or social organization. There was a close and non-linear relationship between the three

domains. Innovations, for instance, could be based on new technologies while the emergence of innovations could fundamentally change the dynamics of the social, fiscal or natural system, thus opening up new questions for science.

STI had the potential to drive transformative progress in various areas, ultimately leading to an improved quality of life, economic growth and environmental stewardship. Scientific research could inform policies and practices that supported sustainability and a greener future for all. Scientific collaboration could promote diplomacy and mutual understanding across borders. Technology could enable access to education, healthcare and economic opportunities. Innovation could encourage business and investment that prioritized social and environmental impact, including equal access to resources, opportunities and services.

Overall, harnessing STI could help mitigate pressing global issues such as climate change, inequality and social injustice. The 2030 Agenda, unanimously adopted in 2015, positioned science, technology and innovation as one of the seven key actions for achieving the SDGs. Similarly, Agenda 2063 of the African Union recognized the critical role of STI in realizing the aspirations of African citizens.

Ghana had found that digitizing the economy had increased its revenue to approximately US\$ 8.7 billion in just one year. Currently, the country was in the process of implementing an e-parliament portal and mainstreaming STEM education. Other measures taken included the use of drones to deliver drugs to difficult-to-reach areas.

Ms. A. Santana Bello (Cuba) said that the right to STI for a more peaceful and sustainable future was under threat because the most powerful nations were not fulfilling their international commitments, and were instead manipulating concepts such as democracy and human rights to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries.

While Cuba was in full support of multilateralism, it rejected every form of war, including unconventional wars, and condemned all efforts aiming to reinstate a unipolar world order, plunder natural resources or impose coercive unilateral measures, all of which undermined international peace and stability and violated the Charter of the United Nations. She called on developed countries to provide development funding to developing countries, not as a favour but as an obligation. Indeed, developed countries had a historical responsibility to redress the damage they had caused through colonization, natural resource exploitation, use of unsustainable production and consumption patterns and adoption of otherwise unfair economic models that perpetuated underdevelopment in the Global South. To guarantee a more peaceful and sustainable future, a fair environmental transition was needed which eliminated structural poverty and built new models of production and consumption.

Cuba was of the view that STI were part of the solution to many of the world's problems and were particularly important in efforts to achieve equitable and socially sustainable economic development. As such, Cuban parliamentarians had passed some important laws promoting the development of STI and established a number of world-renowned scientific institutions. Cuba had managed to keep technological development alive despite the illegal blockade imposed on the country by the United States of America which had caused immense scarcity and suffering over six decades.

She condemned the genocide committed by Israel against the Palestinian and Lebanese people. It was vital to find a fair, comprehensive and sustainable solution to the conflict in the Middle East guaranteeing the human rights of Palestinians.

Parliamentary democracy had the potential to foster cooperation and solidarity towards the Global South, including in the area of STI. Cuba would fight tirelessly for peace, development, equality and justice not only for itself but for the world as a whole, including by rejecting hegemonic powers.

Mr. O. Lopes (Guinea-Bissau) said that the Speaker of the People's National Assembly of Guinea Bissau, Mr. D. Simões Pereira, had been unable to attend the IPU Assembly due to a travel ban which prevented him from leaving the country. The ban was an illegal and abusive order mandated by an authoritarian regime. More must be done to maintain the freedom and autonomy of Guinea-Bissau's democratic institutions, preserve the rule of law and uphold human rights. Those values should apply to everyone and not just to those who agreed with the regime.

STI were inherently neutral but could have good or bad impacts depending on how they were used collectively or individually. While they brought invaluable opportunities, they also brought challenges, often of a cross-border nature, which must be addressed jointly. Parliamentarians had a duty to create common regulatory frameworks and benchmarks that

ensured that innovations were implemented ethically. If used wisely, technology could be a powerful tool to promote peace and understanding, facilitate dialogue and reduce conflicts. The development of STI should focus on reducing inequalities between the Global North and South.

Unfortunately, in many countries, including his own, the use of STI for peaceful ends had not been prioritized by those in power. Technological innovations were being used to suppress democracy and impose authoritarian rules rather than to improve access to healthcare or education, for example. He called on lawmakers to ensure that the benefits of STI reached everyone. Only then would it be possible to build a society based on peace, justice and prosperity.

Dr. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania), President of the IPU, took the Chair.

Special segment to mark the 25th anniversary of the entry into force of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

The President, introducing the special segment, said that the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, also known as the Ottawa Convention or the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention, was the cornerstone of the international effort to end the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines. Anti-personnel mines were a devastating weapon that destroyed lives during and after armed conflict. Those affected were mostly civilians, innocent men and women, who found their lives completely overhauled. Many were left with disabilities while others could not live a normal life without the fear of stepping on a mine.

The Convention, adopted in 1997, had been the result of an incredible movement of dedicated men and women determined to put an end to human suffering, protect victims and stop casualties. She pointed out that, at the time of the Convention's adoption and even before, the IPU had held many debates on the topic of anti-personnel landmines at its Assemblies and adopted resolutions such as the one adopted in Cairo at the 98th IPU Assembly entitled *Respect for International Humanitarian Law and the Banning of Anti-personnel Mines*. Acknowledging that the banning of anti-personnel mines was one of the IPU's top priorities, she could safely say that it had been thanks to the political commitment of many of her IPU colleagues that the Convention had come into force so quickly thus helping to reduce the number of civilian casualties over the years. However, more work remained to be done. Only in 2022, close to 5,000 mine-related casualties had been recorded worldwide and the threat could still be observed in 60 countries.

In 2024, the Convention had celebrated the 25th anniversary of its entry into force. While the Convention had 164 State Parties to date, 33 States were yet to join, with universalization efforts having slowed since 2017. Banning anti-personnel mines must be a universal goal and parliamentarians had an important role to play in achieving that goal.

She introduced special guest, HRH Prince Mired Raad Zeid Al-Hussein of Jordan who, in his capacity as Special Envoy on the Universalization of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, had been leading efforts to promote further acceptance of the Convention. He had also worked extensively to promote the rights of persons with disability having become President of the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2024.

Prince Mired of Jordan (Special Envoy on the Universalization of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention) said that 2024 marked the 25th anniversary of the Convention and the 20th year of his own work on landmines. Since the first review conference of the Convention in 2004 and with assistance from more than 24 donor countries and entities, Jordan had been able to clear all of its minefields, and was declared mine-free in 2012.

He had witnessed first-hand the devastating impact of landmines on individuals, families and communities as well as the tangible benefits provided by the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Although parliamentarians were faced with many responsibilities, he urged them to make room for the landmine issue – an issue about human life, human rights and human dignity as well as good governance. What was different about the landmine issue was that it represented an achievable cause. It was, in most cases, a finite problem that could simply be addressed and crossed off the list. The only caveat was that parliamentarians must be prepared to put in the time, resources and commitment to getting it done.

The goal was for all countries to accede to the Convention, taking the solemn oath to: (1) never, under any circumstances, use, manufacture or trade in anti-personnel mines; (2) clear all mines and return the affected land safely to productive use; (3) destroy stockpiles and (4) provide assistance to those whose lives had been devastated by mines. In reality, however, a number of countries were refusing to join, holding firm to the notion that landmines maintained a military and

strategic utility. Other mine-affected countries had entertained the idea of joining but needed further encouragement. There were also countries that had never planted or stockpiled mines and simply considered the matter a non-issue. More engagement was necessary to gently nudge the remaining countries towards accession.

So far, 164 countries had acceded to the Convention, leaving 33 that had not. The more countries that acceded to the Convention and abided by its terms, the healthier and more vibrant it would remain in the long run. It was important to give the issue of accession due consideration regardless of whether a country was mine-affected or mine-free. If accession was not a realistic option at present, the minimum a country could do was conduct a thorough policy review, taking into account the views of those that had already joined.

In conclusion, landmines were a silent evil that remained in the ground long after a conflict had ended, waiting to strike. He urged parliamentarians to keep the victims at the forefront of their minds as they moved forward. An apology would not be enough for a victim severely maimed by a landmine that could have been previously cleared.

The President, taking note of the Prince's calls to strengthen efforts towards universalization, called on those countries that had not yet ratified the Convention to do so as soon as possible and on those that had ratified to step up their efforts towards adherence. A crucial part of adhering to the Convention meant providing assistance to victims affected by anti-personnel mines and advancing protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.

Mr. F. Fakafanua (Tonga) said that Tonga had been blessed by peace and security throughout its history, having never witnessed first-hand the looming shadow of war, including anti-personnel mines. Although Tonga was one of the 33 States that had not ratified the Convention, it did not view the matter as a non-issue. As Speaker of Parliament, he pledged Tonga's support for the Convention and would ensure the matter was tabled at the next sitting of Parliament.

Ms. J. Kwan (Canada) said that the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, or the Ottawa Convention as Canada preferred to call it, held pride of place in Canada's contribution to a more peaceful world. The effort that had been required to finalize such a uniquely comprehensive Convention was a shining example of the role that parliamentarians could play in addressing global challenges. Indeed, it had been at IPU Assemblies that Canadian parliamentarians had first promoted awareness of anti-personnel landmines calling on fellow delegates to support a global ban. Paying tribute to the victims and families, she acknowledged those nations that had ratified the Convention and urged those that had not to do so soon. Commitment to the Convention was a contribution to humanity.

While the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention was an important step towards world peace, more remained to be done. Its 25th anniversary was an opportunity to celebrate past achievements but also to renew commitments.

The President said that the IPU supported the work of Prince Mired of Jordan and would be working closely with him in the future.

Item 9 of the agenda

Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda

(A/149/2-P.1, P.2, P.3, P.4, P.5-rev2 and P.6)

The President said the IPU had been founded in 1889 by a small group of parliamentarians dedicated to promoting peace and development through parliamentary diplomacy. The vision was to create a world where every voice counted and where parliaments were at the service of the people. As President, she hoped to continue that legacy by building trust, inclusiveness, dialogue and ownership but recognized that it was difficult to do so where there were tensions. Noting that the IPU had failed to reach consensus on an emergency item at the previous two Assemblies, she urged delegates not to be discouraged but instead to rise up and try again. The way forward was to move one step at a time.

The Secretariat had received six emergency item proposals at the current Assembly. In line with the IPU Statutes and Rules, each Member Parliament that had submitted a proposal would have the opportunity to speak followed by any Member Parliament wishing to give an opposing opinion.

Mr. D. Illouz (Israel), presenting the emergency item proposal entitled *Call for condemnation of the missile attacks by the Islamic Republic of Iran against Israel*, said that on 13 April and 1 October 2024, Iran had launched hundreds of missiles at Israel with the objective of targeting civilians. Those were not random strikes but deliberate acts of war aiming to spread terror. Iran often used proxies such as Hamas and Hezbollah hoping to stay in the shadows and evade accountability. However, the missile strikes had shown Iran's true hand: destruction and domination. Iran had also been involved in the attacks of 7 October 2023, having armed and funded Hamas, thus making the massacre possible.

Beyond Israel, Iran was arming the Houthis in their attacks against Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and global shipping routes. Its own people were also suffering brutality, with those who dared speak out being beaten, jailed or killed.

Iran's terror was not just a regional aggression but an attempt to destabilize the entire world. In addition to using proxies, the country had repeatedly violated UN Security Council resolutions and flouted every international effort to curb its nuclear ambitions. At the heart of the terror was the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) which was not just a military body but the engine behind Iran's entire terror network responsible for training and directing terrorist groups. The IRGC must be labelled as a terrorist organization or violence and chaos would continue to spread.

The world had a choice whether to stand for peace and stability in line with the Abraham Accords or allow Iran's terror and nuclear ambitions to cause disaster. The time to act was now. Iran was a rogue State that ignored diplomacy. Its proxies must be dismantled, and its nuclear ambitions crushed. Equally, the organizations it supported, such as Hezbollah, Hamas and the Houthis, must be recognized as the terrorists they were. Overall, Iran was the greatest threat to global peace and its terror and aggression must be stopped.

The President said that no delegation wished to speak against the proposal.

Mr. M. Hadid (Palestine), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group and presenting the emergency item proposal entitled *Enforcing UN General Assembly resolution ES-10/24 and ensuring accountability*, said that the situation in the Middle East today was one of unprecedented war, assassination, destruction and death with thousands of innocent people affected. The conflict risked spreading throughout the region, further undermining international peace and security. To solve the problem, it was important to go back to the source of the problem, namely the occupation of Palestine. Ending the occupation would bring back peace to the region.

In July 2024, the International Court of Justice had published an advisory opinion entitled *Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem* deeming the Israeli occupation of Palestine illegal. The opinion went into detail about the racist policies resulting from the occupation and described the dire situation of the Palestinian people. The UN General Assembly had then adopted resolution ES-10/24 giving Israel 12 months to bring an end to the occupation. Israel was urged to revoke all measures supporting the occupation and to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their absolute right to self-determination on the territory of their State.

Palestine's emergency item proposal was an opportunity to speak up in support of humanity and ensure full implementation of the said UN General Assembly resolution. As the IPU made its choice, it should consider how it wished to be judged by future generations: as an organization that had helped the Palestinian people or as one that had done nothing. The rights of Palestinians must be recognized while the people responsible for the destruction must be held accountable rather than being allowed to act with impunity.

He wished to highlight that Palestine's proposal had been amended to take into account the reservations expressed by Member Parliaments. Those amendments had been conveyed to the Secretariat.

Mr. D. Illouz (Israel), expressing his opposition to the proposal, said that the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) had no place preaching about international law when it was paying terrorists to murder innocent Israelis and brainwashing children to hate and kill. Its schoolbooks, for instance, celebrated Dalal Mughrabi who had led the massacre of 38 Israelis, including 13 children. In addition, the PNA refused to condemn the attacks of 7 October 2023 in which Hamas had slaughtered over 1,200 Israelis, including babies. The PNA did not want peace but wished to see Israel erased.

He wished to be clear that the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice was non-binding, carried no legal force, and was issued without hearing Israel's case or considering decades of Palestinian terrorism. It was a blatant lie to suggest that Israel had been ordered to leave certain territories within 12 months. The PNA was manipulating international law for political gain.

Israel was the only democracy in the region committed to the rule of law, including international law. Using that commitment to weaken Israel only emboldened terrorists and undermined the free world. He called on the IPU to reject manipulation and stand firm against those who sought to destroy its cherished human values.

Mr. X. Iacovelli (France), speaking on behalf of France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Netherlands and Canada and presenting the emergency item proposal entitled *Response by parliamentarians to the urgent plea by the UN Secretary-General to recommit to multilateralism for global peace, justice and sustainability*, said that the proposal called on parliaments to overcome their divisions and join forces to resolve conflicts and challenges around the world. The proposal was a response to the alarm sounded by the UN Secretary-General who had acknowledged that the world was on the edge of an abyss. Indeed, since the establishment of the UN in the wake of the Second World War, the international situation had never been so serious. No fewer than 56 armed conflicts were raging all around the world, resulting in millions of victims, refugees and displaced persons. Violations of the Charter of the United Nations and of international humanitarian law were becoming more and more widespread in a context of geopolitical divisions and weakened multilateralism. Alongside the violence, the world was also facing unprecedented global challenges such as climate change, food insecurity, inequalities and poverty. The situation required a collective global response.

Noting that no one conflict or victim was more important than another, the proposal called on the international community to recommit to multilateralism and put an urgent end to all conflicts worldwide. One such conflict was the conflict in the Middle East where it was vital to reach a ceasefire, free all hostages, ensure unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid and implement a two-State solution for Israel and Palestine. The invasion of Ukraine by a permanent member of the UN Security Council was another conflict of concern not only for the West but for the world as a whole. Indeed, the invasion was not a harmless act but a serious infringement of the international order that threatened international stability and created widespread economic and food security consequences across the globe. The conflicts in Sudan, Yemen, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Haiti and Venezuela, amongst others, must also be addressed.

Acknowledging that the legitimacy and effectiveness of multilateral bodies must be improved, the resolution called for the UN Security Council to be expanded. Deliberate attacks on civilian populations were also condemned. It was particularly important to end sexual violence and violence against children.

After failing to adopt an emergency item resolution at the past two Assemblies, the IPU must reach an agreement today or else its usefulness would be called into question. He called on delegates to overcome their divisions in the interests of peace and justice.

Mr. I. Khraishi (Palestine), expressing his opposition to the proposal, supported the need for consensus but pointed out that the way the proposal was expressed undermined the right to life. The priority should always be to condemn the targeting of civilians.

The delegation of Israel was using the IPU Assembly to spread misconceptions and undermine the legitimacy of the International Court of Justice. Palestinian school curricula had been evaluated by the European Union and nothing about them contradicted international law.

Mr. A. Mbata (Democratic Republic of the Congo), presenting the emergency item proposal entitled *The security and humanitarian situation in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, said that the Democratic Republic of the Congo had been facing a deadly armed conflict for over 30 years in which two million people had died, five million people had been displaced and over one million women and young girls had been raped. The crisis had been aggravated by the actions of Rwanda whose troops were occupying a large part of Congolese territory, supporting terrorist groups such as M23 and plundering his country's natural resources in flagrant violation of the principle of territorial integrity, the Charter of the United Nations and the Constitutive Act of the African Union. The situation had been confirmed by many UN reports and addressed in a similar resolution adopted almost unanimously by the Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie (APF) in July 2024. Several countries, including the G12, had called on Rwanda to withdraw from Congolese territory, to no avail.

Parliamentarians must not remain indifferent to the security and humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo which was extremely serious. By supporting the proposal, which was the only proposal from Africa, the IPU would be showing solidarity not only with the Democratic Republic of the Congo but with Africa as a whole.

Ms. E. Nyirasafari (Rwanda) strongly rejected the proposal, which was inadequate in both procedure and substance, adding that the African Group in its meeting on 13 October 2024 had decided not to present the item as a group. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo was actively collaborating with the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) – a group responsible for the crimes committed during the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi – and had enrolled Wazalendo in its forces, a militia group that had vowed to erase Congolese Tutsi from its territory. Collaboration with those groups had undermined regional peace efforts.

Despite the belligerent and provocative actions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda had abstained from escalating the conflict. Rwanda had always prioritized peace and had been working tirelessly to support regional efforts aimed at bringing stability to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It remained particularly committed to the Luanda and Nairobi peace processes. However, peace could not be achieved unilaterally. While Rwanda remained committed to dialogue, it was important to acknowledge that the actions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including its alliance with genocidal militia, remained a direct threat to Rwanda's territorial integrity and safety. Rwanda would always be prepared to defend itself against such threats. She called on the Assembly to dismiss the proposal of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Ms. M. Stolbizer (Argentina), speaking on behalf of Argentina, Chile, Peru, Mexico, Brazil and Guyana and presenting the emergency item proposal entitled *Mobilizing parliamentarians for the protection of children in armed conflicts to avoid risks, suffering and consequences*, said that children were innocent victims of war who suffered both directly and indirectly from devastating consequences such as death, kidnapping, forced recruitment, family separation, sexual violence and loss of education. However, children did not ask for a life shaped by war; the suffering they endured stemmed from the decisions made by adults. Immediate action was needed to protect children from war.

Efforts would be made to ensure that all situations were covered in the proposal, including those of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan and Ukraine where millions of children were affected by war. In the case of Ukraine, half of the population under 18 had been displaced, with many of those children having to flee alone, putting them at greater risk of forced recruitment or kidnapping.

It was not her intention to speak against any other proposal but rather to encourage countries to work together towards a collective vision aiming to protect the children of war. The ideas contained in the other proposals, such as the need for multilateralism, a stronger UN and the delivery of humanitarian assistance, would be helpful in realizing that vision. It was important to rise above divisions and confrontations for the benefit of the children. She appealed to delegates to support her proposal.

Ms. M.d.S. Núñez Monreal (Mexico), speaking in her personal capacity, said that she opposed the proposal because it suggested that Venezuela was at war which was not the case.

Mr. M. Mottaki (Islamic Republic of Iran), presenting the emergency item proposal entitled *The deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza and Lebanon*, said that the ongoing crisis in Gaza and Lebanon had reached a tipping point and demanded decisive international action. Violations of international humanitarian law and human rights were happening on an unprecedented scale, leading to the loss of innocent lives and destruction of civilian infrastructure, including essential services such as healthcare, water and sanitation. Those violations were not isolated incidents but part of a systematic campaign of aggression and occupation spanning decades. Noting that the crisis was a man-made tragedy rather than a natural disaster, parliamentarians must address the crisis, not as a matter of policy, but as a moral imperative.

He drew attention to some of the recent atrocities in Gaza and Lebanon, including the heinous attack on al-Aqsa hospital where Palestinian refugees had been burned alive. Such crimes bore the hallmark of genocide, which, under Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, was defined as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group". The international community could no longer remain silent in the face of such crimes which were becoming more and more normalized.

That said, after discussing the matter with the delegation of Palestine and other Member Parliaments of the Arab Group, the Islamic Republic of Iran would like to withdraw its own proposal and show support for the proposal of Palestine.

The President informed the Assembly that Israel had also decided to withdraw its proposal. Four proposals therefore remained.

The Secretary General said that the Assembly would now proceed to a vote by roll call on the four remaining proposals. He explained the voting procedure in line with the IPU Statutes and Rules.

A video explaining the voting procedure was played.

A vote by roll call was taken.

With 651 votes in favour, 413 against and 346 abstentions, the proposal submitted by the delegation of Palestine on behalf of the Arab Group failed to obtain the required two-thirds majority of the votes cast and was therefore rejected.

With 795 votes in favour, 309 against and 306 abstentions, the request submitted by the delegations of France, United Kingdom, Germany, Netherlands and Canada obtained the required two-thirds majority of the votes cast.

With 121 votes in favour, 624 against and 665 abstentions, the request submitted by the delegation of the Democratic Republic of Congo failed to obtain the required two-thirds majority of the votes cast and was therefore rejected.

With 709 votes in favour, 320 against and 381 abstentions, the request submitted by the delegations of Argentina, Chile, Peru, Mexico, Brazil and Guyana obtained the required two-thirds majority of the votes cast.

Having obtained the required two-thirds majority and the largest number of positive votes cast, the proposal submitted by the delegations of France, United Kingdom, Germany, Netherlands and Canada was added to the agenda of the Assembly.

The sitting rose at 20:00.

Final Agenda

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 on the theme *Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future*
 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 co-Rapporteurs
 8. Amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules
 9. Response by parliamentarians to the urgent plea by the UN Secretary-General to recommit to multilateralism for global peace, justice and sustainability
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Emergency item entitled *Response by parliamentarians to the urgent plea by the UN Secretary-General to recommit to multilateralism for global peace, justice and sustainability*

SITTING OF WEDNESDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2024

(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 09:00, with Dr. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania), President of the IPU, in the Chair.

Item 9 of the agenda

Debate on the emergency item submitted by the delegations of France, United Kingdom, Germany, Netherlands, and Canada on the theme *Response by parliamentarians to the urgent plea by the UN Secretary-General to recommit to multilateralism for global peace, justice and sustainability*
(A/149/2-P.3)

Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine) said that the United Nations (UN) was on track to failing all countries slowly and painfully. It was the only organization intended to prevent global conflicts, yet it was paralyzed. Some continents were not represented among the UN Security Council's permanent members, which was not right in modern times. African countries, countries from the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC), India and Japan deserved to hold a permanent seat. The world's biggest aggressor held veto power. The Russian Federation had been waging illegal, unprovoked war against Ukraine for the previous decade – Ukrainian children were abducted and taken to a foreign land where their cultural and ethnic identity was completely wiped out, while prisoners of war were returned in very bad conditions or not returned at all. UN agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had no access to Russian prisons and war camps and could barely monitor the situation. Propaganda and foreign military interference affected conflict-afflicted areas. It was the duty of parliamentarians to restore the initial purpose of the UN, namely to prevent conflicts instead of merely watching them develop.

Mr. K. Suebsang (Thailand) said that the emergency item was a sign of hope and the way for the IPU to revive multilateralism. His country reaffirmed its support for a rules-based multilateral system with the UN and had welcomed the adoption of the UN Pact for the Future, which would ensure that the multilateral system was fit for purpose and adaptable to evolving challenges. The UN, and particularly the Security Council, must undergo comprehensive reforms to maintain their relevance. Amidst ongoing armed conflicts worldwide, it was disheartening that thousands of innocent civilians, especially women and children, were being killed and injured; protecting innocent civilians should be prioritized at all times. All parties were urged to fulfil their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL). The fighting needed to stop, and all parties should contribute to ensuring that humanitarian support could safely and effectively reach those affected. UN staff and premises, hospitals and other public buildings should be protected.

Against the backdrop of the situation in Myanmar, which had spillover effects in Thailand, a solution led and owned by Myanmar was necessary for peace and stability. Thailand was engaging with all sides and would continue to work closely with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the rest of the international community. All parties should take a close look at the situation in Myanmar and stop the indiscriminate airstrikes. Multilateralism and genuine dialogue were necessary to reach mutually agreed peaceful solutions to the situations in Ukraine, the Middle East and Myanmar, and interregional and regional efforts must be reinforced to sustain and strengthen international peace and security. The IPU was the best platform to mobilize Member Parliaments to build trust, solidarity and global governance through parliamentary diplomacy and to save future generations from the scourge of war.

Mr. K. Kosachev (Russian Federation) said that the poor attendance and few speakers for the current item were shameful. The emergency item was not pressing enough for the IPU, which was disheartening. Allowing delegations to present their motions two days before taking a final decision on it was a bad practice. The IPU's Statutes and Rules should be amended to set a

deadline ensuring that motions were presented prior to the Assembly, thus allowing geopolitical groups and national delegations to hold proper discussions. The current emergency item did not concern recent events and was therefore not in accordance with Rule 11 of the Rules of the Assembly. Initiatives should be evaluated by the Executive Committee, to ensure that they respected the IPU's Statutes and Rules. The Twelve Plus Group and other countries had presented the current topic only briefly and more broadly than the Secretary General. They wanted to force other Member Parliaments to support their draft resolution immediately, without further consideration, whereas other important issues within the Organization had benefited from discussions over time, which was the only possible approach. Hastily deciding on such a serious emergency item was unfair and was a form of cheating. While the issue was important, the wording of the relevant documents needed to be checked, failing which the item should not be debated. If another emergency item had been under discussion, the participation of Member Parliaments would have been different. The Russian Federation could not support the relevant documents, not because it disagreed with them, but because it did not have enough time to take a position.

The President said that the IPU Statutes and Rules were still undergoing review and amendment, and suggestions in that regard were welcome.

Ms. A. Kalmari (Finland) said that radical changes were required at the UN: Latin America, Africa and Asia should be represented among the Security Council's permanent members; no country should have the right to veto; and a Security Council member violating the Charter of the United Nations should not have the right to vote. The UN should prevent wars, but it had not succeeded. The IPU should have clear rules for advancing peace. For instance, the IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine required invitation, a clear mandate, financing and reporting. Young parliamentarians and women parliamentarians should play a stronger role. Parents in conflict-afflicted areas had one goal – to ensure that their children lived in a safe, peaceful world without fear. Parliamentarians should think about the roles, effectiveness and transparency of organizations so that they could address war successfully.

Ms. K. Bradley (United Kingdom), co-author of the proposal, said that the adoption of the emergency item proposal was tangible evidence of the mission of democracy for everyone. The address by the UN Secretary-General should be a wake-up call, urging countries to confront widening inequalities and crises that threatened the society and the planet. Such crises were multi-faceted and interconnected, required immediate attention, disproportionately impacted the most vulnerable and undermined global stability. Parliamentarians could legislate for social equity, environmental sustainability and economic resilience. They should support policies to protect at-risk populations and ensure that no one was left behind. Geopolitical tensions hindered progress and countries could not afford to be gridlocked by dysfunction. Parliaments needed to rise above political divisions and engage in meaningful dialogue. True international cooperation required setting aside differences to pursue shared goals. Parliamentarians should advocate for multilateral frameworks that fostered collaboration and built trust among countries.

Current global crises demonstrated that international solidarity was necessary. The crisis in Ukraine affected global markets and international stability. For lasting peace, parliamentarians should support Ukraine's sovereignty while advocating for a complete Russian withdrawal and collectively seek a just resolution. A unified response was needed in the Middle East; parliamentarians had a moral obligation to promote peace, support diplomatic efforts towards de-escalation and ensure humanitarian aid reached those in need. Lasting peace further required courage, collaboration and a commitment to justice for all, including a diplomatic, sustainable solution that protected everyone's future. Parliamentarians should advocate for the rights of children caught in conflict, ensuring that legislation protected them from violence and exploitation and allowed them to thrive. The erosion of public confidence in democracy and international law was alarming; restoring trust in institutions was critical and the UN played a key role in that regard. Parliamentarians must ensure transparency and accountability in decision-making and engage constituents in guiding their actions.

The President, recalling Rule 16 of the IPU Statutes, issued a call for the geo-political groups to nominate their representatives on the drafting committee, which would be meeting in the course of the afternoon, to finalize the draft resolution *Response by parliamentarians to the urgent plea by the UN Secretary-General to recommit to multilateralism for global peace, justice and sustainability*.

Ms. M. Valente (Angola) took the Chair.

Item 3 of the agenda
(continued)

**General Debate on the theme *Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI)*
*for a more peaceful and sustainable future***
(A/149/3-Inf.1)

FIRST SPEAKERS FROM DELEGATIONS AND INVITED ORGANIZATIONS

Ms. M. Cederfelt (Sweden) said that parliamentarians needed to consider how they could enact legislation promoting innovation and technology while guarding against disinformation and mass surveillance. Her country's strong standing in innovation and technology was due in part to its higher education system; producing creative and innovative students was key. Strong institutional and stable macroeconomic conditions, including an open market economy, boosted public and private investments in students and the overall knowledge infrastructure. The country had also long provided quality education to all and robust social and public services. The potential of artificial intelligence (AI) could not be underestimated. Economies could develop significantly if legislation steered AI in the right direction. Parliamentarians should create a framework to protect AI from misuse, such as for undemocratic purposes. An international standard on AI was important. The IPU should advance work to that end.

The Russian Federation was an aggressor country and was attacking another Member Parliament, Ukraine. Transparency in the Organization's activities was important, as well as support to the IPU President in that regard. There should be procedures that ensured that communication between the aggressor and Ukraine worked towards peace, stability and unity within the IPU.

Mr. P. Bakovic (Slovenia) said that the solution to climate change, economic challenges and global uncertainty relied on parliamentarians' ability to collaborate and effectively harness STI. Scientific research was essential to enhance understanding of natural processes and the impact of human activities on the environment, leading to sustainable solutions; technological advancements allowed for more efficient natural resource management and improved agricultural practices, contributing to food security and the preservation of ecosystems; and innovation was critical in promoting peace and security. The Slovenian Scientific Research and Innovation Strategy 2030 promoted sustainable development in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, prioritizing, among other areas, the digital transformation of the economy, healthcare, the sustainable management of energy, food and water and the transition to a circular economy. The country had implemented target measures to enhance innovation and collaboration among research organizations, educational institutions and businesses. International programmes, such as Eurostars and the EIC Accelerator, were key to funding research and innovation projects. Parliamentarians needed to turn knowledge into action to build a peaceful, sustainable future and were crucial in harnessing science to benefit all. The current debate was a significant step in their collective efforts.

Ms. G. Burokiene (Lithuania) said that the current changes were not merely technological but were also associated with socioeconomic transformation and strategic reforms in key areas of public life and governance. Lithuania's Parliament acknowledged that AI had transformative potential to enhance its efficiency, effectiveness and productivity, and that implementing it was complex and presented technical and ethical challenges. The country's Parliament had therefore adopted an experimental approach, prototyping AI tools to evaluate their accessibility before committing to full-scale deployment.

STI was transnational. Hostile actors used AI and hybrid tools to manipulate foreign information, spread lies and interfere in democratic processes, which had a destructive influence worldwide. Such was the case in the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine. Lithuania and other European countries had also been targets of such operations. The perpetrators should be clearly identified. Lithuania took a comprehensive, whole-of-society approach to monitoring, analysing and countering disinformation involving State institutions, non-governmental organizations, the media and businesses. In the context of the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine and the crisis in the Middle East, new technologies needed to be used responsibly. It was crucial for parliamentarians to implement a rules-based multilateral framework to ensure that STI did not undermine global peace and security. There was an urgent need to reform multilateralism so that it could effectively address global realities, including threats posed by authoritarian regimes.

Mr. E. Mulembwe (Mozambique) said that the answers to social, economic and environmental issues lay in science and technology. Moral responsibility was necessary to balance the advantages and disadvantages of technological advancements, which should be leveraged to ensure that no one was left behind. Low-income and developing countries needed to know how to invest in education and capacity-building. Governments should continually improve legislation so that technology could drive inclusive socioeconomic development, whereas it was up to legislators to monitor the implementation of such legislation, ensuring that they neither canonized nor demonized technology to avoid technophilia and technophobia. Concerning the criticism of the IPU President at the first sitting of the Governing Council of the 149th IPU Assembly earlier in the week, he reminded the IPU President that she could count on Mozambique's support, fraternity and solidarity.

Mr. M. Balla (Hungary) said that the importance of research, development and innovation had increased in his country, boosting the economy's competitiveness and socioeconomic development. Hungary had strengthened technology transfer and higher education institutions, increasing the number of companies and universities dedicated to technology. It had produced several award-winning personalities in the field of STI and aimed to internationalize its research and innovation ecosystem. As technology progressed, governments needed to act immediately to adapt regulatory frameworks. Technological inequality, misinformation and false information undermined public trust in government institutions and public safety. Given that misuse of technology undermined human rights, governments must provide a safe, non-discriminatory and evidence-based environment for all, free of online harassment and cyberattacks, particularly gender-based attacks. Parliaments should pay more attention to how marginalized and vulnerable groups were affected. As digital development improved, traditions and national identity should be preserved. Parliamentarians should work together to ensure that the emerging digital revolution worked in the service of the people.

Mr. M. Hadid (Palestine) said that, against the backdrop of the unconscionable displacement, assassinations and destruction that had occurred in his country over the previous year, the world did not seem interested that millions of Palestinians, including children, were suffering simply because they were Palestinian. The defenders of democracy had given leeway for Israel's destruction and had said nothing in the face of its crimes, whereas, one year prior, Palestine had asked them to bring an end to Israel's criminal folly. Palestine's dead and wounded were not merely statistics but had a personality, a family and a broken dream. The occupying entity continued to commit terrible crimes and took full advantage of the bloodshed and destruction, extending its activities to Lebanon and perhaps elsewhere. It was regrettable that some were still trying to understand the situation; it was genocide. Israel could not talk about self-defence when it had killed thousands of Palestinian women and children. The definitions of terrorism and crimes against humanity needed to be reconsidered if they did not apply to the Palestinian prisoners who were dying and being starved and raped. Many countries were defending a fascist regime. The use of force could not dilute freedoms. Strength was not simply characterized by military force but by peacebuilding. Palestinians had real strength – they had never understood or accepted the occupation, and the light of freedom would one day shine upon them. Palestine could resist and would not allow murderers to win.

Ms. G. Morawska-Stanecka (Poland) said that in the face of climate change, poverty and migration, parliamentarians should maximize the benefits of technological progress while minimizing potential harm. New technologies were already disrupting the job market and generating substantial profits for a small group of shareholders. Accessibility was a challenge for rural and disadvantaged groups, whereas STI should be accessible to all. AI was being used to manipulate public opinion and undermine democracy with fake news that intensified social and political polarization worldwide, dehumanized opponents and weakened cooperation. It was necessary to take decisive action to combat AI-generated information through legal measures, place democratic values at the heart of the technological transformation, preserve social justice and harness new technologies for good. It was essential to establish universal ethical guidelines for AI to ensure respect for human rights and civil liberties. Parliaments were vital in leveraging STI to create a more peaceful and sustainable future. New technologies often outpaced legislation, thus creating a legislative vacuum. When the relevant regulations were adopted, they merely legitimized an established market situation, benefiting STI companies, sometimes at the expense of citizens. Parliaments should therefore closely monitor the development of new technologies to proactively address the challenges.

Mr. H. Gebaly (Egypt) said that the IPU had made efforts to defend international peace, security and parliamentary dialogue. His country, which in 2024 celebrated its 100th anniversary of joining the Organization, would continue to carry out similar efforts, defending independence in the Arab and African world, especially in Palestine, with a view to there being an independent Palestinian State with the 1967 border and with East Jerusalem as its capital. Egypt would work towards sustainable development to safeguard peace and security in the region. There could be no prosperity without science and technology. The IPU ensured that science and technology were responsibly, ethically and sustainably managed. International technological cooperation was necessary among parliamentarians. Egypt placed emphasis on research, science and innovation, including by establishing a legislative framework for investment and infrastructure, and it hoped to implement an integrated innovation framework to translate knowledge into development and value. In the light of the current existential challenges, parliamentarians should focus on their shared humanitarian duty and build knowledge transparently to use science responsibly.

Mr. S. Smith (New Zealand) said that legislators could cultivate peace and security by strengthening regional stability, promoting awareness of international commitments, meticulously examining proposed laws and announcing breaches of global statutes. Parliamentarians needed to leverage STI for the benefit of all, and their ability to do so would determine their future. There was a need for reliable, affordable electricity generation, as the demand for electricity would continue to rise. New Zealand's market-driven electricity sector was mainly based on renewable energies and was free from Government subsidies. However, with New Zealand's AI revolution, the electricity sector grew as well as the country's need for natural gas as a reliable back-up system. There should be reforms to planning laws to strengthen energy infrastructure and boost economic growth and development. Countries' energy security was linked to economic performance, technological advancements, security and social development. Legislators should drive meaningful change by embracing the AI revolution.

Ms. S. Codina (Andorra) said that her country had adopted a national digital transformation strategy, incorporating technology into people's daily lives while guaranteeing respect for fundamental rights. To ensure that technology benefited all, particularly women, young people and vulnerable groups, Andorra had launched digital skills training programmes and expanded internet access to facilitate digital inclusion for all, regardless of socioeconomic background. It had also implemented a framework to protect data and personal privacy, which was crucial in anticipating long-term repercussions of decisions taken with regard to technology, especially AI. It had implemented collaboration mechanisms between the public and private sectors and other countries. The digital services forum set to take place in Andorra in 2025 would shore up regional cooperation and facilitate exchange among various stakeholders. The country was developing adaptive policies to balance the swift arrival of AI and the need for regulation, and had approved an AI ethics code, which included recommendations to the public and private sectors, and the public at large on the responsible, transparent and equitable use of AI with respect for fundamental rights. AI's progress must go hand in hand with robust prevention measures against discrimination, violence and disinformation. The upcoming years would be crucial in determining how technology positively impacted societies. It was important to promote national and international ethics charters on the use of technology to establish shared standards and build trust among citizens, governments and businesses so that technological progress aligned with social values.

Mr. A. Sobel (United Kingdom) said that it was essential for parliamentarians to understand how STI impacted their responsibilities and the steps they should take globally to address that. The United Kingdom had established a government department for STI, which prioritized AI, bio-engineering, future telecommunications, semiconductors and quantum technologies. Science and technology had fundamentally changed decision-making, as data analysis was paramount to inform decisions and policies, allowing countries to establish responsive, evidence-based legislation. Translating scientific information into effective legislation required understanding scientific and socioeconomic factors to create policies that addressed urgent environmental needs while considering economic impacts. The IPU had made great strides in its multilateral work on climate change, AI regulation and global internet protocols. The fast progress of machine learning made certain human-made conventions moribund – the protection of human life lay beyond legislators and regulation, as AI might be used to target and singularly kill in combat, without consideration for the implications regarding human rights abuses. The 148th IPU Assembly had done groundbreaking work, and parliamentarians should reinstate the call for a ban on fully autonomous weapons.

With disinformation undermining public trust in institutions, parliamentarians should use online tools to communicate effectively and combat misinformation by legislating to ensure that information was fact-checked and people were safe from online harm. While biotechnology, including genetically modified plants, contributed to ending world hunger, new regulation was required to ensure their safe development, consumption and export. Parliamentary oversight and cooperation were paramount in parliamentarians' role to ensure that governments prioritized the welfare of all, in light of the dangers presented by technology.

Mr. O. Hejira (Morocco), highlighting his country's efforts to establish a technology and innovation strategy and an AI centre, said that while new technologies helped parliamentarians to take science-based decisions, the digital divide remained an obstacle for least developed countries (LDCs), who could not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It was important to provide support so that all countries had the necessary training to adopt new technologies, thereby tapping into developing countries' potential. Parliamentarians needed to guard against the dangers of those new technologies which were unethical, particularly misinformation, to peace and sociocultural values. They should issue a unified global message on the deadly and destructive dangers of STI, and call for STI to be leveraged to save the world and use resources wisely. Parliamentarians should establish an ethical STI culture that was in line with UN resolutions and benefited all.

Mr. B. Ouch (Cambodia) said that current challenges required innovative collective solutions. The international community was looking to the IPU for more effective and responsive leadership. Parliamentarians should ensure that scientific and technological progress was in line with the values that unified the global community, such as gender equality, young people's participation in STI and international cooperation, including between the Global North and South. Cambodia and the other ASEAN countries had published a joint statement on AI on their commitment to use AI responsibly for progress and sustainability in the region.

Comprehensive and ethical cooperation frameworks on AI should be established to promote democracy, peace, dignity, inclusion and sustainability. There should be increased investments in education and training in AI. Assessment and regulation mechanisms should be created to evaluate AI's impact on society and promote the achievement of the SDGs through AI. Old technologies should not be overlooked, such as in the development of weapons, particularly explosive devices and land mines. Cambodia welcomed the IPU's stand on armed conflict and disability, and reaffirmed its commitment to the 1997 Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. It invited all countries to reaffirm their collective commitment to humanitarian principles and the protection of civilians at the Fifth Review Conference of the Convention due to take place in Cambodia later that year. Countries yet to join the 1997 Convention should do so. Parliamentarians should work together to put an end to the pointless suffering caused by weapons and build a fairer, more equitable world that was free of landmines and in which innovation benefited all.

Mr. O. Lopes (Guinea-Bissau) took the Chair.

Ms. E. Cuesta (Ecuador) said that sustainable solutions were necessary to achieve peace and equality and improve constituents' lives. Ecuador faced multidimensional crises, such as a marked increase in violence and organized crime, chronic malnutrition, child labour, attrition, poverty and emigration, with children being particularly affected by those crises. The country had been part of international efforts to find peaceful solutions to conflicts from 2007 to 2017. Addressing violence and organized crime when a country was already debilitated required massive efforts and a comprehensive approach that included economic, social and technological measures. AI could promote public safety, development, social inclusion, security, crime prevention and transparency in Ecuador's financial system, which was plagued by narco-trafficking and money laundering. Political will and budgetary support were necessary. Ecuador had established draft laws to regulate AI. Parliamentarians should legislate to ensure that science and technology were used ethically, fairly and democratically, and that political management, science and innovation were people-centred.

Mr. J. Waweru (Kenya) said that Africa had been asleep during previous industrial revolutions. To ensure that that would not be repeated, he asked countries for their support in that regard. Kenya had had success in mobile technology and financial inclusion, and continued to adopt digital platforms in healthcare, agriculture and education. The Kenya National Digital Master

Plan 2022–2032 focused on AI, cloud computing and data-driven solutions, attesting to the country's investment in growing its digital economy. The country was committed to leveraging STI as a core strategy for national development in alignment with the Kenya Vision 2030, which aimed to transform Kenya into a newly industrialized, middle-income country by 2030. Despite the strides made, it faced challenges relating to capital development, policies, regulations, climate change and environmental degradation. Its strategies to address those challenges included strengthening public-private partnerships, STI education and skills development, and digital infrastructure.

Kenya should establish robust legal and regulatory frameworks to govern the use of AI, big data and other emerging technologies to ensure data privacy. Regarding data representation, there was a serious imbalance, as data centres were generally established in the northern hemisphere. Africa had suffered the appropriation of its assets; including the continent in data representation would provide it with opportunities. STI was key to creating inclusive, resilient and forward-thinking societies. Parliaments should work together to harness STI for global peace, progress, equity and sustainability. Parliamentary action was critical in creating an environment for innovation to thrive, including by passing legislation to support digital transformation, green technologies and ethical frameworks for emerging technologies, while fostering partnerships between governments, the private sector and academia. All countries should set up their data centres in Kenya, where green energy abounded, which would usher in the fourth industrial revolution.

Mr. S.F. Sylla (Guinea) said that the visit of the IPU Secretary General to his country had significantly contributed to its legislative work, including the publishing of a draft Constitution. Such advances allowed Guinea to reposition itself in sub-regional and regional organizations and fostered cooperation programmes with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. It was hoped that the IPU could provide a support mechanism to draft organic laws to accompany the Constitution and capacity-building for parliamentarians and parliamentary officials, especially in assessing draft laws on finance. More active parliamentary cooperation on STI was necessary to build a peaceful and sustainable future. Appropriately managing, disseminating and harnessing STI contributed to the well-being, peace and sustainable development of all. Parliamentary action could considerably help in that regard. Guinea would play its part in the transformation of humanity. Expressing his deep compassion for the martyrs of Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon, he urged the international community to take more concrete action to restore the right of the martyred to live in peace in its ancestral land.

Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland) said that his country had made innovation a pillar of its development and ensured that technology improved everyone's lives while respecting human rights. The recently launched Swiss National AI Institute aimed to make Switzerland a world leader in AI, with a focus on ethics and transparency. While data protection and regulation posed a challenge, properly implementing new technologies could lead to progress. Technological advancements should be people-centred and improve democracy. It was important to recognize that new technologies could be harnessed for a change in profession. In that respect, Switzerland's two-pronged education training programmes and enhanced support for continuing education ensured that jobs adapted to changes on the labour market, in keeping with SDG 8 (decent work).

The proposed IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology would help parliaments to legislate on STI. The European Union (EU) Artificial Intelligence Act and the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law also provided guidance on how to legislate on technology with a focus on ethics, transparency, human supervision, non-discrimination, privacy and the prevention of abusive use. Parliamentarians needed to consider how to address the increased use of AI, including in the preparation of parliamentary statements; how to build capacity, such as in the use of translation software in multilingual and multicultural parliaments; and how to protect data and guard against over-dependence on technology. Such considerations required an appropriate, coordinated response that fostered responsible innovation. Global challenges necessitated a collective response. It was crucial to regulate new technologies to ensure they respected fundamental rights and anticipated potential risks. The IPU's Centre for Innovation in Parliament was key to that process. Switzerland was ready to share its expertise and work with all countries for peace, prosperity and well-being for all.

Mr. O.M. Moe (Norway) said that there was value in parliamentarians gathering to exchange views on current developments. After the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine, Norway had received thousands of Ukrainian refugees in just over two years. It would manage that situation and

stood with Ukraine. The full-scale war in the Middle East had more serious implications for Norway, where antisemitism was on the rise, as the country's Jewish minority faced harassment and insecurity. Norway's two synagogues were guarded by heavily armed police. A memorial service following the 7 October terrorist attacks had been interrupted by activists carrying models of Iranian missiles. That was not acceptable. Norway had increased the terror emergency level. It was considering imposing border control on Sweden and Denmark following terrorist attacks against the Israeli embassies in those countries, which Norway's intelligence services believed had been carried out with support from the Islamic Republic of Iran. There were also links between organized crime in Scandinavia and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Norway had changed and hopefully would not continue along that trajectory. Parliamentarians should support just and secure peace, and eliminate terrorism and organized crime, which destroyed trust among countries and undermined the common values of the international community. Parliamentarians had the shared responsibility to fight antisemitism and protect minorities.

Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium) said that parliamentarians should be cautious of the potential risks associated with technological progress and commit to STI's safe development. STI and the Triple Helix Model of innovation, whereby governments, businesses and knowledge institutions worked together to reinforce one other, were required for a secure, balanced future. Parliamentarians could contribute to developing the future by establishing regulations, which should not be a barrier to innovation and should allow for innovative products and services to be placed on the markets. Countries could commit to innovation only if the regulatory framework supported it. Given that it was challenging to draft regulations that fully anticipated future developments, parliamentarians should consider no-regulation zones without restrictive frameworks that stifled creativity. Only then could sustainable solutions be achieved.

Everyone had the right to benefit from scientific advancements. Parliaments' role was to bridge the gap between science and policy, make informed evidence-based decisions and foster dialogue between scientists, researchers and the public. STI policies needed to be people-centred, and scientific research was essential. There should be investment in accessible knowledge, education and training, and public funds should be invested strategically. Academic institutions needed to be accountable, while research projects should align with the SDGs. Policymakers should bridge the gap between developing and developed countries and ensure that STI contributed to more peaceful and prosperous societies by investing in scientific systems in developing nations, encouraging research, preventing brain drain and promoting inclusiveness, by incorporating more women, young people and people from all socioeconomic backgrounds into STI. It was crucial to ensure that STI's challenges did not overshadow its potential, to establish robust and progressive infrastructure, and to guarantee reliable data management. Parliaments should prepare for and mitigate the potential socioeconomic impacts of STI.

Mr. N. Walder (Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie (APF)) said that its strategic framework 2023–2030 prioritized parliamentary diplomacy and the improvement of legal services. Parliaments needed to complement traditional diplomacy, which involved the executive and government organizations. Parliamentarians were key to peacebuilding because they were familiar with the situation on the ground and could disassociate themselves from conflicts between countries. The APF supported political transition and the restoration of democratic order in countries that had undergone a coup, and encouraged dialogue and cooperation among parliamentarians of conflicting governments, such as in the Great Lakes region.

The APF had revised its democratic monitoring mechanisms to better support political transition. It no longer automatically suspended membership of parliaments dissolved following contested elections, provided that there was: no political violence, consensus on the transition between political parties and among civil society, a credible agenda to restore democracy and adherence to the values of the Francophonie. The APF promoted mediation, pragmatic and progressive dialogue, and a holistic approach that included social, economic and political factors in the assessment of the consequences and root causes of problems. It was committed to solidarity and inter-parliamentary cooperation. The APF had provided parliamentarians with legal corpora containing legal and technical expertise, model legislation and suggested methods for national implementation. The corpora dealt with climate policies, the protection of whistle-blowers and gender-sensitive budgeting, among other issues.

Regarding harnessing STI for a more peaceful and sustainable future, science and parliamentarians had worked hand in hand during the COVID-19 pandemic to understand risks and establish emergency public health measures. To address technology-induced threats and

challenges to information and communications technologies (ICTs), the environment and sustainable development, social sciences and public health, including antimicrobial resistance, the APF had established close ties with stakeholders in academia. All parliaments had the ad hoc structures to maintain the continuum between science and decision-making. Parliaments should exercise their prerogative to vote on legislation and steer governments; they should ensure they were not dictated to by experts but still drew on scientific research for decision-making.

Mr. Y. Büyükkaydin (Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC)) said that an estimated US\$ 5 trillion would be spent on information technologies worldwide in 2024. Technology was essential for economic growth, peace and sustainability and offered people new opportunities. STI's contribution to peace was directly linked to the democratization of means of communication and information access. Digital transformation strengthened understanding between peoples, intercultural dialogue and international cooperation. However, STI's full potential should be considered in conjunction with ethics and leveraged for the benefit of all. The war in Ukraine and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza were painful examples of how science and technology could be used for destruction. International cooperation was necessary to improve people's welfare and establish lasting peace. It was imperative to balance promoting innovation and technological advances and addressing ethics and security. Countries must stand firmly with Ukraine in its struggle for sovereignty and with Palestine in its quest for self-determination.

The Black Sea region had great scientific and technological potential. The PABSEC Assembly had submitted recommendations on AI, information technologies and scientific cooperation to the Parliaments and Governments of the region. Sustainable progress required not only technological advances, but also political will and national, regional and global cooperation. Investments in science and technology should be aligned with peace, equality and sustainability, which was the only means of building a more liveable and just world free of the current problems.

Mr. W.M. Aye (Myanmar) said that technology was integral to lasting peace and development. The military coup in his country in 2021 had not stopped elected parliamentarians from representing their people and continuing their work as a fully functioning e-parliament. Social media and other digital tools had been used to raise awareness about the Government's work, raise funds for humanitarian aid and report human rights violations and abuses by the military junta. While the National Unity Government used technology for peace, the military junta abused it to consolidate its power and block internet usage to conceal its attacks and atrocities. Thousands of civilians had been killed and millions displaced and in humanitarian need. Young people had fled the country, having refused to attack civilians. The military junta had no intention of implementing ASEAN's consensus on restoring peace, stability and democracy through a Myanmar-led comprehensive political resolution. The junta could not legitimately conduct an election. The National Unity Government had proposed a comprehensive road map prioritizing democracy, human rights and national unity, and urged countries to continue to support its Government, put pressure on the military junta and work towards justice for Myanmar.

Mr. M.R. Majidi (Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA)) said that science and technology were currently in the hands of extremist factions and, if not ethically used, would lead to tragedies similar to the genocide, ethnic cleansing and mass killings in Gaza and Lebanon. The apartheid regime of Israel had committed war crimes killing thousands of innocent people, mostly women and children, before the eyes of the international community, which preferred to remain silent. The ongoing escalation of tensions and mass killings were an alarming prelude for another world war. Given the IPU's history of parliamentary diplomacy and mandate to maintain peace and security, it was urged to take the necessary steps to put an end to the humanitarian crisis in the region.

Mr. L. Achour (Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM)) said that PAM's member parliaments had emphasized the need to regulate AI in all areas of their activities and examine how AI could hinder democratic processes. Cyberthreats knew no borders, and cyberspying was a serious concern, as it could undermine democracy. PAM had worked closely with other organizations to combat terrorism and established a research centre that studied the use of research and how sensitive data was obtained. It had also established an international observatory on AI and communication, which identified potential threats of fake news and adopted legislation to deal with such threats. Through dialogue with civil society, it had put forward measures to leverage the benefits of the digital revolution.

Mr. M. Cassayre (International Development Law Organization (IDLO)) said that technology and innovation had transformative potential to shape a just, peaceful and equitable world. Digital innovation could increase institutions' efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness to people's needs. Electronic case management and court information systems, for example, could improve procedures and build trust in governance. Making legal resources and interventions more accessible and affordable empowered citizens to claim their rights, such as through mobile courts and translation services. Technologies such as open data platforms and e-governance provided real-time access to information, promoting transparency, integrity, visibility of decision-making processes, fairness and accountability. Technology could also foster advances in critical sectors, including education and health.

However, the digital world remained largely unregulated. Designing, developing and deploying such technologies must be grounded in the rule of law, a rights-based approach and unwavering focus on people's needs. Technology should empower justice-seekers regardless of gender, class or race. To that end, clear legal frameworks were essential to govern the responsible use of technology, promote digital literacy and access, especially for marginalized populations, establish guard-rails for the unlawful use of technology and encourage multidisciplinary approaches to data governance. Parliaments should work together to ensure that emerging technologies were used ethically, protected fundamental rights and promoted peace. IDLO remained committed to working with parliaments and other partners to strengthen legal frameworks in that regard.

Ms. M.d.C. Alva Prieto (Peru) took the Chair.

Mr. G. Silberschmidt (World Health Organization (WHO)) said that the WHO and the IPU had renewed their memorandum of understanding to deepen their collaboration. Progress towards the SDGs was off track. Scientific advances were increasingly focused among a few people in just a few countries. There was growing mistrust in evidence and science. It was necessary to leverage science to address current challenges in a way that increased equity, which would not happen through a passive trickle-down effect. The decisions parliamentarians made would determine the future of the planet and humanity. The WHO stood ready to support parliaments and the IPU to address challenges and required their support in turn, especially for two WHO priorities – the ratification of the Pandemic Agreement and sustainable global health financing, including through the WHO Investment Round.

Mr. N. Ștefănuță (Vice-President, European Parliament) said that too many people were affected by war, hunger and climate change. Science and innovation drove not only progress but also division. Parliamentarians should ensure that they were used for the common good. No one parliament could address the current global challenges on its own. The environmental crisis was one of the world's most pressing challenges. The European Union (EU) had therefore established the European Green Deal and invited all countries to become involved in it. It invested in science and technology to secure a greener future through its Horizon Europe programme. It was necessary to promote green technologies and a circular economy, and establish global multilateral partnerships. While environmental issues were key to sustainability, economies needed to grow to reduce poverty. AI affected jobs, and all the more so in advancing economies. The EU AI Act balanced innovation, safety and social issues. AI was important in promoting peace through the use of machine data, learning and big data, and the development of more accurate foresight systems. However, if AI was used incorrectly, fake news could erode trust in democratic institutions. The world was led by more sovereign and dictatorial forces than it had been decades prior. Parliaments needed to unite ethics and human rights as well as technology and people's interests. To achieve positive outcomes, the European Parliament promoted the Global Digital Compact of the UN and would partner with parliaments to address energy, food security and wars.

Mr. R. Khosla (Executive Director, Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)) said that it was essential to incorporate the views of scientists, industry leaders and civil society, while remaining mindful of STI's potential adverse effects. Democratic institutions were pivotal in ensuring that progress was people-centred and protected the rights and well-being of all, particularly the most vulnerable. STI should not be limited to fostering technological growth, but responsibly leveraged to bridge social inequalities. Technology had been used to benefit, in particular, low-income and remote communities, namely through disease prevention, telemedicine to improve access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, new contraceptive methods to reduce

unintended pregnancies and portable ultrasound devices for the timely screening of pregnancy complications, thus reducing mortality. The challenges relating to STI should be addressed equitably and ethically, such as by reducing the Global North-South divide and facilitating international cooperation to establish global and regional standards for emerging technologies.

Ms. M.-T. Pictet-Althann (Sovereign Order of Malta) said that new technologies had immense potential for good but also posed significant risks that must be mitigated, especially their harmful effects to fundamental human rights, including, most notably, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, which was undermined by misinformation and disinformation. STI should be used ethically to promote democracy and avoid social tensions and the exacerbation of conflicts and inequalities. Parliamentarians needed to establish legal frameworks to guide the development of technology, guard against its misuse and guarantee equal opportunities to bridge the technological gap, leaving no one behind. The Sovereign Order of Malta looked forward to actively participating in the Second IPU Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue, due to take place in June 2025 in Rome. It was working closely with the IPU Secretariat and thanked the Secretary General for his leadership and support regarding the interfaith dialogue.

SECOND SPEAKERS FROM DELEGATIONS

Ms. R. Brooking (New Zealand) said that emphasis should be placed on longitudinal studies because they demonstrated the importance of funding science and research to inform policy decisions. Such studies followed groups of people over time to examine population trends and showed how social determinants, such as poverty and the environment, and early-life experiences had long-term impacts on health, well-being and ageing. Longitudinal studies outperformed other approaches in answering key policy questions in terms of prevention, early intervention and programmes to reduce inequities and improve health and well-being. The Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study was one of the world's most detailed studies of human health and development. Given that some of its findings had informed policy, legislators should fund and consider longitudinal studies when developing policies.

Mr. N. Mohabir (Guyana) said that parliaments should advance human progress based on the recognition that STI impacted almost every facet of human life. Parliaments should create a regulatory framework to maximize STI's benefits and minimize its downfalls, the greatest of which was increased unemployment resulting from mechanization. Considering that harsh weather phenomena had become the norm, environmental preservation and sustainability were top priorities; the planet should be safe for future generations. While the current generation could not undo what was already done, it could reduce degradation, using technology to preserve what was left. Although Guyana had one of the world's most sustainable forests, it was investing heavily in renewable energies. The country presented a model the global community could emulate. Unless swift action was taken, the burdens of science and technology would quickly outstrip their benefits.

Ms. B.O. Kjerstad (Norway) said that parliaments were faced with the challenge of creating legislation that leveraged AI as a tool for sustainability. Technology developed quickly, and technological companies should not be given too much power. Given that the internet and digital information were crossborder issues, legislation had to be drafted with other countries. In that regard, Norway took inspiration from the EU and the EU AI Act for its legislation. Ensuring prosperity for all was a challenge. Since resources were finite, parliamentarians should establish regulations fostering sustainable development for the people they represented, while preserving the environment and water resources.

Ms. Kishi Makiko (Japan) said that her party had established the promotion of digital transformation within politics as a policy objective to achieve digital democracy, including civic technology, thereby allowing for electronic voting and direct citizen participation in administrative and judicial decision-making processes. It was important to create a digital society where no one, especially the elderly, was left behind. Parliamentarians should ensure that digitalization did not lead to job loss. There should be a policy guaranteeing that all workers, including non-regular workers, freelancers, foreign workers and workers with disabilities, could live with a sense of safety and security. That policy should be translated into practice by eliminating the digital divide and working towards harmonious economic development through the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) and AI. Governments and businesses should consider how

information and data were managed with a view to protecting personal data. When problems had arisen regarding the mismanagement of personal information in the country's optional identity document system, the Parliament had pointed out the risks to the Government and encouraged efforts to improve the system. There should be balance between the use of AI and regulation. Parliamentarians should craft AI to bolster the well-being of humankind as a whole. Japan looked forward to discussing the challenges associated with harnessing STI.

Ms. M.-N. Battistel (France) said that generative AI demonstrated how AI had moved beyond being an issue for experts to a matter of everyday life, which parliamentarians should address. AI's negative effects impacted women more than men – it could increase gender inequalities, making women more invisible, and contribute to disinformation leading to violence against women, particularly in politics. Parliamentarians should better moderate content, put measures in place to remove inappropriate content and ensure that women had high-level positions in that field.

Parliaments needed to discuss technological progress and its repercussions. In the 1980s, France had established a parliamentary office for the assessment of scientific and technical choices, whereby field experts and parliamentarians worked together on long-term scientific and technical consequences, which informed the Parliament's decisions. The French Parliament had also developed a digital modelling tool to anticipate economic and fiscal ramifications of measures taken. There should be an international framework to ensure AI was used ethically while balancing the need for regulating but not stifling the development of innovations and preventing over-dependence. It was important to address the use of AI to generate fake news and interfere in electoral campaigns. The EU AI Act and the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law were key documents on AI regulation. Considering that technological progress knew no borders, there was an urgent need for multilateral dialogue bodies, such as the IPU, to jointly reflect on harnessing innovation. France welcomed the draft resolution set out in document A/149/2-P.3.

Mr. H. Raholijaona (Madagascar) said that scientific and technological progress was key to addressing global challenges. With regard to environmental sustainability, the majority of farmers in Madagascar continued traditional slash-and-burn practices. For most of the population, who did not have the necessary means or technological infrastructure, harnessing STI for peace and security remained a luxury. While Madagascar had already established legislative mechanisms on AI, they needed to be pragmatically updated. International cooperation should also be strengthened. His country stood ready to work with the IPU to overcome challenges in practicalizing steps taken.

Ms. D. Tei (Tonga) said that her country's introduction of an updated bill on computer crimes was important in safeguarding its digital future. In Tonga, STI had fostered women's economic empowerment, enabling them to start businesses, access markets, gain financial independence and thrive in male-dominated fields. By working together, parliamentarians could ensure that STI was used to its fullest potential, driving prosperity, sustainability, social cohesion and peace.

Ms. M.d.S. Núñez Monreal (Mexico) said that her country was committed to technological democratization by integrating AI into its legislative systems and ensuring digital transformation. Its Constitution promoted the right to science using policy based on solidarity so that technological progress could benefit all. National innovation programmes incorporated STI to address challenges in such areas as healthcare, access to water, cybersecurity and food security. The country addressed the digital divide so that no one, especially vulnerable groups, was left behind. Parliamentarians should provide incentives for innovation while protecting the digital world. It was important to set limits and responsibilities on the data processing of society. To that end, Mexico had established legislation on personal data since 2010. Digital education was key to bridging the digital divide and building a fair, peaceful and democratic society.

Mr. A. Paredes (Peru) said that it was frustrating that STI, which could benefit people in a new way each day, was being used to cause damage and destruction, such as with weapons and wars. No one could justify taking a life for a piece of land or because of a different way of thinking. Society could not continue living with the permanent pain of seeing many people being murdered around the world. If parliamentarians did not act, they became accomplices to the murders they frequently criticized, even if the people in their country were not directly involved. There should be empathy and not indifference. STI should help parliaments to make intelligent, relevant decisions to

benefit all and provide the necessary tools to address underlying problems, such as climate change, pollution and a good quality of life for all. More than ever, education needed to be strengthened to better address human pain, and there should be increased education on ethics for all young people so as to overcome double standards. Parliamentarians should ensure that citizens had integrity and solidarity and were humane. Indolence and indifference could no longer be tolerated.

Mr. S. Ozboyaci (Türkiye) said that young people could best harness the power of science and technology to build a peaceful and sustainable future. However, they did not have equal access to opportunities, as some were held back by war, terrorism, famine and economic hardship. Technologies developed to benefit humanity were being used to destroy lives in some regions, such as in Gaza and Lebanon. Peace and sustainability could not be built if the current tragedy was ignored. Speaking directly to young parliamentarians, he recalled that a 19-year-old software engineer in Gaza, who had probably sought to use science and technology to build a peaceful future, had been burned to death in an air strike on a hospital. Parliamentarians should raise their voice to stop the genocide in Gaza. They could not leave future generations a world they were ashamed of. Parliaments needed to oppose Israel's massacre in Gaza and stand on the right side of history, which was humanity and peace. History should remember parliamentarians for their courage to stand up for the oppressed. A peaceful and sustainable future was possible only by building a more just world.

Ms. D. O'Neill (Australia) said that according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the available data was so ineffective that it was unsure whether countries were losing US\$100 billion or US\$240 billion because of multinational profit shifting. All countries were impacted and faced serious data poverty. There needed to be a collective shift to more advanced technologies so that parliaments could gather the necessary information to help citizens. Regarding inequitable information-sharing, if the powers exploiting countries and their citizens had more information than the countries being exploited, parliamentarians of exploited countries could not properly represent their citizens. Evidence-based, scientifically informed policymaking was key.

Mr. C. Núñez Salinas (Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO)) said that AI, if used and developed appropriately, could improve people's quality of life. It was necessary to analyse the use of resources, investment in infrastructure and training, and establish regulatory frameworks to avoid deepening socioeconomic divides. PARLATINO was committed to ensuring that STI worked for the benefit of all and had therefore adopted a framework law enabling countries to establish AI regulation from a sociocultural perspective to contribute to ethical sustainable development.

Social justice was not just an abstract ideal, but a political and moral imperative that should guide all actions, especially in overcoming all forms of poverty. Parliamentarians needed to ensure that all people had access to the necessary opportunities and resources to live a life of dignity. Poverty was not simply about statistics, but about the millions of people impacted by deprivation and hopelessness. To achieve complete democracy, parliamentarians should ensure that systems were inclusive for the social and economic benefit of all.

A delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that Norway had told lies about Iran. The heroic 7 October operation had been called a terrorist operation, whereas it had been the most minimal and most legitimate response for Palestinians, by way of Hamas, to defend their land and right to life. Norway knew better than anyone that if Israel's crimes could have been resolved by diplomacy and negotiations, the Oslo Accords would have succeeded.

Islamophobia had started in Europe. If there were demonstrations against Israel in Europe, the Palestinians should not pay the price. Palestine should not pay for Hitler's crimes in Europe. He asked Mr. Moe (Norway) whether a memorial had been held in Norway for the thousands of Palestinians martyred by Israel. If Norwegians had demonstrated against the crimes by the Zionist regime and supported the Palestinian cause, Norwegian parliamentarians should represent the people of Norway, not the criminal Zionist regime. Norway should consider whether it had condemned the attacks and assassinations in Iran or the killing of the Hezbollah leader, and whether it had communicated its displeasure with Iran's retaliatory response. He recommended that Mr. Moe be polite when speaking about the great nation of Iran and stand on the right side of history.

YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS

Ms. K. Carter (New Zealand), providing a Maori worldview on peace, security and justice, said that data was often seen as the backbone of the information economy, significantly impacting marginalized groups and Indigenous communities, especially Indigenous data sovereignty. Society still grappled with defining data and the ethical implications of its collection and use.

Parliamentarians should consider whether its collection served as a force for good, bad or something in between. There was growing concern about how data was gathered and stored, particularly by social media platforms that collected information without explicit consent.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples stressed the need to protect Indigenous communities' collective rights, the paradox that excessive data worked against Indigenous communities while insufficient data benefited them, and the need for Indigenous peoples to control access to and manage their data. Indigenous data was a treasure and was essential for Indigenous Peoples' health and well-being as they navigated the complexities of the information economy. Everyone should advocate for stronger protections for Indigenous data sovereignty.

Ms. A. Acosta Islas (Mexico) said that AI prototypes should be understandable and there should be transparency in how they had been tested and how they made decisions, as well as transparency in the data used to ensure that such decisions were fair and responsible. AI should be regulated by ethics and there was an urgent need for parliaments to establish people-centred regulatory frameworks that promoted the protection of human rights and social justice. Parliamentarians needed to give more visibility to and guard against the risks of AI. International cooperation should be strengthened to benefit from AI. It was important for the IPU to set up a standing working group on that issue with a view to facilitating the exchange of best legislative practices and fostering collaboration with other international organizations. Mexico's Parliament had drafted a digital education agenda and a law on science and technology that promoted education in that field. It had also carried out a scholarship programme to increase the participation of women and young people in high-level posts in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Mr. R. Kempson (United Kingdom) said that STI developments were powered by young people in every country and they should be celebrated. Young parliamentarians should consider how they could play a part in the struggle for human progress. It was their duty to allow innovation to thrive and benefit everyone by ensuring that people, societies and markets were free. While totalitarian systems might seem to be able to direct resources by instilling fear and demonstrating strength, it was only an illusion of progress, which always failed in the end. Young parliamentarians must be unafraid to fight for the conditions necessary for scientific and technological progress. The United Kingdom stood in solidarity with the people of Ukraine, who were on the frontlines of that struggle.

The sitting rose at 12:50.

Sitting of Wednesday, 16 October 2024

(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 14:35, with Ms. J. Pejović (Montenegro) in the Chair.

Item 3 of the agenda (continued)

General Debate on the theme *Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future* (A/149/3-Inf.1)

Mr. M. Ilabaca (Chile) said that, with its huge renewable energy potential, his country was committed to its national strategy for achieving a cleaner and more sustainable future through lowering its carbon emissions. In so doing, it would help to combat climate change, harnessing crucial new sustainable technologies to address green energy challenges and reduce energy consumption without jeopardizing development. Chile was using artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics in agriculture to improve yields and in healthcare to enhance and facilitate surgical procedures. It also used AI modelling to predict, identify and deal with wildfires in real time. Such tools had critically allowed it to protect its ecosystems and improve quality of life, including in remote areas. STI, moreover, played a useful role in conflict prevention and resolution, international diplomacy and cooperation, and environmental monitoring.

Investment in education and research, especially in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), would contribute towards equipping future leaders with the skills required to address twenty-first century challenges. To boost those critical skills, Chile was promoting STEM education and giving grants for research in the areas of renewable energy, AI and robotics. It was also providing guidance in the responsible use of new technologies and in drafting legislation to provide a regulatory framework fit to cater for new technological developments. Chile was keen to participate as a trustworthy partner in STI knowledge-sharing and capacity-building towards shaping a more peaceful, sustainable and just future for all.

Ms. A. Aghazada (Azerbaijan) said that sustainability and peace were two interconnected pillars, with security dependent on balancing human activities with the natural environment and technology playing its role. Aware of the impact of renewable energy solutions on energy production, energy consumption and carbon emissions reduction, Azerbaijan was expanding its capabilities accordingly and leveraging its expertise to contribute to global energy security. Together with inclusive innovation, international cooperation was essential to achieving equity and global prosperity. Azerbaijan was therefore collaborating to promote knowledge transfer and scientific partnership to ensure that STI benefited all, including through solutions for early conflict mitigation. It was vital to invest in research, support education and foster public-private partnerships to drive technological breakthroughs. Azerbaijan was committed to working with international partners to build a sustainable, resilient and peaceful world for future generations, using STI as a tool for the greater good and the advancement of equity, stability and universal peace.

Mr. N. Zippelius (Germany) said that, to unlock the potential for innovation in education, healthcare and business denied to the countless numbers disadvantaged by the global digital divide, States must first and foremost be willing to provide free, open and secure internet access. Nonetheless, in addition to increasingly censoring online content not aligned with specific political or ideological narratives, some countries were limiting such access altogether – and with it individual freedoms and development prospects. Much younger technologies such as AI, however, would shape socioeconomic and political development for years to come. All parliamentarians must therefore consciously strive to implement the critical IPU resolution on AI, especially in light of the perturbing trend among autocratic States to restrict AI models, making them culturally nuanced and prone to propaganda and undermining the collaborative nature of AI technology. Parliamentarians must support and engage in international exchanges aimed at countering such protectionist tendencies.

Ms. M. Huber (Austria) said that children and youth would be most affected by climate disasters but often went unheard in politics. Parliamentarians consequently had the responsibility not only to speak but also to act on their behalf, and fast. STI, including clean technologies, could contribute significantly towards addressing the challenges entailed in eliminating fossil fuels and achieving net zero emissions. With the transition to green energy, energy independence and energy security a matter of peace and security, dependency on critical raw materials must be reduced by stimulating the circular economy to promote sustainability and reduce environmental impacts. It was always essential to maintain dialogue but it was also necessary to act.

Mr. A. Ekpenyong (Nigeria) said that, along with innovations to improve water and food security, ground-breaking achievements in such fields as sustainable energy, AI and blockchain were enhancing life quality, creating pathways towards peace and global sustainability, offering solutions to crucial challenges, and providing hope for younger generations. Appreciative of the pivotal STI role in national development, Nigeria had established a comprehensive legal framework for fostering innovation across key sectors, safeguarding its digital infrastructure and building trust in the technology ecosystem. It nevertheless faced gaps in infrastructure funding and international collaboration. The IPU was uniquely positioned to assist developing nations unlock the full STI potential through capacity-building and knowledge-sharing. Representing over 60% of the country's population and energized by STI possibilities, Nigerian youth were driving innovation but needed an enabling environment. The IPU would hopefully continue as a steadfast ally to nations such as Nigeria in harnessing the transformative power of STI.

Ms. M. Kivelä (Finland) said that, with world leaders looking to technological innovations to advance their military pursuits, the development of so-called killer robots and the worrying reports of Israeli use of robots and automated tools in the genocide taking place in Gaza served as calls to action. A legally binding global framework was urgently needed to regulate autonomous weapon systems, in line with the IPU resolution adopted in that connection in March 2024. Given the potentially devastating consequences of such weapons for humankind, their production, use and trade should be strictly prohibited and steps taken to ensure that global inequality was not accelerated by their development and use for profit, with others paying the true cost. Technology, however, also brought opportunities for sustainability, human rights and indeed animal rights. New innovations could help transform food systems, mainstream plant-based food production and reduce factory farming. Only if harnessed for the greater good could technology bring significant progress.

Mr. A.H. Sabeti Monfared (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the existing world order and structure of international organizations had failed to create lasting peace and security, even contributing to current tragedies. Regrettably, many of those organizations were mere bystanders looking on, alongside governments, at the brutal massacre of Palestinian youth and children at the hands of the occupying Israeli regime that had stripped freedom and human rights of all meaning. The question needing no answer was whether advancements in STI – and above all AI – would lead to well-being and prosperity or be misused by a select few to monopolize knowledge and turn opportunities into threats to humanity. Without a profound change of perspective, new knowledge and new decisions, or better still a rethink, even the greatest scientific achievements would be used for ill rather than to change the world's fate by transforming it into a better place.

Mr. A. Pinotes Batista (Portugal) said that new technologies such as AI and blockchain were indispensable to building a more sustainable world and, above all, a cohesive society in line with human rights principles. In the face of current geopolitical tensions, all forms of intelligence were needed – not simply AI alone – to achieve progress marked by decency and humanism. Parliaments and their young members in particular must join in to play a key role in the development of AI as a powerful tool offering opportunities that are vital to seize. To bring about the fulfilment and happiness that the Earth's resources could provide, steps towards overcoming barriers and tensions must be taken by expressing humility and compassion through dialogue, and by ambitiously harnessing development to serve humanity.

Ms. D. Sammut Hili (Malta) said that new technological tools could help to foster solutions for improving life quality and promoting harmony among diverse communities, while science promoted understanding of the world and the complex challenges it faced. Through research, clean energy technologies could be developed, agricultural practices enhanced and sustainable urban

environments created to reduce humanity's carbon footprint and protect the planet for future generations. Technology was a catalyst for change and essential for sustainability, with digital platforms facilitating communication across borders, and empowering individuals and organizations to tackle local and global challenges together. Innovation was central to that venture, encouraging creative thinking and the pursuit of new ideas leading to solutions for aligning economic growth with environmental responsibility. To harness such powerful tools, education and collaboration must be prioritized to equip future generations with the skills needed to navigate and innovate in a rapidly evolving world.

Mr. G. Ahearn (Ireland) said that it had been unthinkable in the 1990s that his island country would ever be at peace, yet it was now Europe's fastest growing economy, with low inflation and full employment, despite challenges such as the coronavirus pandemic, the war in Ukraine, rising living costs and Brexit. STI and AI, especially now, brought a new challenge, creating opportunities but also potential risks such as inequality and technological unemployment, which affected both the most vulnerable and the most well-off in society. To mitigate those risks, governments must invest further in the best tool, namely education, for combating them and enable skilling and upskilling in a very changing world. With the IPU playing a leading role in that regard, his Parliament looked forward to working with it in countering all such challenges going forward.

Mr. M. Rakotomalala (Madagascar), after highlighting a satisfactory increase in the number of young Malagasy parliamentarians aged under 45, said that STI and social media were key factors in a country's development and modernization, and in the effectiveness of parliamentary work. In Madagascar, plans were afoot to expand high-speed internet connectivity to rural areas in a bid to bridge the national digital divide. Young people would consequently be better supported in their STI endeavours, exemplified in 2024 by a young Malagasy team's participation in the finals of a major pan-African robotics competition involving the development of autonomous farming systems. Always keen to promote such initiatives, the Malagasy Parliament had created a committee tasked with assessing the impact of State-run digital development and transformation programmes. It was all part of saying yes to young people.

Mr. A. Tongjaisod (Thailand) said that young parliamentarians must do their utmost to build an open source community to cope with the technological advancements on the horizon. To that end, it was important to scale up the expertise and competitiveness of young entrepreneurs in all industries and equip them with the digital and smart skills required to build a vibrant technological ecosystem. In Thailand, the legislation in place enabled young start-ups and entrepreneurs to own, manage and commercialize their research and inventions, with financial support provided through a technology and innovation-based enterprise fund. Through hands-on training, networking and incubation opportunities provided to young small and medium-sized enterprises and start-ups, it would be possible to capitalize fully on new digital advancements across economic sectors, helping to fulfil the national dream of turning Thailand into a high-income country.

Mr. W. Soto Palacios (Peru) said that STI must be ethically and responsibly used to advantage to build a just and equitable society for all. As a melting pot of diverse cultures, ethnicities and languages, and with its incalculable natural wealth, his country had unique qualities to be protected against potential threats from the misuse of new and innovative technologies. Those same powerful tools could also help it to preserve its biodiversity, safeguard its communities and guarantee peace and sustainability. A key regulatory law had therefore been introduced to promote sustainable, competitive and productive socioeconomic development as part of the commitment to harnessing technology to serve the entire population and its well-being. Appropriate policymaking and increased cooperation were likewise essential to ensuring that STI drove progress towards a more inclusive, peaceful and sustainable future for all.

Mr. S. Patra (India) said that his country's significant strides forward in harnessing STI for development had been largely driven by the passion and ingenuity of its young innovators. Young Indian entrepreneurs and technologists were developing viable solutions to pressing socioeconomic challenges, while Indian technical and economic cooperation programmes were promoting fruitful collaboration and knowledge-sharing among young scientists and engineers from developing nations. Valuable communication and data services provided to neighbouring countries through the South Asia Satellite launched by India underscored how technological collaboration could benefit peace and development. Youth must be encouraged to see STI as a tool for

cooperation and peacebuilding. The immense potential of youth-led STI would only be fully realized, however, if the world's young scientists, technologists and innovators came together to exchange ideas and work towards common goals, including that of a more harmonious world for future generations.

Mr. H. Carneiro (Portugal) said that the significant barriers faced by many countries in assessing new technologies simply perpetuated inequalities and limited global development. Parliamentarians must ensure that STI was within reach of all and served not to restrict human rights and freedoms but to emancipate citizens and secure their access to essential services, irrespective of socioeconomic status or geographical location. With AI gaining prominence, its regulation must be prioritized and undertaken on the basis of universal principles and rules to ensure that it was not used to distort perceptions of reality or manipulate conscience, freedom or truth.

STI was also instrumental in the efficient and innovative management of scarce natural resources, ultimately promoting peace by favouring stability, preventing tensions and reducing competition. STI could furthermore lead to new opportunities for helping those in most need and empowering new generations, especially in regions where instability or poor economic development restricted access to education and health. In short, STI played a decisive role in building a fairer, more peaceful and sustainable future. It was the job of legislators to ensure that technological advances were used in an ethical, inclusive and regulated manner that enabled all to benefit without losing sight of fundamental human rights and dignity.

The sitting was suspended at 15:20 and resumed at 15:40.

Dr. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania), President of the IPU, took the Chair.

Cremer-Passy Prize ceremony

The President, after recalling both Article 2 of the Cremer-Passy Prize Rules concerning the award process and the winners of the two previous editions of the prize awarded at the 145th Assembly in Kigali and the 147th Assembly in Luanda, said that the criterion set for the current third edition of the prize was that the candidates must have demonstrated an exceptional record in connection with the 2024 IPU priority theme of peace and security. Composed in accordance with Articles 6.1 and 6.2 of the Prize Rules, the Prize Selection Board had met on four occasions to deliberate on the candidates and had reached a unanimous decision.

A video announcing Mr. H. Kabadi, Speaker of the National Transitional Council of Chad, as the winner of the 2024 Cremer-Passy Prize was screened.

The President, congratulating Mr. Kabadi on his award and noting that he had been unable to attend the ceremony, invited the Vice-President of the National Transitional Council of Chad to accept the award on his behalf.

Mr. D. Laouhingamaye (Chad), accepting the award on Mr. Kabadi's behalf and conveying a message sent by Mr. Kabadi himself, said that Mr. Kabadi was touched, honoured and humbled to have been chosen as the recipient of the 2024 Cremer-Passy Prize. He dedicated the prize to all Chadians, including the country's President and indeed its parliamentarians, who strived to craft key legislation and make voices heard. He also thanked the African Group for their ardent support of his candidacy, which had led him to become the first African parliamentarian to be awarded the illustrious prize. More than simply a personal honour, the award was in recognition of the collective efforts of all those who, through every word and deed, had made valuable contributions towards building and consolidating peace and security as universally cherished values. He hoped that the IPU would continue working to ensure that parliamentary diplomacy likewise continued to achieve its goals, starting with peace and security, tolerance, cooperation and solidarity among all peoples of the world.

The President said that the geopolitical groups were encouraged to nominate two sitting members of parliament – specifically one man and one woman as opposed to one candidate and one alternate – as candidates for the 2025 Cremer-Passy Prize before the deadline of 30 June 2025. With the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action due to be celebrated in 2025, gender equality had been fittingly chosen as the theme for the prize.

Special segment on the latest IPU publications

The Secretary General, introducing the IPU's three most recent publications, recalled that the IPU provided tools for equipping parliamentarians with the skills, knowledge and experience needed for them to take action in line with their commitments and to function effectively in their legislative role. Entitled *Human security and common security to build peace*, the first of the three was relevant to the 2024 IPU priority theme of peace and security and offered innovative approaches to addressing conflict and promoting peace. It served as a comprehensive and timely guide for tackling domestic and international security challenges in an era of increasingly numerous and complex wars and conflicts involving multiple parties and geopolitical competition. Such conflicts were often fuelled by criminal activity and the spread of disinformation on social media, further amplified by AI. Two approaches to parliamentary decision-making were suggested in the toolkit: the people-centred human security approach focused on contextualized tailored legislation prioritizing individual well-being; and the common security approach emphasizing dialogue, multilateralism and international collaboration as means of resolving wider problems.

A video on the publication and its intended purpose was screened.

The Secretary General said that the second publication was the eighth edition of the *World e-Parliament Report* produced by the IPU Centre for Innovation in Parliament on the basis of findings from a survey of 115 parliamentary chambers in 86 countries. The report showed that digital transformation in parliaments was gaining momentum, as reflected in the figures, including for use of cloud computing and AI tools, with cybersecurity emerging as a top priority. Equally notable, however, was the growing digital divide between rich and poor parliaments and its potential impact on the quality of democracy. The report also introduced the IPU Digital Maturity Index, a pioneering tool for helping parliaments to assess their progress across six key areas, including governance, infrastructure and public engagement.

A video on the World e-Parliament Report 2024 was screened

The Secretary General said that the third publication, entitled *10 actions for stronger national climate commitments*, was aimed at helping parliamentarians in their pivotal role of ensuring that climate-related pledges were transformed into robust policies backed by solid budgets and that governments were held to account through enhanced oversight of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). With the 2025 deadline for NDC submissions fast approaching, the guide served as an opportunity for parliaments to shape their country's climate future, providing detailed NDC background information and outlining 10 practical actions for strengthening oversight practices. It was a sister publication to *10 actions for greener parliaments*, issued in 2023, which encouraged parliaments to reduce their carbon footprint. Both guides were part of the IPU climate campaign, *Parliaments for the Planet*, designed to mobilize parliaments to accelerate action on the climate emergency.

At the proposal of the IPU President, a round of applause was given to the Secretary General and his team in appreciation of their work.

Item 4 of the agenda

Special accountability segment on the implementation of IPU resolutions and other decisions (A/149/4-R.1)

The President, accompanying her remarks with the first part of a digital slide presentation, said that she intended to continue underscoring the point she had made during her leadership campaign about the vital duty of parliaments to translate all IPU decisions into national realities. Of the 37 Member Parliaments designated in 2024 to participate in a standardized survey and report on their implementation of such decisions, a commendable 81% had responded by the late June deadline. A further eight were to be applauded for having voluntarily participated in the reporting exercise. The written report was contained in document A/149/4-R.1.

To facilitate the annual reporting process described in Article 7 of the IPU Statutes, parliaments from each geopolitical group were designated to report and answer the questionnaire prepared and sent out by the IPU Secretariat in March of each year, with voluntary responses in addition always most welcome. Every Member Parliament could therefore participate in the exercise and those under obligation to do so could expect follow-up by the IPU Secretariat.

Ms. A. Filip (Director, Division for Member Parliaments and External Relations, IPU), presenting the data provided by national parliaments in the 2024 reporting exercise, as set out in document A/149/4-R.1, and accompanying her remarks with the second part of the digital slide presentation, said that all indications from the wealth of information received were that the follow-up to IPU decisions had been encouraging. Member Parliaments that had not already done so were invited to read the document, with particular reference to the specific cases set out in the annex thereto.

A breakdown of the 81% response rate mentioned showed that the rate stood at 100% for two geopolitical groups, at between 60% and 90% for one such group, and at 50% for another. A significant majority of 78% were relaying the IPU outcomes to their respective parliaments, with almost one half taking additional steps within parliament. The IPU encouraged still more parliaments to translate those outcomes into domestic legislation and policy and to hold parliamentary and committee debates on which of them were considered most interesting and useful.

Good examples of action by Member Parliaments included, in Australia, the establishment of an autonomous anti-corruption commission; in Mexico, constitutional amendments to lower the age of eligibility for parliament and the Executive Cabinet; in Burundi, the creation of a commission on the human rights of parliamentarians; in Namibia, the implementation of affirmative action policies to increase women's representation; in the Philippines, the ratification of two key peace and security treaties promoted by the IPU; and in Pakistan, the establishment of a fully functional secretariat to provide guidance on legislative implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As made on a yearly basis, the main recommendations for enhancing the impact of the IPU's collective work were for parliamentarians to submit the IPU Assembly reports to their parliaments; share copies of Assembly declarations and resolutions with other parliamentarians; promote parliamentary debates on Assembly outcomes; draft legislation or amendments aligned with IPU resolutions and recommendations; and engage systematically in the annual IPU reporting exercise.

Thirty-nine Member Parliaments had already been identified to engage in the 2025 exercise, with all others encouraged to share information on their work. In both cases, the engagement was an opportunity to disseminate such information more broadly among the global parliamentary community, amplify the key messages from the parliaments concerned, and raise visibility around their work and its impact.

The President said that a number of Member Parliaments would share information contained in the reports that they had submitted, starting with Speaker Katjavivi of Namibia, to whom the Secretary General first wished to pay tribute in light of his announcement of retirement from political service.

The Secretary General, in his tribute, said that Mr. Katjavivi was a very special person who had played an indelible role in the work of the IPU, following in the tradition of the series of distinguished Namibian personalities who had served the Organization, including as its President, since the Parliament of Namibia had joined the membership in 1990. In addition to his professional relationship with Mr. Katjavivi, he also had a valuable personal one that had informed their collaboration. Mr. Katjavivi's spirit of accommodation, his constructive contribution to deliberations and his conciliatory mode in exchanges with colleagues counted among his admirable qualities. His sterling youth empowerment credentials, moreover, exemplified in his introduction of young Namibian parliamentarians to the IPU, demonstrated how the older generation could equip young people to assume responsibility. Mr. Katjavivi would be missed but, with his mind still ticking in retirement, he would continue to contribute.

Mr. P. Katjavivi (Namibia), bidding a formal farewell in advance of his retirement in early 2025, said that he had been privileged to contribute to the collective efforts of all colleagues within the wonderful setting that was the IPU and urged continuing commitment to the democratic principles of unity and cooperation that guided those efforts to create prosperity, peace and stability.

Concerning the reporting exercise, his focus would be on the Namibian youth agenda, specifically the Namibian Children's Parliament instituted 17 years previously in partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Namibia as a transformative initiative and now an exemplary model of youth engagement with a remarkable impact on national policymaking. Through its platform, young Namibians held Parliament and Government to account and actively

participated, including as advocates for their concerns and rights, in shaping the country's future from a fresh perspective. Reinforcing democratic principles and encouraging early civic engagement, the Children's Parliament palpably served as an excellent training ground for future young parliamentarians seeking to ensure that the youth voice was heard and acted upon.

With its members representing all regions as well as marginalized and Indigenous communities, the Children's Parliament had during its six sessions to date addressed wide-ranging issues of importance, including education reform, climate change, children's rights and welfare, gender equality, and boys' educational and emotional needs. Forming a guiding framework for future measures, the reports on its sessions were routinely debated in Parliament and submitted to the executive for approval and further action. In short, the Children's Parliament was a catalyst for change and empowered the upcoming generation to participate in governance and policy development.

The President invited two young Namibian delegates to share their experiences and insights as leading members of the Namibian Children's Parliament.

Ms. P. Mokotjomela, member of the Namibian Children's Parliament, said that the impact of the Children's Parliament went beyond debate, with its motions influencing real legislative change, holding leaders accountable and making the youth voice count through raising critical issues in a commitment reflected in the reports of its sessions. She encouraged all IPU Member Parliaments to pilot similar initiatives to ensure that the voice of youth – already leaders of the day – was heard.

Mr. G. Neumbo, member of the Namibian Children's Parliament, said that their Parliament provided a unique platform for young people to shape their own future, hold government to account, advance the child-related agenda and truly shape policy direction. Youth engagement was critical to youth governance, with the Namibian experience showing that the youth voice could drive solutions. He encouraged emulation of the Namibian example of creating conducive environments for children and youth to grow as productive citizens.

Mr. F. Salim (Libya), emphasizing his Parliament's commitment to participating in all IPU gatherings and subsequently reflecting their outcomes in the country's legislation, said that examples included the enactment of laws to regulate radioactive and nuclear activities, combat cybercrime and online financial fraud, and establish a fund for the reconstruction of the city of Derna, which had been destroyed in a natural disaster. A parliamentary committee on sustainable development had also been established.

A video on action by the Libyan Parliament to implement IPU resolutions was screened.

Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada), focusing on the Manama Declaration adopted at the 146th Assembly in 2023 on promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies, said that the Canadian Senate Standing Committee on Human Rights had since published the findings of its year-long study on Islamophobic incidents in Canada, on which she had spoken in the General Debate at that Assembly. It had also reported on a further study conducted on anti-black racism, sexism and systematic discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Commission and wider public service, which had concluded that the Commission needed to set its own house in order. The Committee was now poised to release a report on forced global displacement. In line with the objectives set out in the Manama Declaration, her Parliament was dedicated to ensuring that its hearings remained open and accessible to all. Canada continued to act on its commitments to counter discrimination and intolerance in all their forms.

Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia), recalling the Australian-sponsored resolution on orphanage trafficking adopted at the 147th Assembly in Luanda, said that the resolution had represented a significant achievement for the IPU, embodying as it did the first global action plan on what was a relatively new form of trafficking and slavery affecting up to eight million children. She had now submitted a proposal to the IPU Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights for the resolution to be revisited at the 150th Assembly in Uzbekistan. In that event, her Parliament would organize a workshop on orphanage trafficking and also prepare a new handbook on the subject in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and possibly the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). For the IPU to work with a resolution sponsor on an implementation plan to share with legislators would constitute an entirely new approach to which she looked forward.

Mr. R. Alimov (Uzbekistan) said that his Parliament had enhanced its legislative framework to support implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across such sectors as education, healthcare, infrastructure and justice, including through effective oversight assisted by a parliamentary commission established in 2020 to focus on the SDGs. Special emphasis was also placed on gender equality and social inclusion, both crucial to attainment of the SDGs. In implementing the Rwanda Declaration on gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments, the focus was on strengthening related legislative frameworks, enhancing parliamentary oversight, reforming the judiciary and promoting good governance. To foster peace, justice and strong institutions in line with SDG 16, parliamentary reforms were centred on promoting transparency, accountability and the rule of law. Legislative bodies played a crucial role in ensuring that governments remained committed and accountable in their efforts to achieve the SDGs.

A video on the follow-up of IPU resolutions by the Parliament of Maldives was screened.

Mr. U. Lechte (Germany) said that, since the 146th Assembly in Bahrain in March 2023, the humanitarian situation in numerous crisis-ridden areas had worsened and the number of refugees worldwide had doubled. The United Nations (UN) refugee agency's budgetary requirement had also almost doubled since 2020 and, despite high donor contributions, it had a funding gap in common with the World Food Programme (WFP). In a complex environment of rapidly changing needs and priorities, both those organizations required flexible and timely funding. Given its substantial contributions, Germany was the world's second largest donor to UN organizations but could not guarantee the same in future, having already spent billions on Ukraine, for example. He therefore urged economically powerful countries worldwide to share responsibility by significantly increasing their humanitarian aid commitments. Lastly, the IPU stood for diplomacy and talks behind the scenes. Its Member Parliaments must not applaud aggressors but struggle together to achieve global peace and help the weak and poor – not the one with the mighty fist.

Mr. J. Fakhro (Bahrain), accompanying with a digital slide presentation his review of approaches in his country that reflected the spirit of the landmark Manama Declaration adopted in March 2023, said that Bahrain was deeply committed to peace and justice and continued to call for peace in the Middle East and a comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question, for the criminalization of religious, sectarian and racial hatred, and for efforts to ensure that global platforms were not exploited to incite fanatic extremism. Its King Hamad Global Center for Peaceful Coexistence was cooperating with the IPU to build capacities, enhance legislative frameworks and develop coordination mechanisms for consolidating the values of tolerance, harmony, peaceful coexistence and mutual respect. Bahrain believed that, if properly implemented, global initiatives were the way forward to a better and brighter world for all and that working for peace and stability was a collective responsibility. Itself a diverse society, it remained committed to the principles articulated in the Manama Declaration on promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies.

Mr. H. Singh (India) said that his country's hosting of the 2023 Group of 20 (G20) Summit under the theme *One Earth, One Family, One Future* reflected its vision for an inclusive global order, while its hosting of the Ninth G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit (P20) reaffirmed its commitment to parliamentary diplomacy as a means of promoting global peace and prosperity. Dedicated to sustainable environmental practices and climate justice, India aimed through its updated NDCs to achieve net zero emissions by 2070. It was also implementing a comprehensive strategy for combating abuse, exploitation and violence against children. As a strong parliamentary democracy, India had an independent judiciary and a political system sustained and supported by such institutions as an election commission and a comptroller and auditor general. It had a zero-tolerance approach to corruption, with measures to match, and had acted to promote transparency and accountability and ensure citizen participation in governance. It hoped that its joint efforts with the IPU would lead to a more democratic, peaceful and sustainable world.

Mr. T. Monberg (Denmark) said that the IPU provided welcome opportunities for meeting representatives from around the world and learning about the many different ways of building societies. Through such forums, the first steps could be taken towards strengthening coexistence through dialogue, which was key to addressing major challenges that no country alone could resolve. Ongoing conversations with fellow parliamentarians were therefore vital, including to break down historical barriers. The past could not be changed but, together, a better future could be created for the generations to come. With the future belonging to them, young people should be

given more influence and responsibility in the quest to tackle urgent issues, the climate crisis being a case in point. Efforts to resolve the planet's problems must be collective and solutions must be pursued without further delay through dialogue and action.

Ms. R. Maachaoui (Tunisia) said that measures taken by her Parliament to implement the resolution on cybercrimes adopted at the 146th Assembly in Manama had led to her country's accession to the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime, otherwise known as the Budapest Convention, in February 2024. Tunisia was accordingly working to enhance cooperation and exchange digital data and information to combat cybercrime, especially that involving human trafficking, terrorism, money-laundering, digital piracy, deepfakes, child sexual exploitation and cryptocurrency. It was also working to enhance the capacities of judges and law enforcement officers for dealing with electronic evidence that was potentially challenging to obtain. In April 2024, a parliamentary delegation from Tunisia had travelled to Lisbon for the official launch of the three-year CyberSouth+ project aimed at strengthening regional cooperation on cybercrime. As a young parliamentarian, she would strive to combat cybercrime, with a focus on the unscrupulous use of AI and other technologies to target women, girls and children in particular.

Ms. M. Guerra Castillo (Mexico) said that her Parliament had worked hard on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), establishing a cross-party group to check that all initiatives were tailored to the relevant SDGs and ensure that the country was well positioned to meet the SDG targets. Those many initiatives included laws providing for improved gender equality, a ban on holding public office for domestic violence offenders, and measures to protect children and adolescents from sexual exploitation and violence. Employment rights, workers' salaries and statutory working conditions had also been improved. The enactment of laws in tune with the 2030 Agenda was a means of enabling Mexico to meet its obligations in that sphere.

Ms. M.E. Bartos (Hungary), speaking on Dr. Ackson's recent official visit to Budapest in her dual capacity as IPU President and Speaker of the Tanzanian National Assembly, said that the visit had coincided with the celebration organized by the Hungarian National Assembly to mark the 135th anniversary of the IPU and of the Hungarian founding membership of the Organization. Dr. Ackson had been received by the President of Hungary and the Speaker of its National Assembly and had had meetings with the Deputy Speakers and members of the Board of the Hungarian National IPU Group. She had been the guest of honour at the festive event likewise attended by the President of the IPU Bureau of Women Parliamentarians. A gold-framed image symbolizing the long-standing relationship between the two institutions had been unveiled and a photographic exhibition opened on the IPU's history.

A video on the IPU President's visit to Budapest was screened.

Ms. C. Dijksteel (Suriname) said that her country recognized the significance of the global efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism and had acted to address its own internal security challenges with the aim of guaranteeing peace, justice and strong institutions. Parliament had reviewed the country's electoral laws to ensure fair representation of diverse groups among its ranks, including by facilitating the participation of underrepresented communities, in line with the IPU Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections. The legal counter-terrorism framework had been strengthened through incorporating international standards and aligning national laws with global commitments to combat, among others, money-laundering and terrorism financing. Programmes focused on community development and education had been introduced to empower local populations and tackle the root causes of violent extremism and radicalization, with an emphasis on inclusivity, awareness-raising, peaceful coexistence and the creation of a resilient society. Suriname also played a role in the collective international response to terrorism and violent extremism, embodying the spirit of IPU resolutions.

Ms. K. Slassi (Morocco) said that her Parliament was committed to the implementation of IPU resolutions on issues such as peaceful coexistence, peace and security, and environment. In June 2023, it had organized the Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue in conjunction with the IPU, while on the security and institutional fronts, Morocco actively participated in UN peacekeeping operations, promoted digital transformation and regional institutional capacity, and followed a comprehensive integrated approach to counter-

terrorism, taking religious and socioeconomic aspects into account. It had also undertaken important institutional reforms to enhance transparency and efficiency, and was working to decentralize power. In the area of environment, Morocco had long been a pioneer, among other things enacting key laws on environmental protection, environmental impact assessments, renewable energy, and the use of biodegradable plastic bags. As for cybercrime, it had established a directorate tasked with combating online human trafficking. Morocco remained determined to play an active role in promoting peace, security and social justice, both nationally and internationally.

Mr. K.E. Kandodo (Malawi), referring to progress made in his country in respect of the earlier-mentioned Manama Declaration and the Luanda Declaration on parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions, said that a new peace and unity law had been enacted and parliamentary oversight strengthened to ensure that the law was fully enforced. In respect of the IPU resolution on cybercrimes, a comprehensive regulatory framework for personal data protection was in place pursuant to a recently adopted data protection law aligned with the constitutional provisions on the right to privacy. The new law enhanced individual rights and offered clear guidelines for data protection. As to the IPU resolution on negative carbon emission balances in forests, progressive legislation on climate change mitigation and adaptation had been introduced to align national policies with the objectives of the Paris Agreement and other relevant protocols. Parliament, moreover, was now paperless and had recently installed state-of-the-art e-Chamber equipment with advanced features. He encouraged other Member Parliaments to endeavour to implement all IPU resolutions.

Mr. C. Sathawornwicht (Thailand), highlighting key parliamentary actions taken in his country in line with the IPU resolution on cybercrimes, said that the need for an urgent response to cybercrime was underscored by the surging number of reported cyberscams in Thailand, amounting over the preceding year alone to well over 300,000 and resulting in losses in excess of US\$ 1 billion. In 2023, the Thai Parliament had enacted a new law aimed at preventing and suppressing cybercrime by swiftly tackling its fast-moving nature through data-sharing among financial institutions, telecommunication operators and relevant authorities. The law also closed the regulatory gaps previously hampering the efforts of those authorities to respond speedily and effectively to cybercrime incidents. In particular, it provided for the disruption of money-laundering chains, requiring commercial banks and payment platforms to freeze suspicious accounts temporarily, on request, to contain further financial damage. Thailand reaffirmed its commitment to combating cybercrime and supporting international collaboration in that domain for a safer digital future.

Mr. S.J.-C. Apithy (Benin) said that, in relation to the implementation of the Manama Declaration, his Parliament was engaged in raising awareness of a law enacted in 2022 concerning the status of refugees and stateless persons in Benin. It was likewise raising awareness of the Digital Code and had also established a network of parliamentarians tasked with working on education, vocational training and youth employment. Its women's caucus, furthermore, played an important part in strengthening women's participation in decision-making and increasing their representation in parliament. With respect to implementation of the IPU resolution on cybercrimes, Parliament had ratified the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection and the Budapest Convention, following which Benin had acceded to the Additional Protocol to the latter concerning the criminalization of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems.

Ms. A.V.B. Cirikiyasawa Bainivalu (Fiji) said that, in response to the Luanda Declaration, progress continued in strengthening the Fijian parliamentary system, reinforcing oversight and enhancing inclusion. The standing committees had been given additional powers, including to initiate in-depth oversight inquiries on matters of public interest requiring closer scrutiny, which had benefited accountability and transparency. The subcommittees had also been empowered to determine their own procedures, subject to certain conditions. A more bipartisan approach encouraging closer cooperation with opposition members had similarly helped to improve oversight effectiveness. With regard to enhancing inclusion, parliament was providing administrative and financial support to the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Fiji Group, comprising all Fijian women parliamentarians, who had active leadership roles in both parliament and government. To strengthen citizens' understanding of and participation in parliamentary processes, parliamentarians were now permitted to speak in the vernacular and a new audiovisual conferencing system with multilingual captioning had been installed.

The President, thanking all those who had participated in the special accountability segment, said that parliaments had evidently been working hard to ensure the implementation of IPU ideals in their respective countries and deserved praise for their endeavours.

Item 3 of the agenda
(resumed)

**General Debate on the theme *Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI)*
*for a more peaceful and sustainable future***
(A/149/3-Inf.1)

Mr. Z. Beleniuk (Ukraine), concluding the General Debate, said that he was a young parliamentarian and Olympic champion proud of his Ukrainian and Rwandan roots. He had retired from his professional sports career a few months previously, after the Paris Olympics, where he had won a third medal for his country. Unfortunately, the hundreds of Ukrainian athletes killed by the Russian Federation would never be able to do the same. Ukraine and Rwanda shared a similar history of genocide, which Rwanda had suffered in 1994 and now Ukraine 30 years subsequently. The Russian Federation spread misinformation throughout Africa about Ukraine, but he was the best example of the tolerance and inclusion that characterized Ukrainian society. He owed everything to his country and urged all to stand with it in its fight for independence from Russian colonialism.

The sitting rose at 18:05.

Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

SITTING OF MONDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2024

(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 09:15 with Mr. A. Torosyan (Armenia), Vice-President of the Standing Committee, in the Chair.

Adoption of the agenda (C-III/149/A.1)

The agenda was adopted.

Approval of the summary records of the Committee's session held at the 148th IPU Assembly in Geneva (March 2024)

The summary records were approved.

Preparation of a resolution entitled *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*

(a) Presentation of the draft resolution and explanatory memorandum by the co Rapporteurs

Ms. M. Rempel Garner (Canada), co-Rapporteur, accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that 26 national delegations had submitted amendments. She was optimistic that the draft resolution would be successful and set a good precedent.

Ms. N. Lugangira (United Republic of Tanzania), co-Rapporteur, speaking via video link and expressing gratitude for the amendments, said that Ms. Rempel Garner and she had worked closely on how to address the amendments since the previous IPU Assembly. The Committee had worked inclusively, considering views on artificial intelligence (AI) from the Global South, which set a good example for future resolutions.

Ms. M. Rempel Garner (Canada), co-Rapporteur, accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that the draft resolution was the first to consider AI, which was developing rapidly and was the subject of legislation, regulation and discussions within international bodies. Given that countries were at different stages of regulating and legislating AI, amendments citing statistics, reports, interim resolutions or regulations, legislation or global statements had been omitted as they would quickly become dated. She hoped that the debate would reveal whether those decisions reflected delegates' will, and that a principles-based resolution could be agreed to guide future discussions on global frameworks and build capacity within IPU Member Parliaments.

(b) Debate on the draft resolution

Mr. H. Snopche (North Macedonia) said that AI was reshaping society, impacting politics and demanding that parliamentarians rethought how they legislated, protected democratic values and prepared societies for the future. AI could enhance political processes, automate administrative tasks, improve voter outreach, make systems more efficient and responsive, and help adapt policies to citizens through real-time insights into public opinion. However, it could also contribute to the spread of misinformation, manipulation of elections, erosion of public trust in institutions, and removal of compassion, empathy and ethical judgement from politics. Parliamentarians must navigate that evolving landscape, ensuring that AI strengthened democratic systems. Policy should focus on three areas: (1) establishing a clear regulatory framework to govern AI use in political processes, preventing misuse, and ensuring transparent and responsible digital platforms; (2) developing robust digital literacy programmes to inform citizens, political leaders and institutions about AI and its broader social implications; and (3) creating policies to

ensure equitable access to AI and promote its development and deployment for the benefit of all societies, including in the Global South. International cooperation could help establish frameworks that bridged technological divides and ensured all nations, regardless of economic power, could shape AI governance. Politicians must promote innovation while upholding ethical and democratic principles, and design policies to foster a safe, equitable and thriving political landscape. They should proceed with determination and embrace the transformative era with caution and optimism.

Ms. M. Bon Klanjscek (Slovenia) said that she was pleased that AI was at the top of the Committee's agenda, given its rapid advance and need for regulation. AI technologies, such as large language models, that could generate disinformation presented significant challenges, particularly to democracy and the rule of law, and parliamentarians must look to the future. Slovenia was committed to addressing those challenges, which required an international response, during its tenure as a non-permanent member of the United Nations (UN) Security Council. Slovenia's national programme on AI provided a framework for national and international activities, particularly the development of trustworthy AI that respected democratic values and the rule of law. It outlined AI development and implementation that was in line with ethical principles and human rights. It was necessary to develop a transparent and responsible approach to using AI – founded on respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law – and the current debate furthered efforts in that regard.

Ms. F. Blatrix Contat (France) said that the French Group of the IPU strongly supported the draft resolution, which highlighted the speed of AI development, the challenges of keeping pace with and regulating that development, AI-related impacts on society and certain groups, the risk that multinational technology companies would be too involved in tech regulation, and the resulting need for legal frameworks to ensure responsible AI use and protect human rights and the rule of law.

The draft resolution could benefit from amendments on preventing the use of AI to repress and control citizens, and to violate freedoms and fundamental rights, and on impeding AI use in disinformation campaigns. It could also highlight the risk that AI could deepen economic inequality and the digital divide globally, and ensure that AI did not reproduce biases found in training data and algorithms. The draft resolution should demand that future legal frameworks be transparent and require AI user information to ensure responsible use and recourse for victims. The draft resolution should recommend the establishment of regulatory bodies to monitor AI and its development in line with human rights and democracy. It should refer to the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence – the first legally binding international treaty on AI – which could prove a useful source of inspiration. In February 2025, France would host the Artificial Intelligence Action Summit to outline measures to develop AI for the common good.

Ms. Jin Sun Mee (Republic of Korea) said that there was significant AI development and investment worldwide. Although AI was expected to contribute significantly to economic growth and solve social challenges, there were concerns that it would violate fundamental rights, spread false information, and infringe privacy and copyright. The 22nd National Assembly was considering 11 proposals for the AI Framework Act which included institutional mechanisms to strengthen national competitiveness through AI, and protect human rights and the interests arising from AI development. Experts and civil society organizations were holding meetings, seminars and legislative debates on AI. The executive branch of Government had established AI policies, including the National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence. The Financial Services Commission, the National Human Rights Commission and the Personal Information Protection Commission had each published AI guidelines concerning their respective sectors. The Government would establish a new digital order as part of a government-wide initiative based on the Digital Bill of Rights and the principles of freedom, fairness, safety, innovation and solidarity. 20 policy tasks had been selected to address challenges, eight of which would be designated impactful, urgent or of high public interest. She hoped that the draft resolution and current discussion would help overcome challenges.

Ms. V. Riotton (France), speaking on behalf of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, said that the previous morning, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians had discussed the draft resolution from a gender perspective. Twenty-seven delegates had participated in that discussion which had focused on the increasing presence of new technologies, including AI, in everyday life. Technology presented great opportunities and significant challenges. The Forum had agreed that,

if managed and used sensibly, technology could significantly accelerate gender equality by creating new career paths for women, producing gendered data, reducing domestic chores, increasing access to information and essential services by targeting women, and helping parliamentarians strike a work-life balance. However, with little or no oversight, AI could amplify existing biases, worsen discrimination linked to the digital divide, and be used to terrifying effect in armed conflicts. The Bureau would therefore propose three amendments, including to tackle the invisibility of women and violence against women.

Ms. A. Attalides (Cyprus) said that AI presented opportunities and challenges for democracy, human rights and the rule of law. An ethical, transparent and accountable approach to AI was essential to mitigating negative impacts, including the widening divide between the Global North and South. Governments and international bodies must create regulatory frameworks to govern AI development and deployment, and uphold human rights within AI systems. Those frameworks should address algorithmic bias and discrimination, which required inclusive datasets and continuous monitoring. AI processes should be transparent to help citizens understand and challenge decisions. Through algorithm audits, stakeholders could hold developers and users accountable. Public engagement was necessary for a democratic dialogue on AI; involving citizens in policy discussions could foster understanding of the balance between technological innovation and its risks. Educational initiatives should raise awareness of AI and its implications for democracy and human rights, and empower individuals to advocate for their rights. International cooperation was crucial to setting global AI governance standards, mitigating risks, promoting ethical practices across borders and ensuring that technologies respected human rights universally. In that regard, the European Union (EU) AI Act aimed to balance the economic potential of AI with the protection of democracy and fundamental rights through a risk-based approach. Cyprus remained committed to international efforts and was revising its national AI strategy to implement an approach in line with the EU Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence. AI presented a real and existential challenge, the response to which should be swift, proactive and united. The draft resolution struck the right balance between innovation and regulation.

Mr. S. Envieh Tekieh (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the draft resolution reflected the profound impacts of AI on humans and considered the potential of AI for countries, particularly developing countries. National sovereignty must be protected, particularly through regulations and laws to prevent destabilization, and governments should be supported. The benefits of AI should be harnessed intelligently and equitably. Developing countries must have access to information to prevent the digital divide from widening. Since misinformation and incorrect data could harm governments and decision-makers, AI should be based on clear laws, regulations and data. Any global AI framework should be based on information exchanges, fairness and transparency. The challenges and destructive potential of AI should not prevent countries from benefiting from AI and using it for sustainable development. Governments could determine their own rules and the extent of AI use in the economy.

Mr. C. Sathawornwichit (Thailand) said that the draft resolution highlighted the challenges and opportunities of AI. While AI could improve efficiency, it threatened fundamental rights, democracy and equality. To address emerging AI issues, the Thai National Assembly supported the following three measures: (1) fostering inclusive AI governance to address communities' individual challenges; (2) establishing bodies to monitor AI development, create strategies, raise public awareness – particularly among the most vulnerable – and enhance scrutiny of algorithms used against citizens; and (3) ensuring international coordination which, in the absence of binding international instruments, was essential to maximizing the benefits of AI and safeguarding democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The IPU should continue to foster knowledge-sharing and collaboration among parliaments.

Mr. C. Lohr (Switzerland) said that AI could expedite decision-making and grow economies but, without robust legislation, it could harm democracy, privacy and equality. AI governance must protect human rights, and AI systems must be accountable and transparent. The Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights – which the EU, Israel and the United States of America supported – marked progress towards creating international standards. However, regulation to protect the rule of law and human rights must not hinder innovation. AI research could help tackle significant health, education and climate challenges. Parliamentarians must therefore foster creativity and progress while protecting fundamental rights and encouraging responsibility.

Ms. A. Kalmari (Finland) said that the draft resolution laid important groundwork. An AI regulatory framework that countries would approve and implement – such as through legislation and regulations for civil servants, media and politicians – should be created. Her delegation had highlighted the situation of people with disabilities, which the draft resolution had overlooked. Looking ahead, parliamentarians should consider how to prevent AI use in wars and press the UN to develop rules in that regard.

Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah (Egypt) said that previous discussions had focused on the doubled-edged nature of AI. Parliamentarians were responsible for ensuring clear regulations and laws governed AI. They should work alongside technology companies and governments to mitigate AI-related threats, which required significant international, regional and national cooperation. The UN could be central to bringing together stakeholders to provide consultancy and listen to experts who had identified the potential harm of AI. AI companies should ensure information was available to enact laws and protect human rights, sovereignty and democracy. There should be international measures to hold technology companies accountable and an international charter to control AI use in different sectors. AI developments should be reflected in national laws and regulations, and privacy laws should be enhanced. A balance should be struck between using AI and protecting the public, including women. AI legislation should keep pace with international regulations.

Ms. J. Jerinić (Serbia) said that the draft resolution was balanced and well-prepared, especially regarding women and girls. In 2019, the Serbian Government had adopted a five-year strategy for AI development based on the EU document *Artificial Intelligence for Europe*. It focused on economic growth, improved public service provision and scientific research. However, despite the strategy's references to human rights concerns and the adoption of ethical guidelines for trustworthy AI, the Serbian Parliament had not taken action. In Serbia, 20% of the population was at risk of poverty and children were most vulnerable. In 2021, the Serbian Parliament had passed a law introducing a central electronic record of the social and economic status of those applying for and receiving social welfare aid. According to human rights activists, the use of an algorithm to determine applicants' eligibility had dehumanized the application process, rendered the welfare system less fair and transparent, and excluded some 44,000 beneficiaries from the social welfare system. Moreover, the system automatically collected and processed 130 different kinds of data on individuals. In 2022, an initiative had been submitted to the Serbian Constitutional Court to review the constitutionality of the law and, in 2023, she had joined 48 members of parliament in signing a formal request for review. However, the Constitutional Court had yet to begin that review, despite its obligation to do so. She hoped that the IPU would guide future legislative work in the Serbian Parliament, where much work remained to be done.

Mr. S. Patra (India) said that the theme of the debate was apt, relevant and had wider ramifications for human civilization. AI presented significant opportunities and challenges. Parliamentarians must examine its implications for democracy, human rights and the rule of law. For India, the core principles of AI development were safety, security, trustworthiness and responsibility.

Representation, fairness and transparency were central to democracy. AI could help manage data to better inform public policy decisions, streamline public services and facilitate citizen participation through digital platforms. However, algorithms and automated systems could manipulate information, shape public opinion, and polarize societies. AI misuse in electoral processes, such as through disinformation campaigns and voter data manipulation, threatened democracy.

AI had been used to address climate change, healthcare delivery and poverty, which protected human rights. It could help identify and combat human trafficking and monitor human rights abuses in real time. However, unregulated AI use could violate human rights. AI-based surveillance systems had been used to suppress dissent, monitor citizens without their consent and target vulnerable communities. The use of biased algorithms in criminal justice processes, recruitment and service access could perpetuate inequality and discrimination.

India worked constantly to build a comprehensive and ethical AI ecosystem. There should be commitment to work towards international norms and policies – based on inclusivity, transparency and accountability – to ensure safe, secure and trustworthy AI while supporting innovation, ensuring sustainability and addressing social change. The draft resolution highlighted the alarming rate at which unchecked AI developments affected the most vulnerable, including those unable to enjoy the benefits of AI. It recognized the value of harnessing and strengthening existing and new legal and regulatory frameworks.

The G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration had focused on a responsible, inclusive and human-centric AI approach that protected rights and safety. New and emerging digital technologies benefited Western countries, where big tech companies were based and data was sourced. Naturally, those countries focused on controlling AI. However, many countries in the Global South emphasized the need for equitable access to the benefits of AI to bridge digital and geographical divides. Legislation and regulations to address emerging AI-related challenges and opportunities were sovereign matters. The amendments that his delegation had submitted aimed to make the approach of the draft resolution more comprehensive, inclusive and compact.

Mr. C. Ngy (Cambodia) said that over the previous three decades, Cambodia had achieved peace and stability. Digital technology could enhance social and economic productivity and boost administrative efficiency. The Cambodian Government had launched the Cambodia Digital Economy and Society Policy Framework 2021–2035 and the Cambodia Digital Government Policy 2022–2035. The Government was building trustworthy digital systems, developing infrastructure and an institutional framework for digital security, and raising awareness of digital security. It promoted the widespread use of digital services, and developed and enacted laws, regulations, procedures, standard technical frameworks, guiding principles and response mechanisms. The Government continued to develop digital security skills and was establishing cooperation mechanisms between citizens, the State and private sectors. The endorsement of the IPU Geneva Declaration, which emphasized the link between peace and development, was commendable. Upholding democracy and human rights was a matter of progress, and Cambodia continued to strike a balance between individual freedom and collective interests. The Cambodian parliamentary delegation supported the draft resolution.

Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada), welcoming the draft resolution, said that AI decisions could include inaccuracies and discrimination, and might misinterpret human language and behaviour. AI could harm human rights, equality and individual freedoms. The potential use of AI to control and manipulate people was concerning. The draft resolution recognized that AI presented opportunities and risks, including to democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It proposed actions and aimed to address those concerns, calling on parliaments to develop strong AI legal frameworks and policies. It highlighted the importance of increasing AI education for parliamentarians and international cooperation to ensure that the global community benefited from AI and mitigated harm. Parliamentarians were key in that regard. In Canada, the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights was considering studying the impact of AI on Canadians.

Ms. C. Mullie (Consultant, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that the draft resolution was timely and essential, and UNESCO looked forward to its adoption. The call of the draft resolution to increase international cooperation and ongoing AI education was crucial. UNESCO had actively engaged in global conversations and strengthened parliamentarians' capacities worldwide. The UNESCO *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence* emphasized the importance of human rights, dignity, transparency, fairness and human oversight within AI systems. It included 10 core principles and 11 policy action areas to guide policy makers. The draft resolution should refer to the *Recommendation* to ensure coherence in AI governance efforts.

Agile legislative approaches must be implemented to align global standards with national AI governance. Since 2016, over 30 countries had enacted laws mentioning AI and, in 2024, discussions had increased globally. The UNESCO "Consultation paper on AI regulation" outlined nine regulatory approaches and addressed why, when and how to regulate AI. It was available for open consultation, had received global support and would be published shortly.

Recognizing that guidelines alone were insufficient, UNESCO had partnered with the IPU and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Parliamentary Track to engage parliamentarians worldwide through online workshops. Over 300 members of parliament from 110 parliaments had been reached, informing the current debate. UNESCO was developing an open online course on AI to enhance parliamentarians' capacities for evidence-based AI governance. UNESCO stood ready to support parliamentarians in harnessing the potential of AI.

Ms. M. Cederfelt (Sweden) said that AI was new to most people and few could predict its impact on societies in the near future. It held great potential, including for creative work and communication. However, authoritarian regimes could use AI to survey and control political opponents. Given the destructive potential of AI, parliamentarians must create a legal framework to

protect AI, enable it to flourish and prevent misuse. The UN Global Digital Compact, which aimed to safeguard technological development and ensure an inclusive and safe digital environment, could provide inspiration.

Ms. D. Dlakude (South Africa) said that, as the influence of AI grew, it was imperative to prioritize ethical AI development and deployment. AI systems must align with international human rights frameworks and protect individuals' rights and dignity. Likewise, they must prioritize privacy and personal data protection, and include transparent reporting requirements in accordance with international human rights guidelines. Such measures would uphold citizens' fundamental rights while fostering greater trust in technological advancements. Initiatives to promote women's participation and leadership in AI development were important, as diverse and inclusive representation in AI research, design and decision-making would help fully realize the potential of AI. It was important to act with foresight, as current decisions would profoundly impact the future. By ensuring that AI promoted ethical values, protected privacy and fostered inclusivity, AI would be a force for good and would uphold human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Mr. C. Matznetter (Austria) said that he supported the draft resolution. Efforts to regulate AI – including the EU AI Act, which did not deal with the military use of AI – were overdue. The draft resolution should refer to the IPU resolution entitled *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence*. The implementation of such weapon systems and AI, which would significantly impact human life, should be prevented.

Mr. G.M. Kouwanou (Benin) said that AI was among the most significant technological advances and the challenges it posed could not be ignored. AI could improve governance, access to public information and participation in democratic processes. However, it could distort information and create information bubbles, thereby influencing public debates. Adequate regulation must tackle those issues. Algorithms could perpetuate discrimination and violate fundamental rights. It was important to guarantee equal treatment and ensure that the design and use of AI respected human dignity. There must be calls for international regulations promoting the ethical use of AI. Legislation must keep pace with innovation and technological developments, which required national parliaments and international organizations to collaborate closely. Legal frameworks must regulate AI, uphold democratic values and protect individual rights. Cybercriminals used AI and algorithms to automate attacks and target victims more efficiently. For years, Benin had fought against cybercrime. Legislators were duty-bound to ensure that AI development and use was transparent, equitable and respectful of human rights.

Mr. A. Gajadien (Suriname) said that Suriname must embrace the potential of AI to improve governance, public services and decision-making. The responsible integration of AI – which required legislation ensuring data privacy, fairness and transparency – could make the Surinamese Government more efficient and responsive to citizens' needs. Clear laws were necessary to regulate AI in politics, safeguard democracy and prevent misuse. He therefore supported the draft resolution. Humans were collectively responsible for ensuring that AI served citizens and respected democratic values and human rights.

Ms. R. Alyahya (Saudi Arabia) said that AI presented opportunities and challenges for democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It was essential to harness its potential while safeguarding fundamental rights and democratic values, as AI could spread misinformation, undermine public trust in democratic institutions and exacerbate discrimination.

The Saudi Data & AI Authority (SDAIA) had been established to achieve the goals of Saudi Vision 2030 and help Saudi Arabia achieve its full potential. SDAIA had identified health as a priority sector due to the importance of data and AI in meeting growing sector demands. Increases in healthcare costs and expectations required a transformational shift in the field. Data and AI could improve access to, and the value of, health services and address health threats.

Saudi Arabia had launched two global initiatives to protect children in the cyber world and empower women in cybersecurity. They aimed to advance collective action and unify international efforts by increasing decision-makers' awareness of the growing online threats to children, strengthening the global response through international cooperation and addressing women's low participation in cybersecurity. Absher, an online platform, streamlined Government services for nationals and expatriates. The balance between leveraging AI and safeguarding citizens was crucial to maintaining democratic integrity and human dignity.

Mr. S. Rais (Tunisia) said that AI represented a significant technological revolution that required swift adaptation and impacted many areas. Attention should be paid to the challenges it presented to democracy. There was a risk that AI would replace human intelligence. Technological advances revealed the negative impacts of AI, and parliamentarians should highlight the dangers of AI misuse. Efforts were underway to protect human rights and privacy, prevent discrimination, and ensure accountability. Policies, legislation and systems were being created to control AI technologies, mitigate risks, and protect democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Parliamentarians were important to ensuring that laws and regulations kept pace with AI developments. Similarly, flexible legislation should criminalize AI misuse and raise public awareness of such misuse. Parliamentarians should warn of the economic risks of excessive AI use, such as unemployment. It was important to support international cooperation and parliamentarians within the IPU should collaborate to deepen AI understanding. Concerning the UN General Assembly draft resolution A/78/L.49, Arab parliaments had warned that AI misuse could harm sustainable development.

Mr. T. Karikoga (Zimbabwe) said that communication technology and AI had improved political communication and enhanced citizen participation in politics. AI could process vast amounts of data, democratize politics and monitor election polls. However, it could compromise election integrity by disseminating misinformation and disinformation. Algorithms based on inaccurate or insensitive data could deepen existing inequalities for women, youth and people with disabilities, and harm election credibility. Parliamentarians and policymakers must keep pace with technology and introduce laws and regulations to minimize AI's disruptive effects and maximize its benefits for democracy. In 2021, the Zimbabwean Parliament had enacted the Cyber and Data Protection Act to build confidence and trust in information and communication technologies. In terms of health, education and freedom of expression, AI promoted and protected human rights by improving services, information and opportunities. However, it also enabled profiling, surveillance and discrimination which violated human rights and privacy. It was imperative to introduce laws ensuring human intervention in AI use.

Mr. I. Castillo (Malta) said that the profound impacts of AI on democracy, human rights and the rule of law must be addressed. If left unchecked, algorithms could harm equity, privacy and democratic processes. AI development must be ethical, accountable and transparent. Human rights must be central to any AI framework, safeguarding freedom of speech, privacy and equal treatment. Strong legal frameworks must be developed to regulate AI, prevent misuse by States and private actors, and protect the rule of law. However, AI could also strengthen democracies. With the right frameworks, AI could improve access to information, make governments more efficient and responsive to needs, improve service access, promote human rights and give marginalized communities a voice through data-driven advocacy. AI could also improve legal system efficiency and, with proper safeguards, make societies more inclusive, equitable and resilient.

Mr. S.S.H.J. Amaral (Timor-Leste), commending the UN, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN AI Advisory Body for its interim report entitled *Governing AI for Humanity* and UNESCO for the *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence*, said that it was time that parliaments assumed their unique responsibility of safeguarding democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and responded to significant AI challenges. The IPU should explore how to implement an exchange and collaboration mechanism for parliaments to fill gaps in AI knowledge, experience, legislation and oversight. Doing so would help establish global standards and frameworks, as stated in the draft resolution, and enhance parliamentary participation and inclusion, particularly in the Global South. He supported the appeal of the recently adopted Global Digital Compact to anchor digital cooperation in international and human rights law, and to establish an Independent International Scientific Panel on AI and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance. He highlighted the five objectives of the Global Digital Compact. He would vote in favour of the draft resolution and urged parliamentarians to do so too.

(c) Drafting and adoption of the draft resolution in plenary
(C-III/149/DR)

The Chair said that the Committee would proceed to discuss the proposed amendments.

The sitting rose at 13:00.

SITTING OF WEDNESDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2024

(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 17:10 with Mr. A. Torosyan (Armenia), Vice-President of the Standing Committee, in the Chair.

The Chair said that there had been 194 proposals for amendments from 26 parliaments, and three from the Forum of Women Parliamentarians. Delegations had worked together constructively to consider the proposed amendments. He invited the Committee to adopt the draft resolution.

Ms. N. Lugangira (United Republic of Tanzania), co-Rapporteur, agreed that the draft resolution should incorporate an amendment to the preamble from the Forum of Women Parliamentarians that had been accepted by the Standing Committee but was missing from the draft, and agreed to a proposal by a representative of Sweden to integrate a modification to operative paragraph 15.

The Standing Committee adopted the draft resolution by acclamation.

A delegate from Australia said that the resolution was an outstanding document and she congratulated the co-Rapporteurs for their work.

The Chair proposed that the co-Rapporteurs present the resolution to the Assembly on behalf of the Committee.

It was so agreed.

Preparations for future Assemblies**(a) Subject of the next resolution to be prepared by the Committee**

The Chair said that the Bureau of the Standing Committee had met earlier that morning and had supported two proposals for the subject of the next resolution to be prepared by the Committee. Switzerland had submitted the first, concerning the rights and political representation of people with disabilities, and Belgium had submitted the second. The Bureau had been willing to put forward both proposals. However, the Swiss and Belgian delegations had subsequently agreed to put forward the Belgian proposal, *Recognizing and supporting the victims of illegal international adoption and taking measures to prevent this practice*. The Swiss delegate would continue to work on his proposed theme and would resubmit it as a proposal for the topic of the resolution for 2026.

He invited the delegate from Belgium to present the proposal on illegal adoption.

Mr. M. de Maegd (Belgium) said that, sadly, illegal adoption had been occurring worldwide for decades. Children were stolen at birth and sold on the illegal adoption market to families who were often well-intentioned and unaware of that market. There were three groups of victims: the children, the biological parents, and the adoptive parents.

Although cultures and regulations varied between countries, the child's interest must always come first. Almost four years ago, a victim of illegal international adoption had contacted him and explained the hardships she had experienced. After meeting other victims and associations he had realized the scale of the issue. In June 2022, the Belgian Parliament had unanimously adopted a resolution that he had submitted, which officially recognized illegal adoption. The resolution aimed to prevent illegal adoption and support victims. As a result, archives had been opened to enable victims to research their origins; illegal adoption had been clearly defined as human trafficking; the nationality code had been amended to ensure that victims could remain Belgian if their adoption were proved invalid; and victims could more easily change their names. The Government had officially recognized that illegal adoption occurred in Belgium and had committed to tackling that issue.

He was convinced that other countries could replicate those actions. Some countries – including in Europe, Asia, the Indian Ocean, Latin America – had already enacted relevant legislation. However, illegal adoption continued to affect countries worldwide, including in Latin America and Africa. In Belgium, a human trafficker had recently received a 10-year prison

sentence. At the 143rd IPU Assembly, he had contributed to the development of a resolution on the trafficking of orphans. He had met with the United Nations (UN) Committee on Enforced Disappearances, which had led to a joint statement on illegal intercountry adoption. The UN had henceforth considered illegal adoption a serious crime and it was time that the Standing Committee tackled the issue. It was parliamentarians' duty to protect the most vulnerable worldwide, pay attention to injustice and implement measures.

A delegate from Bahrain said that conflicts had increased international illegal adoption, and she was pleased that the topic had been raised. It was important to introduce laws, focus on how to return children and provide children with psychosocial care if necessary. She wished the co-Rapporteurs luck in drafting the resolution, and would provide further information to help cover other areas of the world and tackle the issue.

A delegate from Norway said that she fully supported drafting a resolution on illegal international adoption and had worked on that issue in the Norwegian Parliament. The co-Rapporteurs had parliamentarians' full confidence, but it could be helpful for parliamentarians to ask questions in their own parliaments because time was of the essence and many illegally adopted children were the victims of human trafficking.

The Chair took it that the Committee supported the recommendation to prepare a draft resolution entitled *Recognizing and supporting the victims of illegal international adoption and taking measures to prevent this practice*.

It was so decided.

The Chair said that the debate would take place at the 150th IPU Assembly and the resolution would be adopted at the 151st IPU Assembly. He invited the Committee to approve the nominations of Ms. L. Crexell (Argentina) and Mr. M. de Maegd (Belgium) as co-Rapporteurs.

It was so decided.

(b) Other items for the Committee's agenda at the 150th IPU Assembly

The Chair said that the Bureau had considered two proposed themes for the debate at the 150th IPU Assembly: (1) Orphanage trafficking action plan: Implementing the IPU resolution adopted by the 147th IPU Assembly, October 2023; (2) Follow-up on implementation of the 2024 resolution on artificial intelligence (AI). He hoped that those proposals would be adopted the following day. It was important that parliamentarians paid attention to adopted resolutions once they returned to their parliaments. Follow-up debates were an opportunity to assess completed and remaining work. He proposed following up on both resolutions at the 150th IPU Assembly.

It was so decided.

Elections to the Bureau of the Standing Committee

The Chair said that the presidency of the Committee should be held by a woman from the Asia-Pacific Group for two years. In October 2023, Ms. J. Mahmood (Maldives) had been elected President. However, she had lost her parliamentary seat in the 2024 national Maldivian elections. The Asia-Pacific Group nominated Ms. D. O'Neill (Australia) for a first term to the Bureau of the Standing Committee.

Ms. D. O'Neill (Australia) said that it was an honour to hold discussions and pursue the common good with parliamentarians from across the world. Mr. Torosyan's ability to chair such a conciliatory body had impressed her. In such tense times, the Committee's work to unite parliamentarians was a reminder of their common humanity.

The Chair invited the Committee to approve the nomination of Ms. O'Neill.

It was so decided.

The Chair said that the African Group would fill the vacancy on the Bureau of the Standing Committee at the 150th IPU Assembly.

The sitting rose at 17:40.

Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

SITTING OF MONDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2024

(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 09:30 with Ms. F. Belhirsch (Netherlands), Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee, in the Chair.

Adoption of the agenda (C-I/149/A.1-rev)

The agenda was adopted.

Approval of the summary record of the Committee's session held at the 148th IPU Assembly in Geneva (March 2024)

The summary record was approved.

The Chair informed participants of the recent publication of an IPU toolkit for parliamentarians on *Human security and common security to build peace*. Parliamentarians were encouraged to make use of the toolkit and to submit any feedback they had to the Secretariat. She pointed out the upcoming events during the Assembly that related directly to the Committee's mandate, emphasizing themes such as disarmament, international humanitarian law, and fostering peaceful coexistence.

The Chair noted the **tenth anniversary of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians** and the **Common Principles for Support to Parliaments**, encouraging participants to engage with planned activities and visit the information stands for further details. She reminded participants of the IPU's **anti-harassment policy**, urging adherence to ensure a respectful and inclusive environment in line with the Organization's core values.

Panel discussion: The role of parliamentarians in preventing conflicts over natural resources

The Chair, introducing the panel discussion, said that the exploitation of natural resources and related environment stresses could become significant drivers of violence and conflict. The panel discussion would consist of a moderated round table of experts followed by contributions from parliamentarians. She introduced Mr. J.-M. Rousseau (Head of the Business and Security Division, Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF)) as the Moderator.

A video on the toolkit for parliamentarians on human security and common security to build peace was screened.

The Moderator introduced the panellists and said that extractives were likely to remain a driver of economic growth internationally, given that many of the minerals used in the batteries that powered the green transition came from the extractive sector. Many of those minerals originated in countries involved in conflict, but the wealth generated from such resources did not always strengthen those countries and provide for their citizens. While resources such as uranium brought many advantages, they also brought significant challenges, including in terms of their use in weapons. Parliamentarians had a strong role to play in resource governance throughout the extractive cycle, to ensure that mining projects benefited local citizens and communities.

Ms. C. Seymour (Senior Researcher, Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP), Geneva Graduate Institute (IHEID)), panellist, said that while many countries had incredible resource wealth, it often did not benefit the people of those countries. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, for instance, was extremely rich in natural resources, but, despite strong demand for such resources as a result of the green transition, it ranked 164 out of 174 countries in the World Bank's Human Capital Index.

It was important to consider conflicts relating to natural resources from a political economy perspective, taking into account aspects such as production, wealth accumulation, resource distribution and redistribution, and taxation. As a result of the decade-long crisis of violence, there were currently 3.4 million internally displaced people and 524,000 refugees in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Information from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) showed that displacement sites in the country directly correlated with the sites where natural resources were prevalent. That indicated that the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was a story of violent resource extraction and natural resource wealth. It was important to speak the truth in that regard. Such enrichment from natural resources was a global story, as the economy of the Democratic Republic of the Congo was integrated into the global economy, and the wealth, privilege and comfort experienced by people in certain countries was directly connected to the suffering, hardship, exploitation and injustice faced by the Congolese people. It was important to understand that the choice made by consumers in one country directly affected the realities of those living in others.

Mr. A. Ware (Global Coordinator, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND)), panellist, speaking in a personal capacity, said that uranium was primarily used for the production of nuclear weapons and the generation of nuclear power, while other radioactive products, such as cadmium and thorium, were also used for medical and commercial purposes. Describing the health and environmental risks of uranium mining, he said that oversight was needed to mitigate those risks, and parliamentarians played a key role in ensuring uranium mining was conducted safely. In addition, uranium mining presented territorial challenges, since the mines were often located in rural areas, and Indigenous Peoples and other communities might disagree with the granting of mining licences, partly because mining required large areas of land that could not then be used for other productive purposes. Parliamentarians needed to have oversight to ensure that the licensing process was conducted in agreement with local communities and in keeping with local communities' rights.

There were also proliferation-related issues: countries with uranium mines needed to have safeguards in place to make sure that the uranium they sold was not used to create nuclear weapons. However, that was difficult to achieve, particularly once the uranium had left the country of origin. Parliamentary controls were important in that regard. States with nuclear weapons had a responsibility under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) not to support the development of nuclear weapons, while countries with uranium mines that had ratified the NPT also had a responsibility in that regard. Furthermore, when working to prevent proliferation by States, such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, that were mining uranium in order to develop nuclear weapons, it was important to consider all aspects involved in the development of such weapons. The uranium mining and enrichment of the Islamic Republic of Iran was also a concern, and agreements on the end point of uranium mining, such as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, were important in that regard.

Regarding the energy transition, it was important to consider whether nuclear energy was the correct option given the resources, infrastructure and investment required for renewable energies. Uranium mining offered short-term economic returns but could be costly in the long term, particularly in terms of land rehabilitation.

The Moderator asked Ms. Seymour what parliamentarians in both resource-rich countries and resource-receiving countries could do to ensure that communities in resource-rich countries benefited from those resources.

Ms. C. Seymour (Senior Researcher, CCDP, IHEID), panellist, said that the interdependence and interlinkage of countries and resources were both geographic and historical. Members of the donor and development community were reticent to talk about the historic violences of colonialism and the violent resource extraction that was entrenched in the governance models of certain countries. Parliamentarians and those developing policies for resource extraction must speak those truths, and acknowledge the past and the injustices that had occurred and that continued to occur.

The Moderator asked Mr. Ware about the current capacity and willingness of parliaments to provide oversight in both uranium-mining countries and those that procure uranium, and about the factors that had enabled parliaments to achieve success in their oversight role.

Mr. A. Ware (Global Coordinator, PNND), panellist, said that the level of parliamentary capacity and willingness depended on the parliament and its resources and structure. However, it was crucial for parliaments to have an oversight role, as important issues, such as radiation from uranium mining, required awareness and controls from parliaments in order to protect people and the environment. Organizations, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), could also provide some support to smaller countries with fewer resources.

Costa Rica, a party to the NPT, was an example of a success story in terms of oversight. The Government had granted a licence for uranium and thorium mining and, as the Parliament did not have the capacity to provide oversight, a case had been brought before the Supreme Court, which had more time and resources to consider the issues. The Supreme Court had subsequently overturned the mining licence on the basis that the authorities did not have the capacity to determine that the uranium and thorium would not be used in nuclear weapons. That case showed that parliaments could call on other regulatory, technical or judicial bodies to support them in their oversight role.

The Moderator, summing up the discussion thus far, said that, with regards to parliamentary oversight, there had been developments in the European Union (EU) in terms of environmental, social and governance issues and human rights due diligence. The new corporate sustainability reporting directive, for instance, underscored the role and responsibilities of private actors, including mining companies, meaning that private companies based in the EU could be held liable for human rights violations committed by contractors in other countries.

The Chair thanked the Moderator and panellists for their input and invited contributions from the floor.

Mr. F. Bytyqi (North Macedonia) said that the desire to control limited natural resources often led to conflicts with profound, long-term political and economic consequences that mainly affected those who were living in poverty or were socially marginalized. One of the greatest challenges that parliamentarians faced was ensuring the fair and sustainable distribution of natural resources. To achieve that, it was important to address the root causes of conflicts, work to prevent exploitation, and develop legislation and systemic mechanisms so that every citizen had access to water, land and other vital resources. It was also essential to strengthen democratic processes based on inclusivity, transparency and accountability. Those values should be embraced and applied to resource management in order to avoid conflicts and ensure that differences became a source of strength rather than division.

In addition, parliamentarians must make people aware that climate change was a threat multiplier and that climate-related challenges needed to be incorporated into conflict prevention strategies. As part of that process, parliaments should encourage and support the transition towards green technologies and sustainable resource use. It was crucial to recognize that true stability and peace could only be achieved through regional cooperation that fostered interdependence and strengthened economic ties between countries, through the joint management and fair sharing of resources. Parliamentarians must lead the way in that process, demonstrating that peace and justice required unwavering commitment to democratic values and sustainable development.

Mr. B. Mahtab (India) said that, to manage resources sustainably and equitably, it was important to shift the focus to the needs of those who did not have access to basic resources. Parliamentarians had a duty to ensure fair, equitable and inclusive access to resources, an approach that was the cornerstone of many policies in his country. Unsustainable lifestyles and patterns of consumption and production also put pressure on natural resources and had a long-term impact on the environment. Parliamentarians were well placed to encourage people to adopt more sustainable lifestyles and consumption patterns, and should learn from each other's best practices. Natural resources were the drivers of growth and prosperity, and lawmakers had a critical role to play in ensuring that they were managed and shared in a sustainable and peaceful manner.

Ms. M. Huber (Austria) drew attention to the role that recycling technology could play in addressing issues related to natural resources. The recycling of strategic raw materials, such as those found in electrical products, was essential to reduce dependency and stimulate circularity. Parliamentarians and companies should support the development of such technologies and their transfer to other countries.

Mr A. Khoori (United Arab Emirates) said that climate change exacerbated conflicts, hindered sustainable development and threatened peace. It was essential to preserve natural resources and implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to ensure that the environment was protected for future generations. Parliaments should establish climate action committees to promote policies that kept pace with climate change. They should also provide support for institutions that could develop regional and international environment plans, and for the establishment of non-governmental organizations involved in climate action, while also providing more funding for the sharing of expertise and experience on climate initiatives. Furthermore, it was important to strengthen the rights of women to ensure that natural resources were used in an equitable manner, in part by encouraging women to get involved in natural resource management policy development. He outlined some of the initiatives taken in his country to that end.

Mr. K. Suebsang (Thailand) said that parliamentarians could help to prevent conflicts over natural resources by promoting equitable resource distribution, enacting legislation to regulate relevant industries and fostering dialogue between citizens, governments and other stakeholders in order to address grievances before they escalated. His country was a member of a number of regional resource management frameworks, such as the Mekong River Commission.

As with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, much of the internal displacement in Sudan and South Sudan had been linked to conflict over natural resources rather than to hunger, as had been widely reported. To prevent such large-scale displacement, it was important for there to be collaboration and cooperation among parliamentarians.

Ms. C. Seymour (Senior Researcher, CCDP, IHEID), panellist, responding to the comments of the Thai delegate, said that the time had come for parliamentarians, academics and policymakers to work together to address the hypocrisies that had been committed within the international system in the name of peace, security and development. More needed to be done to prevent grave violations of human rights. Moreover, young people were urgently calling for climate action and climate justice, and for parliaments to take responsibility by changing laws, policies and practices and ensuring oversight. Young people were a powerful force, and it was important to work with them.

Mr. D. Naughten (Ireland) said that, by 2030, some 700 million people would be displaced by intense water scarcity, which was a focal point of tensions between countries and communities that shared water resources. It was important to nurture peace by building relationships across communities and borders. To that end, parliaments could learn from the experiences of his country, where science – as a non-religious, universal language that transcended cultural and national boundaries – had played a vital role in building peace by facilitating objective, fact-based collaboration at both the policy and community levels, underpinned by the principles of human security. The IPU Science for Peace Schools, for example, had focused on addressing water scarcity in the Middle East, the Sahel and the Mekong River Basin, with the aim of using scientific research both to address environmental and technical challenges and as a diplomatic tool to strengthen ties between historically divided nations. That work had resulted in the following four recommendations that were aligned with the principles of human security and common security: water and sanitation policies should be based on robust evidence by fostering dialogue between the legislative and scientific communities; extensive community involvement in water management should be promoted through citizen science; parliamentarians should adopt the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and promote its principles; and a global parliamentary expert community on water should be established to share knowledge and innovative solutions for water management. The IPU should look at ways to facilitate the sharing of technology and expertise between countries.

Mr. P. Tuan Nguyen (Viet Nam) said that, to prevent conflict over natural resources, parliamentarians should leverage their representative, law-making and oversight roles by gathering information on natural resources locally and nationally; developing a national legal framework for environmental protection and overseeing its implementation; promoting public transparency through clear legislative and administrative actions on environmental issues; and raising public awareness of those issues. Internationally, parliamentarians should foster dialogue and negotiation to prevent conflict and promote international cooperation in the management of natural resources.

Mr. S. Köse (Sweden), thanking the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) for supporting the publication of the toolkit for parliamentarians on human security and common security to build peace, said that the sustainable and equitable management of national resources was essential for preventing conflicts. Addressing the root causes of insecurity, such as unequal access to resources, could help to stop conflicts from escalating. The Minka Lake Chad Initiative was a good example of how regional cooperation on resource management could promote both peace and stability. He asked the panellists how parliamentarians could promote policies that integrated human security principles into resource management to prevent conflicts, both nationally and regionally.

Mr. M.M. Dlamini (South Africa) said that human security, peaceful dialogue and economic justice were fundamental to prevent conflicts, terrorism, human rights violations and illicit trade in small arms and precious minerals, address the global refugee crisis and, ultimately, achieve peace for all. When considering how to prevent conflicts over natural resources, it was important to acknowledge the historical facts. Many of the resource-driven conflicts affecting the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other countries in Africa stemmed from the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885, when colonial powers had resolved to make Africa an extraction point for mineral resources. Parliamentarians must ensure that their respective governments refrained from collaborating with or endorsing foreign and local armed groups operating in conflict zones. They must also compel their governments to stop interfering in African issues and to stop illegally procuring extracted natural resources. Parliamentarians should oversee investigations and prosecutions of individuals, organizations and countries that were engaged in the smuggling of mineral resources in conflict areas, and champion policies that ensured that communities living in resource-rich areas benefited from those resources. However, the greatest contribution that parliaments could make was to assist in the development of African economies by funding beneficiation programmes to ensure that mineral resources did not leave the continent as raw materials but instead were processed in Africa, thereby creating jobs and strengthening industries.

Mr. V.H. Musowa (Malawi) said that the topic at hand was of great interest to the people of Malawi, and Africa more broadly. Most conflicts caused by natural resources occurred at the source of those resources, the majority of which was found in Africa. His country, for instance, had a uranium mine, but the people of Malawi did not benefit from it. Conflict over natural resources could be avoided, yet parliaments in countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Malawi lacked the capacity to provide oversight and to legislate on issues relating to uranium mining, which was a complicated issue. There therefore needed to be capacity-building so that parliaments had the knowledge and expertise to curb malpractice, ensure that local communities benefited from mining and oversee the post-mining process. Only by ensuring that local people were the beneficiaries of mining activities could conflict around such natural resources be avoided.

Mr. A. Dvoinykh (Russian Federation) said that, to prevent much of the world's population from being affected by water shortages, it was important to modernize water treatment systems and develop new agricultural processes such as rainwater irrigation. It was important for lawmakers to work with engineers and scientists to that end, and to foster knowledge-sharing internationally. However, it was important not to link water scarcity issues with conflict, as the two areas were very different. The Russian Federation stood ready to cooperate in the area of water resource governance with a view to seeking well-balanced decisions on climate-related issues.

Ms. F.M.P. Konseibo Tiendrebeogo (Burkina Faso) said that, to prevent conflict linked to natural resources, it was essential to address conflicts at the community level by promoting peace and cohesion, and building communities' capacity to identify the causes of conflict and manage natural resources correctly. It was also important to tackle deforestation, ensure food security and build the resilience of farmers and producers, particularly among displaced communities. Parliaments should strengthen their oversight in those areas and enact laws that promoted human rights and ensured compliance with international treaties.

Ms. J. Kwan (Canada) said that, in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, all energy projects affecting Indigenous lands in Canada must respect Indigenous communities' rights to free, prior and informed consent. The full adoption of such an approach could significantly reduce conflicts linked to natural resources. It was also important to take a long-term view, as resource extraction had significant implications for future generations.

The Chair gave the floor to the panellists and Moderator to conclude the discussion.

Mr. A. Ware (Global Coordinator, PNND), panellist, in response to the query from the delegate from Sweden, said that the IPU's recently published toolkit provided guidance on how to incorporate human security into planning processes. Examples of success stories outlined in the toolkit included Costa Rica, which had abolished its army and reallocated resources to public health and education, and resolved conflicts with neighbouring countries. Another example, not in the toolkit but which he highly recommended, came from Wales, where the 2015 Well-being of Future Generations Act had incorporated SDG implementation, which was at the core of human security, into Welsh law. The International Court of Justice was also an important mechanism for resolving resource-related disputes, as were regional courts and national environment courts, which had been established by about 50 countries. He agreed that the joint management of resources and the involvement of Indigenous communities were important. The Bougainville Conflict, which had been linked to copper mining, was an example of how conflict could be resolved by involving local communities, including women, in negotiations. The parliamentary handbook on implementation of the United Nations Secretary-General's disarmament agenda *Securing our common future*, provided examples in that regard and outlined actions to prevent illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Ms. C. Seymour (Senior Researcher, CCDP, IHEID), panellist, welcomed the toolkit for parliamentarians on human security and common security to build peace. To ensure that such tools and practices were implemented, it was important to take due diligence seriously, recognizing that well-intentioned interventions could have distortionary and negative impacts on people and communities. It was crucial to ensure that all voices – including those of Indigenous Peoples, women and affected communities – were heard in a genuine way. The political economy perspective was also key to preventing protracted conflicts and ensuring that local communities benefited from natural resources.

The Moderator underscored the importance of security sector governance – including through human rights due diligence processes and risk assessments – in environmental and resource governance. His organization had recently been involved in a joint risk assessment involving an oil company, the armed forces and communities in Colombia, with the aim of identifying shared challenges and how to manage them jointly. Human rights training and monitoring were crucial both for countries with mines and for those whose mining companies operated internationally. Parliaments could strengthen such efforts by enhancing national regulations and increasing their oversight of security providers and companies.

In celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, a video on youth in parliament was screened.

Panel discussion: *The role of parliamentarians in nuclear security*

The Chair, introducing the panel discussion, said that all countries, whether for medical, scientific or industrial reasons, possessed radioactive materials that had to be protected. The notion of nuclear security therefore concerned all countries, who had a shared interest in establishing a strong nuclear security architecture. As with the previous panel, the discussion would consist of a moderated round table of experts followed by contributions from parliamentarians. She introduced Ms. S. Case Lackner (Senior Fellow, Vienna Centre for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP)) as the Moderator.

A video on the tenth anniversary of the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments was screened.

The Moderator said that parliamentarians played an essential role in nuclear security, which was the practice of ensuring that nuclear and radiological materials used for peaceful purposes were safe from misuse and sabotage by criminals, terrorist and others motivated to do harm. Technologies that used nuclear and radioactive materials had many benefits – including in medical and agricultural applications – and could support the achievement of the SDGs. As such, nuclear security concerned absolutely everyone, and parliamentarians were essential in ensuring that international nuclear security was fully effective. Her organization, the VCDNP, had organized a workshop with the IPU in April 2024 to address the role of parliamentarians in nuclear security.

Ms. E. Buglova (Director, Division of Nuclear Security, IAEA), panellist, said that nuclear security was important for all countries, including those with no nuclear power plants, as nuclear technology was used in a range of sectors in every country around the world. The IAEA supported countries in their use of that technology, in areas such as public health and agriculture. However, people tended to associate nuclear technology with nuclear weapons, and it was important to explain why and how nuclear technology could be used safely and securely to generate nuclear energy and address the SDGs. Nuclear security was a national responsibility that required a robust national nuclear security regime based on a solid legal foundation. The Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and its 2005 Amendment were a key component of that legal foundation, and it was the role of parliaments to adopt and ratify it. The IAEA worked with countries to provide information and address concerns regarding nuclear technology.

Ms. M. Lorenzo Sobrado (Head, Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Terrorism Prevention Programme, Terrorism Prevention Branch (TPB), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)), panellist, said that there were 19 international legal instruments to combat terrorism, seven of which related to the prevention of intentional and unlawful conduct involving nuclear or other radioactive material. They included the CPPNM, the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Countries were encouraged to become parties to the seven international legal instruments, which dealt with both State and non-State actors with terrorist and other, more common types of criminal intent.

UNODC worked to support countries in implementing those instruments, in cooperation with other international bodies. It had been sharing its substantive expertise and conducting outreach work with parliamentarians for over a decade, and had held events and workshops in a number of regions, many of which had been attended by parliamentarians. UNODC had also published resources with detailed information on the various legal instruments and the support available to parliamentarians in that area.

Ms. C. Scotto de César (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) Policy Analyst, International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)), panellist, describing the threat of ionizing radiation, which affected all countries, said that global law enforcement was facing an ever-changing set of capable, mobile and resourceful non-State actors with the intent to target nuclear facilities and to misuse radioactive materials. INTERPOL was uniquely positioned to collect information about that threat. In 2023, 234 incidents involving radioactive sources had been reported, ranging from unauthorized access and unauthorized possession to theft and illicit trafficking. INTERPOL collected, analyzed and assessed information to provide analytical products to law enforcement and help with investigations. It also provided capacity-building to support law enforcement's response, prevention and detection efforts.

Parliamentarians played a key role in ensuring that a legal framework was in place to support law enforcement in its work, in facilitating compliance with key international instruments and in fostering judicial cooperation and investigation. That was achieved by adopting national legislation, criminalizing offences related to the misuse of radioactive materials, setting up an independent regulator able to control nuclear resources within a country and establishing coordination mechanisms across government departments. Strong nuclear and budget legislation was needed to ensure that law enforcement could prevent, detect, respond to and investigate nuclear and radiological incidents, and had the equipment and training it needed.

The Moderator asked the panellists how parliamentarians could broach the topic of nuclear security in their parliaments and among constituents, given the complexity of the field.

Ms. E. Buglova (Director, Division of Nuclear Security, IAEA), panellist, said that it was important to join forces in order to build a robust nuclear security regime. Direct interactions with parliaments and the IPU were crucial to enable organizations like the IAEA to explain the practical implications of ratifying international legal instruments and the importance of ratification when it came to further utilizing nuclear technology securely and building public trust in such technology. To that end, the IAEA had, for instance, launched an initiative to hold bilateral scenario-based discussions with stakeholders from individual countries.

Ms. M. Lorenzo Sobrado (Head, CBRN Terrorism Prevention Programme, TPB, UNODC), panellist, explained that UNODC representatives had taken part in parliamentary discussions on the ratification of international legal instruments in order to provide an overview of the instruments and address any questions from parliamentarians. UNODC had also developed a manual of fictional cases in which the instruments could be applied, with the aim of demonstrating that criminal acts under those instruments could occur in a very broad range of circumstances. Underscoring the importance of international cooperation, particularly in such a technical area, she said that language and legislation needed to be harmonized across jurisdictions to ensure prompt cooperation. That could be achieved, in part, by ratifying the relevant legal instruments and incorporating their provisions into national law.

Ms. C. Scotto de César (CBRNE Policy Analyst, INTERPOL), panellist, said that it was important to bring discussions on nuclear security back to local contexts and look at how such materials could be used in sectors such as medicine and industry. INTERPOL had developed a methodology to help countries carry out assessments of radiological and nuclear threats, taking into account types of actors, their motivations and the conditions that could lead to an attack.

The Moderator asked the panellists to provide parliamentarians with a key message on nuclear security.

Ms. C. Scotto de César (CBRNE Policy Analyst, INTERPOL), panellist, said that it was important to remember that the threat was real. Legislation needed to be enacted to criminalize malicious activities involving radioactive material and facilities, and law enforcement agencies needed to have adequate human and financial resources to address that threat, with specialized equipment and forensics, and dedicated chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear teams.

Ms. M. Lorenzo Sobrado (Head, CBRN Terrorism Prevention Programme, TPB, UNODC), panellist, said that all countries used radioactive sources in medicine, agriculture and industry, and there was a strong international legal framework in place to help parliaments to protect people against any malicious use of those materials. Having adequate legislation and becoming parties to those instruments would help to protect citizens and provide the tools needed for effective international cooperation.

Ms. E. Buglova (Director, Division of Nuclear Security, IAEA), panellist, said that nuclear security was about more than just preventing nuclear terrorism; it was also an opportunity to ensure that society enjoyed the full benefits of nuclear technology securely. It was therefore the responsibility of all countries.

The Moderator summed up the discussion thus far.

The Chair thanked the Moderator and panellists for their input and invited contributions from the floor.

Mr. O.M. Amutike (Zambia) said that he had attended the workshop mentioned by the Moderator, which had given his country the opportunity to review the international legal instruments to which it was party, and consultations had begun on all of the instruments to which Zambia was not yet a party. Local application of nuclear energy was particularly important for countries such as Zambia, which relied heavily on hydropower but had been hit by drought, which had meant that electricity could not be provided to much of the population. In response, his country was developing its nuclear power and also looking at other applications in areas such as medicine and agriculture. Challenges included financial constraints – given the large investments needed in nuclear energy infrastructure – and the need for robust safety measures. It was also important to raise public awareness of the benefits of nuclear energy.

Mr. S. Rachkov (Belarus) said that the topic under discussion was of crucial importance given the current international context. His country pursued a consistent policy in the area of international security, and nuclear security in particular. It was a traditional sponsor of United Nations General Assembly resolutions on the prohibition of new types of weapons of mass destruction and on nuclear security, and supported international efforts to prevent the proliferation of such weapons. His Parliament had taken major steps towards establishing a nuclear security

system with an appropriate legal and regulatory framework, and international expert missions had repeatedly confirmed the security of the country's nuclear power plant, which fully complied with international norms and standards. He urged parliamentarians to strengthen efforts to establish a sound nuclear security architecture that encompassed all forms of nuclear technology.

Mr. K. Kosachev (Russian Federation) said that, in addressing nuclear security and stability, it was important to guarantee the balance of nuclear weapons, as had been agreed in treaties such as the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty), from which the United States of America had withdrawn. It was also necessary to promote non-proliferation, ensure nuclear security in the civil sector and safeguard the balance of conventional forces, by reviving treaties such as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty), which had been undermined by NATO countries. Nuclear powers needed to act more responsibly, as the situation was currently moving in the wrong direction.

Mr. O. Merezhko (Ukraine) said that the biggest threat to global nuclear security was the Russian regime, which had systematically threatened to use nuclear weapons against Ukraine and those democratic countries that supported it. The Russian Federation was deliberately attempting to destroy the nuclear non-proliferation regime and undermine global security. It had violated the Charter of the United Nations and unleashed a war of aggression against Ukraine. Such brutal violations of international law had grave consequences for global nuclear security.

In addition, the Russian Federation was blackmailing the world with threats of nuclear disasters at nuclear power plants in Ukraine. The only way to prevent such nuclear terrorism was to defeat and isolate the Russian regime and bring Russian war criminals to justice for their crimes against peace and world security.

Mr. D. Sam (Cambodia) said that nuclear power posed serious threats to human health in terms of both pollution and its impact on climate change. His Parliament had enacted legislation to ensure the safe use of nuclear technology and had ratified the Convention on Nuclear Safety and a number of international legal instruments relating to the non-proliferation, disarmament and prohibition of nuclear weapons. Cambodia had banned the production, use and storing of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and the Parliament had played a key role in implementing regulations and legislation to support the Government in its commitment to the non-proliferation of its nuclear programme and to ensuring security and safety nationally, regionally and globally. All countries must take serious action against the impact of nuclear power.

Mr. A. Tongjaisod (Thailand) said that parliamentarians should play a pivotal role in advancing nuclear security and the environmental agenda by engaging with relevant international authorities involved in legal and policy research on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. His country had implemented the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CNTBT) and ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), and would continue to promote the universal principle of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Regionally, the Bangkok Treaty represented a key step towards peace, security and stability.

Mr. B. Akburak (Türkiye) said that discussions on nuclear energy security must cover all military and civilian areas in which nuclear energy was used. Despite the risks posed by nuclear energy, there was a growing need for reliable, sustainable and accessible energy sources. Nuclear power plants were critical in that regard, but so too were international standards and multilateral cooperation. Having independent supervisory and regulatory bodies at the national level helped to strengthen the nuclear security culture in countries and ensured that the standards accepted by the international community were applied. From a military perspective, the presence of nuclear weapons posed a much greater challenge to the world, and recent geopolitical tensions had led to backtracking on previous progress. Full implementation and further strengthening of existing international conventions was the collective responsibility of all countries. Parliamentarians should also consider the devastation that a nuclear war would cause for humanity, making every effort to prevent such a war and taking the necessary measures to ensure the security of our peoples, in part by becoming party to relevant international legal instruments.

Mr. S. Mahmoud Nabavian (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that nuclear security could not be achieved unless nuclear weapons were eradicated completely. Such weapons should not be used as a tool to exert pressure on other countries. Instead, it was important to ensure that countries could benefit from nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

His country's nuclear activities were conducted in keeping with relevant international conventions, as had been confirmed by international inspectors. Those activities were not a threat to peace or to human or environmental health.

Unfortunately, the Zionist entity had attacked his country's nuclear power plants and facilities, and was committing violations by seeking to erase the people of Gaza and attacking the people of Lebanon. It did not abide by any international standards and should be prosecuted before the International Court of Justice for its war crimes. He called on the world to respond to those inhumane acts, and reiterated the importance of using nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and of ensuring nuclear security.

Mr. A. Ware (Global Coordinator, PNND) underscored the link between preventing the acquisition, possession and potential use of nuclear weapons by non-State actors and processes for nuclear non-proliferation, risk reduction and disarmament by States. The legal principles outlined in United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and related international legal instruments applied to the threat and use of nuclear weapons by both State and non-State actors, as confirmed by the International Court of Justice, which had ruled that the threat or use of nuclear weapons was illegal. The G20 had also agreed that the threat or use of nuclear weapons was inadmissible. However, that had not been implemented in policy. Nuclear armed States and their allies were encouraged to implement their legal obligations by, for example, adopting no-first-use policies, taking all nuclear weapons off alert and refraining from making provocative threat-of-use statements. All countries were urged to implement their obligations under the NPT.

The Chair invited the panellists to give their concluding remarks.

Ms. E. Buglova (Director, Division of Nuclear Security, IAEA), panellist, thanked parliamentarians for their comments, which would help the IAEA to better understand how it could work with and support Member States.

Ms. M. Lorenzo Sobrado (Head, CBRN Terrorism Prevention Programme, TPB, UNODC), panellist, invited participants to consult the various international legal instruments to combat nuclear terrorism and other criminal acts involving nuclear and other radioactive material. UNODC had various projects that enabled it to provide legislative support to countries and to conduct outreach activities. UNODC representatives were also available to visit parliaments to explain the various legal instruments or to meet with relevant parliamentarians and other stakeholders bilaterally.

Ms. C. Scotto de César (CBRNE Policy Analyst, INTERPOL), panellist, said that such discussions helped to bridge the gap between the work of parliaments, governments and law enforcement in dealing with the threat and handling of radioactive materials and crime scenes.

The Moderator reiterated that the nuclear threat was real, that adequate legislation was needed to ensure nuclear security and that nuclear security was the responsibility of all.

The Chair thanked the Moderator, panellists and participants for their contributions.

The sitting rose at 12:40.

SITTING OF WEDNESDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2024

(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 14:30 with Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland), Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee, in the Chair.

Expert hearing on the theme *The role of parliaments in advancing a two-State solution in Palestine*

The Chair said that the expert hearing would inform the process of drafting a resolution to be submitted to the Committee for consideration at the 150th Assembly. He recalled that, given the sensitivity of the issue at hand, it had been decided that a co-Rapporteur would be nominated from each of the six geopolitical groups. The co-Rapporteurs nominated thus far were:

Mr. M.A. Bouchouit (Algeria), Mr. J. Buttimer (Ireland), Ms. M. Guerra Castillo (Mexico) and Mr. T. Utikere (New Zealand). Participants were invited to submit their proposals for the draft resolution in writing to the Secretariat by 1 November 2024.

Ms. M. Pundak (Co-Executive Director, A Land for All – Two States, One Homeland), speaking in a pre-recorded video, said that in order to bring an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it was essential to develop a shared vision of the needs of the two peoples based on changing realities and the lessons learned from previous mistakes and achievements, with a view to creating a viable, sustainable future, based on self-determination, equality and safety for both peoples. The current war must be brought to an end, as it evidently did not ensure the safety of Israelis or Israel. It was also important to emphasize that the war had not started on 7 October 2023 and that it was not a war on Gaza or on Hamas. Instead, it was a war against the lives and future of the Palestinian people and, within that, on the lives and future of Israelis as well. Rather than attempting to shrink or manage the conflict, it was essential to find a solution. The current war provided an opportunity in that regard, both for Israelis and Palestinians and for the wider region.

Her organization, with the help of a large number of Israeli and Palestinian experts, lawyers and activists, had created an updated vision for an achievable two-State solution. Indeed, one major problem was that Palestinians felt that a two-State solution could not be achieved or that it would be used to maintain the occupation, apartheid and injustice. Her organization's vision was based on a new understanding of the situation of Israelis and Palestinians, who were interdependent in terms of such things as water supply, climate and healthcare. There therefore needed to be an acknowledgement of that interdependency, and of the shared interests and future of Israelis and Palestinians. Her organization advocated for a model of two separate, sovereign States with joint institutions to address shared issues and interests, such as water, the economy, security, Jerusalem, climate and health, and with freedom of movement between those two States. The right of return and freedom of movement should be basic human rights for all. Action was urgently needed to stop the war and lay down the principles for a sustainable solution. The international community had its role to play in that regard.

Ms. R. Salman (Executive Director, Combatants for Peace), speaking in a pre-recorded video, said that the ongoing war in Gaza represented a pivotal moment in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – it brought significant threats but also a unique opportunity to advance the previously stalled peace process through new diplomatic initiatives and strategies towards a two-State solution. The international community had a crucial role to play in that regard and needed to show courage and engagement. Combining on-the-ground support for a political solution with coordinated international pressure could pave the way for a sustainable resolution to the conflict.

In addition, more countries should recognize Palestine as a State, as that could help to foster bilateral and regional dialogue towards a two-State solution. Peace was the only way to break the cycle of fear, violence and loss that compromised the security and dignity of both Israelis and Palestinians. Her organization was working to promote a shared future for Israelis and Palestinians based on mutual recognition, self-determination, freedom, dignity, equality, security, agency, inclusion and healing, seeking to transform the narrative from one of hatred to one of hope. To bring about a people-driven peace process, it was necessary to cultivate a new generation of leaders in various sectors of society and ensure that policy decisions were guided by the experiences, hopes and aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians.

Ms. M. Durrieu (Researcher and Professor in International Relations and Political Science, Sciences Po Paris), providing an overview of the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and efforts to bring about a two-State solution, said that international organizations should continue to play a role in those efforts – the asymmetry between the two parties was too large and the hatred too profound for a solution to be reached bilaterally. The IPU, in particular, had a key role to play, as the solution must be partially constructed by and for the parliaments of Israel and Palestine. It was also important to acknowledge that accepting the two-State solution already represented a sacrifice for many Palestinians. Moreover, young Palestinians needed to be given hope in the process so that they did not turn their backs on it permanently. Achieving a two-State solution was an absolute necessity; recent events in Gaza and the wider region had demonstrated that the security of Israel and the stability of the region would not be achieved without a solution to the Palestinian issue – the Palestinian people had been deprived of their liberty and dignity for too long. Maintaining the status quo was not an option.

Furthermore, it was essential to understand that the conflict between Palestine and Israel was a territorial conflict fought with territorial tools. The two-State solution provided a territorial solution to that conflict, granting each population a share of the land on which they could establish a sovereign and independent State. In working towards a two-State solution, it would be important to build on previous agreements, such as the Arab Peace Initiative endorsed by the Arab League in 2002, and find concrete solutions to technical problems. It would also be necessary to ensure that the solution was collectively imposed and enforced through international law. That would require the two-State solution to be negotiated and enforced multilaterally. Agreements would be meaningless unless they were effectively applied, and sanctions should be imposed on those who violated such agreements.

Another important step would be the re-construction and re-legitimization of the Palestinian Authority. Democratic elections would need to be organized, and the international community must be willing to recognize the results. Corruption issues within Fatah would need to be addressed and a new leader elected, with potential candidates including Marwan Barghouti and Mohammad Dahlan. Lastly, a two-State solution could not be achieved unless the expansion of Israeli settlements was ended, and control of certain colonized territories was returned to the Palestinian Authority. The international community and international organizations had a very important role to play in that regard, given that the settlements were a serious violation of international law and of human rights.

The Chair asked whether a political solution would be sufficient and whether it would be accepted by the populations on both sides.

Ms. M. Durrieu (Researcher and Professor in International Relations and Political Science, Sciences Po Paris) replied that one of the main challenges would be ensuring the reconciliation of the two peoples, particularly given how intertwined they were on the ground. The territory was extremely limited, and Israelis and Palestinians would inevitably be close neighbours. The borders, walls and cultural and linguistic differences were artificial separations, as illustrated by the Old City of Jerusalem and the city of Hebron. Forgiveness among people was harder to achieve than political solutions, and the deep emotions and suffering experienced on both sides would need to be acknowledged. Track Two diplomacy processes, such as workshops between young Palestinians and young Israelis, would need to be put in place alongside the political negotiations, and implementation of a two-State solution would have to be reinforced with initiatives such as school programmes, linguistic cooperation and historical and cultural exchanges.

Ms. A. Chenoy (Adjunct Professor, Jindal School of International Affairs, Jindal Global University, India), speaking via video link and expressing her solidarity with the Palestinian people and agreement with the previous speakers, said that the principles of common security and human security were critical to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The States that had experienced conflict in recent decades shared one feature: one section of the population had been denied their rights and had been controlled by a dominant group. States that had enjoyed stability were those that had ensured coexistence and plurality.

A human security and common security approach, which was embedded in the heritage of the Global South, involved recognizing the rights of all people and ensuring freedom from fear; no group or State should have security at the cost of another, as that led to escalation, militarization and violence. Many peaceful, independent States in the Global South had become part of the Non-Aligned Movement, leveraging their neutrality to ensure peace and development. The strategy of non-alignment had consistently supported the two-State solution, although the Global South had no single coordinating platform on non-alignment, which meant their voices had not been heard within the international organizations. Those countries continued to advocate for global disarmament and development, and for regional solutions to conflicts. The two-State solution was the most viable option, although ultimately it was up to the people of Israel and Palestine to decide. There needed to be a non-violent strategy that ensured equal rights and justice for all Palestinians.

The Chair asked whether a consensus could be achieved among countries from the Global South concerning a two-State solution.

Ms. A. Chenoy (Adjunct Professor, Jindal School of International Affairs, Jindal Global University, India) replied that United Nations General Assembly resolutions on the issue had regularly been proposed by countries from the Global South, indicating their support for a two-State

solution. It was time for the international community to consider the people of Palestine in a humane and inclusive manner based on common security and human security. The entire Global South was pleading for a just two-State solution.

A minute's silence was held in memory of all those who had lost their lives in conflicts around the world.

Mr. M.A. Bouchouit (Algeria), co-Rapporteur, thanking the experts for their remarks, recalled that there had been no State known as Israel prior to 1948. The international community was making concessions when it was clear that Israel would not commit to a two-State solution. It was important to consider the vulnerable, marginalized, subjugated people of Palestine and for the Assembly to be fair and pragmatic towards those people in its decisions on the issue.

Mr. J. Buttimer (Ireland), co-Rapporteur, speaking in a pre-recorded video, said that his country had worked tirelessly to maintain a fragile peace on the island of Ireland. The success of that process had hinged upon building relationships between neighbours, communities and countries on which stronger bridges of tolerance continued to be constructed. He expressed the hope that the people of Israel and Palestine would be able to achieve the same. Peace was built on trust, cooperation and the courage to maintain a dialogue. Allowing Palestine to become a member of the United Nations would be a significant step towards meaningful peace and security for both Palestine and Israel. The two-State solution was the only credible path forward, yet a just, sustainable and comprehensive settlement was further away than ever. Renewed energy, vision and cooperation were needed. The people of Palestine deserved a future of peace and hope, while Israel had the right to exist securely and peacefully alongside its neighbours. A future defined by mutual recognition and respect was the only path to break the cycles of violence and retaliation.

Ms. M. Guerra Castillo (Mexico), co-Rapporteur, called for a ceasefire and for compliance with international humanitarian law. It was important to ensure that human rights and dignity were protected, that the rule of law was respected, and that transparency and accountability were maintained. Multilateral diplomatic dialogue was needed to stop the blockade on Gaza and prevent violent extremism. Politicians played an essential role in that regard, as they could provide solutions and foster negotiations. Stronger parliamentary cooperation was also needed, and the IPU should play a key role in promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue. The State of Palestine should be recognized as equal to the State of Israel. It was important to ensure lasting peace based on respect for human rights and human dignity without exception, and by adopting an approach that encompassed, among others, human security, economic security, food security and environmental security.

The Chair informed the Standing Committee that the Israeli delegation had left Geneva and had provided a written statement on the issue at hand, as summarized below.

Mr. D. Illouz (Israel), in a written statement, said that the Israeli delegation was unable attend to defend itself because the meeting was being held during the Jewish holiday of Sukkot. On 7 October 2023, Hamas terrorists had stormed Israeli communities, murdering over 1,200 innocent civilians, raping women, executing children and wiping out entire families. Hamas' Israeli hostages were still being held in Gaza. Therefore, discussion of a Palestinian State at the present moment was ill-timed, would mean rewarding terror with statehood and would encourage another wave of terror. Such an approach was not diplomacy but a message to the world that massacres could be used to achieve political goals. The mention in the title of the current meeting of "a two-State solution in Palestine" was a glaring sign of bias; also, omitting the name "Israel" was as if to erase its existence.

The countless, meaningful and far-reaching solutions for the Palestinians that Israel had offered had always been rejected. After the 7 October 2023 massacre, out of 120 Knesset members, 99 coalition and opposition members had voted against the idea of a Palestinian State.

He appealed to those who cared about peace to stand with Israel in defeating terror that threatened not only Israelis but peace itself. Terror must not be rewarded. He also urged the Committee to reconsider its proposed agenda and to stand on the right side of history, with Israel and against terror.

Mr. A. Damianou (Cyprus) said that it was currently more crucial than ever to reflect on the role parliaments could play in advancing peace and stability. For decades, there had been strong support for a comprehensive and lasting settlement based on a two-State solution. Such a solution required the political will, strong commitment and unequivocal support of the international community, and parliamentarians had a pivotal role to play in that process. The Assembly's decision to adopt an emergency resolution on Palestine was a positive and decisive move. Coming from Cyprus, he understood the deep scars left by unresolved conflicts, and his country stood in solidarity with efforts to advance a just and lasting solution for Palestine. It would continue to play its role as a pillar of security and stability in the wider region of the Middle East and as a bridge for dialogue and cooperation with Europe.

Mr. S. Mahmoud Nabavian (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his country was opposed to a two-State solution, as it was undemocratic and went against the principles of international law. The lands in question were Palestinian not Israeli lands, and Palestinians should have the right to live in their own country. The expansion of Jewish and Zionist settlements, and the repeated violations of Palestinians' human rights were unlawful and should not be allowed. The matter should be decided through a democratic vote with accurate and fair monitoring.

Mr. A. Alharbi (Saudi Arabia) said that his Government was committed to a fair and just two-State solution, and the establishment of a Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital. That was the only solution that could be implemented in practice and that would guarantee the security of Palestine, Israel and the wider region. The first meeting of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution would be held in Riyadh and he invited parliamentarians to urge their governments to join the initiative. Furthermore, it was important to recognize the Palestinian State and ensure its membership in the United Nations.

Mr. J.C. Beltrán (Chile) said that resolving the conflict in Israel and Palestine would require countries to change their foreign policies, set aside their political and economic differences, and foster a dialogue built on respect. An international perspective was needed – peace and international security could be achieved if countries worked together. In addition, the world's major powers should use artificial intelligence for positive ends, to prevent violence and crime, ensure the security of populations and achieve peace.

Mr. A. Khoori (United Arab Emirates) called for the draft resolution to be impartial, balanced and consensus based to ensure that it would be adopted by all Member Parliaments. The draft resolution should call for the reform of the IPU with a view to strengthening its role in building peace and security through parliamentary dialogue and diplomacy. It should also acknowledge the limited impact of some parliaments and the lack of implementation of relevant international resolutions as major challenges; seek to strengthen the role of parliaments in implementing relevant resolutions and decisions; recognize that the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with full membership in international organizations was necessary to achieve fair and just peace and security in the region; express support for all regional and international efforts to bring peace to the Middle East; recognize that the war in Gaza represented a threat to the two-State solution and the establishment of a Palestinian State; and reaffirm parliaments' commitment to parliamentary diplomacy, in keeping with the declaration made at the 148th Assembly.

Ms. A. Erdoğan (Türkiye) said that Israel was waging a war against international organizations such as the United Nations, including by obstructing the work of a United Nations-mandated commission of inquiry, designating the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) a terrorist organization and attacking United Nations peacekeepers in Lebanon. The work ahead would therefore be very difficult, as Israel did not accept international institutions and was evading all efforts to implement an immediate, permanent ceasefire. Her country would continue to promote the recognition of the Palestinian State in line with a two-State vision. The only way to achieve lasting peace in the Middle East was to end Israel's violations, implement a two-State solution and bring those who had committed crimes in Gaza to justice.

Mr. C. Law (United Kingdom) said that the recent, appalling image of a Palestinian man, Sha'ban al-Dalou, being burned alive served as a reminder that any two-State solution should be about helping the people on the ground. He called on the governments of his and other countries to

recognize Palestine as a State – it was not possible to call for a two-State solution without first taking such a step. Reaching a two-State solution would require dialogue and the setting up of joint initiatives such as community centres, schools and hospitals, as had been the case in Northern Ireland.

Mr. B. Mahtab (India) reaffirmed his country's support for the people of Palestine and their quest for statehood, peace and prosperity. It was important to return to the path of dialogue and diplomacy, and show support for a just, peaceful and lasting two-State solution that would lead to the establishment of a sovereign, independent and viable State of Palestine within secure and recognized borders. Parliaments played an essential role in advancing a two-State solution, as they could promote diplomatic solutions through their legislative, representative and oversight functions. Parliamentary delegations, dialogue forums and inter-parliamentary groups should work to encourage governments to fulfil their commitments. Parliaments should also urge the parties to work towards creating the conditions necessary for peace and to resume direct negotiations. Only a two-State solution achieved through direct and meaningful negotiations would deliver an enduring peace for the people of both Israel and Palestine.

Mr. Y. Galeazzi (Sovereign Order of Malta) asked how the experts saw the role of religious leaders and faith-based institutions, and particularly interfaith dialogue, in advancing the peaceful implementation of a two-State solution.

Mr. M.M. Dlamini (South Africa) said that the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 19 July 2024 highlighted the steps that Israel and the international community must take to achieve a two-State solution. That included Israel ending its presence in the occupied Palestinian territory, providing full reparation for the damage caused by its actions, evacuating settlers in existing settlements and dismantling parts of the wall it had constructed. The advisory opinion also underscored the importance of allowing displaced Palestinians to return to their original place of residence and acknowledged that the full realization of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination required the cooperation of all States with the United Nations. Countries had a duty not to accept any changes in the territory occupied by Israel since 1967, which included East Jerusalem.

A task force should be established to unite parliamentarians from both sides, foster dialogue and cooperation, and guide the IPU Assembly towards a lasting solution to the conflict. In addition, parliamentarians should urge their respective governments to recognize the State of Palestine as a significant step in advancing a two-State solution and fostering a climate of mutual respect and coexistence between Israel and Palestine. Until a peaceful two-State solution was achieved, the people of Palestine should continue to defend themselves.

Ms. J. Kwan (Canada) said that her country must recognize the State of Palestine, which already existed under international law. Canada should join the growing number of governments that understood the importance of advancing towards peace and justice for Palestinians and Israelis; impose an arms embargo on Israel, including by removing any loopholes on arms transfers; and take immediate action to impose sanctions on key figures in the Israeli Government who had incited genocide and violence. There could be no impunity for terrorism, for the incitement of genocide or for annexation. Moral courage and political will were needed to ensure lasting peace. She expressed the hope that the IPU Assembly would take steps to spread a message of peace and justice for all.

Ms. F. Belhirsch (Netherlands) called for a two-State solution that was rooted in international agreements and endorsed by the international community, and that recognized that both Israelis and Palestinians deserved their own sovereign nations. Such a two-State solution was the only viable path to peace. Parliamentarians had a responsibility to use diplomacy, dialogue and legislation to support initiatives that promoted just and lasting peace, and to treat all lives equally. Parliaments must work actively to end the violence and suffering, setting aside prejudices and opinions in order to be truly objective, and support human security and common security to ultimately build peace. Policymakers had a responsibility to support a solution that brought justice, security and dignity to all people involved, and ensured that both Israelis and Palestinians could live in peace and freedom without fear of violence. Parliamentarians must advocate for a peace process that recognized the legitimate rights of both peoples and addressed historical grievances.

Mr. C. Lacroix (Belgium) said that parliamentarians should consider the issue from the perspective of international law, particularly in terms of self-determination. Parliaments and governments had a responsibility to immediately and formally recognize the State of Palestine as the starting point in the process towards a two-State solution under the guidance of the United Nations. Parliaments should also demand an end to the blockade on Gaza, the reconstruction of Gaza, and the imposition of economic and political sanctions against Israel. To achieve a ceasefire and, ultimately, a two-State solution, Hamas should also release all remaining hostages.

Mr. A. Salman (Bahrain), thanking experts for their useful ideas for a two-State solution, said that the expansionist policies of Israel were hindering peace efforts in the region, represented a form of extremism and were not limited to the occupied Palestinian territories. The current Israeli Government was seeking to evade domestic accountability by committing violence and genocide in Palestine and Lebanon. Moreover, some of the world's major powers were complicit in Israel's occupation of Palestine, providing military and diplomatic support to the occupier. Those powers spoke of a two-State solution, yet instead of providing solutions, they provided weapons that were destroying the region. The Palestinian people had a right to self-determination and it was important to rebuild Palestinians' trust in the possibility of establishing a sovereign State. A two-State solution would require international guarantees and the recognition of the State of Palestine. The IPU should use its strong international voice to express support for the Palestinian cause and promote a just international position on the issue.

Mr. L. Achour (Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM)) said that the PAM supported international efforts to achieve a ceasefire and protect civilians in Gaza, and called for negotiations on a two-State solution to resume. He reiterated the right of the Palestinian people to establish a Palestinian State. The escalation of the conflict in the Middle East was affecting security throughout the region and impeding the peace process. All efforts must be made to prevent all-out war and implement an immediate ceasefire. The PAM stood ready to support post-conflict negotiations concerning future governance and the return of Palestinians to their land. To deliver comprehensive peace, that process should start with a serious commitment from all parties to find a solution that complied with international law and that would ensure the security of all people. Parliamentarians should play a key role in facilitating those negotiations and in ensuring that tangible action was taken on the ground. All stakeholders must work closely to find effective solutions.

Ms. A. Kalmari (Finland) said that mutual respect, justice and independence were key to achieving peace. It was important to bury hatred and bitterness on both sides in order to work towards a two-State solution.

Ms. M. Durrieu (Researcher and Professor in International Relations and Political Science, Sciences Po Paris), responding to the question concerning the role of religious organizations, said that control over religious sites was a complex issue, as the Israeli Government was progressively taking control of more land and more holy places. It was important to draw from previous efforts in that area, such as the Beilin–Abu Mazen agreement of 1995, which had provided concrete solutions to technical issues such as the organization and control of holy places. Broader religious cooperation would be easier to achieve than political cooperation, as it was a territorial rather than a religious conflict.

Participants had expressed their agreement concerning the importance of guaranteeing the rights, freedoms and security of both the Israeli and the Palestinian people, and the urgent need to end injustices and human rights violations. To achieve a two-State solution, it would be necessary to secure commitments on all sides, and parliaments should find ways to put pressure on governments, first to recognize the State of Palestine and then to commit to and comply with the agreements reached, including by imposing sanctions on parties that failed to comply with such agreements.

Ms. A. Chenoy (Adjunct Professor, Jindal School of International Affairs, Jindal Global University, India) said that there was a sense of consensus on the need for a two-State solution and the important role that the international community and parliaments could play in that regard. Although the international community was currently very divided, people were increasingly putting pressure on their governments to move towards a two-State solution, and there was a growing recognition that the current violence was unacceptable and ran counter to the idea of a two-State

solution. The international community should come together and put pressure on the major powers that were hindering the process and allowing the genocide to continue. The IPU could play a key role in creating a collective voice and a more cohesive international community.

The Chair thanked participants for their input, which would inform the next phase of the drafting process.

Elections to the Bureau of the Standing Committee

The Chair said that the Committee was requested to fill one vacancy for the Asia-Pacific Group. The following nomination had been submitted: Mr. H. Mohammad (Malaysia).

The nomination was approved.

The Chair said that the Committee was also requested to elect a new Vice-President from the Asia-Pacific Group. The following nomination had been submitted: Mr. H. Mohammad (Malaysia).

The nomination was approved.

The sitting rose at 16:50.

Standing Committee on Sustainable Development

SITTING OF TUESDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2024

(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 14:30 with Mr. W. William (Seychelles), President of the Committee, in the Chair.

Adoption of the agenda (C-II/149/A.1)

The agenda was adopted.

Approval of the summary record of the Committee's session held at the 148th IPU Assembly in Geneva (March 2024)

The summary record was approved.

The President said that he wished to draw attention to the new IPU *Policy to prevent and address harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and other IPU events*, which was intended to ensure an inclusive, peaceful and safe working environment, free of harassment for all, and which drew on definitions and approaches used in the UN System *Code of Conduct*.

He invited Ms. R. Fatima (Under Secretary-General and High Representative, United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS)) to speak via a pre-recorded video message on the Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries due to take place in Gaborone, Botswana from 10 to 13 December 2024.

Ms. R. Fatima (Under Secretary-General and High Representative, UN-OHRLS) said in her video message that least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing States (SIDS) bore the heaviest brunt of the ongoing overlapping global crises, which disproportionately impacted their development. The international community had committed to addressing their urgent needs and unique challenges through specific, targeted programmes of action.

The Third UN Conference on LLDCs would demonstrate renewed solidarity with those countries, bring together various stakeholders and include a parliamentary forum – the IPU was expected to play a crucial role in ensuring its success. The Conference's outcome document, a new programme of action guiding LLDCs towards sustainable development, had already been agreed by consensus. For the first time, climate change and disaster resilience was a key priority area for LLDCs. To ensure a transformative impact in LLDCs, all parties should, at COP29, support the new programme of action, which underscored, most notably, the role of national parliaments in supporting the programme's implementation, and strengthening awareness of and advocacy for LLDCs. Those national parliaments present were urged to intensify their efforts in that regard, as effective legislative oversight and resource allocation could be key to ensure that LLDCs were on track to achieving the targets of the new programme of action and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Parliaments and governments were the driving force behind that change and should actively engage in the Third UN Conference on LLDCs.

Debate on the theme of the next resolution entitled *Parliamentary strategies to mitigate the long-lasting impact of conflicts, including armed conflicts, on sustainable development*

The President introduced the three Rapporteurs of the draft resolution, Ms. H. Faye (Bahrain), Ms. E.T. Muteka (Namibia) and Mr. R. Fogiel (Poland), and the guest speakers, Ms. A. Gill (Director, United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding and Responsive Institutions (CPPRI) team), Mr. G. Connor (Policy Specialist, UNDP CPPRI), Mr. M. Talhami (Strategic Programme Manager, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)) and Mr. H. Born (Head of the Policy and Research Department, Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF)).

Ms. A. Gill (Director, UNDP CPPRI), accompanying her report with a digital slide presentation, said that UNDP's work on conflict prevention, peacebuilding and parliamentary strengthening was important because it was grounded in its rights-based governance values, including the effective and inclusive participation and accountability of all the formal and informal institutions in the countries UNDP worked with to ensure that the population, especially marginalized groups, had its priorities heard and was able to work towards sustainable peace and development. UNDP supported the IPU's role as a formal institution in that regard.

UNDP's conflict prevention work focused on building trust nationally and sub-nationally, between formal and informal institutions and the population. Sub-national support was key and could be linked to national efforts using a multi-level approach. It was important to work with parliamentarians in that regard because national budgets and plans needed to be conflict-sensitive. While discussing such strategies was easy, it was difficult to reflect various conflict dynamics and political economy analyses in development priorities.

Given the need to address rising global inequality in existing planning mechanisms, the approach to peacebuilding should incorporate other important issues, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and the digital space, and the rise in hate speech, misinformation and disinformation.

Mr. G. Connor (Policy Specialist, UNDP CPPRI) said that UNDP had led global policy support efforts to provide parliaments with guidance documents, including *Parliaments as partners supporting the women, peace and security agenda* on the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and *Parliaments, crisis prevention and recovery: Guidelines for the international community*. In their efforts to resolve the brief violent conflict in North Macedonia in 2001, UNDP and Switzerland had strengthened political dialogue in the country's Assembly through the establishment of the Inter-Community Relations Committee, a peace agreement and constitutional amendments. The Committee was a standing body of North Macedonia's Assembly, and its legal position and authority were enshrined in the Constitution. It elected members of parliament (MPs) from different ethnic communities. It had also been effective in sustaining dialogue at times of crisis and inter-community tensions, and benefited from UNDP's direct support to build its capacity to enhance political dialogue between the country's political parties. UNDP, through the Committee, increased lawmakers' capacity to understand and monitor laws relating to minority rights, inter-ethnic relations and conflict sensitivity, among other areas.

The Committee had played a vital role, significantly developing North Macedonia's multicultural and multiethnic dimension, true harmony among all citizens and strong parliamentary democracy. UNDP support helped strengthen social cohesion vertically between elected representatives and citizens, and horizontally through political dialogue among communities.

Mr. M. Talhami (Strategic Programme Manager, ICRC) said that the topic under discussion was central to meeting the unprecedented humanitarian needs of civilians in armed conflicts and stemming the long-lasting impacts of such conflicts, including their impact on the SDGs. Humanitarian actors needed to provide long-term, at-scale responses adapted to protracted crises and factor in climate hazards to respond to acute emergencies, and provide long-term support to local service providers to ensure continuous municipal delivery of essential services, especially in urban areas.

The reversal of the SDGs in fragile conflict- and violence-affected contexts was alarming. Such a reversal was mainly due to, firstly, the unprecedented levels of destruction of critical infrastructure, which further underscored how the non-respect for international humanitarian law (IHL) continued to be the principal cause of suffering during armed conflict. Second, with a shrinking humanitarian space and extensive unexploded ordnance, humanitarian actors, local service providers and contractors lacked sustained safe access to critical infrastructure. Third, the importation of customized parts to maintain and repair critical infrastructure was hindered by the unintended impacts of sanctions on principled humanitarian action. Fourth, insufficient humanitarian funding hindered the continuous delivery of essential services, which, as underscored in UN Security Council resolution 2573 (2021), required the protection of civilian infrastructure, service provider personnel, spare parts and consumables. UN Security Council resolution 2664 (2022) was also a step in the right direction, as it provided for humanitarian exemptions to mitigate the incidental impact of sanctions. While those two resolutions inspired cautious optimism, they must be practicalized on the ground to protect critical infrastructure and essential services, and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Certain steps were necessary to guarantee access to essential services and progress towards achieving the SDGs, with a focus on ensuring that fragile conflict- and violence-affected settings did not fall further behind. Autonomous sanction regimes should incorporate open-ended

humanitarian exemptions, and the national competent authorities should provide guidance to suppliers and banks in their areas of jurisdiction to mitigate overcompliance and de-risking regarding goods and services needed for principled humanitarian action. There should be flexible multi-year humanitarian financing and “no regrets” investments in emergency preparedness planning for armed conflicts, climate hazards and environmental degradation. The humanitarian-development nexus should be operationalized by forging stronger partnerships between humanitarian organizations, development actors and local service providers to respond at scale and strengthen the resilience of essential services. Lastly, it was necessary to build back better during early recovery and reconstruction by taking an all-hazards approach to emergency preparedness.

Mr. H. Born (Head of the Policy and Research Department, DCAF) said that government actions should align with international principles. Parliamentarians should be careful not to consider armed forces and police across the board as having a separate status to civilians, since the situation varied from country to country. As the bridge between society and the executive power, parliamentarians needed to remind governments that the law should apply in times of war.

Since the parliamentarians attending the present Assembly also represented Governments who were State Parties to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), they should remind their Governments of their obligations under the 2030 Agenda, as the situation did not look favourable. SDG 16, on peace, justice and strong institutions, was the means by which security and stability could ensure the wider development of society for generations to come. Eighty per cent of the world’s poorest people lived in contexts of war, conflict and violence; there could not be any development during raging war. The security and development communities needed to come together to show that security and stability were key to achieving the targets of SDG 16.

For effective parliamentary oversight, parliaments’ legal power should be backed up by appropriate laws and resources, and by building parliamentarians’ and civil society’s expertise, especially as parliamentarians were not security experts, which made it challenging for the military, police and government to keep parliamentarians up to speed. Effective parliamentary oversight also required parliamentarians to have a critical attitude to hold the government accountable, which meant involving the courts and sometimes challenging the party line.

In carrying out their security-related functions, parliaments needed to look at the gaps in legal frameworks, better understand the budget, and ensure that the security sector’s accounts were public with a view to comparing and cross-checking information, providing oversight and control in the event of mistreatment of or by the police and military, and, in some cases, exercising scrutiny in electing security leaders. As demonstrated by Canada’s National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, inclusiveness, and not simply the force of weapons, strengthened the security sector. Parliaments were key to developing a national vision and legal security framework.

The President, thanking the experts for providing the Committee with channels for capacity-building, invited the Committee to share on the item under discussion.

Ms. C. Erotokritou (Cyprus) said that global challenges and instability were being intensified by the conflicts unfolding in the Middle East. The effects of terrorism, population displacement and infrastructure destruction extended beyond countries’ borders, threatening progress towards achieving the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. Coordinated parliamentary action and multilateral cooperation were vital in addressing the long-lasting impacts of conflict on sustainable development. Affected countries often struggled to meet basic human needs and achieve peaceful, inclusive societies and justice. Parliamentarians played an essential role in improving budgets and holding governments accountable to advance social inclusion, innovation, green transition, digital transformation and climate energy solutions, particularly in conflict situations.

Following Türkiye’s 1974 invasion and forced occupation of Cyprus, the Cypriot House of Representatives had worked with the executive to enact special legislation to equitably distribute the resulting burden, restore the economy and provide relief to victims and their relatives, and continued such efforts through its Standing Committee on Refugees, Enclaved, Missing, Adversely Affected Persons. The efforts of women parliamentarians had led to legislative amendments to support female victims of the invasion and recognize them as war victims. At the executive level, Cyprus had developed Vision 2035, a national long-term strategy to ensure sustainable and resilient economic growth for all Cypriots by addressing future global and local challenges over 15 years.

The President encouraged the Committee to challenge the experts present with questions and comments.

Mr. S. Aleinik (Belarus) said that all countries should show political will and enter into dialogue on global security in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. The current global geopolitical situation was characterized by serious political tensions between countries, the restoration of a bloc mentality, confrontations and the threat of local conflicts escalating to global conflicts. Armed conflicts were slowing down the SDGs' achievement and could reverse previous progress.

The West had increased its military budget to fuel an arms race and keep conflicts raging, hindering social, economic and other sustainable development programmes. Belarus had consistently advocated for political and diplomatic conflict settlement and had long contributed to negotiations on the conflict in Ukraine. His country was working to resume efforts on international and regional security, including through the joint search for effective, long-lasting solutions within the framework of the International Conference on Eurasian Security. Parliamentary strategies were important to collective efforts to mitigate the impact of conflicts on sustainable development and, more broadly, to prevent and resolve conflicts.

The President said that the Committee should keep their comments within the framework of sustainable development and their countries' best practices in that regard.

Mr. P. Bakovic (Slovenia) said that crises in recent years had severely thwarted progress towards SDGs achievement, worsening inequality and vulnerability. Geopolitical tensions posed a threat to rules-based multilateralism and the 2030 Agenda. Humanitarian needs had significantly increased owing to natural disasters and human-induced emergencies unprecedented in scale, frequency and severity, which were driven by protracted conflicts, biodiversity loss and pollution. With about 60% of conflicts linked to natural resources, political stability and security within and between countries were increasingly at risk. Crisis management efforts and peace-building initiatives needed to address the issue more seriously.

As a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council and a member of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), Slovenia rooted its actions in international law and the protection of human rights. It had also identified the following priority areas for its engagement in Security Council matters: preventing conflicts, protecting the population in armed conflicts, safeguarding water resources and infrastructure, implementing the women, peace and security agenda, and addressing the links between climate, peace and security. Coordinating action among humanitarian, development and peacekeeping actors was crucial to addressing the root causes and drivers of conflicts and preventing cycles of violence and protracted crises. There was a collective responsibility to develop solutions to support affected countries in achieving the SDGs.

Ms. R. Abunayan (Saudi Arabia), highlighting the importance of peace to sustainable development, said that her country had engaged in diplomatic efforts to resolve conflicts by promoting peace talks and negotiations. It collaborated with international organizations to address challenges to development, including through initiatives promoting education, health and proper infrastructure in affected areas. Saudi Arabia had contributed funds to international organizations and NGOs to support refugees and displaced populations, and encouraged investments through public-private partnerships in different countries to foster economic development and job creation in conflict-affected areas. It had established a council to monitor the governance of those efforts and ensure they were on track to addressing the root causes of conflicts and promoting peace talks through parliamentary diplomacy.

Mr. M. El Mener (Tunisia) said that his country had been implementing the 2030 Agenda by organizing workshops and national consultations and participating in international negotiations. It was committed to contributing to the green economy, circular economy, carbon neutral economy and social development. The COVID-19 pandemic had pushed countries to embody the spirit of cooperation, help people worldwide and establish laws to protect economies and manage resources effectively, especially renewable energy, which was a main resource in Tunisia.

Climate change greatly impacted society and the economy. Tunisia was suffering in the face of desertification, deforestation, fires and water scarcity, which had led to high rates of poverty, displacement and unemployment. Big industrial countries did not shoulder their responsibility to support socioeconomic growth among pollution-affected populations. Countries needed to work together to that end.

The Tunisian Parliament sought to build a multilateral world based on people's economic rights, democracy, freedom and the rule of law, and to implement international treaties while protecting sovereignty. With all those principles being called into question in Palestine, the Committee should consider how to deal with that challenge.

Ms. Kishi Makiko (Japan), deploring the loss of countless lives to current conflicts, said that Japan's Constitution upheld pacifism. She had personally advocated for a peaceful international community rooted in pacifism and held her Government accountable to the pacifist ideal. Conflicts were an immediate threat to peace, but also a long-term obstacle to sustainable development, causing environmental degradation and intensifying the impacts of climate change. It was time for countries to re-examine and strengthen their approach to sustainable development and peace.

Japan was a strong proponent of human security and supported developing countries through its Trust Fund for Human Security established in 1999 in collaboration with the United Nations (UN). A bipartisan study group had been formed in 2024 to advance human security diplomacy. She would ensure that Japan's support through the Trust Fund continued without disruption and upheld a free, open international order, the rule of law and human security in accordance with the SDGs. Governments should leverage the IPU as a platform of parliamentary diplomacy to promote peaceful resolutions through restraint and dialogue between conflicting parties.

Mr. V.D. Ram (India) said that parliaments were increasingly perceived to contribute to peacebuilding and sustainable development owing to their fundamental role in ensuring the rule of law, the protection of human rights, transparent governance and national compliance with international obligations. While it was difficult to pinpoint a single cause of conflict, parliamentarians could implement inclusive governance, which was essential to preventing marginalization and fostering harmony. Economic recovery plans and investments in essential infrastructure were crucial to revitalize communities and create opportunities. Conflicts often followed a cyclical pattern and addressing their underlying issues required a comprehensive, multifaceted approach that involved peacebuilding and reconciliation, and addressed the conflict's root causes. Parliamentarians must be proactive in implementing early-warning systems to detect potential conflict hotspots and in addressing underlying issues before they escalated.

Sustainable resource management and the unwavering protection of human rights were indispensable to prevent future conflicts. Parliamentarians must empower women, engage the youth and foster international cooperation to build resilient and prosperous societies.

He questioned the validity of the belief that climate change should be at the centre of all government policy. Climate change and security must be linked but climate change could not replace security.

The President said that parliaments had demonstrated commitment to advancing the 2030 Agenda. Through the IPU, numerous declarations and resolutions had been adopted that illustrated parliaments' political will and engagement to help ensure that the world was more sustainable and resilient, and that no one was left behind. While there was strong political mobilization, coordinated parliamentary actions needed to be scaled up to accelerate SDGs implementation. Only 17% of the SDG targets were on track to be met on time. Recent assessments showed an alarming situation in which the world's poorest and most vulnerable were the most impacted. Climate change, environmental degradation, health inequalities, poverty and socio-economic disparities continued to affect people's lives and livelihoods.

Mr. M. Karakaya (Türkiye) said that renewable energy, environmental protection and social development could not be addressed while economic and human resources were being spent on conflicts and as long as there were people without security of life and property.

With malnutrition persisting, basic human needs not being met and people continuing to be left behind, peace and stability were essential. Parliamentarians needed to act for change. Regional ownership was crucial to minimizing the impact of conflicts. The UN was regrettably far from providing an effective and sustainable solution to conflict. The situation in Gaza had demonstrated that international law could easily be violated and that the international community had failed to respond. Maintaining such a trend could not benefit future generations.

In response to the statement by Ms. Erotokritou (Cyprus), he stressed that that delegate did not care about the substance of the current discussion and that Cyprus always claimed that Türkiye had invaded Cyprus in 1974, but that was a historical matter and was not the right way to start the

discussion, as it did not contribute to resolving the issue at hand. In 1974, Türkiye had intervened in exercise of its right as a guarantor; Cyprus had been established as a republic in 1960 and divided into two guarantor States; 1963 saw the Bloody Christmas event.

The President, requested that participants refrain from discussing issues that did not apply to the Committee's work.

Ms. A. Lotriet (South Africa) said that the far-reaching effects of environmental devastation caused by conflicts bore severe human rights implications, particularly impacting women, girls and vulnerable communities, and people's fundamental right to live in a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. To protect civilians and alleviate human suffering, it was essential to prevent armed conflicts and resolve them peacefully in strict adherence to international humanitarian and human rights law.

It was crucial to investigate alleged war crimes, prosecute perpetrators, ensure reparations for victims, strengthen other States' investigative and prosecutorial capacities, and cooperate fully with international investigative and judicial mechanisms. Understanding conflicts' impact on the environment and incorporating legal environmental protections into military training, national policy and legal frameworks were key. Environmentally sensitive areas should be designated as demilitarized zones to ensure environmental conservation in conflict zones. Parliamentarians needed to advocate for the prohibition of the trade of blood minerals through effective enforcement mechanisms, including legislation and international cooperation. International actors, including the UN, should provide more support for climate adaptation in conflict-affected areas, with a focus on conflict-sensitive adaptation programmes to empower vulnerable communities and address the root causes of climate vulnerability.

Parliamentarians had the responsibility to champion those causes, effect positive change and advocate for policies to protect human rights and ensure sustainable environmental management in conflict-affected regions.

Mr. A. Gerasymov (Ukraine) said that discussing risks to sustainable development should involve addressing a fundamental truth: imperialistic aggressors, such as the Russian Federation, were the primary threat to people's future and undermined every aspect of life. The Russian Federation had compromised Ukraine's nuclear safety, directly threatening regional security and undermining any chance of sustainable development in Ukraine. From the first day of its invasion, the Russian Federation had sought to cripple Ukraine's agricultural sector by weaponizing food, resulting in the loss of millions of tons of grain, increased food prices globally, widespread hunger and instability – consequences that extended far beyond Ukraine's borders. Considerable portions of Ukraine's protected natural areas and forests, as well as the Kakhovka Dam, had been damaged during the war. That ecocide had incurred significant long-term environmental, social and financial consequences. It was a crime against the planet and undermined global efforts to address climate change and environmental sustainability. Concerning energy security, the Russian Federation's many targeted attacks on Ukraine's civilian energy infrastructure had cut off electricity, heat and water supply for millions in order to break people's spirit and sabotage Ukraine's development.

The Russian invasion was hindering progress towards achieving the SDGs, having generated over 175 million tons of greenhouse gases, as well as disinformation, propaganda and deep fakes. If parliamentarians were serious about creating a sustainable future for all, they must not allow such conflicts to take precedence. They should stand strong and united against the aggressor because to let it succeed would sacrifice the future of sustainable development. It was no longer an issue of politics; people's future was under threat. The co-Rapporteurs should incorporate all the aforementioned insights into the resolution.

The President said that, in keeping with the IPU guideline to manage the use of abusive language in IPU meetings, the conduct of participants should be characterized by mutual respect based on IPU values and principles, as laid down in the Statutes and Rules, and should respect the dignity of all people.

Mr. A. Bagherzadeh (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that it was necessary to strive for sustainable development, which involved social, economic and political dimensions, and was based on achieving real opportunities for people. The destruction of infrastructure, including civilian infrastructure, made it impossible to achieve the SDGs, undermined development, education and healthcare, destroyed humanity as a whole and caused pollution. Parliamentarians should seek out solutions, including finding job opportunities for conflict-affected people.

Conflicts displaced many people, flooding neighbouring countries with refugees. Such was the case in Gaza and Lebanon, where millions had been displaced. That catastrophic situation impeded all efforts to achieve sustainable development. The Zionist entity was perpetrating massacre and destruction in Gaza and Lebanon. Humanity should stand against such aggression and work hand in hand to put an end to it. Parliaments could ratify decisions and resolutions within the framework of the IPU to put an end to all such conflicts, drawing on the different political, cultural and economic ideologies. Parliamentarians should strive for mutual respect and peaceful coexistence among all religions and ideologies, protect the innocent and respect the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs.

The IPU played an important role in investing in peace everywhere. It should strengthen democracy globally to build peace and sustainable development in accordance with UN values. Most importantly, parliamentarians were key in ensuring that sufficient funds were allocated for sustainable development, especially reconstruction.

Mr. A. Dvoinykh (Russian Federation) said that the theme of the resolution was so abstract that the debate would become politicized. Politics and security did not fall within the remit of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development. Considering the political conflicts inherent to discussions on armed conflicts, parliamentarians should refrain from politicizing the draft resolution and focus on working together to achieve the SDGs, which the Russian Federation stood ready to do.

Mr. D. Sam (Cambodia), drawing on his country's experience of how war had claimed millions of lives and destroyed the economy, culture, and education and health systems, said that armed conflicts and their long-lasting impacts could be resolved only through peaceful settlement, such as dialogue and national reconciliation in adherence to the Charter of the United Nations. Cambodia's "win-win" policy had allowed it to maintain peace since 1998 and defend its sovereignty, social order, security, safety and political stability by upholding the rule of law. Its society had become strong and vibrant, and defended peace as the country was being built. Peace, political stability and security were the foundations of sustainable development and social harmony. All parliaments and parties to conflict should use peaceful dialogue to mitigate the long-lasting impact of conflicts and promote peace for all.

Ms. S. Unnopporn (Thailand) said that sustainable development and peace could not be achieved without strong legal foundations. Among other legal initiatives, the Thai Parliament fostered reconciliation and social cohesion in conflict-prone areas, promoted public participation in conflict resolution and had established special committees to propose strategies to promote peace processes in response to conflicts in border provinces in the country's south. Equitable resource distribution and poverty reduction were important in regions previously affected by conflicts.

Parliaments were critical in holding governments accountable for their actions. Thailand exercised robust parliamentary oversight over peacebuilding efforts in its conflict-prone sub-regions and the efficient and transparent allocation of State resources. It supported programmes aimed at rebuilding infrastructure, restoring peace, ensuring public services and creating economic opportunities. It prioritized women's empowerment and supported marginalized groups in decision-making.

Multilateralism and international cooperation were crucial in preventing and mitigating conflicts. Thailand had supported regional peace processes and reconciliation efforts, including working with host countries and local communities based on local development needs. Local development projects must therefore go hand in hand with peace initiatives.

Ms. S. Almansoori (United Arab Emirates) said that the draft resolution should incorporate parliamentary diplomacy, which was key to building relations and fostering cooperation between national parliaments, and communication bridges to mitigate the lasting impacts of conflict. The draft resolution should also encourage trade between countries so that common interests could prevent conflicts. During its term on the UN Security Council, the United Arab Emirates had implemented efforts to mitigate conflicts, including providing diplomatic solutions, preventing new conflicts, finding comprehensive peaceful solutions, and promoting tolerance and peace internationally through, for example, the Abraham Accords, which promoted dialogue among religious groups, and UN Security Council resolution 2686 (2023) on tolerance, peace and international security, which was the first resolution to state that xenophobia, and racial and gender discrimination could lead to and escalate conflict.

Mr. H. Elgendy (Egypt) said that parliamentarians should ensure conformity of all national laws with the SDGs – especially during conflicts – adopt necessary laws, allocate resources for implementation and promote international initiatives to mitigate the impact of conflicts on sustainable development. The most effective way to prevent conflicts was through neutral diplomatic negotiation efforts, peaceful conflict resolution and international cooperation to resolve the root causes of conflicts. Countries should commit to international instruments to protect the SDGs during armed conflicts and disseminate among their militaries the principles of such instruments, especially IHL, the Geneva Conventions and conventions on nuclear disarmament.

Parliamentarians should motivate humanitarian organizations to assist conflict-afflicted countries to promote sustainable development through reconstruction, a green economy, renewable energy, sustainable transportation and by requesting the international community to alleviate those countries' debt burden. Furthermore, the first step to achieving the SDGs was to carry out efforts to limit poverty and improve healthcare and access to education for all.

Mr. M. Reddad (Morocco) said that his country had implemented a comprehensive conflict-resolution strategy involving diplomacy and development, where peace and development were two sides of the same coin. Morocco had resolved many regional conflicts, placing emphasis on reconstruction as a foundation for sustainability. Its approach had not simply been one of diplomacy but one of investment in a more prosperous future for Africa which built hope and solidarity among local communities. Investing in human resources had been key to Morocco's strategy. Education and capacity-building were central to the strategy with a view to empowering the youth and preparing them for future challenges. Educational and vocational programmes were based on coexistence and tolerance to help build more resilient societies.

Addressing the impact of conflicts required a comprehensive, integrated approach. Together, proactive diplomacy, sustainable development and investment in human resources could create a basis for sustainable peace. Given that countries faced cross-border challenges requiring joint efforts from all countries, all international organizations and countries should benefit from Morocco's experience and scale it up to build a sustainable, prosperous and peaceful world for all.

Ms. R. Abouras (Libya) said that the risks to achieving the SDGs were inequality, injustice and the fact that countries affected by conflict and climate change did not have programmes to address those challenges. Having faced many wars and the impacts of climate change, Libya had deployed efforts to reconcile warring parties within the country, implemented the SDGs by building roads and empowering women and youth, and carried out developmental and agricultural programmes, among others. The society had put down its arms to work towards reconstruction. Likewise, the IPU should establish a committee to promote ceasefire and dialogue in all areas facing the threat of genocide, which was the best path to recovery and sustainable development. It was the role of parliamentarians to foster peace and cooperation.

Mr. K. Khelifati (Algeria) said that establishing laws to promote international diplomacy and the peaceful resolution of conflicts were key to mitigating the long-lasting impact of conflicts on sustainable development. Parliamentarians should provide conflict-affected areas with resources to support sustainable development efforts, and institute peace and security. Algeria had prevented regional conflicts through diplomacy, negotiation and mediation and had called for regional peace and security through joint efforts. The Algerian Parliament played a pivotal role in supporting the right of the people of Western Sahara to determine their sovereignty and the right of Palestinians to establish its independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital, while providing humanitarian and financial support to Palestinians. Although the IPU defended sustainable development, it should consider what it had done to help Lebanon and Gaza to establish peace, given that the Zionist entity prevented SDG achievement in the region.

Mr. M.L. Khumalo (Zimbabwe) said that conflicts disrupted life, displaced families and eroded trust among citizens. The scars of conflict often lingered long after the fighting, hindering countries' SDG achievement. Parliamentarians' foremost strategy must embrace peacebuilding initiatives to foster dialogue, reconciliation, understanding and collaboration, given the many divisions conflicts created. Community mediation and conflict resolution training could empower local leaders to address grievances before they escalated. Parliamentarians should strengthen national institutions, ensuring transparency, accountability and representativeness of citizens. Promoting rule of law and good governance practices could build trust in political systems and reduce the likelihood of conflict. Parliamentarians should allocate resources for education, a

powerful tool for preventing conflict, and develop robust social protection systems for vulnerable conflict-affected populations, including by providing resources for displaced families, ensuring access to healthcare and facilitating integration programmes for returnees.

Mr. M. Reddad (Morocco) said that the parliamentarians had gathered to discuss development, which was why he had not spoken about problems between countries. Western Sahara belonged to Morocco, whose rights and values were undermined and at risk of being deprived by certain countries.

Mr. K. Khelifati (Algeria), in response to the statement made by Mr. Reddad (Morocco), said that Western Sahara had the right to self-determination and the UN was looking into the issue.

The President thanked delegates for their contributions and invited the experts to provide responses and clarifications to the questions raised.

Mr. H. Born (Head of the Policy and Research Department, DCAF) said that there were clear links between the Committee's work and the actions outlined in the UN Pact for the Future, particularly action 7, on building effective and accountable, inclusive institutions, action 13, on building and sustaining peaceful, inclusive and just societies, and action 18, on national strategies to prevent conflict. While certain delegates believed that military security was not relevant, it impacted nuclear safety and food, energy, environmental and climate security. Parliaments' needed to ensure accountability for stability, which was key to development.

Ms. A. Gill (Director, UNDP CPPRI) said that multilateralism, which was key to conflict prevention and sustainable development, was increasingly under threat. If IPU Member Parliaments believed in multilateralism, they should make sure it was reflected in their proposed solutions. More needed to be done to address the link between climate change and human security. The international community needed to address cross-border issues through multilateralism.

Mr. G. Connor (Policy Specialist, UNDP CPPRI) said that society was in a new era with serious resource constraints while transitioning to renewables, thus fuelling a geopolitical fragmentation. Parliaments needed to look at the role of business in preventing conflict. UNDP's guide *Heightened human rights due diligence for business in conflict-affected contexts* looked at conflict involving natural resources and companies in extractive industries. Likewise, the European Commission had published its *Corporate sustainability due diligence directive*. Parliaments could use those guidance documents as entry points to develop their markets.

Mr. M. Talhami (Strategic Programme Manager, ICRC) said that multilateralism could advance the application of IHL during armed conflicts, which had recently been lacking. The protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure should be adequately integrated into policies and military doctrine. Protracted armed conflicts required a more holistic humanitarian response. Promoting inclusive and equitable access to services was important to resolve conflict and sustain peace.

The President said that there was a growing political awareness with regard to respecting UN resolutions. He invited the experts to explain how political will to respect and implement the resolutions could be measured, considering that the UN was facing numerous challenges in that regard.

Ms. A. Gill (Director, UNDP CPPRI) said that any resolution, like UN resolutions, should inspire hope because they were agreed to jointly by all members, which strengthened collaboration and paved the way forward for implementation.

Mr. G. Connor (Policy Specialist, UNDP CPPRI) said that some UN Security Council resolutions could be implemented through country action plans. Parliaments must play an oversight role, particularly in the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

The President invited the co-Rapporteurs of the draft resolution to share their insights.

Mr. R. Fogiel (Poland), co-Rapporteur, said that parliaments had the crucial task of oversight of reconstruction policies in the aftermath of military conflicts. They should rely on international cooperation to mitigate the long-term effects of conflicts. Reconstruction policies should be in line with the SDGs, and parliaments should establish legislative frameworks to that end. The destruction of the Kakhovka Dam, a source of renewable energy, clearly showed how conflicts could harm sustainable development. The co-Rapporteurs would try to include all the discussion points in the draft resolution.

Ms. H. Ramzy Fayez (Bahrain), co-Rapporteur, said that there was an urgent need to find lasting solutions, and strengthen the rule of law and respect for human rights. Parliamentarians needed to take measures to reduce the flow of illicit arms and prevent conflicts to achieve peace, which was a prerequisite for social and economic development. Without peace, societies would suffer from violence and instability, hindering progress and leading to human and material losses that impeded SDG achievement. Parliaments were vital in dealing with conflicts and mitigating their impact on sustainable development.

Sustainable anti-conflict societies were built by promoting dialogue, peaceful settlement, human rights, social justice, transparency, the fight against corruption, all basic services, economic development, cooperation, humanitarian work and reconstruction. Strengthening regional and international peace and security limited the impacts of conflicts, and enhanced confidence in political and economic stability, thus contributing to achieving the SDGs and building a better future. National parliamentarians were key to addressing conflicts, promoting peace and stability and mitigating conflicts' negative effects on sustainable development.

The President said that certain participants tried to sneak in issues irrelevant to the Committee's work. Only a sustainable relationship between participants could ensure peace. Participants were urged to do justice to the Committee and respect one another. The IPU had established rules concerning meetings and participants' conduct, but they were not being applied. The Committee should consider having subgroups to mediate between participants, who were not responsible for the situations in their countries but attended meetings to discuss global concerns, which could not be addressed without peace between them.

The sitting rose at 16:50.

SITTING OF WEDNESDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2024

(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 9:30 with Mr. W. William (Seychelles), President of the Committee, in the Chair.

Preparations for the Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29) in Azerbaijan

The President said that Member Parliaments should reflect on the values and guiding principles of the IPU and their roles as representatives of the people, regardless of their background. They should rise above their differences and unite with a renewed purpose so as not to lose sight of the bigger picture and to achieve effective parliamentary diplomacy. Concerning preparations for the Parliamentary Meeting at COP29, which would take place later that year in Azerbaijan's designated Green Zone, the IPU had promoted parliamentary engagement on climate change for over a decade. COP was an important vehicle for that action. The IPU was grateful to Azerbaijan for elevating the visibility of parliaments as key stakeholders for climate action.

The Parliamentary Meeting would produce an outcome document. He introduced the COP29 rapporteur, Mr. Mammadov (Azerbaijan), who had prepared a preliminary draft of the outcome document, which had been open for amendments until 4 October 2024. The Committee's debate should further work on the text with a view to its submission for adoption at the Parliamentary Meeting.

Mr. S. Mammadov (Azerbaijan), rapporteur for the COP29 Parliamentary Meeting, said that the Member Parliaments' valuable insights would be important to the success of the Parliamentary Meeting. While Azerbaijan had been known to make significant profits from fossil fuels, it had

always demonstrated its readiness to contribute to energy transition. It had ranked thirty-second in the 2023 Energy Transition Index of the World Economic Forum and had become a leading country in terms of investments in renewable energy resources as a share of gross domestic product (GDP). The country had begun implementing its green energy strategy before it had been declared host of COP29. The IPU had been promoting parliaments' active participation in the fight against climate change by organizing COP Parliamentary Meetings. The COP29 Parliamentary Meeting draft outcome document was based on the outcome documents of the COP27 and COP28 Parliamentary Meetings, and on the Committee's discussion on the resolution on partnerships for climate action held during its session at the 148th IPU Assembly.

The COP29 Parliamentary Meeting draft outcome document emphasized the following: parliamentary support for regulatory mechanisms to achieve rapid, substantial and sustainable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; the need for international joint initiatives and knowledge-sharing to establish more agile, operative and comprehensive cooperation mechanisms and to mitigate the effects of extreme weather events; and governments' active role in implementing large-scale action programmes for efficient water use and the creation of new water sources.

A video on Azerbaijan's preparations for COP29 was shown.

The draft outcome document called for government support for countries affected by natural disasters, conflicts impacting the environment, and mines and unexploded ordnance. Among other things, legislation should be created to facilitate the transition to green energy and mitigate the effects of pollution on the health of people and the environment, in accordance with the COP28 outcome document.

COP29 would focus on climate finance. International financial institutions should cooperate more closely with developing countries to promote climate investments, which should be strengthened by legislation, and developed countries needed to fulfil their financial commitments. Legislative mechanisms should support innovation and affordable access to modern technologies promoting green energy. It was important for government efforts to be complemented by broad involvement from civil society institutions. Legislation and parliamentary oversight should address the needs of those disproportionately affected by climate change. An objective monitoring mechanism was key to ensuring transparency in carrying out climate change commitments. The draft outcome document also provided for reviewing the implementation of Parliamentary Meeting recommendations and taking stock of efforts implemented through the IPU, and encouraged multi-stakeholder climate education mechanisms.

The observations and proposed amendments for the draft outcome document had been analysed and the required changes made. They pertained to contradictory language relating to conflicts, the interpretation of the Paris Agreement, different approaches to the provision of financial support to developing countries, the transfer of technology, the role of young people, vulnerable groups and climate education. Parliaments were urged to participate in the COP29 Parliamentary Meeting.

The President acknowledged the presence of Ms. Al Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates), Vice-President of the Committee, and invited delegates to share their insights and questions regarding the outcome document.

Ms. G. Katuta Mwelwa (Zambia), speaking on behalf of the IPU Advisory Group on Health, said that the climate crisis was a health crisis and therefore welcomed the Parliamentary Meeting session on the critical nexus between both crises. She suggested the inclusion of a new operative paragraph, which would read:

We urge parliaments to recognize the links between health and climate change, and that climate change is a health risk multiplier and support multi-sectoral policies and investments to make health systems resilient to the impacts of climate change, including those related to climate-induced food insecurity, extreme weather-related illness and vector-borne diseases, ensuring positive health outcomes for all, especially vulnerable and marginalized populations.

The Secretariat was requested to share the proposal in writing for the Rapporteur's consideration.

Mr. Yoshii Akira (Japan) said that the draft outcome document provided parliamentarians with critical guidance to collectively address climate change. Japan had been carrying out climate change mitigation efforts, including by providing technical assistance through the transfer of Japanese technologies while respecting the autonomy of recipient countries, thus strengthening their technology standards and institutional frameworks, and by pledging US\$ 10 million to the Loss and Damage Fund. In light of those commitments, Japan's proposed amendments to the draft outcome document had been based on the belief that technology transfer should be carried out voluntarily and on mutually agreed terms, and that loss and damage contributions should be encouraged among developed and developing countries, in keeping with the spirit of the decisions adopted at COP28. The amendments also aimed to ensure that the outcome document reflected the spirit of the first Global Stocktake outcome document and the Paris Agreement, and garnered broader international support.

Ms. M.S. Al Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates), Vice-President of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, said that the COP28 Parliamentary Meeting had been the first such conference held in the Green Zone and had had a record number of participants, including high-level participants, which clearly showed the importance of parliaments' role in collectively fighting climate change and implementing the Paris Agreement. The COP28 outcome document had guaranteed the sustainability of parliamentarians' work through an enhanced legislative and monitoring role to combat climate change and through parliaments' support for effective, green and sustainable technology-based strategies. Against that backdrop, the COP29 outcome document should provide for the continuation of and following-up on the Paris Agreement, parliamentarians' role in boosting innovation in clean energies through national capacity-building and awareness-raising strategies, the need for parliamentary efforts to create green job opportunities and governments' increased inclusion of young people, women and parliamentarians in their COP29 delegations.

Mr. S. Anviah (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that fulfilling commitments under the Paris Agreement was a common responsibility, and countries should find executive ways and use science and research, among other fields, to solve the climate change issue, including mitigating the effects of sandstorms. It was concerning that many industrialized countries did not fulfil their commitments. It was his hope that the Loss and Damage Fund could support climate change projects and countries affected by natural disasters. Given that the Islamic Republic of Iran and other Middle Eastern countries did not have enough resources, developed countries were called on to provide financial support without affecting other countries' sovereignty. The embargo imposed on the Islamic Republic of Iran exacerbated challenges related to climate change problems. Focus should be placed on providing developing countries with support, especially technical and financial, to fulfil their commitments, thus promoting their development and energy transition. The Islamic Republic of Iran stood ready to negotiate with other countries in that regard.

Ms. J. Kwan (Canada) said that her country was not meeting its targets. It needed to address corporate non-compliance with tax obligations; the billions in taxes lost represented nearly a quarter of the country's federal corporate income tax revenue. It also needed to stop subsidizing the oil and gas industry, and investing in false green energy investments, which was cheating the system and humanity. Addressing those issues would generate funds that should be reinvested into green technology and energy, and energy efficiency. Urgent action was required.

Mr. M. Khumalo (Zimbabwe), highlighting some impacts of severe weather events in his country, said that the Government had focused on working with local communities to protect critical ecosystems, preserving pine forests to protect biodiversity and water resources, and carrying out reforestation efforts to restore land damaged by natural disasters. The Zimbabwean Parliament had also enacted policies to promote sustainable land management and mainstream climate change into national development plans, including by promoting climate resilient agriculture in mountain regions, agroforestry and ecotourism as an alternative livelihood for locals. Zimbabwe took a proactive and comprehensive approach to addressing climate change and building a resilient future.

Ms. R. Abouras (Libya) said that she hoped that COP29 would put emphasis on ceasefires across the world, that money would be invested in green energies instead of weapons to eliminate all types of violence, and that the conference would address the importance of sustainable ecosystems and of supporting youth.

A delegate from Zambia said that her country faced social, political and economic challenges that could potentially lead to conflict. Historic grievances and socioeconomic disparities could pose threats to national cohesion and sustainable development. Parliamentary strategies were crucial in mitigating the long-lasting impacts of conflicts and ensuring a stable environment conducive to sustainable development. Such strategies included enacting effective legislation, promoting transparency and accountability, ensuring inclusive governance, fostering economic and social recovery and exercising parliamentary oversight. Collaboration was necessary among parliaments, governments, civil society, international organizations and local communities.

Mr. S. Mammadov (Azerbaijan), rapporteur for the COP29 Parliamentary Meeting, said that upon careful consideration of the suggestions for the outcome document, he welcomed Ms. Katuta Mwelwa's proposal concerning the inclusion of the connection between health and climate change. Regarding the proposals by Mr. Yoshii Akira on voluntary technology transfer and contributions to the Green Climate Fund by developing and developed countries, a meeting would be held with the Japanese delegation, followed by discussions with Member Parliaments and the Secretariat with a view to including a consensus-based amendment on those matters. He thanked Japan for its commitment and financial pledge to combat climate change. Ms. Al Suwaidi was commended for her useful experience; the Dubai COP28 outcome document had provided a basis for the draft outcome document under discussion, particularly in calling upon parliamentarians to establish monitoring mechanisms to ensure its implementation. Consideration would be given to the proposals by the Islamic Republic of Iran, concerning dealing with sandstorms and other natural disasters. A meeting would be held with the Canadian delegation and every effort made to best include in the outcome document its proposal on addressing corporate non-compliance with tax obligations and using those taxes to tackle climate change. He concurred with the delegate from Libya on the need to stop wars, which had an effect on climate change – the draft outcome document called for parliamentarians' engagement in that regard, and at COP29 Azerbaijan would call for a truce in conflict zones.

The President said that while commitments had been made to loss and damage funding in the past, the outcome document should emphasize the need for such funds to be sustainable. The outcome document should also strengthen the nexus between scientists, politicians and the private sector, which was important for inclusivity and sustainability. Climate change was an existential threat. He was therefore pleased to see the parliamentarians' solidarity and looked forward to their participation at the COP29 Parliamentary Meeting. He drew attention to the new IPU climate guide entitled *10 Actions for stronger national climate commitments*, which aimed to support parliamentarians in honouring their countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and exercising oversight.

Ms. H. Schofield (IPU Consultant, Climate Action) added that the said climate guide was the latest instalment of the IPU *Parliaments for the Planet* campaign. It focused on helping parliaments become greener institutions and oversee the implementation of the Paris Agreement. Governments were set to submit new NDCs to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in early 2025. Parliaments could get involved in shaping the new commitments and holding governments accountable. Parliamentarians should review the key actions outlined in the guide and present them to their parliaments. She looked forward to further discussions on the actions for stronger national climate commitments at COP29.

The President said that the IPU and other international organizations were holding a workshop later in the Assembly to empower parliamentarians to implement the NDCs and advance the climate agenda nationally. The workshop was timely, as countries were preparing new NDCs for submission in 2025. Parliaments should be engaged in the process and oversee implementation.

Panel debate on the theme *Towards a fair global financial system: The role of parliaments in preventing corporate tax avoidance and achieving sustainable development*
(C-II/149/5-Inf.1)

The President introduced Ms. D. O'Neill (Australia), moderator of the panel debate on the theme *Towards a fair global financial system: The role of parliaments in preventing corporate tax avoidance and achieving sustainable development*.

The Moderator, referring to an incident in her country, Australia, in which an audit company had monetized confidential Government information to allow foreign multinational enterprises (MNEs) to avoid taxation in Australia, said that such greed and unethical behaviour outweighed the public good and had been contrary to international ethical standards for accountants. Corporate tax avoidance significantly impacted national economies, with spillover effects on the global economy. Political will and considerable economic resources from all countries were necessary to adapt to a changing climate and achieve the SDGs. MNEs used tax base erosion and profit shifting to undermine such efforts, which denied governments the public funds needed to invest in sustainable economic and social development. The debate would focus on base erosion and profit shifting, and the practical measures needed to address them. She introduced the panellists.

Mr. B. Dickinson (Deputy Director, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Centre for Tax Policy and Administration), panellist, said that an estimated US\$ 4 trillion was required to finance the SDGs. While the focus had been on international corporate tax, filling that financial gap would also depend on policies and administrative capabilities, value-added tax (VAT), income tax, tax collection methods and the use of digital technology in tax collection. Tax sovereignties had been encountering issues in recent years owing to globalization and the rise of MNEs. Rules made to govern “brick-and-mortar” companies were no longer applicable. There was growing concern about companies exploiting the loopholes in international tax rules to shift profits to no- or low- tax jurisdictions.

The OECD’s base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS) project brought together over 140 countries to change tax rules in efforts to close those loopholes. Given that billions of dollars were at stake, global action and a broad coalition of countries were necessary. The issue affected not only rich countries but all economies. The BEPS project incorporated rules and tools to which participant countries were committed. It involved updating tax treaties to stop tax treaty abuse; implementing country-by-country reporting, which ensured increased transparency of company activities among jurisdictions; addressing transfer pricing; and introducing a global minimum corporate tax, which allowed countries to retain their sovereignty while offering tax incentives.

The project had been accompanied by a tax transparency movement, regarding information exchange among tax jurisdictions, which was the most important tool in battling illicit financial flows. Efforts were underway towards launching the Automatic Exchange of Information (AEOI). It was challenging for the OECD to sustain a coalition of countries that addressed the issue based on consensus. In legislating, parliamentarians must navigate the complex international tax rules, and forge national alliances among parliamentarians, the executive, businesses and civil society to draft the essential tax reforms.

The Moderator said that the focus of the current discussion was SDG achievement and how countries could fund the ideas suggested at the IPU.

Ms. K. Mambwe (Project Manager, Tax Inspectors Without Borders), panellist, said that tax policy makers could help to mobilize revenues in their countries. Building tax capacity was important for auditors to investigate MNEs’ transactions and generate revenues for governments. Parliaments could advocate for enhanced tax capacity, global tax reforms and ethical corporate practices, such as tax morale, and leverage improved tax administration. The BEPS project was important for developing countries, particularly in the implementation of BEPS minimum standards and transfer pricing guidelines. However, more remained to be done.

The Moderator drew attention to document C-II/149/5-Inf.1, which outlined steps to address base erosion and profit shifting practices, and to establish a system of financial integrity for sustainable development.

Ms. R. Abunayar (Saudi Arabia) said that parliaments were crucial in preventing corporate tax avoidance and, consequently, in promoting sustainable development. Tax compliance and enforcement were important in shaping countries’ fiscal landscapes, ensuring fairness and fostering economic growth. To promote tax compliance among businesses and individuals, Saudi Arabia had carried out awareness-raising campaigns, implemented advanced digital platforms and performed risk-based audits. It had also ramped up enforcement measures to combat tax avoidance through penalties, data analytics to detect non-compliance patterns, and active participation in OECD and G20 initiatives, such as the Common Reporting Standards and the AEOI. Further efforts included exchanging information to strengthen cross-border enforcement and deter MNEs from evading taxes, introducing transfer pricing regulations, implementing anti-avoidance provisions, closing loopholes, preventing abusive tax practices and clarifying tax laws.

The Moderator said that while countries were at different stages in their efforts, the OECD encouraged them all to simultaneously impose a 15% global minimum tax for MNEs. She hoped that the current discussion would help that goal become a reality.

Mr. V.D. Ram (India) said that it was parliamentarians' responsibility to ensure that financial systems were equitable, transparent and conducive to sustainable development and inclusive growth. Corporate tax avoidance undermined the integrity of tax systems, reduced government revenues, deepened inequalities, and deprived countries, especially developing countries, of the resources needed to invest in public services and infrastructure. Sustainable development, the financing of which required the mobilization of domestic resources, was significantly influenced by fiscal policy and necessitated policies promoting inclusiveness and sustainable development.

In light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), India addressed corporate tax avoidance through a multifaceted approach that included legislative reforms, international cooperation, such as through BEPS, and robust tax enforcement measures. Its General Anti-Avoidance Rule (GAAR) empowered the tax authority to scrutinize and invalidate tax-avoiding arrangements, and its goods and services tax had streamlined indirect taxation, reduced tax evasion, increased compliance and created a unified tax regime, making it more difficult for businesses to exploit tax loopholes. Parliaments played an important role in creating a fair and effective tax system through legislation, oversight, international cooperation and transparency. India's Parliament had been monitoring and proactively guiding the Government's work regarding sustainable development. Engaging with stakeholders, particularly tax authorities, businesses and civil society, enhanced the benefits of an equitable financial system and led to balanced, comprehensive tax legislations and a prosperous, just and sustainable world for all.

The Moderator said that fairness was key to the current topic of discussion. The OECD's proposed 15% global minimum tax rate for MNEs would ensure that countries' needs were sustainably met and would advance the SDGs.

Ms. K. Mambwe (Project Manager, Tax Inspectors Without Borders), panellist, said that the 15% minimum tax rate on excess profits would encourage countries to evaluate the effectiveness of their tax incentives, which often drove effective tax rates below 15%. MNEs should not make excessive profits from tax incentives.

Mr. S. Anviah (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that taxes greatly impacted economic growth. The Islamic Republic of Iran attached importance to attracting foreign investments because of its lower domestic revenue. Recalling that the African Group of the UN and the G77 had established terms of reference for fairer global tax rules, he urged other countries to support that effort to achieve the social and economic goals of the UN. An agreement that was binding for all countries was necessary. Gaps in tax laws led to tax evasion. Companies should not benefit from loopholes – parliaments should all agree on that. The implementation of robust tax laws should be safeguarded by creating monitoring and evaluation systems, and updating tax laws and their follow-up mechanisms. The Islamic Republic of Iran wished to raise awareness about taxes and different taxation cultures to put an end to tax evasion.

The Moderator said that cooperation was indeed important. While parliaments could celebrate diversity, unity was also beneficial. Many countries had the political will to put monitoring and evaluation systems in place to ensure that companies that attempted to exploit governments would be met with a united international force of parliaments.

Mr. T. Beloe (Director, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Sustainable Finance Hub), panellist, speaking via video link, said that the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development, due to take place in Spain in 2025, would play a critical role in bolstering efforts to combat corporate tax avoidance. He underscored the importance of domestic resource mobilization in SDG achievement. The US\$ 4.2 trillion financing gap that developing countries faced with regard to meeting the SDGs could not be filled by international public funds or concessional financing. Domestic resource mobilization was necessary. Developing economies could not afford corporate tax avoidance.

Parliaments should exercise oversight and partner with tax authorities to bring visibility to the latter's role in sustainable development and in combating tax avoidance. Being the linchpin for building trust in institutions and strengthening the social contract, parliaments should provide

citizens with evidence of the role of tax and domestic resource mobilization in delivering public services and promoting sustainable development, especially at times of fiscal constraint. Parliamentarians were urged to become involved in the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development to broaden the stakeholders base, and build capacity for and provide parliamentary perspectives on domestic resource mobilization.

Ms. K. Mambwe (Project Manager, Tax Inspectors Without Borders), panellist, said that her initiative was a joint effort between the OECD and UNDP that applied a hands-on technical approach to capacity-building, especially in developing countries. It provided tax administrations with technical, industry and tax expertise that went beyond traditional capacity-building methods. The initiative's experts performed risk assessments of MNEs operating in developing countries, which led to increased confidence among auditors because of their work with experts from other jurisdictions, and enhanced transparency among MNEs. Tax Inspectors Without Borders experts also detected loopholes in tax systems and provided recommendations for legal frameworks.

The Moderator said that the Tax Inspectors Without Borders initiative was a capacity-building asset that all countries could draw on for expertise at no cost to national management budgets.

Ms. A. Lotriet (South Africa) said that the complicity of certain countries in allowing individuals and companies to dodge tax responsibilities by concealing or laundering money was deceptive and unethical, had dire consequences for society and perpetuated inequities. South Africa had proactively ratified agreements with over 70 countries to prevent tax avoidance and to uphold the fiscal stability. It had also implemented comprehensive transfer pricing regulations to curb profit shifting and ensure arm's length transactions. South Africa's tax commissioner was authorized, under its GAAR, to nullify transactions primarily orchestrated to secure tax benefits, potentially leading to supplementary tax assessments and penalties. Tax abuse not only stripped away essential public funds but also undermined the competitive landscape for smaller local businesses, forcing them to compete unfairly against larger rivals that exploited tax loopholes, deepening inequalities, particularly for women and persons with disabilities.

As a developing country, South Africa suffered immense losses due to profit shifting by MNEs and wealthy individuals, which directly impacted its ability to address unemployment, poverty and inequality, thus hindering progress. Parliaments could play a pivotal role through legislation and oversight by closing loopholes and strengthening enforcement mechanisms. Collaboration with other countries was imperative to establish fair and equitable tax practices that prevented corporate tax abuse and fostered a level playing field for businesses of all sizes, including by promoting access to information on financial institutions and individuals in other countries, which would build a sustainable and prosperous future.

The Moderator said that legislative action was critical but it was not always easy to put issues such as the current topic of discussion on government agendas. Parliamentarians should consider how to address that challenge and seek out model laws on the topic under discussion.

Mr. M. Karakaya (Türkiye) said that preventing corporate tax avoidance would play a decisive role in achieving the SDGs by 2030. MNEs' profit shifting and exploitation of loopholes affected all countries and significantly hindered the reduction of inequalities and decent economic growth. Addressing the issue required multilateral cooperation, such as through the BEPS project, and harmonization between global standards and national legislation. It was crucial for the BEPS project to develop relevant standards through a holistic approach. Türkiye had aligned its legislation with OECD standards, amending its corporate tax law to levy a local and global minimum corporate tax on subsidiaries and MNEs whose revenues exceeded 750 million euros. To build a fair, transparent and sustainable financial system, it was essential to reduce inequalities between countries and ensure inclusive economic growth for all.

A delegate from China said that preventing tax avoidance was crucial to international taxation, as it ensured tax equity. China's anti-avoidance system was composed of national legal frameworks, such as on tax adjustments and arm's length transactions for individuals and businesses, including MNEs; administrative tax collection provisions, with a focus on activities prone to tax evasion, such as equity and overseas asset transfers; and active participation in international tax avoidance conventions and treaties. China had continuously improved its anti-monopoly legal system to align it with international standards to ensure fair competition.

Mr. C. Wattanavekin (Thailand) said that a fair global financial system was essential for sustainable development. Tax avoidance deprived governments of crucial revenue for education, social welfare, infrastructure and inequalities mitigation. Strong legislative frameworks were vital to closing loopholes. The Thai Parliament had enacted laws to enhance transparency and accountability. Given Thailand's growing digital economy, an e-service tax had been introduced in 2021 to collect VAT from foreign electronic service providers and platforms, thus closing tax loopholes, promoting fair competition and boosting national revenue. The country also actively participated in global frameworks to combat tax evasion, such as the BEPS project and the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes. Thailand was committed to ensuring a fair, transparent and effective taxation system that promoted inclusive growth and sustainable development, and aimed to curb tax evasion and direct resources to advance national development goals through strengthened domestic laws.

Mr. M. Khumalo (Zimbabwe) said that an effective tax system was critical for sustainable economic development. Parliaments should work together to enact comprehensive tax laws to close local loopholes and ensure corporations contribute their fair share. Profit shifting undermined revenue collection and perpetuated developing countries' dependence on unsustainable financial aid. Parliamentarians needed to work together to develop tax systems that effectively prevented base erosion and profit shifting, thereby minimizing tax avoidance. Some experts argued that high income tax rates and progressive tax rates encouraged tax avoidance. To reduce tax avoidance, therefore, parliaments should enact legislation to ensure that local companies were not burdened by taxes.

Ms. H. Fayez (Bahrain) said that tax evasion affected government revenues, sustainable development, economic development, social justice, fairness among companies and social inequalities. Parliaments needed to take a multi-stakeholder approach. Bahrain would establish robust, research-based laws to enhance parliamentary monitoring and evaluation, thus ensuring effective implementation of fiscal policies. Parliaments should support international initiatives to exchange tax information, including companies' fiscal statements, and enhance international cooperation. Independent auditing was also necessary. Bahrain's legislative authority had participated in initiatives and signed agreements to combat tax evasion, thus promoting investment opportunities and attracting foreign investments. Parliaments were key in fighting tax evasion.

Mr. M.Z. Maher (Tunisia) said that his country had deployed considerable legislative efforts to achieve tax compliance as the Government was aware of the hegemony of MNEs that shifted their profits to other countries. In light of the challenge to generate the funds needed to implement development plans, it was necessary to implement an international plan to restructure and mitigate debts, particularly by finding a solution for external debt. Tunisia's debt was equivalent to 100% of its GDP, which had put great pressure on the Government and undermined its ability to address economic and social challenges, including welcoming immigrants, and achieve sustainable development. All developing countries should expedite debt settlement. A joint effort between borrowers and lenders was necessary to maintain countries' international sovereignty and ensure a fair and comprehensive taxation system.

Mr. H. Elgendy (Egypt) said that tax evasion affected the budgets of developing countries and required joint efforts by parliamentarians. The transfer of funds to other countries by local, international and multinational companies affected all countries. Countries implemented their own tax policies independently of other countries' policies. Sanctions should be imposed on companies engaged in tax evasion, which grew the informal economy. Parliamentarians should establish fair and updated tax policies to put an end to all forms of tax evasion. Egypt had taken legislative steps to manage tax collection and evasion.

The Moderator agreed that parliamentarians needed to join efforts.

Ms. J. Sabao (Zambia) said that her country had reformed its tax policies to close loopholes and ensure fair taxation, and had engaged in international cooperation to curb tax avoidance across jurisdictions. The mining sector was particularly affected, as companies repatriated their proceeds while declaring losses in Zambia, implemented false accounting techniques, did not declare their exported goods, and undervalued precious stones and base metals for export. Parliamentary oversight in Zambia involved portfolio committees that ensured that the responsible

ministries and parastatal agencies effectively implemented anti-tax avoidance measures and reported their findings, and made recommendations to the Government. Parliaments played a critical role in preventing corporate tax avoidance and achieving sustainable development by creating a more equitable, stable and inclusive global financial landscape through effective legislation, transparency and accountability.

Mr. K.E. Kandodo (Malawi) said that corporate tax avoidance undermined governments' ability to provide for citizens' needs and perpetuated economic inequality. Malawi's mining sector was particularly affected by profit shifting, which hindered progress towards sustainable development, and disproportionately burdened small businesses and individual taxpayers, who paid significantly more than large corporations. A robust legislative framework was necessary. Malawi had introduced rules to prevent profit shifting and ensure arm's length transactions, but more needed to be done to enforce those rules and close loopholes. The country's revenue authority had adopted an integrated tax administration system to improve tax compliance and the authority's ability to detect and prevent tax avoidance. Malawi had also entered into double taxation agreements with several countries to prevent tax evasion and ensure that income was taxed fairly across jurisdictions. Parliamentarians should continue to champion transparency, fairness and accountability in their tax systems to build a global financial system promoting sustainable development and a future in which all could thrive.

Ms. J. Kwan (Canada) said that parliamentarians should be wary of decarbonization funds, which allowed for investments in selective technologies, such as carbon capture and storage, as such technologies had not significantly reduced emissions in recent decades. Most projects involving those technologies had never been launched or hardly met the promised carbon capture rates. It was not a sound strategy to invest in questionable technologies for hypothetical greenhouse gas reductions at the expense of direct reductions. Regulations should enforce direct reductions on oil and gas companies, and ban them from using their resources to purchase reductions elsewhere through domestic or international offsets. Parliamentarians should consider imposing an excessive profit tax in the oil and gas sector, and pay attention to the different methods of tax avoidance, such as through subsidies.

Mr. H. Carneiro (Portugal) said that ongoing reforms regarding international taxation of MNEs posed several challenges. It would be more difficult for less developed countries to implement Pillar Two of the OECD's Two-Pillar Solution, which included, most notably, the 15% global minimum corporate tax, especially if the UN provided alternative guidance that could undermine the OECD's recommendations. Constant cooperation between the UN and the OECD was necessary. Countries should recognize the importance and complexity of the global minimum corporate tax, which necessitated cooperation to be implemented. While several countries could benefit from implementing strategies not aligned with the global minimum corporate tax, such as non-tax incentives and subsidies, such action would undermine global reform goals and create unfair conditions in terms of competitiveness and tax collection. It would discriminate against countries that could not offer subsidized or refundable tax credits but who would, instead, benefit from the effective tax rate for MNEs. The OECD should provide timely administrative guidance on those issues and clarify the No Benefit Requirement under Pillar Two.

Ms. A. Bengtsson (Sweden) said that the introduction by the European Union (EU) of a minimum tax of 15% for large companies helped to ensure fair tax revenues for her country to protect its welfare system, but it also required that Sweden's tax system be adapted to remain competitive. Some experts suggested that taxes should be lower for labour and higher for environmentally harmful activities to stimulate growth and employment while maintaining fairness. Taxes should be redirected for the citizens' benefit.

A delegate from Denmark said that introducing a carbon tax was necessary to phase out fossil fuels in accordance with the Paris Agreement timeline, which would be difficult. He concurred with Mr. Carneiro's view on the OECD's recommendations, which, together with a carbon tax and behavioural changes by businesses and individuals, would ensure compliance with the Paris Agreement.

The Moderator said that an ethical audit and accounting sector was critical in addressing tax avoidance, especially in ensuring economies' sustainability in their environmental, social and governance (ESG) impacts.

Mr. B. Dickinson (Deputy Director, OECD Centre for Tax Policy and Administration), panellist, said that consideration should be given as to how tax avoidance by powerful taxpayers influenced the tax morale of other taxpayers. Addressing corporate tax would mend the cracks in the fiscal social contract. He looked forward to working with the IPU to discuss such issues at the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development in 2025 and, more generally, to bridge the technical-political divide, for which parliamentarians were important. The OECD would support parliamentarians in navigating such fiscal matters.

Mr. A.R. Khan (Head of the Tax for SDGs Initiative, UNDP Sustainable Finance Hub), panellist, speaking via video link, said that tax evasion undermined trust, which lay at the core of social contracts and governance. People aspired to more responsive and transparent governance. UNDP supported governments, including through trainings, to tackle tax evasion and align tax policies with the SDGs, which were not on track to being achieved mainly because of the financing gap. Parliamentary oversight and engagement were key to keeping track of global developments and implementing them nationally. The issue should be further discussed at the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development.

The President said that parliaments should consider how to ensure that combatting tax avoidance did not involve blacklisting certain countries. Small countries, particularly small island developing States (SIDS), would bear the brunt because they lacked the capacity to keep up with changing rules. Consideration should be given as to how such capacity could be built.

The Moderator said that governments relied on four major auditing companies – Deloitte, Ernst and Young, KPMG and PricewaterhouseCoopers – who needed to ensure quality auditing but could wilfully or accidentally avoid taking proper action. The consultancy sector had significant access to government funds but lacked transparency. Such companies should be held accountable because they were critical for the success of the global economy and their transparency was fundamental to the ethical transfer of global funds.

Mr. B. Dickinson (Deputy Director, OECD Centre for Tax Policy and Administration), panellist, said that the OECD did not have a blacklist. The EU, however, had a code of conduct that applied OECD standards through the European Commission independent of the OECD. Capacity-building was critical, particularly in developing countries. The OECD worked to improve the capabilities of tax administrations and ministries of finance in many developing countries. Parliamentarians should also lend their support, especially through legislation. The OECD would engage more systematically with parliamentarians.

The Moderator said that her country, Australia, was considering shared auditing to build the capacity of the next layer of auditors and provide an opportunity for financial probity of large entities by smaller entities. Capacity-building was important in that regard.

A delegate from Kenya said that it was difficult for parliamentarians to combat tax avoidance to promote sustainable development when tax exemption would lead to benefits such as employment.

The Moderator said that multilateral discussions were key to addressing that dilemma. Companies' considerable budgets empowered them to exploit countries. However, parliaments' cooperation to impose the 15% global minimum corporate tax would change companies' power asymmetry, thus leading to better social outcomes and SDG achievement.

Mr. B. Dickinson (Deputy Director, OECD Centre for Tax Policy and Administration), panellist, said that all countries had to balance generating revenue and making their economies attractive to investors. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, there had been more pressure to generate revenue. Tax incentives were often wasteful, did not achieve their initial objectives and were rarely the determining factor for investors. Parliamentarians must determine which incentives were beneficial and assess why tax incentives did or did not work. Parliamentarians were critical in the governance of tax incentives. Management, governing and oversight needed to be scaled up in that regard.

Elections to the Bureau of the Standing Committee

The President said that two candidates had been nominated for election to the Bureau of the Standing Committee, namely, Mr. M.Z. Maher of Tunisia for the Arab Group and Mr. S. Gavrilov of the Russian Federation for the Eurasia Group.

He took it that the Committee wished to elect those two candidates.

It was so decided.

The President said that, given the breadth of the resolution entitled *Parliamentary strategies to mitigate the long-lasting impact of conflicts, including armed conflicts, on sustainable development*, to be drafted at the 150th IPU Assembly, the Bureau of the Standing Committee proposed that the Committee on Sustainable Development dedicate all its time at the forthcoming Assembly to debate the resolution.

He took it that the Committee wished to accept the proposal.

It was so decided.

The President said that the world was considerably off track with regard to implementing the SDGs, which were to be met in five years. Parliaments could accelerate their achievement. The IPU was mobilizing parliamentary engagement to advance SDG achievement and was finalizing a toolkit to support its work on SDG-informed legislative scrutiny.

A video on the IPU toolkit on SDG-informed legislative scrutiny was shown.

The President said that the IPU Rules and Statutes were being amended. To that end, a working group had been established with representation from all geopolitical groups. Member Parliaments were urged to contribute to the amendments, and to continue engaging and compromising for increased effectiveness.

The sitting rose at 12:20.

Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

SITTING OF TUESDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2024

(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 11:05 with Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), President of the Committee, in the Chair.

Adoption of the agenda (C-IV/149/A.1)

The agenda was adopted.

Approval of the summary record of the Committee's session held at the 148th IPU Assembly (March 2024)

The summary record was approved.

Financing the United Nations system: A critical perspective

The President said that bringing a critical perspective to the important question of financing the United Nations (UN) system fell within one of the Committee's areas of focus – that of enhancing the transparency and effectiveness of the UN budget. In his 20 years as a parliamentarian, he had never been approached by any UN official wishing to speak about UN activities or to reach out to him in anticipation of decisions in his Parliament about UN funding. He wondered if the same was true for other parliamentarians, bearing in mind that they were called upon to approve budgets and contributions to multilateral institutions such as the UN, directing and allocating in that process scarce resources for which there was stiff competition. It was accordingly important for parliamentarians to increase their understanding of the UN financial reporting system, in which they would be helped by the Committee's special guests: Ms. S. Gruener and Mr. P. Linnér of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation; and Mr. B. Christiaens of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Ms. S. Gruener (Deputy Executive Director and Programme Director, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation), special guest, introducing the topic, said that the mission of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, established in 1962 on the initiative of the Swedish Parliament, was to continue the legacy and work of the second UN Secretary-General who was its namesake, with a focus on strengthening the UN as the centre of an efficient and effective multilateral system. To that end, it worked to facilitate dialogue and produced publications, among them *The Art of Leadership in the United Nations*, which could be accessed through the Foundation's website, with hard copies also available for participants to take home with them. The Foundation welcomed the opportunity to spotlight its efforts in partnership with the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO) to make the complex and opaque topic of financing more accessible so as to promote more informed discussions, negotiations and decision-making.

Mr. P. Linnér (Programme Director, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation), special guest, accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation and an interactive poll on aspects of the subject matter, said that participants would receive an overview of the information contained in the 10th annual report on financing the UN development system, produced in 2024 by the Foundation in collaboration with the MPTFO. As a non-governmental organization aiming to advance dialogue and policy for sustainable development and peace, the Foundation worked in three policy areas: peace and security, on which it cooperated with and assisted the Peacebuilding Commission established by the UN General Assembly; UN financing and all its related activities; and UN leadership, as covered in the publication already mentioned.

Mr. B. Christiaens (Fund Portfolio Manager, MPTFO, UNDP), special guest, continuing the presentation, said that the small UNDP-hosted MPTFO served the whole UN system and was the centre of expertise on UN inter-agency pooled funds, which were essentially financial instruments for supporting more coherent inter-agency work in furtherance of national government priorities and

attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In short, the MPTFO functioned as a partnerships' platform that brought together UN Member States and civil society to work on joint UN responses. The MPTFO helped those partnerships through trust funds for which it was the administrator or trustee. Its diversified fund portfolio stood at almost US\$ 20 billion, with 107 programme countries receiving resources provided by over 70 contributors, primarily Member States. The MPTFO had been created 20 years previously to channel country-level pooled funds towards post-war reconstruction efforts in Iraq. The Peacebuilding Fund and the Joint SDG Fund were flagship examples of the many other funds since established, some of them increasingly innovative.

Mr. P. Linnér (Programme Director, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation), special guest, said with respect to financing volumes that the revenue of the total UN system in 2022 was equivalent to 10% of the budget of the city of New York and between 1% and 2% of the world's military expenditure. Some 73% of that revenue came from governments and 46% of expenditure went on humanitarian assistance, up from 36% in 2018. Although development and humanitarian systems were severely underfunded in comparison to needs, the humanitarian funding share was increasing and the development funding share decreasing, which was attributable to funds going towards treating symptoms rather than towards eradicating the causes of conflict and long-term poverty. The peace expenditure had also decreased from 19% to 12% owing to drawdowns of UN peacekeeping missions worldwide.

As to global development and humanitarian needs, the official development assistance provided in 2022 was below half the required amount of about US\$ 500 billion. The funding gap was increasing, with trillions more dollars needed for investment in development to rescue the SDGs, and with further cuts in UN development and humanitarian funding likely in 2025 in addition to the reductions already announced by certain top donors. The Human Development Index figures had also been drastically affected for the worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of forcibly displaced people worldwide had steadily increased over the preceding decade and was again poised to rise during 2024, given the complexity and magnitude of the many armed conflicts in progress worldwide.

Mr. B. Christiaens (Fund Portfolio Manager, MPTFO, UNDP), special guest, said by way of further information that the UN had recently established the Internal Displacement Solutions Fund to support governments hosting internally displaced people, which was in addition to the Migration MPTF established pursuant to a UN General Assembly resolution in 2018.

Mr. P. Linnér (Programme Director, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation), special guest, turning to the matter of UN financing, said that the four related funding instruments were assessed contributions, voluntary core contributions, earmarked contributions and revenue from other activities. The core funding included voluntary contributions made by donors towards all activities performed by a specific UN agency, as opposed to earmarked contributions, which counted as non-core funding provided to assist only certain UN agency programmes or certain countries in which a UN agency operated. The second source of core funding was assessed contributions constituting the membership fee paid by every UN Member State. The assessed and voluntary contributions were flexible resources used strategically to enable UN institutions to plan ahead and shift resources to where most needed, which could not be done with earmarked contributions.

Earmarked contributions were termed "hard" if attached to specific countries and programmes, and "soft" if involving pooled funding or funding in support of all of an agency's activities conducted in a particular sphere in any country. Pooled funding was where at least two UN agencies joined forces on a particular theme in a particular country, which was to be further encouraged in the current climate of shrinking funding and increasing needs. UN agencies would be automatically competing for the meagre funding available instead of using the entire UN system to its fullest by working better together as one rather than as single agencies with single programmes in single countries.

Mr. B. Christiaens (Fund Portfolio Manager, MPTFO, UNDP), special guest, said that pooled funds were analogous to core resources provided not to a single agency but to the entire UN system and were therefore especially important for driving UN reform. For donors, moreover, they were cost effective because they used standardized reporting and harmonized templates. Contributions to pooled funds were consequently tantamount to contributions to a larger initiative, the goal being to achieve a result larger than the sum of the parts through a coherent approach.

Mr. P. Linnér (Programme Director, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation), special guest, moving on to talk about the Funding Compact, said that it was a partnership aimed at delivering better results on the ground. It involved a commitment by Member States to contribute more core resources and increase their contributions to pooled funding as well as to their multi-year commitments, which facilitated longer-term activity planning. It equally involved a commitment by the UN development system to work jointly for common objectives, promote transparency, improve reporting on resources, results and impact, and increase efficiency. For their part, parliamentarians should use their oversight function to verify that the latter commitment was being fulfilled. Funding Compact 2.0 had been updated in 2024 and the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review would be undertaken during the current UN General Assembly.

Mr. B. Christiaens (Fund Portfolio Manager, MPTFO, UNDP), special guest, said that, in respect of the most recent trends in UN development financing revealed in the 2024 MPTFO and Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation report, two thirds of the total UN system revenue of US\$ 74 billion was earmarked, limiting the flexibility of UN operations and responses. Of the total UN revenue, assessed contributions accounted for under one fifth, voluntary core contributions for 8% and revenue from other activities for 7%. Earmarked contributions had grown from some US\$ 20 billion in 2010 to the current level of almost US\$ 50 billion, whereas growth in the other three funding instruments had remained relatively stable. The figures cited were based solely on contributions from country members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Among multilateral organizations, the UN had the highest amount of earmarked contributions, largely explaining the significant rise in funding brought about between 2011 and 2022 owing to the multitude of global crises at play. Only the World Bank displayed a similar trend, attributable to the funds channelled to Ukraine in 2022.

Some of the different types of earmarking, which included project- or programme-specific earmarking, single-agency thematic funds and UN inter-agency pooled funds, offered greater flexibility and opportunities for more coordinated and collaborative approaches. Three quarters of inter-agency pooled funds were tied to specific projects, whereas the percentage of financing from more flexible tools was in the single digits. The lack of room for adjustment when priorities were so narrowly fixed essentially constrained efforts by the UN to work with Member States on delivering its mandate and progressing towards SDG achievement.

In 2022, over 70% of UN development system funding had come from Member States, which also funded the additional 17% from multilateral organizations, all through a relative mix of instruments and with the top five contributors providing almost 40% of the entire amount. Recent announcements of possible funding cuts by some of those contributors would affect the UN system's ability to operate and support development. Those same contributors, moreover, provided 60% of humanitarian funding, which was predominantly earmarked for specific projects and even more vulnerable to such cuts.

Mr. P. Linnér (Programme Director, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation), special guest, said that the further reductions in official development assistance announced by the two top contributors, namely the United States of America and Germany, were very problematic and would heavily affect funding of the wider humanitarian system.

Mr. B. Christiaens (Fund Portfolio Manager, MPTFO, UNDP), special guest, concluding his remarks, said that, in 2022, UN expenditure in 42 crisis-affected countries had amounted to US\$ 36 billion, representing over half of the total expenditure of US\$ 67 billion. Often less than one quarter of that amount was spent on development, implying that little was being done to address the root causes of crises and making it difficult for the United Nations to support recovery efforts in the countries concerned.

The main takeaways from the 2024 report on financing the UN development system were that global needs for development and humanitarian assistance were increasing; funding and resources to meet global challenges were insufficient, including at the UN; and quality funding of the UN was also insufficient and heading in the wrong direction towards increased earmarking. The appeal to parliamentarians in their oversight task was for them to raise awareness and become ambassadors advocating through their national ministries, in-country UN teams and indeed, fellow parliamentarians, for high-quality funding. In that connection, Action 55 of the Pact for the Future included a commitment to deepening engagement with national parliaments, the UN having recognized the importance of parliamentary support for the implementation of UN agreements and resolutions, including in relation to the Funding Compact. In closing, he invited participants to submit proposals for future discussions around other aspects of UN financing.

The President, thanking the special guests for addressing the Committee, said in opening the floor for comments and questions that it would be particularly interesting to hear from participants about first-hand experiences of UN development support within their respective jurisdictions.

Mr. M.M. Kapichila (Malawi) said that his was among the UN Member States that habitually paid their assessed contributions long after the 30-day due period. In 2022 and 2023, it had fully honoured its commitments on that score but had not yet done so in 2024. With delays in the payment of assessed contributions negatively affecting budget management, it was high time that parliaments addressed that challenge. In their key role of overseeing and approving national budgets, they should ensure that assessed contributions were covered to enable the UN to operate efficiently.

Mr. D.R. Ryder (South Africa) said that parliamentarians were morally bound to ensure payment of their countries' assessed contributions in full and on time so as to guarantee the funding required for the effective and comprehensive implementation of all UN-approved programmes and activities. South Africa firmly favoured the integration of technical innovations within the UN framework to heighten efficiency and cost effectiveness, and advance efforts to tackle global challenges. A fair and equitable approach was also needed in determining the scale of appraisal for assessed contributions. In considering country-specific challenges, the collective responsibility must be balanced with State capacities, promoting in turn a more just and inclusive funding approach. Parliaments should encourage their international affairs committees to engage continually in debates and inquiries concerning UN contributions, thereby also ensuring transparency and accountability. Through scrutiny and oversight, parliaments contributed to upholding the commitment of their respective nations to the UN and its global initiatives.

Mr. J.F. Undurraga (Chile), after confirming that he had never been approached by any UN official or in-country team, said that funding to be injected into the multilateral system must be clearly identified in national budgets. In a world of backsliding democracy and emerging autocracies, multilateralism was in discredit. Engagement with parliamentarians was a must for the UN development system, as it was they who approved the allocation of adequate budgetary funding for the benefit of the UN. Failure to brief parliamentarians on UN development activities also put that allocation at risk. It also made the implementation of those activities more problematic, especially in countries such as his where many parliamentarians did not support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) or indeed multilateralism, which it was imperative to strengthen alongside democracy.

Mr. A.S. Thakur (India) said that effective delivery of the UN mandate depended on sustainable, adequate, timely and predictable financing. In addition to consistently paying its UN regular budget assessments in full and on time, India supported peacekeeping operations, contributed voluntarily to UN agencies and had established a UN partnership fund to assist the Global South. The financial crisis due to non-payment of mandatory contributions had forced the UN into austerity measures that were delaying critical programmes and slowing progress towards the SDGs. New approaches were needed to secure the resources required to meet the demands created by the expanding UN mandate and accompanying expectations. To that end, the UN must build trust and work collectively and collaboratively, with parliamentarians also pushing for UN Security Council reform in particular to better reflect contemporary realities, and ensure a voice for unrepresented and underrepresented regions. He would welcome more information on the UN spending process.

Mr. S. Köse (Sweden) said that his country had always strongly advocated multilateral and international cooperation, with the UN as its central pillar. Also recognizing that the promotion of peace, security and sustainable development depended on a well-funded UN, it had consistently featured among its largest per capita contributors. With its heavy reliance on voluntary and earmarked contributions, however, the current UN financing model created imbalances, potential uncertainty and obstacles to long-term UN efforts. Countries must ensure through parliamentary oversight that their UN contributions were used to benefit their national interests while also furthering global priorities. Parliamentarians should also lead in promoting a more stable and flexible financing model, with all Members States contributing fairly and on time. He asked how that model could be shifted away from earmarked contributions towards a more strategic and long-term allocation of resources.

Ms. L. Crexell (Argentina), Vice-President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, said that the earlier-mentioned lack of UN engagement was perhaps because many parliamentarians perceived the UN agency system as often closed and distant. Its increasing size also meant that they knew little about its operations. The inability to keep abreast of or ensure accountability for its projects, programmes and policies led to questions about its efficiency, credibility and objectives. She would be interested to know how more private sector funding could be encouraged and whether there were any known issues around obtaining such funding.

Mr. O. Zhmerenetskyi (Ukraine) said that trust in the UN was declining, with only around half of countries still holding confidence in it. In the UN Security Council, peacemaking efforts were blocked by the dictatorial regime of the Russian Federation, which was illegally occupying a place belonging to the now defunct Soviet Union, causing food crises and new humanitarian expenditures with it. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) had been missed and their rebranded version, the SDGs, were headed the same way, perhaps partly because UN budgeting for development was non-transparent and inefficient. Many countries, including Ukraine, used digital tools in public procurement, allowing taxpayers to access the full details, and had civic budgets enabling local communities to decide which projects to finance. Interactive tools were also used for such purposes to calculate financing needs by way of evidence-based data. He wondered why the UN development system did not similarly innovate to enhance its budgetary transparency.

Mr. A.H. Sabeti Monfared (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the unfair linkage between assessed contributions and economic status disproportionately burdened developing countries, underlining the need to re-evaluate the existing UN financing structure. By actively engaging in the budgetary process and monitoring resource allocation, parliaments could play a crucial role in prioritizing their national development programmes. The international community should condemn and stop the unilateral coercive measures illegally imposed on countries under sanctions, critically weakening their economies, creating difficulties around securing budgetary funding and hampering the payment of UN dues through the banking system, leading to loss of voting rights. It should also specifically address the ongoing atrocities in Gaza and Lebanon. The recent terrorist acts perpetrated by the fascist apartheid Israeli regime had caused significant civilian loss of life and suffering, in violation of international law and human rights principles. UN funds must be dedicated towards ending such violence and aggression, with those responsible held accountable.

Mr. P. Linnér (Programme Director, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation), special guest, thanking participants for all their very relevant comments and questions, said in response to a written question received about UN staff benefits and travel that the applicable standardized rates could be found on the website of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). Concerning UN spending, the related decision-making was complicated by the upward trend in earmarked contributions but lay with Member States as those providing the funding, effectively meaning that the UN system's hands were tied under the current funding method. In connection with reform of the UN financing model, the Funding Compact was extremely important, representing as it did a commitment by all Member States and the UN system itself to increasing pooled funding, core funding and also the multi-year commitments, which was what was needed. Lastly, he fully agreed with the point about innovating and suggested that parliamentarians make the same point to the UN teams working in their respective countries.

Mr. B. Christiaens (Fund Portfolio Manager, MPTFO, UNDP), special guest, said in addition that, with respect to transparency and efficiency, the UN Data Standards, introduced a few years earlier, represented progress as they had harmonized reporting by all UN agencies and entities, which were required to report on the same topics in the same manner to the UN System Chief Executives Board chaired by the Secretary-General. As to assessed contributions, the fact that they accounted for under one fifth of the total UN revenue had a bearing on strategic responses and results and should be taken into account in parliamentary discussions on the subject.

Concerning private sector contributions, including from independent financial institutions, they had scaled up to the current point of providing some 5% of the UN system revenue. The 2030 Agenda had helped in that regard as well as in involving the private sector in working with UN agencies and governments for SDG achievement.

Ms. S. Gruener (Deputy Executive Director and Programme Director, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation), special guest, responding to the remarks about longer-term strategic funding, said that multi-year contributions to global pooled funds, such as the Peacebuilding Fund and the Joint

SDG Fund, were the most efficient in that regard. In addition to allowing funding for civil society and other coalition actors, they also offered the flexibility to respond to emerging needs. In conclusion, she encouraged participants to reach out to her and her fellow guests, who would be happy to engage with them bilaterally or regionally, and to continue the dialogue with their fellow parliamentarians.

The President, again thanking the special guests for addressing the Committee, said that they had helped its members to understand the lay of the land and would be welcome back in future to answer further questions on the subject.

United Nations treaties: A review of ratifications and entry into force

The President said that the choice of the subject item was designed to help parliamentarians to better understand the impact of the ratification and entry into force of UN treaties on parliamentary rules and processes, which varied among jurisdictions. Following an overview, participants would hear a presentation from guest speaker Ms. M. Régimbal, Chief of Service of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) in Geneva and Deputy Secretary-General to the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. A. Motter (Senior Advisor, Economic and Social Affairs, Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations), accompanying his overview of the subject item with a digital slide presentation, said that the aim was to familiarize parliamentarians with the ratification and treaty-making processes, explore their role therein and identify possible gaps requiring further consideration. Any number of countries could come together to draft a treaty among them, which had always been done on the basis of unwritten rules drawn piecemeal from customary international law until their codification, in 1969, in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. The Convention had only 116 ratifications, however, meaning that custom still prevailed in the three-stage treaty-making process comprising negotiation, signature and consent to be bound, and entry into force.

The negotiation invariably began with a zero draft proposed either by Member States, the International Law Commission (ILC) or ad hoc intergovernmental committees established for the purpose by the UN General Assembly. Once agreed, the zero draft was transmitted to the General Assembly for possible further negotiation and final approval. With the practice of multi-stakeholder consultations more recently gaining ground, opportunities were now being provided for civil society, the private sector and indeed parliamentarians to provide input at the negotiation stage. Parliamentarians were also free to seek progress reports from their country's governments, ministers and ambassadors.

The critical stage of signature and consent to be bound – or ratification – followed once a zero draft had been approved. Legally speaking, it occurred when a government deposited its instrument of ratification expressing its consent to be bound by the treaty concerned. The involvement of parliaments, the judiciary or the executive in ratification depended on the related constitutional provisions in each Member State. As to how many ratifications were needed for a treaty to enter into force, the rule was specific to each individual treaty, which could also include timelines aimed at allowing countries the opportunity to make necessary preparations or consider the text in the light of their respective jurisdictions. A treaty generally entered into force once the set number of ratifications had been reached, applying from that moment onwards to all ratifying countries and, subsequently, to any other country ratifying the treaty thereafter and declaring its entry into force within its jurisdiction. Countries could also decide to apply a treaty before its official entry into force.

With regard to treaty implementation, the first method was where a treaty automatically became part of domestic law if its provisions were considered sufficiently precise, and the second was where a treaty needed to be transposed into domestic law before it could take legal effect. In that connection, parliaments had a major role to play in translating the treaty's provisions into actionable legislation. In conclusion, it would be interesting to hear about national experiences of the treaty process.

Ms. M. Régimbal (Chief of Service, UNODA-Geneva, and Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament), guest speaker, said that, specifically, in the ratification of, accession to and, above all, implementation of international disarmament instruments, the word “disarmament” should be taken to also refer to non-proliferation and arms control measures. From

the outset of negotiations, the parliamentary role was pivotal in the entire life cycle of disarmament instruments, which could come to fruition in a variety of ways and forums, including the Conference on Disarmament. Apart from invitee observer States, the Conference comprised 65 member States and sat annually in Geneva as the only disarmament body uniquely mandated to negotiate disarmament instruments. While many of those instruments continued to govern the disarmament world in its current form, a more recent trend was for new instruments to be negotiated through frameworks other than the Conference, such as the UN General Assembly in the case of the Arms Trade Treaty or even outside the UN system, as with the Anti-Personnel Landmines Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. In that context, the modalities were based on States' interests in reaching the end goal of a treaty that laid down regulations, prohibitions and safeguards around differing categories of weapons.

Parliaments were instrumental in mobilizing national interest in such instruments at all levels, with parliamentarians from both ruling and opposition parties increasingly taking part in the related negotiations as members of the national delegations involved. Once an international instrument had been negotiated and agreed by a majority of States, it moved into the domestic sphere for ratification purposes, which is where parliamentarians again had a crucial role to play in conjunction with governments. Following their signature, instruments were ratified in accordance with built-in criteria, generally within a specific optimal time frame and sometimes requiring amendments to existing legislation or the adoption of new legislation. In some instances, a State might accede to a treaty without having signed it when open for signature.

In addition to benefiting from the IPU as an excellent mechanism for inter-parliamentary cooperation on priority issues, parliamentarians should seek to build robust collaborative relationships with regional partners. In short, a country's safety and strength relied on the safeguards in place in neighbouring countries against, for example, unintentional biological incidents, as in the COVID-19 pandemic, and intentional or malicious criminal activity that might similarly cross borders. Some disarmament instruments had not yet been ratified years after being signed, perhaps owing to shifts in a signatory State's position or, more usually, because of the many competing priorities in parliamentary agendas. Parliamentarians should therefore ensure that disarmament featured highly on their agenda and seek to change the ingrained mindset that it was a siloed pillar shrouded in secrecy, the upshot being that its importance in other areas of work was often diminished. Disarmament was, however, a cross-cutting tool key to the achievement of peace and security, both national and regional, and could also further guarantee and sustain international development priorities and socioeconomic growth. Parliamentarians again played a central part in embodying and internalizing the links between disarmament and areas ranging from agriculture and health care to climate action and food security, as well as in making advance preparations for the ratification of or accession to a treaty. The UN Secretary-General served as the depositary for most instruments, including those negotiated outside the UN setting.

Instruments were negotiated by States for States, with the UN functioning as another tool for facilitating their implementation, which parliamentarians should endeavour to accelerate. She and her colleagues had the job of responding to needs, as required, and were available to help.

The President invited comments from the floor.

Mr. A. Tongjaisod (Thailand) said that his Parliament worked to ensure that international agreements, including UN treaties, were properly ratified, translated into national law and implemented, with compliance also monitored. Under the Thai Constitution, the ratification of international treaties, especially those affecting the country's socioeconomic security or resulting in significant trade, investment or budgetary obligations, required parliamentary approval. The executive, which was involved in the negotiation of treaties, was also required to seek parliamentary consent before ratification.

Mr. H. Ebrahim (Bahrain) said that the path from the ratification of a treaty to its implementation was often fraught with challenges that parliamentarians were uniquely positioned to address. The indispensable function of parliaments in the scrutiny and ratification of treaties to ensure their alignment with national interests and legal frameworks demanded rigorous examination of treaty obligations and their potential impact on domestic legislation. The implementation of UN treaties could, however, be delayed by legal differences among nations and by political considerations or competing national priorities. Those challenges nonetheless also presented opportunities for parliaments to lead the way in fostering international cooperation through collaborating with civil society, exchanging legislative expertise with other nations, and

continually updating legal frameworks. In sum, parliaments played a fundamental role in the successful implementation of UN treaties by taking proactive ratification, legislative, oversight and cooperation measures to ensure that treaties had their intended impact.

Mr. M. Mousiouttas (Cyprus) said that his country's executive was primarily responsible for treaty negotiations and that its legislature played an essential and exclusive role in ratifying and overseeing the implementation of UN treaties. Thanks to its first-hand knowledge of the importance of such treaties and UN frameworks, especially in relation to peace and human rights, Cyprus had learned that international agreements must not remain abstract commitments but be supported by robust domestic frameworks. While in the Cypriot presidential system the role of parliament in treaty processes might appear secondary to that of the executive, the parliamentary contribution to treaty ratification, implementation and oversight was vital. All parliamentarians were duty-bound to ensure that governments fulfilled their international obligations and that the letter and spirit of UN treaties were reflected in national laws and policies.

Ms. S. Almansoori (United Arab Emirates) said that the true value of treaties lay in their effective implementation, which required coordinated efforts at multiple levels. Fostering closer ties between the UN and the IPU was a main priority for helping parliamentarians to understand the significance and implications of treaties before proceeding to ratify them. Another priority was to ensure accountability through quarterly reporting on the implementation of treaties and UN decisions. Also, her Parliament had actively participated in key global forums and initiatives to better align its work with the UN agenda and drive implementation.

Mr. A.S. Thakur (India) said that UN treaties crucially provided a legal framework for international cooperation in global governance, fostering peace and stability by setting clear norms for State conduct, encouraging collaboration on global challenges, and promoting a more just and sustainable world order. As the world's largest democracy, India deeply respected parliamentary sovereignty. Its executive was constitutionally empowered to negotiate and sign treaties, which became binding only with parliamentary approval. Through making laws to implement treaties, the Indian Parliament played a key role in shaping the country's future, while through detailed scrutiny and oversight it ensured that treaties were aligned with national interests, sovereignty, the legal frameworks and public opinion. Among other things, it also harmonized domestic laws with the country's international obligations, reinforcing the principle of checks and balances to ensure transparency and accountability in treaty implementation.

Mr. A. Ware (Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND)) said that the PNND, in cooperation with the IPU and other partners, had produced a handbook for parliamentarians on disarmament *Supporting Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament*. Comprising an overview of disarmament treaties and agreements, the handbook was recommended as a resource for interested parliamentarians and provided information on how they could become involved if their countries had not yet signed or ratified those treaties.

Ms. M. Régimbal (Chief of Service, UNODA-Geneva, and Deputy Secretary-General to the Conference on Disarmament), guest speaker, said in concluding remarks that, beyond harmonizing domestic legislation with international instruments, parliamentarians must continue to engage at all levels in the implementation phase. To that end, they should participate in related meetings, strengthen alliances with the PNND and its likes, and make use of the technical assistance and guidance available through the UN, including UNODA, which always made a point of communicating with those responsible for disarmament instruments. It was through working in concert that those instruments could be brought to life.

The President thanked Ms. Régimbal for having taken the time from her busy schedule to address the Committee.

The sitting rose at 13:20.

SITTING OF WEDNESDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2024

(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 09:05 with Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), President of the Committee, in the Chair.

The United Nations and the G20: Complementarity or redundancy?

The President said that, in the face of declining multilateralism, questions were being asked about whether the current landscape of multiple international organizations tasked with varying responsibilities made for a productive system that was stronger than the sum of its parts or created redundancy, taxing limited resources and ultimately undermining the achievement of shared goals and outcomes. In light of the increasing number of collective actors in the multilateral sphere, the Committee was keen to examine the relationship between the United Nations (UN) and other bodies, starting with the G20, with Mr. B. Ellmers of the Global Policy Forum as the special guest presenter and Ms. L. Crexell (Argentina), the Vice-President of the Committee providing further input.

Mr. B. Ellmers (Director, Financing for Sustainable Development Program, Global Policy Forum (GPF)), special guest, speaking via video link from Berlin, said that, as the premier international economic policy coordination forum, the G20 operated in a policy area similar to that covered by the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). After emerging as an extension of the G8, it had first convened at finance ministerial level in 1999 and at Heads of State level in 2008, at the start of the global financial crisis. At that time, the G8 was under severe criticism, with questions raised about its legitimacy and effectiveness, especially with the Global South so heavily underrepresented in its composition. While conceived as a solution to those issues, the G20 still comprised only 19 of the 193 UN Member States, leaving 174 countries theoretically unable to ensure, through participation in the decision-making, that their interests were reflected. To increase its inclusiveness, the G20 now also comprised two regional bodies – the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) – although that again prompted doubts around legitimacy when both included a member or members already occupying a seat in their own right. Effectively, therefore, a two-tier voting system inconsistent with democratic practice was in place.

In a case of mission creep, the G20 had shifted its previously exclusive focus on economic policy towards a range of policy areas, increasingly duplicating the work of other forums. Its activities were largely driven by its presidency, which rotated annually, creating pressure to achieve outcomes within a single year. The G20 members, and indeed the international community at large, had limited ownership of G20 Summit outcomes, for which continuity mechanisms were lacking. Unlike the UN, the G20 had no secretariat to support implementation and accountability through monitoring, which posed a major challenge. Also, its policy focus was primarily economic, whereas the UN addressed the wider social, economic and environmental aspects of global policy issues.

One recent outcome demonstrating the result of decision-making involving only 19 countries was the G20 Common Framework for Debt Treatments beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), which was a policy response to the serious debt crisis in low-income countries, none of which were G20 members. Apart from not tackling the debt crisis in G20 countries, that initiative had proved ineffective, having failed entirely to involve private creditors – essentially the major investment firms based mainly in the Global North and regulated by United Kingdom or United States law – in debt crisis solutions. Another similar example was the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting Multilateral Instrument (BEPS MLI), which had been strongly criticized, above all by African countries, for its allocation of taxation rights to the advantage of countries – essentially G20 members – hosting transfer corporations. In response and as part of a trend for shifting G20 policy areas back to the UN, the latter was negotiating a Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation.

The G20 had emanated from a demand for economic policy coordination that the UN managed unsatisfactorily, despite its long-standing and newer proposals for reforming ECOSOC and strengthening its implementation and norm-setting powers. In coordinating UN development funding, ECOSOC dealt with similar issues to the G20 but the related International Conference on Financing for Development took place only once a decade, whereas the G20 Summit was an annual event. It might be asked why such a discrepancy if the demand for economic policy coordination and annual decision-making was so great. Fully inclusive coordination of that kind would be impossible without the structural innovation that would ensue from strengthening ECOSOC and the financial programming process in particular. A biennial ECOSOC-G20 summit at the level of Heads of State had recently been mooted but rejected in favour of a similar summit involving only Heads of State and Government to strengthen coordination between the UN and international financial institutions. There had, moreover, been some reluctance to accord formal status to the G20 within the UN.

In short, the G20 was playing an important role, especially in bringing together ministers of finance, but was doing nothing that the UN could not also do if it had stronger internal structures and a mandate to engage more robustly in economic policy coordination. That, however, demanded the political will of Member States.

The President thanked Mr. Ellmers for his excellent overview of some of the key elements at play in the important UN-G20 relationship and invited the Vice-President of the Committee to provide her perspective.

Ms. L. Crexell (Argentina), Vice-President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, noting the tremendous history behind the UN as an organization dedicated to the maintenance of peace in line with its Charter, said that the UN was a legal entity governed by international law, which provided a framework for its decisions. It was accordingly distinct from the G20 but there was also a fundamental complementarity between the two that should be prioritized. More specifically, the G20 offered agility because it had none of the heavy bureaucracy that burdened UN decision-making, whereas the UN offered inclusiveness and legitimacy by virtue of its broad membership. Coordination between them was therefore a great asset.

As a platform for the world's main economies, the G20 had the financial wherewithal to facilitate the implementation of UN-supported policies, thereby taking the UN agenda forward. Redundancy was nonetheless a risk, as the G20 stood for an elite from which many with equal weight at the UN were excluded. Although representing 85% of world production, that elite could not impose policies on equals in the UN system. Albeit cumbersome, slow and inefficient, formal mechanisms – another issue – gave legitimacy to UN debates and ensured their inclusiveness. Overall, the UN system continued to prevail in the implementation of decisions with a global impact. Rather than rewriting the history of the UN or affecting its trajectory or prestige, the G20 must heed the voices of those outside its own membership.

Lastly, the IPU should build coordinated linkages with the G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit (P20), within which parliamentarians, as policymakers, should wield more influence. To that end, she suggested that the Committee should develop an action plan for working in coordination and synergy with the P20.

The President, thanking the Vice-President for her helpful remarks, said in opening the floor for questions and comments that he looked forward to a full and frank exchange of views among fellow legislators, who had a vested interest in the subject matter in light of their related roles and responsibilities. The opportunity was now before them to send a message to the UN, the G20 and other multilateral actors about the expectations on parliamentarians to implement a multitude of outcomes and more. The desire was for a strong, efficient and effective multilateralism that lent itself to implementation rather than simply to the production of more and more demands that were difficult for parliamentarians to prioritize.

Mr. H. Ebrahim (Bahrain) said that successful collaboration between the UN and the G20 was especially vital in the current era of interconnected challenges and depended on well-aligned efforts and non-duplication. The UN provided an inclusive platform for all to voice their concerns while the G20 was critical in addressing global economic and financial issues. Parliamentarians must work together on bridging governance gaps and fostering comprehensive policies for strengthening peace, security and economic growth. Enhanced coordination required transparency, mutual respect and consistent dialogue. Through strengthened partnerships and shared goals, significant strides could be made towards a more secure, equitable and prosperous world, with deeper collaboration ensuring that collective actions reflected the urgency of global priorities and public aspirations. He asked how UN-G20 cooperation might be enhanced to better integrate financial and economic policies developed by the G20 into the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, particularly in addressing the needs of low-income developing countries.

Mr. D.R. Ryder (South Africa) said that the UN and G20 mandates were indeed complementary, with the G20 primarily focused on economic issues and the UN providing a platform for broad international cooperation on peace, security, human rights and sustainable development. The G20's agility and focused attention were massively important aspects to be emphasized, but the complementary mandates of the two institutions reinforced the need for improved coordination with the UN for mutual benefit. The establishment of UN-G20 high-level summits would enable more inclusive and holistic economically focused discussion and decision-

making among a broader spectrum of actors. As well as strengthening the ability of both institutions to address global challenges, such summits would significantly enhance the three dimensions of the G20's legitimacy and amplify the voices of the international community, ultimately leading to more beneficial and meaningful outcomes for all.

Mr. M.M. Kapichila (Malawi) said that, notwithstanding their differing structures, approaches and focuses, the UN and the G20 had contributed significantly to socioeconomic growth through fostering cooperation among nations to tackle pressing global issues. In its efforts to promote development, human rights, good governance and climate action, the Parliament of Malawi had passed laws aligned with the related UN instruments in fulfilment of its international obligations. The country's trade policy frameworks also aimed to promote fair trade practices, enhance export capacity and attract foreign investment. In UN and G20 discussions, Malawi's parliamentarians advocated for Malawian interests in global policies, while at home they led in lobbying government and civil society for essential improvements. Given the UN-G20 complementarity, parliamentarians should seek to align international and national legal frameworks and oversee the functionalities.

Mr. B. Ellmers (Director, Financing for Sustainable Development Program, GPF), special guest, responding to the comments, said that UN-G20 cooperation could be enhanced if the G20 were to convene and issue its communiqués within the UN framework. The G20, which was not an implementer, could also more frequently delegate the implementation of its agreements to the UN, subject to the consent of the UN Member States.

The fact that the G20 was not a universal body raised fundamental questions over the policy areas to be handled by the two institutions. Unless there was good reason for a body with an exclusive membership to address an issue, the UN should always be the first option. As to the quality of cooperation, it depended on the G20 presidency. In that capacity in 2024, Brazil had sought to move the G20 to within the UN realm and ensure that its agenda reflected UN agreements. To further those moves, it would be important for the succeeding South African presidency to continue along the same lines.

Mr. F.A. Iglesias (Argentina) said that a golden opportunity for progress had been missed in the 1990s by not having applied globally the two principles pioneered within the United States of America and also evident in the EU – with excellent results in both instances – namely federalism and democracy. In the progressively more complicated present-day scenario, the challenge to multilateralism and the international rules-based order was again unprecedented and Europe again had crises at its door.

In the emerging global democracy, the International Criminal Court was its judiciary after starting to shift its focus away from African to global issues; the G20 and the UN were a “collective” form of its executive, the former with an economic function and the latter a security function; and the IPU Assembly and the UN General Assembly were its budding legislature. In the huge challenge ahead, there was reason for both optimism and concern, the historic evidence being that humanity needed major catastrophes to advance.

Despite the scepticism and unease around the G20's democratic nature, political power was almost invariably democratized over time. Complementarity and coordination between the G20 and the UN should be increased, and the Security Council reformed with parliamentary involvement and a focus on the veto power. To enable parliamentarians to participate significantly in G20 activities, he proposed that parliamentary foreign affairs committees from each G20 country meet before or after the P20 to prepare an agenda to that end. To include delegations from non-G20 countries in the debate would also help to democratize the P20.

The President, thanking Mr. Iglesias for his interesting suggestion, said that the Committee had been discussing the question of Security Council reform, which was also a matter of ongoing UN debate.

Ms. M. Kademaunga (Zimbabwe), emphasizing that UN-G20 collaboration must be aimed at narrowing the global economic inequality gap, said that the G20 should prioritize inclusive growth and sustainable development with smaller economies in mind. In the quest to further UN inclusivity and democratization, Security Council reform was vital to enabling diverse representation and decision-making to address concerns of those economies. By concentrating its activities on key global issues, the UN-G20 partnership could drive significant change to serve all economies through creating a more effective global governance system, promoting sustainable

growth and reigniting the UN ethos. Activities should also be centred on sustainability, financial management and anti-corruption, especially in smaller democracies needing help. Lastly, G20 leaders' declarations should highlight the need for collective action to tackle global challenges, promote trade and investment, and share the benefits of globalization.

Mr. U. Nilsson (Sweden), recalling that the G20 and its predecessors had resulted from the need for an international economic forum, said that many such forums, including the UN, were examples of bottom-up solutions and that a top-down approach was not necessarily the way forward. The gaps between the two institutions would be best bridged if they worked together towards shared goals around shared concerns, which would strengthen their relationship and cooperation efforts.

The President said that ECOSOC was an example of people voting with their feet in favour of an alternative space for economic dialogue, leading him to wonder if its reputation was why the G20 had established itself.

Mr. B. Ellmers (Director, Financing for Sustainable Development Program, GPF), special guest, said that the demand had arisen only more recently for a structure able to coordinate economic policy more effectively than ECOSOC in its current form. The decision to create a new non-UN body appeared to have been more political than a necessity. The need for coordination notwithstanding, the UN should remain the default option for addressing most policy areas and, indeed, already had effective decision-making structures for addressing specific issues such as climate change. In that context, the G20's only role was to ensure the implementation of UN agreements in G20 countries.

Concerning the Argentine suggestion, the G20 had a range of engagement groups in addition to the P20, some of which exerted more influence on G20 policies and gained more access to its decision-making bodies. With engagement group processes not especially formalized or regulated, parliamentarians could play a strong role in ensuring accountability and transparency on the part of their governments, the truth being that the G20's informality and relative lack of transparency made it vulnerable to influence from lobbying groups.

Mr. A. Motter (Senior Advisor, Economic and Social Affairs, Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations) said that another important UN economic governance structure was the Economic and Financial Committee of the UN General Assembly, or Second Committee, which met annually and had the same issues on its agenda as the G20. Having been somewhat diminished by lack of political will, however, that agenda had shifted into the G20 realm.

As mentioned earlier, the G20 had no secretariat to monitor progress towards its policy goals. In its annual summit declarations, it regularly pledged to take actions but the promised outcomes often never fully materialized. A more stringent accountability mechanism would be a positive move.

Mr. B. Ellmers (Director, Financing for Sustainable Development Program, GPF), special guest, said that the only systematic monitoring of G20 outcomes was conducted unofficially by academic institutions. The Second Committee played a key role in UN economic and financial policymaking, which could nonetheless be strengthened through political will, as in the case of tax cooperation. In elaborating a framework convention on such cooperation, the UN was taking back an area long dominated by the G20, clearly demonstrating that the political will to utilize existing UN structures could create new processes.

The President said that the 2023 Edelman Trust Barometer had shown for the first time that citizens trusted private sector actors more than governments. In 2024, a record number of elections would be held. With environmental issues tending to lose priority in economically turbulent times, it could be that the G20 was seen as a way of circumventing climate commitments, given its focus on "real" money issues as opposed to environmental issues often described as "soft". He also wondered whether the G20 was able to harness and deploy the power of the private sector, which provided under 5% of the UN budget of US\$ 74 billion, and whether it was capable of or resistant to reconciling the three pillars of sustainable development.

Lastly, some commentators were increasingly describing the relationship between economic and national security as mutually dependent, while others asserted that, without natural security in the form of a functioning ecosystem, all endeavours were futile. He would welcome insights into how such issues played out between the UN and the G20.

Mr. B. Ellmers (Director, Financing for Sustainable Development Program, GPF), special guest, said that those were difficult questions to answer. With respect to the three pillars of sustainable development, the UN traditionally addressed them in a more balanced manner than the G20. In its earlier years especially, the G20 had been heavily criticized for its exclusive economic focus but, in its subsequent mission creep, it was taking on more and more UN policy areas. Concerning public trust, the crisis in multilateralism had led citizens to shy away from its processes, which they saw as reflecting geopolitical tensions. The hope was that upcoming conferences such as the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and the Second World Summit for Social Development would be infused with a greater spirit of the trust and cooperation that governments must demonstrate to show that multilateralism could work, which would also increase citizens' confidence in global public governance.

Another issue – to be addressed in the new UN workstream on taxation – was that, in the age of neoliberalism, States had lost regulatory capacities and resources. Together with harmful tax competition, their inability to generate tax revenue had left them in many ways poor and private entities rich. The recent weakening of States was partly attributable to the private-public distribution of resources; governments able to regulate and provide public services would win citizens' trust.

Mr. A.S. Thakur (India) said that global governance must be more representative, transparent and accountable, with its effectiveness and credibility maintained through a structure reflective of the evolving world order. Both categories of UN Security Council membership should be expanded accordingly to give voice to the Global South. During its recent G20 presidency, India had underscored the need for such reform of global institutions. The discussion of emerging global issues in multilateral forums, including the UN and the G20, might sometimes overlap but was essential for coordinating unified global responses to pressing challenges. Complementing UN efforts to build a more democratic, equitable and sustainable world, the G20 was a powerful platform for driving progress in the implementation of important UN agreements. The vast UN experience paired with the G20's economic leadership could be leveraged to advance common goals for the betterment of humanity and the world.

The President asked Mr. Ellmers whether the UN and the G20 understood just how increasingly onerous and difficult it was becoming for frontline parliamentarians to deal with and reconcile the scores of outcomes and other documentation received from a plethora of multilateral players, chief among them those two institutions. While often beautifully written, such documentation could be unduly lengthy.

Mr. B. Ellmers (Director, Financing for Sustainable Development Program, GPF), special guest, citing the Pact for the Future as an example, said that it indeed often happened that few binding and implementable actions remained after sifting through and digesting documentation of that nature. In truth, therefore, the related parliamentary workload was not as high as it might appear. Such documentation was frequently full of aspirational language and sought to reflect many differing stakeholder views, which accounted for the complexity. In the drafting process, a firm focus on concrete outcomes would be preferable.

The point made about driving progress towards the implementation of UN agreements was a significant one. The UN was the norm-setter, while the G20 represented major economies whose actions were a determining factor in the implementation of agreements in central policy areas. Cooperation was therefore essential to finding ways of effectively driving that progress.

The President asked why the G20 issued annual communiqués if their members were not obliged to act on their content.

Mr. B. Ellmers (Director, Financing for Sustainable Development Program, GPF), special guest, said that, while not redundant, G20 communiqués were often repetitive. At G20 Summits, important bilateral meetings often took place on the sidelines, which was neutral ground perhaps more conducive to settling affairs than during formal exchanges or State visits. It would be more expedient, however, to have fewer G20 meetings and more regular interaction in the broader format of such events as the International Conference on Financing for Development. If held on a three-yearly basis, that event was likely to produce more outcomes than did the annual G20 Summits.

The President, thanking Mr. Ellmers, Ms. Crexell and participants for their remarks, said that much had been learned about the UN-G20 relationship and that Mr. Ellmers would be welcome back in future to continue the conversation.

**Sharing best practices and lessons learned: Follow-up on the first two motions
of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs**

The President recalled that, as part of its new mandate unanimously approved at the 146th Assembly in Manama, the Committee had decided to break with the practice of the other three Standing Committees by adopting motions, as opposed to resolutions, on topics more focused on its mandate. The aim was to encourage parliamentarians to take specific actions and report back on the results. The Committee now hoped to receive positive feedback as to progress made in respect of the two motions previously approved on bringing gender equality to the UN General Assembly and on reforming the UN Security Council. Theoretical discussions were important but parliamentarians practised the craft of politics and did not delegate their work elsewhere. Ultimately, the buck stopped with them, which was why their work should be more action-centred.

Ms. S. Almansoori (United Arab Emirates) said with respect to gender equality that her country had always recognized women's vital role in building a thriving society and had updated its national strategy for women's empowerment to align with evolving priorities and future ambitions. Exemplifying the progress achieved, women had accounted for over one half of the Emirati delegation to the most recent UN General Assembly and a woman had served as the country's permanent representative to the United Nations between 2013 and 2024, holding during that time such leadership roles as President of the UN-Women Executive Board. Inter-parliamentary cooperation could drive further progress towards gender equality, which her country was committed to advancing in the national, regional and global contexts.

Mr. A. Larem (Germany), agreeing that motions were the right way forward for the Committee, said that his country's feminist foreign policy sought to promote gender equality in all spheres, including at the UN, with the German Bundestag also officially debating the prospects for the appointment of a woman as UN Secretary-General. As to Security Council reform, it was covered in an ongoing parliamentary subcommittee debate around the progress of reform in international organizations. It was true that outcomes could have more style than substance and that brevity was preferable. It was, however, a positive sign of progress that a Global South country, Namibia, had co-facilitated the Summit of the Future with Germany. A further positive sign would come when the Global South was represented on the Security Council.

Mr. A.S. Thakur (India) said that his country had always championed gender equality and that, in diplomacy, many Indian women had broken glass ceilings, including as the first woman President of the UN General Assembly. Women now constituted almost one quarter of its diplomatic corps, bringing a unique perspective and enriching conversations at home and abroad. India had been the first to deploy a woman peacekeeping contingent, in 2007 to Liberia, followed by similar deployments elsewhere, and one third of its lower house and State legislative assemblies parliamentary seats were reserved for women. Concerning the second motion, India had consistently called for urgent comprehensive reform of global governance structures, including the UN Security Council, to reflect the new realities and aspirations, notably through more inclusivity and equitable representation of the Global South. Without reform, multilateral institutions such as the UN risked irrelevancy.

Ms. T. Jintawet (Thailand) said that her country ranked among the highest in the Asia-Pacific region for the number of women holding executive positions in the public and private sectors. Thailand now had its second woman Prime Minister and there was growing women's participation in politics and in diplomacy. Its ambassadors to the UN Office at Geneva and the UN Headquarters in New York were women, who were equally represented with men among its high-ranking diplomats.

The President, in response to a question from Mr. F.A. Iglesias (Argentina), said that proposals for a new motion should be submitted in writing for consideration. The Committee was in fact seeking topics for discussion at the 150th Assembly and would appreciate such proposals.

Ms. L. Nyelele (Zimbabwe) said that the world had changed dramatically since the establishment of the UN in 1945, bringing complex global challenges requiring a more inclusive, representative and democratic Security Council. As it stood, the Security Council's structure was inadequate, the veto power was limited to too few countries, and the 54 African UN Member States were unrepresented. The Security Council should also be made more transparent and accountable, with Member States able to access and discuss information relating to its work.

The President, concluding the discussion, said that copies of the motions were available for participants to take away with them and seize what was an interesting action-oriented opportunity to initiate parliamentary debates on their merits. All parliamentarians were individually empowered to raise issues and circulate ideas, sowing seeds that would hopefully take root. He thanked all participants for their cooperation in that respect.

Elections to the Bureau of the Standing Committee

Ms. P. Torsney (Head of the Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations) said that the candidates nominated to fill the five vacancies on the Bureau were: for the Arab Group, Mr. F. Al-Nouiri of Libya; for the Asia-Pacific Group, Mr. A.S. Thakur of India; for the Eurasia Group, Mr. S. Rachkov of Belarus and Ms. R.B. Chemeris of the Russian Federation; and for the Twelve Plus Group, Mr. A. Larem of Germany. The two candidates present were invited to introduce themselves.

Mr. A. Larem (Germany) said that he had 37 years of experience in politics, was a member of the German Social Democratic Party and participated in parliamentary committees on foreign affairs, defence, finance, the UN and international organizations, and civil crisis prevention, reporting in those contexts on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and others in the Indo-Pacific region.

Mr. A.S. Thakur (India) said that he was serving his fifth parliamentary term as a member of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and had held ministerial posts covering finance, corporate affairs, and information and broadcasting, and youth affairs and sports. Currently, he chaired a standing committee on coal, mines and steel, and was a member of the public accounts committee. He had also been the youngest President of the Indian Cricket Board. He had welcomed the President's passionate emphasis on the important role of parliamentarians, which was highly motivating, and looked forward to further such discussions in future.

Ms. P. Torsney (Head of the Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations) said that Bureau members currently in attendance, in addition to Ms. L. Crexell of Argentina, were Mr. D. Laouhngemaye of Chad and Ms. R. Tonkei of Kenya. She hoped to see the remainder, who were otherwise engaged in election activities, back for the Committee's session at the 150th Assembly.

The President said he took it that the Committee wished to elect the five named candidates as members of its Bureau.

It was so decided.

Any other business

The President, after confirming that there was no other business, thanked all participants for their presence and their passion, urging them to remember their power as legislators to ignite debate, in line with the democratic practice incumbent on them and mindful of the IPU slogan "For democracy. For everyone". He declared the session closed.

The sitting rose at 11:00.

Forum of Women Parliamentarians

SITTING OF SUNDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2024

(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 10:30 with Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, in the Chair.

The President, congratulating several Bureau members on their re-election, welcomed delegates to the sitting. She noted a number of recent achievements on gender equality in parliament, including in the newly elected Rwandan Parliament where the representation of women had reached 63% as well as in Mexico which had recently elected its first woman President. The IPU Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians had also been approved and would be held in Mexico in March 2025.

Dr. T. Ackson (IPU President) congratulated the newly elected members of parliament who had joined the Forum and recognized the recent progress made to increase the representation of women and other disadvantaged groups in parliament. Progress on gender equality could not be made by women alone but also required the support of men. Gender perspectives must be at the heart of IPU Assembly discussions in order to achieve effective and sustainable solutions that left no one behind.

Drawing attention to the theme of the General Debate, she said that women were largely excluded from science, technology and innovation (STI), whether in technological development or decision-making. Digitalization, often heralded as the great equalizer, was on track to widen inequalities if the gender digital divide was not addressed. It was important to remember that artificial intelligence (AI) was not gender-neutral and often reinforced existing gender biases. In addition to perpetuating gender stereotypes, AI could generate sexist content which could become a source of online harassment, further limiting opportunities and exacerbating inequality. AI must be developed and implemented in a way that promoted equality and inclusivity, including by considering the unique experiences and needs of women and girls from all backgrounds.

Sustaining peace was a prerequisite for gender equality, just as gender equality was essential for lasting peace. Evidence showed that the chances of achieving and sustaining peace were higher when women were included in peace and reconciliation processes. Women brought unique perspectives and solutions to the table, often addressing the root causes of conflict and prioritizing their communities. Sadly, the world was lagging behind on the key pillars of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, including on protection. It was vital to place the rights of women and girls at the centre and lay the groundwork for gender-responsive justice and reparations for sexual and gender-based violence committed during conflicts.

Parliamentarians had a duty to uphold women's and girls' rights at all times, whether in wartime or in peacetime. Women's leadership was crucial in that endeavour. Inclusive leadership helped to drive stronger governance, achieve better outcomes and foster more peaceful and equitable societies. The contribution of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians to global solutions was therefore essential.

Adoption of the agenda (FEM/38/A.1-rev)

The agenda was adopted.

Activities to advance gender equality

Ms. S. Mikayilova (Azerbaijan), speaking in her capacity as member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, said that the Bureau had been busy preparing for the current session of the Forum. It had agreed to debate from a gender perspective the draft resolution of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights on the theme *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*, noting that AI was not gender-neutral. The Bureau had also agreed to hold a panel discussion on the topic *Sustaining peace and providing justice to women and girls*, which would place a strong focus on ending impunity for crimes committed against women and girls living in conflict. A parity debate had been planned on the topic *Pushing*

back on the pushback: Men and women MPs preserving and advancing gender equality, which was a unique opportunity to review pushback on gender equality around the world, particularly during elections.

In addition, the Bureau had met online in July 2024 to consider proposals to amend the IPU Statutes and Rules. It had agreed a set of amendments which would uphold gender parity as the new norm across the IPU, for instance, by promoting parity among men and women in the membership of IPU bodies and in leadership positions, reinforcing existing gender equality provisions, such as quotas, and introducing sanctions for non-compliance with those provisions. The amendments would be submitted to the working group in charge of reviewing amendments with a view to their adoption at the 150th IPU Assembly.

Speaking in her capacity as member of the Gender Partnership Group, she said that the Group had met the previous day to discuss gender participation at the 149th IPU Assembly. The participation of women was expected to be strong at 36.4%. The figure was higher than at the previous four Assemblies but still well below the record of 39% achieved at the 143rd IPU Assembly in Madrid in 2021 and the 144th IPU Assembly in Nusa Dua in 2022. A record low of all male-delegations and a record high of gender-balanced delegations were expected. Among the delegations of at least two members announced as at the eve of the Forum, only five were expected to be all-male and two all-female, which were the lowest numbers ever recorded. The total number of announced delegations with a 40:60 gender balance ratio stood at 35% which was an improvement on the previous Assembly where the number had stood at 30%. As many as 23 delegations had announced a 50:50 ratio. Ultimately, the objective was to get to zero single-sex delegations and achieve gender parity at the IPU.

The Group had also deliberated on the special cases of delegations that had not attended Assemblies for several consecutive sessions, deciding that sanctions should not be applied on single-sex delegations if they had not attended four successive Assemblies or more. It had taken note of the progress made towards the implementation of the new IPU *Policy to prevent and address harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and other IPU events* and encouraged all IPU Member Parliaments to promote it in their geopolitical groups. Everyone must play their part in achieving the goal of zero harassment.

She invited women parliamentarians to attend the 29th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29) to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan in November 2024. Men and women must work together to address the challenges of climate change.

The President said that the amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules were historic since they contained a recommendation, albeit non-mandatory, to ensure a regular rotation between men and women for the position of IPU President. They also called for gender balance among Vice-Presidents and for gender mainstreaming in the drafting of resolutions. Efforts were currently being made to give women half of the total time allocated for speeches delivered during the General Debate.

Ms. Z. Hilal (Secretary of the Forum), drawing attention to the recent activities undertaken by the IPU to advance gender equality, said that the IPU had been supporting several parliaments, including those of Colombia and Djibouti, to assess their gender sensitivity. Support had also been provided to several countries in transition, such as Gabon and Burkina Faso, with a view to ensuring that their constitution-making process was inclusive of women's participation, leadership and perspectives. Efforts were being made to enhance peer-to-peer support among caucuses of women parliamentarians, particularly in Sierra Leone, Kenya and Uganda, as well as to support parliaments in better implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), specifically by helping identify discriminatory legal provisions and revise legislation. It was promising to note that several State delegations currently being examined by the CEDAW Committee, notably the delegations of Benin, Cuba, Saudi Arabia and New Zealand, had included parliamentarians amongst its members. The IPU had been long calling for the inclusion of parliamentarians in United Nations (UN) delegations and encouraged other countries to do the same.

She was pleased to announce that the IPU had identified gender equality as the priority theme for its work in 2025 to mark several gender-related milestones that would be reached in that year. Those milestones included the 30th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), the 25th anniversary of the "Women, Peace and Security" (WPS) Agenda and the 40th anniversary of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians.

Contribution to the work of the 149th Assembly from a gender perspective

The President invited the Forum to consider the draft resolution on the theme *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law* from a gender perspective with a view to producing a set of gender-focused amendments. The Bureau had nominated Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche (Algeria) to chair the debate and Ms. V. Riotton (France) to serve as Rapporteur.

The nominations were approved.

Ms. M. Rempel Garner (Canada), co-Rapporteur, introducing the draft resolution, said that the world was in the midst of a massive technological transformation that would have an impact on national economies and, in turn, on the fabric of civil societies. Although the rapid and widespread use of AI had already begun to affect decision-making, international guardrails on AI were largely lacking. The goals of the draft resolution were twofold: (1) to recognize that technological transformation had and continued to have an impact on democracy and human rights; and (2) to build capacity within parliaments and in the IPU to address the technological transformation proactively and productively. It was important that all areas, including the Global South, were equitably represented in any global frameworks regulating AI.

Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche (Algeria), First Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, took the Chair.

The Chair said that delegates were invited to consider how parliaments could: (1) ensure that AI policies and regulations upheld fundamental human rights, prevented gender-based violence and protected the rights of women and girls; (2) build their own capacity to legislate and advocate for inclusive and equitable AI governance; (3) ensure the equal participation of women in the development and governance of AI technologies; and (4) require international bodies and private companies to prioritize gender-sensitive AI that upheld human rights and promoted gender equality on a global scale.

Ms. M. Chinomona (Zimbabwe) said that the Parliament of Zimbabwe had passed the Cyber and Data Protection Act (2021) which served as a guardian of the rights of women in the digital sphere. The Act acknowledged that women faced an increased risk of online violence and criminalized the use of information and communication technology to commit such acts. One of the most significant aspects of the Act was its emphasis on the need for explicit consent in the processing of data, thus safeguarding women from unauthorized use of their personal information. The cybersecurity centre and the data protection authority established under the Act provided a robust mechanism for monitoring and enforcing those protections. The two bodies were tasked with ensuring that the digital space was safe and secure for all users, particularly for women. The Act also addressed the issue of cyberbullying and cyber harassment. Criminalizing those behaviours sent a strong message that such actions would not be tolerated.

Ms. T. Jintawet (Thailand) said that technological development, including AI, was both harmful and beneficial for humanity. The use of AI in fields such as law enforcement and healthcare could either empower or marginalize women depending on how the technologies were designed and deployed. Areas of concern included the underrepresentation of women in the development of AI technologies, particularly in the design and decision-making processes, and the potential of AI to perpetuate gender biases. Noting that misinformation and online harassment driven by AI disproportionately affected women, especially those in politics, she said that the safety, dignity and participation of women in democratic processes must be protected. It was essential that AI policies were inclusive and prioritized gender equality. National AI committees should be established consisting of equal numbers of men and women.

Mr. S. Patra (India) said that AI was rapidly transforming societies, shaping economies and influencing global governance. While it risked reinforcing existing gender biases and inequalities, it also had significant potential to promote gender equality and empower women, for instance, by providing opportunities in education, employment, healthcare and entrepreneurship.

India was committed to leveraging AI for gender equality. It had introduced programmes to reskill women in AI, enabling them to enter technical professions. There were also several initiatives to promote the participation of women in AI development and research with a view to making it more gender-inclusive. The Kilhari programme used AI to provide new and expectant mothers, particularly in rural areas, with essential information on maternal and child healthcare.

AI offered unparalleled opportunities to advance democracy, human rights and gender equality as long as it was developed and regulated inclusively. Comprehensive governance frameworks were needed to balance AI innovation with citizen safeguards. The Global Digital Compact was particularly important for establishing gender-inclusive governance frameworks.

Ms. E. Nyirasafari (Rwanda) said that Rwanda was set to become a hub for AI research in Africa and had a strong AI ecosystem. It had a national AI policy to harness the benefits of AI and mitigate its risks. The policy also sought to address the gender digital divide.

Digital and mobile technologies had enormous potential for women's empowerment by providing them with opportunities to find and share information, access educational and health services, generate income, interact, collaborate, network and have their voices heard. In Rwanda, both women and men were involved in technological projects without any form of discrimination. Women were more than just users of AI but in fact participated in the digital ecosystem as innovators, designers and developers. Lastly, the Parliament had passed a Law on Prevention and Punishment of Cybercrimes (2018) to reduce the negative impacts of AI on democracy, human rights and the rule of law and established a Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Ms. R. Alyahya (Saudi Arabia) said that AI presented opportunities and challenges for democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Balancing innovation with ethical considerations and robust regulatory frameworks was essential to harness its potential while also safeguarding fundamental rights and democracy. Ongoing dialogue among stakeholders, including policymakers, technologists and civil society, was crucial to navigate those complexities.

Saudi Arabia had recently announced a number of global cybersecurity initiatives, including ones related to child protection and women's empowerment in cyberspace. The initiatives aimed to advance collective action in those areas, strengthen the global response and raise awareness among decision makers regarding growing threats while also addressing the challenges underlying the low participation of women and the growing shortage of specialists in the field of cybersecurity. One such initiative sought to add computer science and AI specializations to educational curricula with a view to promoting understanding of AI technologies and their ethical implications, including for women's rights, while also drawing in more female specialists. In addition, a national plan for women was being put together, which would include an extensive review of legislation, including that pertaining to the protection of women in cyberspace. The review would help to identify gaps, find proper solutions and raise awareness in the society.

Ms. M. Alshehhi (United Arab Emirates) said that AI, if not designed in a just and transparent way, could exacerbate gender inequalities. To preserve human rights and democracy, a call for just and transparent use of AI should be included in the draft resolution.

The United Arab Emirates had launched many initiatives to enhance the responsible and sustainable use of AI in different sectors, including a pact which aimed to make AI more inclusive, including of women. The country had established the first AI ministry in the world to coordinate national efforts in the field and develop specific strategies and policies. There was also an AI council responsible for implementing the country's AI strategy.

Ms. R.M. Mtshweni-Tsipane (South Africa) said that AI systems had the potential to perpetuate and exacerbate gender inequalities. Technology-facilitated gender-based violence was a particularly concerning issue. Not only did it pose serious challenges to digital governance but also created a persistent lag in the adoption of laws and policies that effectively tackled the issue, which was pervasive and affected individuals across diverse professions, regions and legislatures. Proactive measures must be taken to address the use of AI in perpetuating gender-based violence and ensure that national laws and policies were able to keep up with evolving challenges.

South Africa proposed that the following operative paragraphs be added to the draft resolution: "calls on parliaments to, through legislative action, prioritize prevention, elimination and responses to all forms of technology-facilitated gender-based violence and discrimination. This includes enhanced content moderation, accessible and effective reporting systems and the establishment of content removal processes compliant with international human rights law" and "urges parliaments to enact legislation prohibiting the distribution of non-consensual explicit images and providing recourse to victims".

Ms. A. Pasholi (North Macedonia) said that AI was not just a tool for progress, it was a reflection of the values, biases and priorities of its creators. If gender-sensitive perspectives were not incorporated into its development and governance, AI risked entrenching existing inequalities and creating new ones.

Studies revealed that nearly 44% of AI models showed gender bias, and 25% showed both gender and racial bias. It was worrying that AI systems determining credit worthiness could replicate historical patterns of discrimination, such as granting lower credit limits to women, resulting in women being denied loans, not because of financial status, but due to algorithmic assumptions that women were less economically stable. However, such impacts were not limited to financial services. Women working in politics, activism and the media faced unique and insidious forms of harm, including online harassment, targeted abuse and even AI-generated attacks designed to undermine their credibility and deter them from public life. Social media algorithms prioritized content that generated high engagement, often pushing misogynistic narratives to the forefront and amplifying voices that sought to silence women. Women in politics in particular could find themselves targeted by deepfakes and automated disinformation campaigns, which not only aimed to discredit their public image but also to send a broader message that women did not belong in politics. Malicious use of AI intimidated women into silence and undermined their safety and efficacy.

It was also important to address the underrepresentation of women in the AI industry itself. The lack of representation was not only a symptom of broader gender inequalities but also a cause of biased AI systems. When development teams were not diverse, the resulting technologies were less likely to account for the needs and perspectives of women, leading to outcomes that disadvantaged women and perpetuated harmful stereotypes. Parliamentarians were in a position to lead the agenda for a more ethical, inclusive and gender-sensitive approach to AI. They had a responsibility to advocate for legislation that held AI systems accountable through mandatory risk assessments and equality impact evaluations.

Ms. G. Karelova (Russian Federation) said that the impact of digital technologies was becoming more and more visible and new approaches to challenges were needed.

AI and its impact on women's lives had been a key topic at the Fourth Eurasian Women's Forum recently held in St. Petersburg. Participants of the Forum had suggested that international programmes be created to help women enter professions related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) to eradicate gender inequality in those fields. The programmes should provide women access to digital technologies, online education and platforms to exchange professional experiences. She drew attention to the International Council of Women in Technology and Industry established in the Russian Federation to consolidate the efforts of women in relevant industries.

Overall, new technologies and AI should benefit the whole of humanity and be a platform for constructive cooperation.

Ms. N. Boulhan Houssein (Djibouti), drawing attention to some of the benefits of AI, including its ability to ease the burden of work on its users, said that national institutions, including parliaments, must also stay on top of the challenges.

Djibouti had provided training and capacity-building support to parliamentarians on AI, noting that its use in the internal workings of parliament could help save time. In 2015, it had also established the National Agency for State Information Systems which sought to improve the quality and efficiency of the e-government service, including through the use of AI. One of the initiatives of the agency was a biometrics system which sought to fight against identity theft and better protect personal data.

The draft resolution must underscore the vital importance of legal frameworks to oversee the use of AI. A task force should be created within every parliament to ensure its responsible use in parliamentary work. She called for equal participation of women in the governance and development of AI. Efforts were also needed to motivate women and girls to enter the field of technology and engineering.

Ms. J. Sabao (Zambia) said that AI and its rapid application across political, economic and social domains presented benefits to society but could also negatively impact democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Women and girls were particularly vulnerable to the negative impacts of AI which tended to mirror existing gender biases. For example, women in politics were targeted with immense online abuse and harassment, including in Zambia. Such incidents discouraged them from engaging in public debates, voicing their political opinions and speaking publicly.

The Zambian Parliament acknowledged the need to embrace emerging technologies and innovations in its parliamentary functions as they could make Parliament more transparent and efficient. However, it was important to ensure responsible development, deployment and use of AI in a way that promoted gender equality and inclusion.

Ms. E. Azad (Islamic Republic of Iran) condemned the criminal acts carried out by Israel against the people of Gaza, including women and girls, through the use of different technologies.

It was important to advance the rights of women and girls as technological advances became more accessible. AI must be used in a non-discriminatory, inclusive way. Women and girls from all communities should be able to benefit from the opportunities created by AI. National approaches to AI were needed to account for the demands of individual countries.

Ms. E. Salkičević-Dizdarević (Bosnia and Herzegovina), noting that there was no agreed definition of AI, said that it was crucial to strike the right balance between technological development and protection of human rights. Legislation and education were key in that regard. She drew attention to the AI legislation passed at the European Parliament in March 2024 and highlighted the need to prioritize AI literacy, including for women. Training in AI should be provided for people working in areas related to government, human rights, the judiciary, law enforcement, the media and education, as well as for the public as a whole.

Ms. A.N. Kpochan (Benin) said that, while AI offered immense opportunities to improve societies, including for the benefit of women, it could also exacerbate discrimination. It was therefore important to use it responsibly and ethically. The perspectives of developing countries must be better integrated into the development of AI.

Ms. R. Barghouthi (Palestine) drew attention to the situation in Palestine where autonomous weapon systems powered by AI were being used against the Palestinian people, particularly in Gaza and the West Bank. It was apparent that a number of States, including many of those that claimed to champion efforts to regulate and prohibit such systems, were comfortable speaking in theoretical terms but reluctant to act in practice. The matter was a concern not only for Palestine but for all States as such systems were being exported and proliferated by Israel. Weapon systems powered by AI were likely to be used to commit and accelerate war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide as well as to be tested on the populations of the Global South.

The pleas of the Palestinian people to stop the above trend had fallen on deaf ears and the world was now witnessing an automated genocide in which more than 42,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, had been killed. The widespread use of systems such as Lavender and the Gospel was largely responsible for the killings. Noting the report by Amnesty International entitled *Automated Apartheid* which explained how such technologies were being used to persecute the Palestinian people, severely restrict their freedom of movement and violate their basic human rights, she urged parliaments to question businesses and governments worldwide and ban the sale of surveillance technologies that contributed to the automated apartheid and illegal occupation in Palestine.

She believed that the draft resolution failed to tackle the dangerous situation described, condemning in particular the fact that preambular paragraph 9 mentioned “international and regional initiatives” but not treaties and obligations, and “ethical standards” but not legal standards. It was vital to highlight international obligations, including in relation to autonomous weapon systems, and draw attention to serious violations of international humanitarian law and international crimes.

Ms. K. Slassi (Morocco) said that AI had both benefits and risks when it came to democracy, human rights, women’s rights and peace and security. The draft resolution should call for the development of mechanisms, in parliament and otherwise, to monitor AI systems from a gender perspective. Women and girls were already excelling in science and technology and must be given equal opportunities to enter the field.

Morocco had deployed tireless efforts to regulate AI. It had introduced important legislation to protect personal information and had promoted AI in higher education. Training was also being provided to young people on the psychological and sociological impacts of technological advances.

Ms. Tong Yi (China) said that AI had immense potential to drive economic growth and social progress, and women, as pivotal contributors to humanity, were integral to that journey. The impact of AI on women was multifaceted, offering a mix of opportunities and challenges. It spawned new job sectors and work patterns, providing women with a broader array of career paths, and liberated women from the burden of household chores – a shift that was instrumental in dismantling gender barriers. It enhanced educational prospects, offering women easier access to learning materials

and empowering them to boost their knowledge and skills. It had also made political participation more accessible for women, amplifying their influence via the internet. At the same time, however, algorithmic bias and prejudices in data sets could lead to widespread gender discrimination against women and the underrepresentation of women in the technology sector could further skew the system. Women in less developed regions would struggle to keep up with the demands of AI due to a lack of digital literacy and resources, constraining their growth and highlighting the digital gap. There was also the added concern that women were potentially more vulnerable to privacy breaches and security threats, such as misuse of personal data.

With the concerted efforts of all stakeholders, AI could be a powerful ally in elevating women's quality of life, serving the broader economic and social development of humanity.

Ms. M. Odhiambo (Kenya) recognized that AI carried significant benefits that could be leveraged to solve Kenya's most prevalent problems, including in health, education, agriculture, finance and business, as well as to grow the country's economy. In the health sector, AI had been used in the detection of diseases. In agriculture, it had provided means for early detection of crop failures. In finance, it had enabled unbanked populations to access fast, short-term loans. In education, it had provided students with personalized learning resources.

However, she also acknowledged the disruptive nature of AI which had the potential to facilitate the spread of mis- and disinformation, to exacerbate technology-facilitated gender-based violence, and to be weaponized in politics, for instance, through the manipulation of election results. Such incidents could happen using deepfakes, algorithms or chatbots, for example.

Women were disproportionately affected by the negative effects of AI, not only because of their underrepresentation in the information technology sector, but because they were unable to access digital spaces that enabled them to participate in the debate. It was important to introduce digital round tables for women.

Kenya was currently in the process of developing a specific policy on AI, although other legal frameworks on technology, including cybercrime, already existed.

Ms. A. Santos (Portugal) said that in Portugal, women were most vulnerable to the threats associated with AI. Not only did they face more discrimination but were also more at risk of losing their jobs to AI or to people who were more technologically skilled. Indeed, AI was predicted to replace many jobs in education and healthcare, which were largely done by women.

In response, women must be encouraged to train in AI and other emerging technologies not only to protect their careers but also to be put in leadership positions. By being more involved in AI women could help mould the future of technology in a way that was more inclusive and representative, thus creating a fairer and more equitable society.

Overall, the keys to leaving no woman behind in a future dominated by AI were: providing life-long education in the field, raising awareness of the importance of adapting to technological advances, and keeping up with changes in the job market resulting from digitalization.

Ms. R. Maachaoui (Tunisia) said that it was important to strike a balance between harnessing AI and preserving human rights. AI could improve the quality of life and boost efficiency in many sectors, including healthcare and education, but also posed challenges, for instance, related to privacy. The judiciary should be aware of the impact of AI on the development of laws and in judicial decision-making in order to work responsibly and guarantee fair trials. She encouraged delegates to adopt the draft resolution which should advocate for the rights of women at the economic, political and cultural levels.

Tunisia paid a great deal of attention to the rights of women in the development of AI. Since adopting the IPU resolution *Cybercrimes: The new risks to global security*, Tunisia had taken steps towards implementing its recommendations. It had, for instance, ratified the Council of Europe's Convention on Cybercrime (Budapest Convention) and was now translating it into domestic law.

Ms. S. Abd Ulrrahim (Libya) said that, although AI had some positive aspects, it was also being used in unethical ways. Israel was using AI in its operations in Palestine where civilians, including women and children, were being targeted with mobile phones and CCTV, amongst other things. In so doing, Israel was violating human rights and international humanitarian law which must be updated to include provisions that limited the use of AI to target civilians.

Ms. P. Cox (United Kingdom) said that the United Kingdom had recently ratified the Council of Europe's newly agreed Convention on Cybercrime, which was the first legally binding treaty governing the safe use of AI. The Convention included important safeguards against the many risks of AI, such as the spread of misinformation and the use of biased data, seeking to build a

united front on the matter while also protecting human rights, including the rights of women and girls, democracy and the rule of law. Countries outside the Council of Europe were also being invited to become signatories. She hoped that the Convention, along with the new IPU resolution, would help create global governance frameworks around AI.

Ms. N. Altaca Kayışoğlu (Türkiye) said that AI would become a tool to advance gender equality only when developers began to value gender equality as fundamental to global development, peace and welfare. AI must be regulated to protect women and girls from the harms of the digital world. Parliamentarians had a responsibility to scrutinize, from a human rights perspective, the algorithms used by AI and should put in place specialized organizations to that end. It was vital, for example, to avoid situations where automated systems spat out racist or misogynist content, as had been the case with Microsoft algorithms, which then spread across the world. She warned that AI could be used to either protect or endanger women and girls affected by war.

Ms. V. Riotton (France), said that, according to France's High Council for Gender Equality, three trends were on the rise in relation to gender inequality: (1) efforts were being made to make women invisible; (2) gender stereotypes continued to prevail; and (3) violence against women, whether physical or symbolic, was spreading. A number of recommendations had been made in response to those trends, most notably the need for quotas. Gender quotas should be used, for instance, for content creation and to draft more women and girls into scientific fields. France was also working to implement the European Directive on measures for a high common level of cybersecurity across the Union, which, amongst other things, obliged online platforms to take down sexist content, especially that of a sexual nature shared without consent.

She called on delegates to support the amendments submitted by France, particularly those to operative paragraph 4 which (1) invited parliaments to ensure that advances in AI did not result in the perpetuation of discrimination stemming from biases present in training data and algorithms, and (2) called on parliaments to take measures to prevent the risk of AI being used in disinformation campaigns aimed at misleading, dividing and destabilizing societies and undermining democracy.

Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah (Egypt) said that regional and international initiatives were needed to develop laws, frameworks and standards regulating AI with a view to minimizing its negative impacts. Parliamentarians and international organizations should support each other in that regard. It was important to boost international cooperation to harness the benefits of AI, ensuring that all voices were included. Protecting democracy, human rights and the rule of law was vital. Legislation must contain provisions to eliminate discrimination against women and ensure fair and equal use of AI.

Ms. J. Kwan (Canada) said that AI could be used to target women in politics, women human rights defenders and young women activists. Women in those roles faced misogynistic coverage amplified by social media algorithms and biased algorithmic filters and were often victims of online gender-based violence and harassment exacerbated by AI, such as pornographic and intimate deepfakes, which were used to undermine their reputation and ongoing political engagement. The objective was to silence women and send a message that women did not belong in politics. Parliamentarians must be cognizant that AI training systems often reconfirmed gender bias. It was critical to incorporate gender-sensitive data into the training and development of AI. Legislation and regulatory practices should also be put in place.

Ms. L. Gumerova (Russian Federation) said that it was important to take into account the expertise of national and international organizations. The Russian Federation had developed national strategies, laws and recommendations on the development and regulation of AI, calling for the protection of rights and liberties and introducing ethical standards for research. She suggested that parliaments be addressed under preambular paragraph 9 of the draft resolution.

Ms. M. Guerra Castillo (Mexico) said that her Parliament had recently passed the Olympia Law (2021) which aimed to protect citizens from digital violence, particularly the non-consensual distribution of sexual content. Such acts were now considered penal crimes that could lead to between three and six years in prison and heavy fines. Online violence could cause psychological, social and financial damage and must therefore have legal consequences and carry sanctions. She encouraged other countries to pass similar laws.

The sitting rose at 12:40.

SITTING OF SUNDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2024

(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 14:30 with Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, in the Chair.

Panel discussion on Sustaining peace and providing justice to women and girls

The President said that the panel discussion would highlight ways to protect women and girls, particularly in times of conflict and war, and noted that women parliamentarians could play a crucial role in that work.

Ms. I. Kitwa Godalena (Democratic Republic of Congo), panellist, said that the security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was precarious in light of armed conflicts taking place in the east and west of the country. Sexual violence had become a weapon of war with more than 25,000 women and girls estimated to have fallen victim since 2023. Following recommendations by the UN, her Parliament had passed Act No. 22/065 of 26 December 2022, laying down the fundamental principles for the provision of protection and reparation for victims of conflict-related sexual violence and crimes against the peace and security of mankind. The law was significant in the struggle against sexual violence because it gave people hope. Not only did it afford rights and protections to victims but it also set out the obligations of the State, established the notion of “damages” and determined the procedure to identify victims. For the first time in history, the country had penal provisions to combat sexual violence against women and girls.

That said, there were a number of obstacles preventing successful implementation of the law. One such obstacle was a lack of resources, which, among other things, made it difficult to translate the law into the different local languages and therefore to promote it among the whole population. In addition, women victims were often hesitant to come forward for fear of being rejected by their communities, pursued by their perpetrators or stigmatized.

Her Parliament was hoping to allocate resources in the 2025 budget to tackle the abovementioned obstacles. While progress towards transitional justice had already been made, the courts had been considering more and more cases of sexual violence since the adoption of the said law. Victims were also exempt from having to pay legal fees.

Ms. C. Carlota (Timor-Leste), panellist, said that the 1999 referendum in Timor-Leste, which had established the country's independence, had been the beginning of a national effort towards reconciliation, peace and justice after the conflict with Indonesia between 1975 and 1999. The Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) had been established as part of that effort. Approximately 21% of the statements considered by the Commission had been from women, revealing that they had not only suffered from sexual violence, including rape and sexual slavery, but from a range of civil, political, socioeconomic and human rights violations. In response to those findings, the Commission had made some key recommendations to address the root causes of gender violence, including measures to change harmful social norms. Although the Commission's mandate had ended, implementation of those recommendations continued.

The transitional justice process in Timor-Leste, which was ongoing, had brought some useful lessons on how to provide justice to women and girls who were victims of conflict. Firstly, there was a vital need to appoint women leaders to ensure women's voices were heard and their needs addressed. Secondly, gender-based violence could be tackled by creating safe spaces for women to recount their experience without fear of stigma or retaliation. Thirdly, it was important to promote cultural sensitivity and respect for traditional norms, for instance, by involving people from the community who could help fill communication gaps and facilitate women's participation in the transitional justice process.

She was of the opinion that gender equality should be considered a fundamental principle for reconciliation and development in post-conflict and fragile States.

Ms. S. Calltorp (Director and Chief of Humanitarian Action, UN Women Geneva), panellist, speaking via video link, said that ending impunity for crimes against women and girls and ensuring their access to justice was central to sustaining peace. Women and girls played a crucial role in building sustainable peace processes and delivering justice for gender-based violence alongside

international courts and tribunals. However, women's representation in key decision-making positions remained a challenge at the International Court of Justice. Only 4 out of the current 15 judges were women, and since its establishment in 1945, only 6 women had served as judges, as compared to 115 men. The striking underrepresentation of women directly impacted how gender-based crimes were handled, limiting the potential for justice. Transitional justice offered a unique opportunity to address those gaps.

The recent Guidance Note of the UN Secretary-General on Transitional Justice provided a useful road map on how to adopt gender-responsive approaches to justice in post-conflict societies. Transitional justice was not simply about prosecuting crimes but also about addressing the root causes of conflict, which were often intertwined with gender, racial and social inequalities. Reparations, when designed to be transformative, could help prevent future conflicts by tackling those fundamental underlying issues. As such, the importance of gender-sensitive processes and methodologies could not be overstated. At every step of the justice chain, whether through international or national systems, it was vital to hear and respect the voices of women. Considering technical details, such as whether those conducting the interviews were trained to recognize the trauma endured by victims of gender-based violence, was essential to ensuring that justice was gender-sensitive. The burden of proof, the credibility assessment and the very standards applied in courts must be scrutinized with a gender lens. Too often, women and girls were left out of those processes, or, worse, their testimonies were disbelieved or dismissed.

She highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach. Justice must be accessible to all women, including those marginalized by factors such as ethnicity, disability or refugee status. Noting that survivors of sexual violence often faced significant barriers, social stigma, lack of support, and in many cases, laws that discriminated against them, she said that it was vital to engage with civil society and survivors themselves in shaping justice systems.

Parliamentarians, particularly women parliamentarians, had a significant role to play in that effort. They were encouraged to push for legal reforms that prioritized gender-sensitive approaches in both national and international justice systems, including by ensuring victim-centred legislation and establishing special units to investigate sexual violence.

While the data, the frameworks and the knowledge were already there, what was needed next was collective action. Parliamentarians must push for reforms to ensure that women and girls, especially those affected by conflict, could access justice, receive reparations and contribute to lasting peace.

Ms. M. Rees (Former Secretary-General, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom), panellist, said that the Women, Peace and Security Agenda had started with UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) but had unfortunately not gone as planned. Rather than reforming the broken system perpetuating violence against women, women had simply been brought into existing structures. It was important to note that conflict-related sexual violence would not be stopped until conflict as a whole was stopped. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom had been working to address the root causes of conflict, such as the arms trade, economic exploitation and inequalities between nations.

Countries must look at three different strands of work in order to move forward. The first strand was law. Law had progressed massively in recent years, which had helped improve common understandings of sexual violence. The jurisprudence of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) had been key to that progress. That said, only 13% of those who had testified at the ICTY had been women, meaning that the legal history of the conflict in Yugoslavia had been mostly put together from a male perspective. More must be done in legal terms to catch the totality of women's experience. However, she warned that talk on reparations should not be fed into social welfare policies as it could trigger International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditionality.

The second strand of work was to recognize that conflict-related sexual violence was part of a continuum. It did not happen out of nowhere but was in fact built on the levels of violence already being carried out during peacetime. Parliamentarians must take anti-violence legislation seriously and push for real change before matters escalated into war.

The third strand of work was to better understand the power dynamics in communities that led to conflict and conflict-related sexual violence, with a view to creating a more equitable system. It was important to carry out gender analyses to assess the status of the rights of women, including of the right to employment, education and political participation, as well as to rethink financial systems, moving away from humanitarian aid and development towards systems that were better equipped to change unequal power dynamics.

Parliamentarians were encouraged to pull all three strands together into a comprehensive framework that looked at the fault lines before conflict happened, addressed violence upstream, reduced economic inequalities and changed gender relations. Only then could the conversations about women, peace and security have real traction.

Lastly, she called on parliamentarians to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) and to push for the abovementioned issues to be addressed in other institutions, including at the UN Human Rights Council and Human Rights Treaty Bodies. Although progress might be slow, the possibility of making a difference within 5 to 10 years was real.

Ms. P. Patten (UN Secretary-General Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict), panellist, making her remarks in a pre-recorded video statement, said that conflict-related sexual violence continued to dominate daily headlines, shocking the collective conscience of humanity. Gender equality gains were being rolled back as weapons continued to flow into the hands of perpetrators and victims remained empty-handed in terms of reparations and redress. Sexual violence was being used as a tactic of war, torture, terrorism and political repression with civilians, particularly women and girls, targeted with rape and abductions by State security forces and non-State armed groups. Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Haiti were particularly affected. Conflict left deep scars and sexual violence shattered lives and livelihoods, destroyed families, broke up communities and prevented societies from achieving sustainable peace. Although survivors were demanding justice, reparations and recognition of their experience, impunity was the norm and justice the rare exception.

During her mandate as Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, she had made it her priority to promote prevention through justice and accountability. In many countries, national legislation failed to recognize all forms of sexual violence as crimes, and weaknesses in laws and procedures allowed perpetrators to escape punishment and deny victims the right to remedy. Robust justice systems were necessary, not only to punish the perpetrators but also to prevent new crimes. Addressing sexual violence required concerted efforts from all segments of society, including parliamentarians who had the authority to influence judicial reforms. She urged parliamentarians to use the model legislation developed by her office on the investigation and prosecution of conflict-related sexual violence to put in place national laws that ensured survivors were not re-victimized by the justice system but rather supported through every step of the legal process. Witness protection programmes and trauma-informed legal assistance were essential components of a survivor-centred approach while comprehensive reparation programmes were also needed to meet the diverse needs of survivors. Reparations must go beyond monetary compensation and encompass a broad spectrum of measures, including psychological support, medical care, educational opportunities and economic empowerment.

In conclusion, the role of parliamentarians in securing justice and reparations for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence was indispensable. Legislation everywhere must protect, defend and restore dignity to the courageous women and girls who had endured unimaginable hardships. It was important to build a world where their stories were not just heard but honoured, and where justice, security and reparations were not mere aspirations but a living reality.

Ms. A. Lotriet (South Africa) said that international humanitarian law and international human rights law outlined specific protections for women in conflict, safeguarding them against various forms of abuse and guaranteeing access to essential necessities. However, it was deeply troubling that numerous countries continued to contravene those laws, leaving millions of women and girls in dire circumstances deprived of essentials such as food, safe water and sanitary living conditions.

It was the duty of every parliament to address and rectify the violations committed against women and girls in conflict-ridden regions, such as the Middle East, uphold the rights of women and girls, implement measures that guaranteed their access to essential services in times of conflict, and ensure their voices were heard. In particular, parliamentarians must support the establishment of safe zones to protect the civilian population, especially expectant mothers and mothers of young children, children themselves, the elderly and people living with disabilities.

The time for action was now. It was important to work together to bring about the change that was long overdue. Concrete solutions and policies were needed to bring relief to those suffering in the midst of conflict. She agreed on the need to address sexual violence in peacetime to prevent escalation during conflict.

Ms. S. Unnopporn (Thailand) expressed disappointment that women and girls, who were the backbone of peace, were rarely included in peace talks despite being disproportionately affected by conflict, whether directly or indirectly. In line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target 16.3 to promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice, Thailand had been building capacities in family and inheritance dispute mediation as well as harmonizing legislation in its southern border provinces where conflict was ongoing. The country recognized the indispensable role of women in peacebuilding processes, as per UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), and was making an effort to change the image of women from victims of violence to frontline peacebuilders. Parliamentarians in Thailand had played a pivotal role in that endeavour. They worked closely with local communities, civil society organizations and international partnerships to advocate for stronger legislation, increased resources and implementation of policies that protected and empowered women and girls and included them in the peace agenda.

Ms. M. Mohanta (India) agreed that conflict disproportionately affected women and girls and aggravated pre-existing gender biases. The Constitution of India provided a robust legal framework that protected the human rights of women, including in conflict, guaranteeing equality before the law and prohibiting discrimination based on religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.

The Parliament of India, as a vehicle of social change, had always been responsive to women's rights. It had enacted laws and policies promoting gender equality, such as women's hostels and programmes to provide women with better access to health and education. There was also a parliamentary standing committee on women's empowerment which made recommendations to improve the status of women in the country. The parliamentary rules of procedure had been revised to include gender-neutral language, thus promoting gender equality in the conduct of business. The Women's Reservation Act (2023), which reserved one third of seats for women in the Lok Sabha – the lower house – and State Assemblies, was another significant achievement.

Ms. E. Matiko (United Republic of Tanzania) said that to ensure justice and sustainable peace for women and girls, it was vital to strengthen judicial systems. Countries must ratify and implement international human rights treaties, and enact laws that protected the rights of women and girls. Economic empowerment initiatives were also needed. All policies must be translated into tangible action, both nationally and internationally.

The United Republic of Tanzania had made progress towards gender equality, for instance, through the enactment of national laws and policies to protect women's rights. They included laws tackling sexual offences and prohibiting gender discrimination in the workplace. However, significant challenges remained, especially in areas such as violence against women, access to education and economic empowerment. More efforts were needed to fully implement the laws and policies in question.

Regarding its international commitments, the United Republic of Tanzania had ratified CEDAW and was a signatory to the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol). A national action plan on Women, Peace and Security was also in place in line with UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

The United Republic of Tanzania had taken several initiatives to improve women's access to justice. It had put in place gender desks at police stations where women could safely report crimes, including gender-based violence. Funding and resources had increased to offer better legal support to women and a special gender court had been established to handle cases of violence against women and children. There were also awareness-raising and capacity-building campaigns being conducted amongst the judiciary.

Overall, the way forward was to tackle the deep-seated social norms, laws and power structures that perpetuated gender inequality.

Ms. A. Pasholi (North Macedonia), noting the vital need to stop atrocities against women, ensure justice for survivors and end the impunity that shielded perpetrators, said that the experience of North Macedonia, a country emerging from conflict, offered some valuable lessons. The vulnerability of women and girls increased dramatically in times of conflict and gender-based violence, including sexual violence, had the potential to become not just a weapon of war but a system that tore at the social fabric of nations. It was vital to ensure that such violations were neither forgotten nor repeated. One critical way of achieving peace and development was to empower women and girls.

Acknowledging the crucial role of parliaments in preventing and addressing sexual and gender-based crimes in conflict, her Parliament had adopted legislation to protect women and girls from all forms of violence. Key reforms included a law on protecting women from domestic violence and a law on gender equality. The laws had strengthened the national legal framework by ensuring that gender-based violence was addressed as a serious crime and by providing survivors with access to essential services, including legal aid, psychological support and shelters. More remained to be done, however, particularly on conflict-related sexual violence. Stronger international cooperation was needed to ensure that perpetrators were held accountable and that survivors received justice. Parliamentary diplomacy and legislative collaboration between nations could play a pivotal role in closing the gap between promises and action.

Peace was not simply the absence of war but the presence of justice, equality and opportunity for all. Women's rights were not a secondary issue but central to the sustainability of peace. Building inclusive societies where women and girls could thrive was the best guarantee for lasting stability.

Ms. L.M. Moagher (Romania) said that Romania had done its best to provide essential services to Ukrainian refugees, most of whom were women and children. The digital platform created for that purpose included a women's centre which provided healthcare and victim support services to women. There was also a hotline that provided refugee women with free professional support on reproductive and child health, including telemedicine consultations. With the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Romania had opened a safe and welcoming space on the border with Ukraine which provided basic assistance for women and children and helped protect them from human trafficking. Based on her experience, it was of crucial importance for State authorities to cooperate with local non-governmental organizations and international actors. Her Parliament was in constant dialogue with those actors with a view to improving the legislative framework in place for the protection of women refugees. The parliamentary group on human trafficking had recently been transformed into a standing committee run jointly by the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate to ensure more targeted action in that area.

Given that no conflict was gender neutral, women's full participation in decision-making in the area of peace and security must be made a priority.

Ms. A. Vidot (Seychelles) said that the women's parliamentary caucus of the Seychelles had, on different occasions, held meetings with different stakeholders on the matter of gender-based violence. In 2020, the caucus had met with a CEDAW Committee consultant to discuss conflict laws, the civil code and employment. In 2022, the caucus, in collaboration with the Southern African Development Community (SADC), had hosted a two-day workshop on sexual and gender-based violence bringing together diverse stakeholders, including representatives from the Attorney General's Office, the police force, social services as well as the prison and probation service. The goal of the workshop had been to review legislation on gender-based violence, sensitize and enhance the capacities of parliamentarians on gender inequality and improve national coordination of legislative and procedural responses to sexual and gender-based violence. In 2023, the caucus had convened with ministerial stakeholders to review key recommendations regarding the Domestic Violence Act (2020). Members of Parliament were also participating in a concerted consultative process to develop a new national gender policy and action plan.

Ms. C. Erotokritou (Cyprus), noting that women and girls had been raped and abused repeatedly during the Turkish invasion of Cyprus, condemned the international community, including the UN, for hushing those crimes.

Sustaining peace and providing justice required strong political will and international cooperation that prioritized the voices and rights of the marginalized. Holding perpetrators accountable was also essential. It was the duty of parliamentarians to ensure that legal frameworks not only existed but were consistently implemented and monitored. Without accountability, the cycle of violence would persist and victims would continue to be denied justice. Women were currently underrepresented as judges and prosecutors. As a result, crimes committed against women during conflict, including sexual violence and forced displacement, were frequently minimized, overlooked and inadequately addressed.

Women were strong and resilient people and agents of change with the potential to contribute greatly to peace efforts. Investing in the rights of women was not just a moral obligation but a strategic imperative for lasting peace and security. Their perspectives were key to addressing the root causes of conflict.

Ms. S. Almansoori (United Arab Emirates) said that humanitarian efforts supporting women in conflict should focus not only on food and shelter but also on personal safety, mental health and physical well-being. International organizations must advocate for safe houses in conflict zones, offering trauma care, mental health support and physical healthcare as essential lifelines. Self-defence training programmes should also be promoted to enable women to protect themselves during and after conflict.

The United Arab Emirates had launched a peacekeeping programme in partnership with the UN which provided women with military and peacebuilding training, empowering them to not only defend themselves but also to actively contribute to global peace efforts. Similar programmes should be introduced in other countries. Together, the international community could build a future where no woman felt unsafe and where every girl had the opportunity to lead, no matter the circumstances.

Ms. R. Barghouthi (Palestine) recalled that Israel was carrying out one of the most intense bombing campaigns in history with explicit intent to commit genocide. Over 42,000 Palestinians had been killed, 72% of whom were women and children, with thousands still unaccounted for.

It was heart-breaking that some members of the panel representing women's organizations were hesitant to speak about the suffering of Palestinian women. Women in Gaza were giving birth without medical assistance or anaesthesia, some in overcrowded shelters amidst rubble, and many tragically witnessing the death of their babies. According to several UN reports, Palestinian women had been taken hostages by Israeli forces and subjected to appalling acts of sexual harassment, threats of rape and degrading strip searches. Degrading photos of female detainees had also been taken and uploaded online.

Noting that Palestine had been suffering from colonialism for 76 years, she drew attention to the recent advisory opinion published by the International Court of Justice declaring the Israeli occupation as illegal. In line with the right to self-determination, UN Member States had a duty to bring an end to the occupation. Parliamentarians must ensure their governments were not complicit in international crimes and could do so by demanding respect for international law, ending irresponsible trade of conventional arms, imposing economic sanctions and activating the principle of universal jurisdiction with a view to ending impunity.

Ms. S. Kheng (Cambodia) said that, as a country caught up in armed conflicts for nearly three decades, Cambodia highly valued peace and considered women the backbone of Cambodian society and economic life. To sustain peace and provide justice for women and girls, Cambodia had led efforts to develop a regional plan of action on women, peace and security adopted by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2022. Although the country did not have a national action plan, it had been actively implementing the four pillars of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, especially in combating violence against women. National laws to protect women's rights included a law on the prevention of domestic violence and protection of victims, and a labour law prohibiting sexual harassment and indecent behaviour in the workplace. There was also a national action plan to prevent violence against women and a national strategic plan to counter trafficking in persons, especially of women.

In Cambodia, women victims of violence were given access to lawyers free of charge, thus allowing perpetrators to be held accountable, and were supported through the legal system by specially appointed police officers. Judges and prosecutors were given training on CEDAW and on domestic violence laws.

The national mechanisms in place to combat violence against women included the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Cambodian National Council for Women and a technical working group on gender-based violence. Provincial working groups had also been established bringing together police, healthcare providers, local authorities, and legal and social services to improve referral pathways and quality of response for survivors of gender-based violence. Every year, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, in close collaboration with development partners and civil society organizations, organized public awareness-raising campaigns to change attitudes and behaviours as part of celebrations for International Women's Day and the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.

Her Government would continue to empower women by providing equal access to education, healthcare and employment as part of the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Women who were educated, healthy and economically independent were better equipped to contribute to peace and socioeconomic development.

Ms. V. Persaud (Guyana) said that obtaining peace and justice for women was a critical issue that required a legislative approach and inclusive systems that catered to dynamic situations. Quoting Martin Luther King Jr., she highlighted that true peace was not merely the absence of tension but the presence of justice. Justice must be accessible to all.

Guyana had utilized digital technology to promote peace and justice for women and girls. Its iMatter application and hotline provided resources on gender-based violence and offered safe 24-hour reporting mechanisms for survivors of violence free of charge. The objective was to reduce fear of stigma and retaliation in conflict and post-conflict settings and encourage reporting which might otherwise be hindered by discriminatory social norms.

Gender-responsive legislation and judicial systems played a vital role in ensuring women's access to justice. Laws that specifically addressed gender-based and sexual violence and discrimination were essential for protecting women's rights. It was imperative to review, amend or even repeal legislation that was not in alignment with international human rights standards. Guyana's upcoming legislative agenda involved the revision of the Sexual Offence Act (2010) and the introduction of an anti-harassment bill. The Family Violence Act (2024), which contained both civil and criminal measures, spoke to protection, prosecution, restitution and reparation.

Overall, Guyana had prioritized survivor-centred approaches that strengthened institutions and fostered community engagement so that women felt safe, supported and empowered to seek justice. Such approaches contributed to individual healing while also promoting broader societal stability and equality. Measures included introducing a gender policy and gender-based violence framework, establishing stakeholder referral pathways, offering training to law enforcement officers and the judiciary, and setting up Hope and Justice Centres, which provided free medical, psychological, legal and socioeconomic support under one roof. Comprehensive measures along with public education helped to dismantle systemic barriers that prevented women from accessing justice.

Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah (Egypt), acknowledging the thousands of women suffering in conflict areas, including those having to flee their homes or give birth in inhumane conditions, condemned Israel for its cruel attacks targeting women in Gaza. Women's rights were human rights. The international community must keep their promises to protect women and girls and put an end to the violence. The participation of women in security, peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts was of vital importance. Refugee-hosting communities must be supported to empower women refugees economically. There was a need for educational curricula that quashed the traditional gender stereotypes that legitimized violence against women.

Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine) drew attention to the situation of women and girls in Ukraine who were suffering the consequences of the Russian aggression. The situation was particularly dire for women and girls living in zones of active combat or in areas illegally occupied by the Russian Federation as they were at constant risk of unlawful arrests followed by torture, rape and all kinds of other inhumane atrocities. It had been reported that 403 Ukrainian women were currently being held as prisoners of war or civilian hostages although the real number was likely to be much higher. Thousands of women had also been reported missing. The case of Ukrainian journalist, Victoria Roshchyna, was particularly noteworthy. Ms. Roshchyna had been taken hostage by Russian forces for several years and had been due for release in a prisoner exchange but had not survived the exchange due to beatings and wounds resulting from inhumane experiments conducted on her. The international community must not ignore the testimonies of women coming back from Russian prisons or of journalists investigating atrocities. According to research carried out by the Casimir Pulaski Foundation in Poland, one of the tools used by the Russian army to control the population was the fear of sexual violence. Ukrainian women were afraid to leave their homes for fear of being attacked. To survive the Russian occupation, they had to hide their Ukrainian heritage as well as any hint of womanhood or natural beauty.

To bring an end to such situations, an international instrument covering prevention and response to conflict-related sexual violence must be developed. A separate point to work on was the issue of women prisoners of war and civilian women abducted and held hostage in armed conflict zones. It was vital to put pressure on countries such as the Russian Federation to follow international rules and stop committing atrocities so that women and girls would live in safety. It was not possible to speak of sustainable peace and development without solving the above issues.

Ms. J. Kavira Katasohire (Democratic Republic of the Congo) drew attention to the pain felt by many women in her constituency who, in the context of conflict, had been subjected to sexual violence often in front of their children and husbands who then abandoned them as a result. The

problem must be resolved from the root. Laws must be put in place to protect women victims of sexual violence and provide them with justice, including reparations. UN Women must be given access to conflict zones to support women experiencing serious violations of their human rights.

Ms. A. Erdoğan (Türkiye) said that women were among the most affected by injustices, inequalities and human rights violations. However, women were not just victims but also brave changemakers who raised their voices against injustice and stood with the innocent and the oppressed. One such woman was Ayşenur Ezgi Eygi, who on 6 September 2024 had been tragically shot and killed at the hands of Israeli snipers in the West Bank after taking part in a protest against illegal Israeli settlements. Ms. Ezgi Eygi had had both Turkish and United States citizenship and no personal connection to Palestine yet had travelled to the country solely to show solidarity with the Palestinian people. As confirmed by UN resolutions, Israeli activities in the West Bank violated international law and the events in Gaza over the past year had escalated into crimes against humanity. Ms. Ezgi Eygi had chosen not to remain silent in the face of those injustices and had left a powerful legacy, encouraging people to stand in solidarity with those who suffered regardless of language, religion or race. One day the Israeli Government would be held accountable for its crimes. In the meantime, it was important to hold strong on a vision for the world where humanity could live in peace as well as to pay respects to all women who dedicated themselves to the cause.

She did not accept the statement delivered by the delegate from Cyprus which was a one-sided view and a denial of history.

Ms. L. Gumerova (Russian Federation) said that the women of the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kursk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia oblasts of Russia, who were caught in the midst of military defence actions, wished to live in peace. It was important not to inflame the conflict as demonstrated by the delegate from Ukraine but to mitigate it by finding common ground. Countries must trust objective data rather than false claims.

She agreed on the need to reject patriarchal ideals and bring down barriers preventing women and girls from developing their skills and talents. It was particularly important for women to develop their potential in the area of science and technology. With the support of the European Women's Forum, the Russian Federation had introduced a strategy aiming to do just that.

Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine), making a point of order, pointed out that the Kherson, Kharkiv, Donetsk and Luhansk regions were territories of Ukraine that were under illegal occupation by the Russian Federation. It was unfortunate that the Russian Federation felt the need to kill, torture and hold captive the women of those regions and then come to IPU Assemblies calling on others to respect the rights of those very same women.

Ms. S. Al Khanjari (Oman) said that women were the most affected by the genocide executed by Israelis against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Women were in dire need of assistance, including medical and psychosocial support, which was unfortunately being blocked by Israeli forces. The war was preventing women from taking up roles in society with many sitting in Israeli prisons. The international community must take a strong position against the actions of Israel and support the women in need.

Ms. P. Aguirre (Ecuador) noted the importance of addressing the issue of unpaid work to achieve economic development and social justice. A total of 16 billion hours of unpaid care work was carried out every day mostly by women. Unpaid care work was one of the main reasons why so many women were living in poverty. Although the Kigali Declaration adopted by the IPU in 2022 called on male parliamentarians to support women by taking up 50% of the daily care work in their families, single mothers would still be expected to do 100% of that work. The Declaration had also called for family-friendly provisions and measures to be put in place facilitating work-life balance. Ecuador had responded to that call by establishing breast-feeding facilities in Parliament but was disappointed that the IPU had not done the same. Women parliamentarians who were mothers, many of them single mothers, should have access to facilities allowing them to bring their children to the IPU Assemblies. It was not enough to make declarations. Action must be taken within the Organization. In 2023, Ecuador had passed a human care law which guaranteed maternity and breast-feeding leave for women and paternity leave for men. Paternity leave was just as important since men had an obligation to care for their families.

Ms. C. Dao Nee Macoura (Côte d'Ivoire) said that her country had been ravaged by war and crisis for decades until the current President, Alassane Ouattara, had come to power. His strategy to reconcile Ivorians had been to address inequalities and had done so by improving infrastructure and empowering women and girls. Education for young girls was now obligatory. Women had access to healthcare and justice. They were also contributing to development; assuming positions in the police force, the army and other institutions; and taking part in political decision-making. The country was currently in the process of introducing a quota system in which 30% of candidates on electoral lists would be women. With the support of the National Council for Women, the authorities, including parliamentarians, upheld a constant dialogue with women. Overall, Côte d'Ivoire recognized that women were peacebuilders and had enshrined gender equality in its Constitution. Women, despite their past suffering, were now fully included across society.

Ms. E. Nyirasafari (Rwanda) said that gender-based violence was a matter not just for women but for the whole of society and must not go unpunished. Rwanda had done a great deal to combat the scourge. It had put in place a legal and institutional framework on gender-based violence, including sexual violence, and was supporting victims in a holistic way having established more than 40 one-stop-shop centres where victims could receive free medical care, including sexual and reproductive health services, legal advice, psychological support and accommodation. Victims who became pregnant were given a choice as to whether to keep the baby, and units dedicated specifically to gender-based violence were operating within the legal department. One of the key obstacles that remained, however, was the reluctance of women victims to come forward. It was possible to eradicate gender-based violence but strong political will was needed.

Ms. M. Mosena (Lesotho) said that, until recently, Lesotho had been dealing with patriarchal norms that deprived victims of gender-based violence and conflict – particularly women – of justice. However, significant improvements had been made in recent years. One of the gender-responsive laws in Lesotho was the Counter Domestic Violence Act (2022) which administered both criminal and restorative justice. The law addressed the culture of impunity within the legal system that prevented perpetrators from being held accountable and exacerbated the helplessness of women and girls. It looked at issues such as the absence of courts able to effectively handle cases of gender-based violence, easily affordable bail conditions, misplacement of evidence and a lack of urgency in dealing with cases. Delayed justice unquestionably turned into justice denied.

To effectively address violence in conflict both nationally and internationally, women must be represented in post-conflict justice processes and included in the judiciary. Women parliamentarians must be involved in influencing international law and harmonizing it into domestic legislation, ensuring the delivery of both criminal and transitional justice. More responsive punitive measures should also be in place.

Human rights violations must be addressed with a focus on root causes while striving for reconciliation, peacebuilding, reparations, justice and the end of impunity. Laws and institutions must be reformed and mechanisms for peace, national unity and reconciliation suitable for all countries should be put in place.

Ms. J. Ovekova (Turkmenistan) said that gender equality played a key role in ensuring peace and sustainable development in society and was vital to the full implementation of human rights. Turkmenistan had consistently implemented an effective gender policy and its Constitution guaranteed equal rights, freedoms and opportunities for men and women. Efforts were being made to expand the socioeconomic and labour activities of women. Within the framework of the Central Asian Women's Dialogue Forum established in 2020, Turkmenistan cooperated with other international organizations and countries in areas such as gender equality, women's entrepreneurship and the social protection of women. Turkmenistan was currently a member of the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and had recently passed the Law on State Guarantees of Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men (2015).

Ms. Z.N. Mashaba (Eswatini) said that Eswatini, like most African countries, was traditionally a patriarchal society where women were marginalized and subjected to legal restrictions impeding their enjoyment of certain rights. However, the Constitution of 2005 set out a new terrain which gave men and women equal treatment before the law in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life, and prohibited discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, birth, creed, religion, socioeconomic standing, political opinion, age or disability. She noted in

particular the enshrinement of women's right to own property which had been previously afforded only to men. A number of laws had been enacted to protect the girl child from harmful practices, such as child marriage, and prevent sexual offences and domestic violence. Under the Constitution, women in Parliament must represent 30% of seats, but in the event that percentage was not reached, an electoral college was formed to elect four women from each of the regions.

Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche (Algeria) called on parliamentarians to enhance their national legal frameworks and ratify all international and regional conventions related to the rights of women, including those seeking to enhance women's representation and participation in political life. Algeria was committed to finding peaceful solutions in support of women. It had ratified UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) with a view to protecting women during armed conflicts and putting in place a national action plan to implement the resolution nationally. Algeria was also the country behind the proposal for an International Day of Living Together in Peace.

Overall, the way to sustain peace and support women was through participation, prevention and protection. Participation meant giving women the chance to contribute to sustainable development. Prevention meant preserving the rights of women in all circumstances. Protection meant ensuring the safety and security of women.

She noted the spread of conflict around the world, such as the war in Gaza where Palestinians were facing a genocide and warned against the use of modern technology to exacerbate violence, including against women and girls. Parliamentarians had an important role in ensuring that international law was respected and that human rights were not used as a pretext to favour the interests of one State over another.

Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia) noted that all countries, including Australia, still had a long journey ahead of them in terms of women's rights and violence against women. Respect for women started with the attitudes of individuals within countries. Countries must support each other with their domestic agendas for gender equality and multilateral organizations should work together to protect women in times of conflict. The protection of women in conflict should be a priority and not an afterthought.

Ms. L. Crexell (Argentina) said that patriarchal norms and stereotypes meant that women were often left out of the judicial system and their experience of vulnerability, poverty and violence rarely understood. More must be done to include the perspectives of women in judicial processes so that they could be fully protected.

Ms. E. Azad (Islamic Republic of Iran) called on the international community – governments and international organizations alike – to establish peace for women and children around the world, including in Muslim States. It was particularly important to protect women and children in Palestine who were being subjected to terrorism and other barbaric crimes by the Zionist regime. Efforts must be made to agree a ceasefire and ensure all victims received compensation.

Achieving sustainable peace, including for women and girls, required countries and populations to engage in dialogue and collaboration while promoting sustainable development and economic and political justice. The Islamic Republic of Iran was doing its utmost to respond to the needs of women and girls in collaboration with other countries, including by passing laws that were supportive of women. It was vital to ensure women's participation in public life and fight gender discrimination in the name of peace.

Ms. F. Martín (Parliament of MERCOSUR (PARLASUR)) called on parliamentarians to acknowledge the vital role that women played in peacebuilding and to use parliamentary diplomacy to bolster their participation. To bring real change for women, women themselves must be at the negotiating table in peace talks. It was unfortunate that 25 years had passed since UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) had been adopted and the participation of women in peace talks was still lacking.

Ms. K. Soe Soe Kyi (Myanmar), speaking in a pre-recorded video message and on behalf of the Myanmar Women Parliamentarian Network, said that women and girls in Myanmar had been at the forefront of protests, activism and resistance following the coup d'État in 2021. They were leading the civil disobedience movement, joining civilian protection efforts and undertaking humanitarian work. Their participation challenged existing gender norms and showed that women could be powerful agents of change.

The Myanmar Women Parliamentarian Network, set up in response to the 2021 coup d'État, was comprised of over 100 women parliamentarians working for peace, justice and the return of democracy. Regardless of the challenges, including limited resources and communication hurdles, the network had made significant strides on women's rights having collaborated with both the executive branch and civil society to provide effective administration and service delivery. It had joined forces with the Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs to enforce policies protecting women and girls and promoting women's peace and security, and was working to ensure that women's needs were prioritized in humanitarian relief. It was also conducting oversight over local government and civilian defence forces to safeguard human security and prevent violence against civilians. The activities of the network included documenting sexual violence in conflict with a view to delivering transitional justice and conducting research on women's post-coup political experience. Crucially, the network maintained constant engagement with citizens through regular town hall meetings and daily interactions.

Ms. G. Karelova (Russian Federation), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Russian Federation had always been a champion of international law. Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson had returned to the Russian Federation after the people of those regions had expressed their will to do so in a referendum. She called on women parliamentarians to be guided by objective information and historical truth.

Ms. A. Shkrum (Ukraine), speaking in exercise of the right of reply and drawing attention to her own personal experience, said that her own baby had spent her first night in a Kyiv bomb shelter as Russian missiles flew overhead. It was a situation that no baby should ever experience.

The IPU had passed three resolutions recognizing Russia's annexation of Ukrainian territory as illegal and demanding the Russian Federation stop its aggression. The Russian Federation, however, had not complied and continued to terrorize Ukraine with complete disregard for international law. Better mechanisms should be put in place to pressure countries to follow international law. The issue was bigger than the Russia-Ukraine crisis alone and extended to any country attacking another.

Report on the discussion on a draft resolution on the agenda of the 149th Assembly

Ms. V. Riotton (France), Rapporteur, summarizing the discussion on the draft resolution entitled *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*, said that 27 delegates had taken the floor, including 26 women and 1 man.

The discussions addressed the rise of new technology, including AI, in all spheres of life, which brought both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, AI had the potential to accelerate gender equality by opening up professional pathways, reducing the burden of unpaid care work, making essential services more accessible and producing a better work-life balance, all of which could benefit women. On the other hand, if not regulated, AI could amplify already existing gender biases and discrimination and serve as a powerful weapon during armed conflicts. It could contribute to the spread of disinformation, exacerbate cyber harassment, enable the manipulation of personal data and facilitate sextortion, amongst other things, which disproportionately affected women and girls. Violence in the digital space was often directed at women parliamentarians, which undermined democracy by sending the message that women were not welcome in politics.

In view of the above, it was vital to develop legislative frameworks that took into account the potentials and threats of AI. Gender quotas were important to encourage greater participation of women in science and technology, particularly in education and in governance positions. Training in AI and cybersecurity should specifically target women. There was a need for protocols regulating the development of new technologies which must contain provisions on gender parity. Lastly, specific measures must be put in place to tackle all forms of gender-based violence facilitated by AI, taking into account the sexist character of such violence and the political context in which it often took place. Those provisions should require the withdrawal of harmful and discriminatory content, wherever necessary. Overall, AI should be regulated through a human rights and gender lens.

The abovementioned summary would be translated into amendments and presented to the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights with a view to strengthening the draft resolution.

The report was adopted.

Elections to the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

The Chair drew attention to three vacancies on the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians. First, the Forum was invited to elect one representative from the Arab Group with a mandate until March 2027 to replace Ms. J.M. Ramadan (Kuwait) who was no longer a parliamentarian following the dissolution of the Kuwaiti Parliament in May 2024. Second, the Forum was invited to elect one representative from the Asia-Pacific Group with a mandate until March 2027 to replace Ms. S. Sirivejchapun (Thailand), who was no longer a parliamentarian. Third, the Forum was invited to elect one representative from the Eurasia Group with a mandate until 2025 to replace Ms. M. Vasilevich (Belarus) who was no longer a parliamentarian.

Ms. Z. Hilal (Secretary of the Forum) said that Ms. R. Maachaoui (Tunisia) had been nominated to fill the vacancy of the Arab Group while Ms. V. Techateerawat (Thailand) had been nominated to fill the vacancy of the Asia-Pacific Group. However, the Eurasia Group had not yet submitted a nomination to fill their vacancy which would therefore remain open.

The nominations were approved.

Venue and date of the 39th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians

The Chair said that the next session of the Forum would take place at the 150th IPU Assembly in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from 5 to 9 April 2025.

She also invited delegates to the IPU Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians to be held in March 2025 in Mexico.

The sitting rose at 17:15.

Forum of Young Parliamentarians

SITTING OF MONDAY, 14 OCTOBRE 2024

(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 14:30 with Mr. D. Carden (United Kingdom), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, in the Chair.

The President said that 2024 marked the Forum's 10th anniversary.

He drew attention to the new IPU *Policy to prevent and address harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and other IPU events*, which was intended to ensure an inclusive, respectful and safe working environment, free of harassment for all, and which drew on definitions and approaches used in the United Nations (UN) *System Code of Conduct*. All participants were encouraged to familiarize themselves with the *Policy*.

Adoption of the agenda (FYP/149/A.1-rev)

The agenda was adopted.

Opening remarks

The President said that over the previous decade, the IPU had empowered hundreds of young MPs to champion youth causes by holding young parliamentarian conferences, providing policy guidance on enhancing youth participation and launching the [*I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!*](#) campaign, which prioritized, among other areas, climate action, gender equality, technology and innovation. He commended the work of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians over the previous 18 months and of the former Presidents of the Board. Despite the progress made, significant challenges remained: only 2.8% of parliamentarians were under the age of 30, and 37% of parliaments did not have a young MP. The *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign needed to be taken to the next level to address underrepresentation from different angles, such as intersectionality and campaign finance, and to build youth-to-youth support and partnerships, to work directly with young people. Young MPs could bring about change.

Dr. T. Aksen (IPU President) said that it had been a timely and crucial decision for the IPU to place youth at the centre of its work as early as 2010 by adopting the resolution *Youth participation in the democratic process* at the 122nd IPU Assembly. The Secretary General was commended for spearheading those efforts, having been Secretary General from the year the Forum began with its work. Youth participation had consistently been one of the Organization's strategic priorities, demonstrating its collective commitment to young people's inclusion and leadership in parliaments, at the IPU and in society.

The Forum had put in place measures for youth-to-youth support and opened the Organization to young people globally and at the grassroots level, mainstreaming a youth perspective in its work. The Forum's greatest success had been its role as an incubator for innovative solutions. She welcomed the Board's efforts to bring the IPU and parliaments closer to young people and youth organizations, and looked forward to the inaugural Open Session of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians due to take place during the 149th IPU Assembly, which was important for greater inclusion and youth-to-youth collaboration. The Forum's gender sensitivity and parity were commendable. The focus it placed on political empowerment, participation and young women leaders in particular could be critical for change. Member Parliaments were benefiting from the Forum's work.

An anniversary provided an opportunity for stocktaking and determining the way forward. Parliamentarians needed to use their individual and collective power to ensure employment, education, social and health services and equality for all young people. They should work towards a more representative, transparent, open, safe and accountable political environment and prioritize harnessing climate action, technology and innovation for the benefit of all. Young people needed to be safe everywhere. She was committed to working with the Forum to ensure the advancement of its ideals.

Mr. M. Chungong (IPU Secretary General) said that steadfast efforts had been carried out in the Board over the previous 10 years. When young people were entrusted with leadership, they delivered, including in their transforming of the Organization. Young people could best articulate and address issues relevant to themselves. They were decision-makers and lawmakers, could hold governments accountable and provide budgetary resources. He commended the young MPs' contribution to the Organization. They were leaders of today and should not wait until they were ostensibly more mature to lead. Young people accounted for 25% of the IPU Assembly, which significantly influenced the deliberations of the Organization. They should pursue efforts to remove the socioeconomic, legislative and financial barriers preventing young people's full engagement in political processes and ensure the implementation of quotas in line with the Forum's benchmark. The *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign was key and would continue to garner global support. It was unacceptable that young people accounted for 60% of the world's population but only 2.8% of parliamentary representation. It was necessary to align the age of eligibility for office with the voting age; failure to do so was discrimination, which should be eliminated.

Marking the tenth anniversary of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians

Mr. F. Al Tenaiji (First President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians and former MP of the United Arab Emirates), speaking via a pre-recorded video message, said that it was important to hear young people's voices in parliamentary processes. The Forum had allowed him to express the ideas of young people globally and to confidently go back to his country with tools and knowledge to make a change for young people. Through the Forum, young people could lead and build a bright future together.

Ms. Z. Hilal (Secretary of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians), accompanying her report with a digital slide presentation, said that the Forum had been born out of a wave of youth movements around the world and the IPU resolution *Youth participation in the democratic process*, which stated that achieving meaningful democracy required the full and active participation of young people, and requested the IPU to incorporate youth participation in its activities and establish a caucus of young parliamentarians. Following the adoption of that resolution, at each IPU Assembly, steps had been taken to rally support for a youth-led structure within the Organization, leading to the Forum's establishment in 2014. Consultations with the Forum had led to the creation of a data set on youth participation in national parliaments, which had been informing decisions on youth participation. The IPU had also begun publishing reports on youth participation. The Forum empowered young people through trainings and the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign. Young parliamentarians within the IPU had presented youth perspectives at the UN and other global youth forums. She urged parliamentarians to join the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign.

Mr. K. Dijkhoff (former MP of the Netherlands), who participated in the creation of the Forum, speaking via a pre-recorded video message, said that young parliamentarians should continue to collaborate to find solutions to each other's problems and build lasting relationships.

The President invited participants to share their views regarding how the Forum had empowered young MPs and helped them to empower other young people, as well as key areas of focus to enhance youth participation.

Mr. O.A. Alao Akala (Nigeria), speaking via a pre-recorded video message, said that the Forum had helped him to connect with like-minded youth leaders around the world, inspiring collaborative solutions and expanding his legislative horizon, as he had presented a motion on out-of-school children, which was important to him.

Ms. D.R.E. Widya Putri (former MP of Indonesia), former member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, speaking via a pre-recorded video message, said that she appreciated the friendships and collaboration the Forum fostered, particularly in combating issues affecting young people, such as the achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and youth unemployment. There was increased youth engagement and participation in politics in Indonesia, and she looked forward to a continued upward trend.

Mr. W. Soto (Peru) said that the Forum had shown him how to promote youth participation and decision-making on global issues. Peru's Parliament had become more representative and placed greater value on listening to young parliamentarians.

Ms. A. Vidot (Seychelles), expressing support for the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign, said that the Forum had helped her to inspire many young people in her country to engage in politics and to empower young girls and women to take up leadership positions.

Mr. A. Al Hinai (Oman) said that his country considered young people the pillar of the future. It had adopted policies and projects to enhance youth participation in parliamentary and political processes, such as creating national youth councils to facilitate dialogue between decision-makers and young people to share proposals. Training programmes were also being developed with international organizations to improve young people's understanding of laws. Women were being empowered to participate in those events, which had led to an increase in their representation.

Mr. M. Bouva (Suriname), expressing support for youth participation in the IPU said that considerable change had occurred in just 10 years, leading to a Board of young MPs speaking for young people globally. The capacity-building programmes conducted by the IPU for young MPs were welcome.

Ms. E. Muteka (Namibia) said that the Forum had increased her confidence, especially as a woman parliamentarian, enabling her to motivate other young women to participate in political activities. It had provided training in parliamentary work, which could be passed on to other young people. Engagements should cater for young people living with disabilities, and there should be an age-specific focus on young women parliamentarians instead of generalizing all women.

Mr. H. Aden Gueddi (Djibouti) said that the Forum promoted dialogue among parliamentarians of similar age. While youth representation was increasing, efforts should be carried out to continue that upward trend, especially in Africa. Young people would best know the challenges they faced, such as precarious jobs and a lack of targeted training. His role as a parliamentarian allowed him to raise such issues in the political sphere. He therefore expressed support for the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign. With the Government as the country's main employer and theoretical university programmes simply producing bureaucrats, the Government had in recent years strengthened the private sector and professional training.

Mr. I. Wamunyima (Zambia) said that the Forum had been transformative, particularly regarding youth participation. Since his country had joined the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign in 2022, it had launched a youth parliamentary caucus with the Forum's capacity-building support through technology workshops and mentorship. The Forum should consider how to maintain the youth agenda by ensuring continued parliamentary support and capacitating young people to carry out ongoing efforts to make a change even outside of parliaments.

Ms. S. Unnopporn (Thailand) said that while young parliamentarians faced several challenges, including meeting high expectations and constantly having to prove themselves, the IPU's support made her feel as though she was not alone. The young MPs gave her inspiration and strength.

Ms. A. Muzana (Rwanda), highlighting her country's efforts in reserving two seats in Parliament for young MPs and in establishing a youth academy for political training, said that the Forum should focus on legal frameworks, starting with constitutions, and political educational frameworks.

Ms. V. Wong Shir Yee (Malaysia) said that the Forum should focus on creating job opportunities for young people, addressing social stigmas, including in the international arena, and equipping parliamentarians to deal with youth-related political issues.

Ms. P. Aguirre (Ecuador) said that the Forum supported and accompanied her amidst ongoing conflict in her country. It had also inspired legislative change in her country: in accordance with the Organic Law on Youths which had entered into force in 2023, in elections at all levels of Government, at least 25% of candidates must be young people. To strengthen participation in the

Forum, the Board should take into account that young people used alternative forms of political participation, such as digital activism. Likewise, parliamentarians should appropriately use social media and artificial intelligence (AI) to increase young people's interest in politics.

Mr. K. Van-Dúnem (Angola), speaking via a pre-recorded video message, said that young people should be trained to become actively involved in the legislative process, voice their concerns and contribute solutions. Because of the Forum, including young people in parliamentary debates had ensured that decisions taken reflected the needs and aspirations of future generations.

Updates on youth participation

Mr. K. Khelifati (Algeria) said that his country participated actively in the IPU thanks to the Forum. It had amended its Constitution in 2020 to increase youth participation and had established a High Council for Youth, providing young people with a wealth of knowledge. In the past, there had been little youth participation in the country owing to a lack of trust, but young people's interest had increased and there was political will for youth development. Those changes had come about thanks to the Forum.

Ms. D. Zuma-Sambudla (South Africa) said that youth participation in Parliament had decreased by about 50% since 2019. Men outnumbered women in all age groups. South Africa did not have youth quotas enshrined in its Constitution or legislation. The Constitution aligned the minimum age to become an MP with the voting age, but it was up to political parties to nominate young people to Parliament. The Parliament would reconsider establishing a young parliamentarian caucus, in accordance with the IPU's request, and had developed a concept note on that issue.

Ms. K. Aliprendi (Monaco) said that challenges changed from one generation to another. People of all ages should be included to best address issues in a balanced manner. Her country's Parliament was close to achieving parity in the proportion of women parliamentarians and young MPs in Parliament, which would accurately represent the population. Monaco had established a National Youth Council whereby young people worked on current issues with support from parliamentarians with a view to creating draft laws through collective reflection and voting on them. The IPU could be a driver of the notion of young parliamentarians and that they should be trained to advance swiftly on development, behavioural changes, inequality and the environment, among other key issues.

Mr. T. Utikere (New Zealand) said that the country's Youth Parliament, enshrined in the Constitution about 30 years prior, allowed young people, including parliamentarians, clerks and members of the press, to debate issues important to younger generations. Select committees encouraged youth participation without a minimum or maximum age requirement, thereby ensuring easy access to the democratic process. Furthermore, the Speaker of the New Zealand Parliament led a Speaker's Outreach Programme, travelling the country with cross-party members of Parliament so that young people could have a parliamentary experience in their communities. Parliamentarians should make every effort to support youth participation.

Mr. Y. Mollaberdiyev (Turkmenistan) said that significant work was being done to protect the rights and freedoms of young people, and to ensure comprehensive social protection and State support, such as through the Law on State Youth Policy, which aimed to foster patriotism among younger generations. The Strategy for International Cooperation of the Youth of Turkmenistan for 2023–2030 had been approved, and the Youth Organization of Turkmenistan had become an official member of UNESCO's Global Youth Community. Turkmenistan's youth policies engaged young people in the Government's sociopolitical activities, in line with the country's goals. A young parliamentarians' group had been established. Young parliamentarians in Turkmenistan were actively strengthening cooperation with the Forum and the young MPs of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly.

Mr. P. Wongcherdkwan (Thailand) said that since his country's most recent general election, MPs under the age of 45 accounted for 45% of the House of Representatives and 8.5% of the Senate. Young MPs in Thailand were actively engaged in IPU activities, including the Empowerment Series for Young Parliamentarians and the Tenth IPU Global Conference of Young

Parliamentarians. A group of Thai MPs would take part in the IPU's parliamentary support online training programme, which would enhance capacity and boost young people's leadership role and initiative in Parliament.

Mr. W. Soto (Peru) said that the Forum was a sign of young people's increased importance in global decision-making. The youth voice was essential not just for the future but the present. All young people should support policies to address current challenges and promote sustainable and equitable development for future generations. The Forum allowed young MPs to strengthen cooperation, exchange innovative ideas and co-create more just and inclusive societies. The Forum's diversity was its greatest resource.

The President said that the contributions had been fascinating and work to promote youth participation in parliaments should continue. The Tenth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians had been held in Yerevan, Armenia, in September 2024, bringing together 150 young MPs from over 50 countries. It addressed the theme *Avoiding lost generations: Preserving education and employment in all circumstances*. The National Assembly of Armenia was thanked for its hospitality and generosity. All young parliamentarians were encouraged to read the action-oriented outcome document adopted there.

Since the 148th IPU Assembly, work had continued to promote and implement the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign and some 1,700 changemakers had pledged their support, including over 60 parliamentary Speakers and almost 800 MPs. Similarly to previous Assemblies, it was hoped that 100 new parliamentarians and 10 parliamentary Speakers would sign up to the campaign. Parliamentarians yet to join the campaign were encouraged to do so. The IPU had continued to support parliaments, such as in Burkina Faso, Myanmar and Zambia, in implementing its pledges. Discussions were ongoing to support the implementation of the campaign in other parliaments. The Organization had been implementing Pledge 4 through the Empowerment Series for Young Parliamentarians. A briefing had been held in June 2024 on the role of young MPs in contributing to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and in August 2024 on young women's political participation, on the occasion of International Youth Day.

Contribution to the work of the 149th Assembly

The President said that the discussion would focus on providing a youth perspective on the General Debate theme, *Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future*.

Mr. B.B. Nodada (South Africa) said that the growing young population was a significant demographic asset that could be used to address challenges and seize opportunities. Despite notable economic growth in many African countries, high rates of youth unemployment persisted, such as in South Africa, which was also the result of low levels of education and socioeconomic deprivation. Prioritizing youth engagement in technology and innovation was crucial for African governments, especially given the far-reaching impact of technological advancements, particularly in information and communications technology (ICT), to address youth unemployment and create a burgeoning economy, which fostered government and citizen learning, innovation and risk-taking. Young parliamentarians should advance policies promoting investment in digital infrastructure, capacity-building, e-services and regulatory frameworks.

It was vital to capacitate science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) educators on broad pre-service and in-service levels, such as through teacher-training programmes, and continuously invest in their professional development to equip them with the latest knowledge and teaching methodologies. The national curriculum should be revisited regularly and updated to incorporate new developments in STEM. By collectively prioritizing and implementing policies to support STEM, parliamentarians could ensure that they actively shaped the future through science and technology.

Mr. B. Karapejovski (North Macedonia) said that the theme of the General Debate and the IPU draft resolution *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law* were timely and essential. Young people should make their voices heard in policymaking. They should consider how STI could benefit all, particularly the most vulnerable, and how to mitigate risks associated with technological advancements, such as exacerbated inequalities and the acceleration of climate change. Bridging the technological divide was paramount for young people

in developed and developing countries. Parliamentarians must ensure inclusive access to the benefits of technology, which required investment in digital infrastructure, education, training and support for young people to participate in the global knowledge economy. STI should be harnessed for peace, prosperity and justice. Therefore, parliamentarians should create avenues for youth participation, and young leaders should be in power to shape the world.

Mr. H. Ebrahim (Bahrain) said that, because of their enthusiasm, young people could play a central role in harnessing STI in innovative and impactful ways to enhance peace and sustainability. There should be a study on how AI reduced human resources and increased unemployment. More work should be done to improve the trustworthiness of information, such as by supplying more accurate information to the data sets that programmes relied on. Youth-led agricultural innovations were key to achieving sustainability, as technology could improve agricultural production, reduce surplus and better preserve natural resources. STI should be appropriately harnessed for people's benefit.

Ms. M. Ulenge (United Republic of Tanzania) said that STI could play a crucial role in building peace and sustainability only if strategies were put in place to ensure their integration. Establishing ethical guidelines for the use of emerging technologies, such as AI and biotechnology, could prevent misuse and promote equity. Technology could facilitate access to education and information, for instance through online learning platforms and digital resources, thus empowering people and disseminating knowledge on peace and sustainability. Data analytics and communication technologies could improve conflict resolution by providing insights into society dynamics, enabling warning systems and fostering dialogue on digital platforms. Advances in medical technology and public health could contribute to peace by addressing health disparities and improving the quality of life, while telemedicine and mobile health applications could extend healthcare access to unserved populations. Innovation in construction and urban planning could lead to sustainable cities that minimized environmental impacts and promoted equity within society.

Mr. S.S.H.J. Amaral (Timor-Leste) said that young parliamentarians should lobby to ensure that young people had access to STI by increasing access to science courses, to finances for research, investigation and projects, and to policymaking with a view to making decisions on regulatory, ethical and security frameworks. The development and application of STI, which was global and had no borders, should promote countries' development and the well-being of their populations. Financing should be localized to involve not only multinationals but also national and local research centres and innovations, thus limiting brain drain and the global and regional technological divide. The General Debate should address such efforts as a matter of human rights protection and the protection of the youngest in society against infringements on their privacy and security, misinformation, and disinformation.

Ms. V. Wong Shir Yee (Malaysia) said that the current technological progress required that parliamentarians' approach to STI be reassessed. Young people could shape the future and the present, and should harness STI to create a peaceful, sustainable and just society, aligning their efforts with the SDGs, particularly SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) and SDG 17 (global partnerships for sustainable development). There was an urgent need to address food security, access to education and climate change, especially in the Global South and for the young people there. A global science fund should be established to promote innovation and collaboration, empower young people and advocate for scientific solutions. Global governance should be reshaped through inclusive and accountable multilateralism. Parliamentarians could not ignore the challenges accompanying technological advances, such as dual-use technologies, the global technological divide, misinformation and data privacy. Young MPs should advocate for responsible innovation and for parliaments to prioritize inclusivity in STI. Robust capacity in the science sector should be built in developing countries to counteract brain drain and unequal opportunities. Regarding AI and automation, parliamentarians should prepare for the potential socioeconomic impact and advocate for policies that support workers in transition, in accordance with SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth).

Ms. L. Nyelele (Zimbabwe) said that young people could unlock the potential of STI to address challenges. Online platforms such as social media, when used responsibly, allowed young people to share ideas and bridge divides. Young people could harness STI to develop sustainable solutions. Parliaments should therefore prioritize education and skills development, and there

should be collaboration between education institutions and industry. The Parliament of Zimbabwe promoted youth participation in science and technology by increasing funding for STEM, thus preparing young people for careers in high-demand fields and fostering critical thinking, problem solving and creativity. The Parliament monitored the implementation of its National ICT Policy 2022–2027 and addressed cybercrime, including online harassment and violence.

Mr. M.A. Rakotomalala (Madagascar) said that STI presented specific challenges to developing countries, namely weak digital infrastructure, such as poor internet connection, limited access to technology, a lack of investment and inadequate technological capacity. However, STI provided economic opportunities, which could improve efficiency in agriculture, health and education. STI also promoted local innovation, which would allow developing countries to create solutions adapted to their context. There should be increased international cooperation for developing countries to benefit from the technical expertise and financial support of developed countries. Parliamentarians, especially young MPs, should be trained to fully harness STI with a view to developing the relevant legal and regulatory frameworks.

Ms. S. Unnopporn (Thailand) said that the draft resolution, *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law* was consistent with her country's human rights commitments, particularly in preventing AI from inciting hatred or violence and safeguarding data privacy. However, the draft resolution did not address the use of AI in surveillance technology or biometric categorization systems. The Thai National Human Rights Commission had received complaints regarding the use of spyware to monitor political figures and social activists, which violated their privacy rights and undermined democracy and the rule of law. Young parliamentarians should strengthen legislation and policy frameworks to increase AI awareness and education, and maximize its benefits for young people while preventing risks, including intimate deep fakes and biased algorithms exacerbating inequality and discrimination. Young MPs could urge governments to build such capacity among young people, particularly marginalized groups, and reduce the digital divide.

Mr. F. Metaza (MERCOSUR Parliament (PARLASUR)) said that, regarding the draft resolution entitled *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*, human intelligence must first be bolstered to promote AI. A significant portion of countries' gross domestic product (GDP) should be devoted to education. Parliamentarians should ensure proper nutrition for children so that they could focus on their education and thus drive AI. Child malnutrition was a global problem, particularly in Latin America and Africa, which were the most disproportionately affected regions. Efforts should be carried out to bridge the digital divide.

Mr. M. Pramanik (Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)), commending the Forum on its groundbreaking work, said that the draft resolution *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law* should include youth perspectives. Emerging technologies disproportionately affected young people's experiences and personalities, which should be incorporated into policies and legislative frameworks. Young MPs should pay close attention to Actions 34–37 outlined in the *UN Pact for the Future, Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generations*, which called on young people to be more engaged in global, regional, sub-regional and national leadership and governance processes and dialogue. Those Actions should be operationalized through national parliaments.

Mr. M. Almheiri (United Arab Emirates) said that young parliamentarians should ensure that legislation was future-proof because the progress of technology, especially AI, would outpace legislative frameworks. Young MPs could future-proof legislation by sandboxing them in parliamentary forums, such as the IPU.

The President said that the young MPs should actively participate in the plenary discussion of the General Debate on the theme *Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future*.

The Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights would consider the draft resolution entitled *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*. He introduced the Rapporteur, Mr. F. Fakafanua (Tonga), who had been appointed to draft a youth overview report on the draft resolution and invited him to take the floor.

Mr. F. Fakafanua (Tonga), Rapporteur, presenting the Forum's perspective, said that, regarding the rule of law, there was concern over the misuse and weaponization of AI-supported frontier technologies and AI's potential to lead to miscarriages of justice owing to the inherent biases of large language models (LLMs). With regard to democracy, deep fakes and images manipulated by generative AI could mislead the general public and influence elections, and AI could be used to monopolize data to manipulate economic and political landscapes. Concerning human rights, the inherent biases of LLMs perpetuated social harm to young people, and concentrated ownership and control of AI tools could stifle development by increasing the global divide. AI would nevertheless contribute to achieving the SDGs. The Forum supported more discussions around minimizing AI's potential harm to young people and ongoing capacity-building programmes for parliamentarians on AI's impacts on society. There should be further education on the effects of AI development on the workforce and its implications for parliamentarians. The Forum welcomed the sharing of best practices on AI legislative reforms to mitigate associated risks.

Ms. M. Kademaunga (Zimbabwe), urging the Forum to support the resolution, said that young parliamentarians should acknowledge the risks associated with the unchecked development of AI, which the resolution should address, in addition to ensuring that AI was harnessed to strengthen democratic values. Implementing robust regulations that promoted AI literacy and fostering diverse representation in AI development could unlock opportunities for young people globally. But there was a need to address the AI gap that threatened to exacerbate existing inequalities between the global North and South, especially with regard to young people in Africa, in conflict zones and in other marginalized communities. Parliaments should create policies to support investment in AI education and training programmes for underrepresented groups and those in conflict zones, and promote digital inclusion and access to AI technologies. AI solutions should address pressing global challenges.

Mr. G. Neumbo, member of the Namibian Children's Parliament, said that when addressing innovation and advocacy, parliamentarians should consider necessity and efficiency. There should be a stronger focus on STEM education, such as by investing and creating opportunities for young people to equip them with the skills to drive progress, thus creating a better future, including through better harnessing of AI.

Ms. I. Stamatović (Serbia) said that AI should be controlled and established with robust regulations. More young MPs should be included in drafting such regulations, especially as young people were introduced to technology from an early age and understood it better than older generations. They did not need to be experts. While regulations had to be drafted, it would be useful to also hold dialogues, test AI, and organize groups to assess how AI and social networks were incorporated into daily life and impacted politics. To become involved in drafting such regulations, young people needed to better understand technology.

Mr. A.H. Sabeti Monfared (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that it was important to benefit from people's skills. For the sake of progress, countries needed to adopt legislation that leveraged AI for good, while taking its challenges into account. Parliaments globally should allocate budgetary resources for development and the enhancement of economies. Any resolution regarding AI could have harmful implications.

Ms. D. Zuma-Sambudla (South Africa) said that AI could improve government operations, citizen participation, healthcare and education. However, without clear rules and oversight, it could deepen social inequalities, compromise privacy rights and affect the fairness and accountability of decisions. It was crucial to establish clear ethical guidelines to govern AI's use across all aspects of society. Robust data protection laws and strict penalties for non-compliance were also essential. Citizens must be educated about the value of their personal data in the digital sphere, the vulnerability of such data and the security risks involved in sharing such data with third parties. Digital education should be accompanied by a programme aimed at creating better opportunities for young people. South Africa's National AI Policy Framework emphasized the importance of human-centred AI, ensuring that AI applications augmented human decision-making, rather than replacing it. The Framework also safeguarded professional responsibility and promoted human values so that AI development aligned with societal and ethical considerations. Parliamentarians should implement policies that harness AI's benefits, safeguard fundamental rights and uphold democratic principles.

Mr. S.S.H.J. Amaral (Timor-Leste) said that young people were especially vulnerable to AI's harmful effects, such as the intrusion of privacy, sexual exploitation and other security risks that infringed on their human rights. They were also particularly vulnerable to misinformation and disinformation – AI could distort their understanding of sociopolitical realities, which could affect their political participation and democracy on the whole. Young people's vulnerability to AI should be addressed in the draft resolution.

Mr. A. Aziz (Egypt) said that the IPU was at the forefront of managing technology and science, which should be implemented responsibly. When parliamentarians returned to NGOs, they needed to draft legislation on technology and science, which they should leverage to enhance peace and sustainable development through innovative solutions.

Q&A session: Taking the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign to the next level

The President said that after three years of the campaign, the Forum would take stock of its successes and strategize on how to build on them. He invited delegates to share on emerging trends in youth participation that the campaign should take into account and on how to increase the campaign's impact.

Ms. Z. Hilal (Secretary of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians), accompanying her report with a digital slide presentation, said that the campaign had been developed by young parliamentarians, particularly the Board, and that changemakers should report on implementation so that their successful strategies could be replicated elsewhere. Over 1,700 changemakers had pledged their support, including 760 parliamentarians from 170 countries, 64 parliamentary Speakers and 16 heads of State and international organizations. She called on those yet to do so to join the campaign and to encourage others to do the same. Changemakers had implemented 34 significant changes. The campaign had been launched in 30 parliaments, with 5 parliaments receiving direct support from the IPU – those of Burkina Faso, Mexico, Paraguay, Uruguay and Zambia. The IPU stood ready to support implementation of the campaign. The campaign's pledges from the most to the least popular were the following: advocating for youth participation (Pledge 6), empowering young parliamentarians (Pledge 4), supporting youth channels in parliament (Pledge 3), mentoring young aspirants (Pledge 5), promoting youth quotas (Pledge 1), and aligning the age of eligibility with that of voting (Pledge 2). Pledges 1 and 2 were the most transformative, yet the least popular, perhaps because their implementation was more difficult or lengthier. However, parliamentarians should not be afraid to introduce small changes to make a difference. They needed to propose legislation in that regard. Resistance was normal and could be combated with steady efforts.

The President invited the Forum to share on changes and additional resources needed to increase the campaign's efficiency and that would empower young parliamentarians to become change-makers.

Mr. P. Owusu (Member, Ghana Youth Leadership Parliament and Kofi Annan Foundation Women and Youth in Democracy (WYDE) Accountability Hub), speaking via a pre-recorded video message, said that young MPs should consider how to make politics and governance more accessible and affordable for all young people, particularly in Africa.

Mr. S.T.B. N'Bouke (Benin) said that the efforts carried out under the campaign were commendable. While the age of eligibility to run for office had been aligned with the voting age in Benin, young MPs still had to be selected by political parties, which was a challenge. Therefore, the IPU's efforts in that regard should be strengthened so that lobbying could reach leaders of political parties and raise awareness of such efforts among them. Young MPs should leverage their proximity to political leaders to lobby for youth representation. The more young MPs there were, the better they could address issues concerning young people.

Mr. B.B. Nodada (South Africa) said that the 2024 provincial and national elections in his country had resulted in a hung parliament – a politically fragmented system. The outcome was called "a Government of national unity" representing various interests across the board and had impacted, among others, the proportional representation of women and youth in Parliament. In both houses, individuals under 30 represented 2.2% – a decrease from 5%, and individuals in the 31 to

40 age group represented only 16% – a significant drop from 30%. Establishing a stable government might lead to delays, including disruptions in legislative agendas and policies, as was the case with the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign in South Africa. Diverse representation might become more complex, as the focus had shifted towards coalition negotiations and power sharing arrangements. It was essential for the campaign to focus on the implications of hung parliaments on effectively implementing policies designed to encourage active youth participation in political processes.

Mr. V.H. Musowa (Malawi) said that there were barriers for young people to join politics and for young MPs to stay in politics. Parliamentarians should study and consider how to practically combat those barriers to enable young people to be in leadership positions. Given that the African political landscape made it difficult for most young people to compete, the politics of young people should be different. The Forum and the campaign should ensure that technology and other resources could be used to attract more young people to politics and sustain more young MPs. The politics of handouts had become dominant in many countries, leaving poor aspirants unable to compete. There should be legislation in that regard. Malawi had passed legislation – that some consider controversial – banning handouts during electoral campaigns so as to open the race for all. When young MPs served for a long time, they inspired confidence in other young people, thus facilitating their participation. Young MPs were needed to support and mentor other young people aspiring to enter politics.

The President said that young people were political and had much to offer, but parliaments too often excluded them. Young people should be able to exercise their political role in their national parliaments and contribute like everyone else. Removing age restrictions to run for elections was key.

Preparations for the 150th Assembly (April 2025)

The President said that at the 150th IPU Assembly, the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security would discuss a draft resolution on *The role of parliaments in advancing a two-State solution in Palestine* and that the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development would discuss a draft resolution on *Parliamentary strategies to mitigate the long-lasting impact of conflict, including armed conflicts, on sustainable development*. Mr. D. Carden (United Kingdom) and Mr. W. Soto (Peru) would be the respective Rapporteurs.

It was so agreed.

The President said that the Forum should suggest amendments to the draft resolutions from a youth perspective.

Elections to the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians

The President said that the Board was requested to fill one vacancy for a female member from the Asia-Pacific Group until April 2025.

Ms. Z. Hilal (Secretary of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians) said that the Asia-Pacific Group had nominated Ms. F. Sauda (Maldives).

The President took it that the Board wished to approve the nomination.

The nomination was approved.

The sitting rose at 17:25.

Open Session of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians

WEDNESDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2024

(Afternoon)

The meeting was called to order at 14:30 with Mr. D. Carden (United Kingdom), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, in the Chair.

The President said that the Forum of Young Parliamentarians had been launched 10 years prior in response to youth movements demanding change and greater involvement in politics. Led by young members of parliament (MPs) who worked to increase youth participation in parliaments and the IPU, the Forum aimed to build bridges between young parliamentarians, other young people and youth organizations. To commemorate the Forum's 10th anniversary, non-MP youth leaders had also been invited to better reflect on the relevant achievements and challenges. He commended the support from young people and youth organizations for the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign.

He drew attention to the new IPU *Policy to prevent and address harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and other IPU events*, which was intended to ensure an inclusive, respectful and safe working environment, free of harassment for all, and which drew on definitions and approaches used in the UN System *Code of Conduct*. All participants were encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Policy.

Discussion on the theme *You have a message! Youth priorities and aspirations: From young men and women to the world's young MPs*

The President invited participants to share their views regarding the importance of the link between young MPs, youth leaders and youth organizations; their views on how strong that link was and on what was the main youth-related issue that politicians should focus on.

Mr. S. Langue (Kofi Annan Foundation), speaking via a pre-recorded video message, said that climate change was a question of justice for younger generations. Leaders should incorporate that into decision-making to protect the planet and meet young people's needs regarding education, access to resources and sustainable employment. Working together would ensure that young people were at the heart of the solution.

Ms. E. Djanato (Kofi Annan Foundation), speaking via a pre-recorded video message, said that young parliamentarians and youth organizations should be involved in policymaking.

Mr. S.T.B. N'Bouke (Benin) said that the Open Session should continue to be held. It was necessary to take youth into account in decision-making and provide a platform where everyone could contribute, such as the Forum. There should be continued sharing of best practices and cooperation among the world's youth organizations.

The President, providing a perspective from his country, the United Kingdom, said that while it was difficult to become involved in national politics, which required joining a political party – a complicated process that often deterred young people – many young people were active in politics, particularly, single-issue politics. Young MPs globally sought to represent the youth voice and help politically active young people to become politicians, which was necessary if they intended to change laws.

Mr. W. Soto (Peru) said that youth participation was necessary in decision-making, especially in light of challenges such as social inequality and climate change. Young MPs could bring about change if they put in the work required.

Ms. Y. Fouvy (Co-President, Unipoly, EPFL UNIL) said that solidarity, ecology, climate justice and social issues were key to her association. Against the backdrop of the situation in Palestine, it was important for young people to discuss politics together, which was the role of political associations at universities. Universities faced much repression, such as from their leaders or the police, and needed to take a stance on certain political issues.

Ms. V. Riccardi (International Labor Organization (ILO)), speaking via a pre-recorded video message, said that young people were starting to be actively involved in decision-making and to have opportunities to contribute to the labour market in roles aligned with their career goals. Young MPs should ensure that all young people had access to quality education and training, and decent jobs that allowed for professional and personal growth, thus empowering them to reach their full potential and benefiting society as a whole.

Mr. H. Aden Gueddi (Djibouti) said that young MPs had not been generally welcome in Africa, but, as a result of debates and efforts by Djibouti's President, they were able to secure seats in Parliament in his country. Young parliamentarians needed support to ensure that their voices were heard.

Ms. K. Tiguemounine (Vice-President, Muslim Students' Association of the University of Geneva (AMEUG)), providing the perspective of secular contexts in Europe, said that the Muslim minority faced unequal access to employment. Everyone should be equal. Laws forbidding people from bearing religious signs were discriminatory and unfairly hindered access to education and employment. There was too much silence around that issue. Religious or ethnic discrimination was a form of racism and an infringement of justice. Access to employment and education should be based on skill.

Ms. S. Falaknaz (United Arab Emirates) said that more legislative efforts were necessary to address issues affecting young people and to involve them in decision-making processes in all sectors. More young people should be trained to take the reins from current young MPs. Parliamentarians needed to provide platforms to share best practices globally and for local young people to share ideas and concerns.

Mr. E. Blanc (Global Student Forum) said that global warming would make the years ahead difficult because young people's capacity would need to be strengthened to meet the challenge. Training was a treasure and should be maintained. Many countries faced budgetary restrictions and did not often incorporate training into their budgets. Ongoing dialogue between parliamentarians and student organizations was needed to address political issues.

Ms. O. Olunuga (Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)), speaking via a pre-recorded video message, said that accountability was necessary to ensure that all young people had access to healthcare and education and were protected. All young MPs should establish accountability mechanisms to track progress using transparent reporting and data-driven insights.

Mr. G. Jones (PMNCH) said that there should be full implementation of transformative multisectoral plans on adolescent well-being, not only in the health sector but also in climate, legal and policy reforms, as well as any other parliamentary action regarding young people's well-being. He looked forward to further collaboration to carry out commitments made on adolescent well-being.

Mr. K.M. Konan (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the voting age in his country had not decreased from 21 to 18 until 2000. Seeing other young MPs and knowing that youth-related issues could be addressed inspired more young people to become involved in politics. Youth associations and regular dialogue were important to further inspire young people and ensure their participation in decision-making.

Ms. A. Bengtsson (Sweden) said that women and young people had a strong presence in her country's Government and Parliament because each political party had a youth wing where young people developed their political skills. The world often valued experience more than new ideas, but young people's ideas were needed to drive change. Young MPs had to fight harder to be taken seriously but could adapt tried and tested principles to current challenges and should inspire the next generation to engage in politics to create a better future for all.

Ms. G. Gasparri (Technical Officer, PMNCH) commended the Forum for its efforts to ensure that young people were engaged in global political decision-making at the PMNCH. Parliaments should increase youth representation and meaningfully engage young people in national policy

processes to ensure that their needs were addressed, which was inherently linked to building a better future. The PMNCH was committed to supporting those efforts, such as through the Global Forum for Adolescents – the world's largest youth gathering, or the *What young people want* campaign, and had also launched the youth-developed Agenda for Action for Adolescents – a framework for parliamentary action on national and global priorities for young people. Young MPs must advocate for youth empowerment policies and financing that specifically addresses their needs. The PMNCH's global investment case showed that US\$ 110 trillion would be lost if there was no investment in young people and their well-being. Parliamentarians were called on to support young people's rights, health and well-being. The PMNCH stood ready to support such efforts.

A video on the importance of youth participation and youth-responsive policies by the Youth Advisory Board of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and Education Above All (EAA) was played.

A video on the necessity to improve youth participation by Yiaga Africa was played.

Mr. L. Poghosyan, youth activist from Armenia, speaking via a pre-recorded video message, said that Armenia's young MPs were ready to lead, innovate and drive change. Their participation should not be merely symbolic. Armenia needed leaders to confront local and global challenges with resilience and foresight and to empower the youth and the rest of the population.

Ms. M. Zaragoza Navarro (Youth Representative, United Nations (UN)) urged young people in Switzerland to become UN youth representatives. When young people provided their opinions and participated in drafting policies, there should be follow-up efforts. The most relevant issues included the climate crisis, gender-based violence and violence against minorities, attacks on human rights, the protection of the right to dignified paid work for all and children's rights, namely to play, have a decent childhood, access quality education, and be valued and listened to.

Dialogue was not sufficient; action was necessary. Young people were active and committed, playing essential roles and creating solutions, and were already leaders. Forums for dialogue were necessary so that young people could be consulted and receive answers to their questions. Such processes needed to be ongoing to secure a better future locally, nationally and globally. Polyvalent and inclusive policies were key. There should be an international forum, such as the current Open Session, for the exchange of good practices. She looked forward to seeing participation from more senior stakeholders at future Open Sessions of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

Discussion on the theme *Co-creating with young men and women: Towards youth responsive policies, inclusive processes and open parliaments*

The President invited participants to share their views regarding the best means of bringing youth voices into parliament to create more youth-friendly policies and open processes; of including youth groups that were usually excluded from political engagement; and how young people could use parliamentary bodies and processes to influence politics.

Ms. A. Muzana (Rwanda), welcoming the Open Session as a platform for the exchange of young people's needs, said that, when carrying out their legislative and oversight roles, young parliamentarians should establish legal and strategic frameworks to build capacity and provide young people with opportunities to compete in global markets. Rwanda was developing its young people's scientific and technological capacity by, among other efforts, training them to be part of a national strategy for transformation and providing them with a platform to present innovations to investors and other key stakeholders. Young people could create innovative solutions to societal challenges when empowered and given the right platform. She would continue to advocate for youth participation in decision-making and parliament.

Mr. P. Osei Osuwu (Kofi Annan Foundation), speaking via a pre-recorded video message, said that a system should be adopted to allow established young leaders to mentor up-and-coming young leaders, thus creating a network of leaders from diverse economic and political backgrounds.

Dr. H. Sana (World Health Organization (WHO) Youth Council), speaking via a pre-recorded video message, said that the Forum of Young Parliamentarians and the WHO Youth Council had to work hand in hand. The current urgent challenges demanded a capable, empowered young workforce. There should be investments in youth globally, recognizing them as key stakeholders in political decision-making, which first required equitable access to quality education, technology and opportunities. Through cooperation, the power of young policymakers and global health leaders could be harnessed to co-create solutions that built healthier, more equitable and inclusive societies.

Mr. A. Conte (Swiss Federation of Youth Parliaments (FSPJ)) said that the youth parliaments in his country worked at all levels of government and aimed to give young people a basic understanding of politics, get them interested and make their voices heard. Youth parliaments allowed for dialogue with young people, which was important for them and parliamentarians. Youth parliaments should be implemented in other countries because they helped to inform young MPs of young people's needs and increased political interest among young people. He looked forward to future Open Sessions of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians to continue involving young people in politics.

Mr. J. Kanape (Suriname) said that the world should be assessed through the lens of critical thinking. Young parliamentarians had to be firm about their ideas and positions because the world would try to shut them down. There were problems in the world, yet the international community painted the situation with positivity. Young MPs' dreams of changing the world should be transformed into action. Platforms such as the Open Session were not meant to be theatrical but to discuss global issues, which would determine life for future generations.

Ms. A. Zlatar (Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)), speaking via a pre-recorded video message, said that young people, MPs and policy leaders could work together on policy reform. People-centred solutions were being neglected. Based on her experience as a young artist and activist, art could give voice to the many neglected people, so that they were not simply considered a statistic. There must be diverse means of discourse and inclusivity when examining issues such as language barriers, and financial and socioeconomic obstacles to participation, and systemic reforms.

Mr. A. Al Hinai (Oman), expressing full support for the statement by Mr. Kanape, said that being an MP was not easy and young MPs needed to observe, learn and take action. Dialogue and communication were key to solving issues. Furthermore, having a social media presence could be useful – parliamentarians should show people that they were relatable, and should publish what they could achieve and encourage other young people to become MPs.

Ms. C. Solis (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that young parliamentarians should discuss youth quotas to make it mandatory for political parties to have youth representation in parliaments. In regions where such quotas were already implemented, parliamentarians needed to examine the obstacles to implementing those quotas and reasons for their ineffective implementation. There should be discussions around gender-based political violence. In light of the violence resulting from drug trafficking and conflicts that affected youth participation, especially in Latin America, she welcomed advice on steps taken by young parliamentarians to support young people.

The President said that the Forum supported youth quotas and the reduction of the age to run for an elected office in line with the voting age. To that end, it was committed to creating policies and promoting them with other parliaments through the Secretariat. He welcomed further advice for the Organization's work ahead.

Mr. S. Ozboyaci (Türkiye), expressing support for the statements presented by Mr. Kanape and Mr. Al Hinai, said that young people could best harness the power of science and technology to build a peaceful and sustainable future. However, they did not have equal access to opportunities, as some were held back by war, terrorism, famine and economic hardship. Peace and sustainability could not be built if the current tragedy was ignored. A young software engineering student in Gaza had been burned to death in a civilian air strike on a hospital, whereas he had probably sought to use science and technology to build a peaceful future. Young people in

particular should raise their voice to stop the genocide in Gaza. They could not leave future generations a world of which they were ashamed. Parliaments needed to oppose Israel's massacre in Gaza and stand on the right side of history, which was humanity and peace. History should remember parliamentarians for their courage to stand up for the oppressed. A peaceful and sustainable future was possible only by building a more just world.

Mr. S. Nimwesiga (International Gender Champions), speaking via a pre-recorded video message, said that in striving to create a more equitable and inclusive world, young people should have a meaningful role in shaping the policies and decisions that affected their lives. Young MPs should prioritize establishing youth advisory councils in their parliaments. Such councils should meet regularly and be diverse, adequately resourced and held accountable to provide recommendations on issues relevant to young people while taking their diversity into account.

Mr. C. Wallhead (Special Advisor and Head of International Projects, Socialist International), regarding the exclusion of certain groups of young people, said that many people believed that it was difficult to enter the field of politics and many young people had overwhelming responsibilities. To better include them, it was important to promote initiatives to boost young people's engagement, such as through digital forums where they could share views and create innovative solutions, with support from NGOs and donors.

Ms. I. Stamatović (Serbia) said that young people, specifically young women, were not adequately involved in politics because they were still navigating life. Parliamentarians needed to take that into account when encouraging young people to join the field. Politics was not portrayed as a desirable career. Public relations in that regard should be improved, especially for young people in difficult socioeconomic situations, who often did not see politics as a way out. Young people should be shown that through politics, they could resolve issues in their lives, the environment and their country. A digital platform could be used to communicate such ideas to young people. To implement those solutions, MPs could be provided with a toolkit that was sensitive to countries' unique situations. Furthermore, MPs could follow her example and hold open-door sessions so that young people could present their issues or interests.

Mr. P. Anurika Nwadigos (International Youth Parliament) said that discussions should be centred on youth priorities and responsive policies to make young people's voices heard, thus empowering them for leadership and including them in decision-making. The International Youth Parliament would continue to align with the IPU Assembly initiatives in that regard.

A representative of the General Secretariat of the Parliament of the United Arab Emirates said that strong connections between MPs and young people, such as through mentorship, influenced policy, fostered trust and credibility in the political process and promoted innovative solutions to societal issues. Young people in the United Arab Emirates were empowered by their leaders, as their voices were strongly heard by the Parliament, which should be replicated across the world.

A participant said that while young people might be less experienced, they had time to try new approaches, make mistakes and learn. That time, however, was finite, and the opportunity should be seized sooner rather than later.

Ms. Yoon Hanhee (Chair, TechSec initiative of the Geneva Graduate Institute (IHEID)) said that while technology was viewed as pertaining primarily to young people, they were often excluded from policies on technology and focus was placed on specialists. Young people should be more meaningfully involved in drafting those policies. Although young people's involvement in technology was generally associated with social media, they were actually concerned by technology's effect on the environment – the power needed to run it was harmful to the environment – and by the need for transparency in technology's use in security, migration and the military.

A representative of the African Students Association said that young parliamentarians, especially those from politically confrontational and polarized countries, ran the risk of becoming a mere mouthpiece, reproducing their predecessors' arguments. Young MPs needed to be nonpartisan and focus on the future. Current divisions should not determine the future; rather, there should be communication and dialogue.

Ms. K. Tiguemounine (Vice-President, AMEUG), said that while quotas improved youth participation, they were not a direct incentive. Against the backdrop of student uprisings in response to the massacre in Gaza, the definition of political participation should be broadened to ensure that parliamentarians recognized the credibility of student movements and engaged in dialogue with students on issues that mattered to them instead of illegitimizing such forms of participation. More young people would see that politics involved taking action.

Mr. H. Ebrahim (Bahrain) said that while including young parliamentarians was important, it was essential to choose young people that were mature and ready to take up parliamentary responsibility and added value to their countries. As innovators, problem-solvers and the leaders of tomorrow, young MPs had a duty to ensure that technological advancements served as catalysts for peace, sustainability and inclusive development, and addressed pressing challenges without the bias presented on social media, most notably by fostering global cooperation, environmental sustainability and smart cities for a better quality of life. Young people faced significant barriers, including a lack of finances, training and access to decision-making platforms. They should advocate to ensure that they had the tools to take their rightful place at the forefront of technological advancements.

Mr. B. Vardanyan (Armenia), speaking via a pre-recorded video message, said that young parliamentarians in his country were vital agents of change and reflected the hopes of a new generation by bringing fresh perspectives to democratic governance, economic development and social justice through active engagement. They advocated for progressive reforms to increase inclusivity and innovation in the country.

Ms. E. Didon (Research Officer, National Assembly of Seychelles) said that while MPs in her country were accessible, it was discouraging that the ideas that young people presented to them were not always valued. Young MPs made up only 20% of the Parliament, which showed a general lack of political will to implement quotas and further discouraged young people. However, participating in the IPU, particularly the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, provided hope for increased youth participation.

Discussion on the theme *What's next? Sustaining youth-to-youth support and partnerships*

The President invited participants to share their views regarding how links between young MPs and young people could be made stronger; how online platforms, such as social media could harness those links; and what could be done to enhance links with often excluded groups.

Ms. Y. Fouvy (Co-President, Unipoly, EPFL UNIL), lamenting unprecedented police interventions at university manifestations for Palestine, said that Swiss parliamentarians should defend freedom of expression and the right to gather in universities, which must remain political places. Neither universities nor science was neutral. Unipoly stood in solidarity with the young people and children in Gaza, whose schools had been destroyed, thus depriving children of their fundamental right to education. Unipoly was awaiting a reaction of parliamentarians for the dead and wounded. Collaboration was possible so long as young people's voices were heard.

Ms. S. Hjemdal (Norway) said that her country did not have quotas for youth participation but maintained a low average age of participation. Young and older MPs were necessary. Political parties included people of different ages, all of whom should address all of society. Young people should not be engaged only in policy affecting them most. Young MPs, particularly young women, were tasked with additional responsibilities, such as meetings in dedicated youth and women forums, which, though well-intentioned, deterred young MPs from re-election because of the lack of work-life balance.

Mr. D. Joshi (Associate Professor, Singapore Management University) said that there needed to be cooperation between young people, young MPs and the research community, which could be achieved with the IPU's support. They did not adequately listen to and learn from one another. Youth participation should not simply increase numerically, but also substantively.

Mr. K. Khelifati (Algeria) said that young MPs learned from working alongside more experienced people and should be included more in politics, specifically in decision-making. Countries should benefit from young people's knowledge, such as in technology, and trust

them more. Civilized young people should not support the genocide and inhumane massacre oppressing young people in Palestine. Young parliamentarians should use social media to share activities they carried out, thus increasing other young people's interest in joining politics.

A representative of Swiss Youth For Climate said that youth-to-youth collaboration was important, as it brought together MPs and non-MPs. Non-MPs interacted more closely with people who had to make simple individual choices to bring about change, and parliamentarians could empower those people and create structures to increase their political engagement.

Ms. S. Atiola (Adviser, Tonga) said that young MPs should continue providing the necessary support to young people and creating opportunities for them to participate. Mr. F. Fakafanua, Speaker of Tonga's Legislative Assembly, was a young parliamentarian and had facilitated intergenerational dialogue between the country's young people and leaders locally and internationally, namely UN Secretary-General António Guterres. While the country had only one young MP, the attitude towards youth participation was changing.

Ms. V. Riccardi (ILO) said that to foster youth-to-youth support and partnerships, people's lack of trust in politics and politicians should be addressed by improving the accountability of governments' actions, which would in turn improve parliamentary participation and representation.

The meeting rose at 16:25.

Open Session of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

Armed conflict and disability: Enhancing parliamentary action to address disability during armed conflicts and their aftermath

TUESDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2024

(Morning)

The session was called to order at 11:30 with Mr. J.K. Waweru (Kenya), President of the Committee, in the Chair.

The President said that the topic of the debate, *Armed conflict and disability: Enhancing parliamentary action to address disability during armed conflicts and their aftermath*, had been chosen to mark the 25th anniversary of the entry into force of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, otherwise known as the Mine Ban Treaty or the Ottawa Convention. Conventional weapons, such as anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions, had the potential to render people disabled while armed conflict in general exacerbated barriers faced by persons with existing disabilities, affecting their access to basic services, emergency information and humanitarian assistance. According to Landmine Monitor 2023, 4,710 mine-related casualties had been recorded in the year 2022 alone and the threat of anti-personnel mines could be observed in 60 countries and territories. Those were not just figures but real people with families. Although an estimated 1.3 billion people worldwide experienced some form of disability, persons with disability remained the forgotten victims of armed conflict.

The 1949 Geneva Conventions and their additional protocols, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and other similar instruments were essential to advancing the rights of persons with disabilities affected by war. The role of parliamentarians in that context could not be underestimated. Parliamentarians must lead efforts towards accession or ratification of those instruments, champion the adoption of national laws and policies, monitor implementation, and pass budgets supportive of the cause.

He invited the panel to share their experience on addressing disability during armed conflicts and their aftermath, especially on the impact of weapons such as anti-personnel mines in causing disability. To launch the debates, the keynote speaker was Prince Mired of Jordan, Special Envoy on the Universalization of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and President of the Jordanian Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, who was leading efforts to promote further acceptance of the Convention.

Prince Mired of Jordan (Special Envoy on the Universalization of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention), keynote speaker, accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that landmines had been first devised during the nineteenth century and used by the majority of States throughout the twentieth century for defensive purposes. The belief at the time had been that landmines had a strategic military utility and were an indispensable part of any military's arsenal. That belief, however, had begun to change during the mid-1990s as civil society and later governments began to realize the devastating impact of landmines on innocent civilians. As a result of intense advocacy by a multitude of different players, including civil society, non-governmental organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and governments, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention had been signed and ratified within a very short space of time. The late Princess Diana had been particularly substantial in her advocacy and deserved a great deal of credit for the Convention's ultimate success.

The Convention was particularly special in the disarmament world because it was the first instrument to address the needs of victims while also placing the responsibility for mine accidents squarely upon governments and the military, citing negligence or insufficient precautionary measures. The notion of negligence, which absolved victims of fault, had solidified the belief that victims were entitled to rehabilitation services, employment and restitution. The humanitarian imperative to address the plight of landmine victims and put an end to further devastation and tragedy was the main driver for universalizing the Convention.

With the signing and ratification of the CRPD in 2006, which had put pressure on governments to afford citizens with disabilities their inalienable rights on a par with everyone else, the international community had soon realized that landmines must be incorporated into national disability frameworks rather than addressed as a stand-alone issue. Mine-affected States Parties had therefore been obliged to adopt a twin-track approach, affording landmine victims direct support while considering, in parallel, how to enhance and provide an inclusive environment for persons with disabilities as a whole.

In general, the Convention had been a success having fulfilled its duty towards landmine victims. However, more remained to be done as results were mixed, with some countries doing a better job than others. He noted that thousands of innocent people were still being injured, maimed or killed by landmines every year. There were also a number of mine-affected countries with great numbers of victims that had not yet acceded, leaving their victims to struggle on their own, not recognizing their existence nor their right to services and dignity. In some of those countries, landmine victims were even forced to pay compensation to the military for the landmine that maimed them. Those realities would continue to exist as long as some countries remained indifferent. It was therefore vital to convince those countries that had not yet acceded to do so as soon as possible.

The mission of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention was completely achievable, as exemplified by Jordan. Jordan had gone from having a landmine problem to being mine-free after dealing with the issue proactively. Even its northern border, which once had a 104-kilometre mine belt, had been totally cleared, guaranteeing safe passage for Syrian refugees. Delegates were encouraged to discuss the topic in their parliaments.

He invited delegates to the Global Disability Summit, organized jointly by the Governments of Germany and Jordan and the International Disability Alliance, which would take place in April 2025 in Berlin. It would be the first time that a great number of Heads of State would congregate physically to deliberate on the rights of persons with disabilities. It was his hope that the Summit would be the beginning of a new era for persons with disabilities, allowing them to live in an inclusive world where their inherent dignity as citizens was truly recognized and their inalienable rights afforded without reservations.

The President invited the next speaker Ms. G. Smoeun, a Cambodian landmine survivor and one of the first beneficiaries of Humanity & Inclusion (Handicap International) in the 1980s, to share her personal story and some remarks about the needs of those rendered disabled as a consequence of anti-personnel mines.

Ms. G. Smoeun (Spokesperson, Handicap International (Humanity & Inclusion)), panellist and landmine survivor, accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that, at 10 years old, she had stepped on a mine near the border of Thailand and Cambodia while going to fetch water for her family – an event that had changed her life forever. In just a fraction of a second, her leg had been torn off, and with that, her childhood dreams of becoming a dancer. The event had brought her face to face with death and required her to undergo 17 surgeries to survive. With Cambodia immersed in civil war, assistive devices, such as prosthetics, were lacking since the country did not have the medical or financial means to produce and distribute such devices on the scale that was needed. However, thanks to the support of Humanity & Inclusion, she had received her first prosthesis one year after her accident, enabling her to walk again and giving her back some level of independence and dignity. Those experiences had eventually inspired her to become a nurse, though the path had not been easy. Indeed, her life, including her professional life, had been marked by barriers and discrimination as a result of her disability.

She considered herself extremely lucky to have survived her ordeal. Many others had not survived and those who had were often caught up in a cycle of poverty. The link between poverty and disability was significant as persons with disabilities often had limited access to education and professional opportunities as well as lower salaries and higher costs of living.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention was an important milestone that had saved millions of lives and alleviated the suffering of people all around the world. Despite progress, many obstacles remained which required the attention of parliamentarians. Noting that persons with disabilities were some of the most vulnerable members of society, parliamentarians must use their legislative, budgetary and oversight functions to advance their rights and protections both during and after conflict, thus ensuring their inclusion in society.

Parliamentarians should urge their governments to ratify and adhere to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and the CRPD, bring national legislation in line with those Conventions and monitor implementation of the obligations contained

therein, holding the government accountable where necessary. To that end, it was important to collaborate with civil society organizations such as the International Campaign to Ban Landmines – Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC), particularly in the area of advocacy, putting pressure on non-signatories to join the Convention and educating the public about the difficulties faced by persons with disabilities. Collaboration with regional partners was also important with a particular need to offer financial and technical assistance to countries that were affected by landmines. Lastly, it was necessary to allocate sufficient budgets for rehabilitation services, assistive technologies and humanitarian aid, especially in emergency situations.

The 25th anniversary of the entry into force of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention was an opportunity to celebrate the progress made but also to remember that the work was far from finished. Landmines continued to kill and mangle people every day. As long as countries continued to use or stockpile landmines, the international community must continue to mobilize on the issue. Noting that parliamentarians were an essential part of that work, the survivors of landmines were counting on them to create a mine-free world.

The President said that the next speaker was Mr. A. Breitegger, Senior Legal Adviser at the ICRC, whose work was focused on the legal protection of persons with disabilities in armed conflict, in particular on disability-inclusive interpretations of international humanitarian law (IHL) as well as the relationship between IHL and the CRPD. Mr. Breitegger should outline the main challenges faced by persons with disabilities in armed conflict, how IHL protected persons with disabilities and how parliamentarians could support the ICRC in their efforts in the area.

Mr. A. Breitegger (Senior Legal Adviser, ICRC), panellist, strongly supported universalization and domestic implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention as well as efforts to ensure that implementation was informed by survivor perspectives.

He drew attention to the ICRC's Vision 2030 on Disability which was concerned with the inclusion of persons with disabilities in IHL, irrespective of whether their impairments pre-dated an armed conflict or had been acquired during an armed conflict. Apart from the ICRC's ambition to become more disability-inclusive in its humanitarian programming and as an employer, the Vision aimed to contribute to disability-inclusive interpretations and implementation of IHL in complementarity with the CRPD. The complementarity was explicit in Article 11 of the CRPD, which indicated that the Convention was applicable in armed conflict. A disability-inclusive IHL was one which took into account the specific barriers and risks faced by persons with disabilities during armed conflict, and enabled the participation of persons with disabilities in processes dedicated to IHL. The focus on persons with disabilities was justified given that 16% of the world population was estimated to have a disability, with that figure expected to be higher in armed conflict-affected zones (between 18% and 30%).

It was vital to take into account the specific risks and lived experiences faced by persons with disabilities during armed conflict in order to fulfil certain obligations under IHL, such as the need to reduce harm to civilians, ensure humane and equal treatment of detainees, and deliver impartial humanitarian relief. Under the obligation to reduce harm to civilians, parties to the conflict were required to provide access to advance warnings allowing civilians to evacuate before an attack took place. However, persons with disabilities might be impeded in accessing those warnings thus putting them at an increased risk of harm. For example, a person with a hearing impairment would not be able to hear an advance warning transmitted via the radio; other persons with disabilities might have access to the warnings but could have difficulty acting on them, for instance, due to mobility issues. The information must therefore be available in a range of communication formats to cater to the diversity of persons with disabilities. It was also important to take care of the practical aspects of evacuation, such as ensuring accessible means of transport or making provisions for persons with disabilities to take their assistive devices with them. Other risks faced by persons with disabilities included inaccessibility of humanitarian relief and mistaken attacks.

Parliamentarians must advocate for specific provisions on protecting persons with disabilities in armed conflict to be included in national law. They should raise questions with the armed forces to ensure that the risks faced by persons with disabilities were integrated into the conduct of operations. The participation of organizations of persons with disabilities in debates and briefings should also be encouraged.

He invited delegates to the spotlight session on IHL and persons with disabilities at the upcoming 34th International Conference of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent which aimed to raise further awareness of the risks faced by persons with disabilities in armed conflict. Conference participants – States, national societies of the Red Cross/Red Crescent and Observers

– would have the opportunity to submit pledges to inspire further action on the matter. Pledges might include: organizing further expert meetings on disability rights; integrating the issue of disability-inclusive IHL into training activities within the armed forces; and ensuring better inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian actions. Members of parliament should encourage their respective governments and/or Red Cross/Red Crescent national societies to pledge in that regard.

The President said that the final panellist was Mr. S. Ouedraogo, one of two representatives of people living with disabilities in the Transitional Legislative Assembly of Burkina Faso. He was also a lawyer and consultant who specialized in the rights of persons with disabilities, including in situations of humanitarian crisis and armed conflict. Mr. Ouedraogo was invited to present the situation of persons with disabilities in Burkina Faso whose vulnerability was exacerbated given the many challenges facing the country. He should clarify how parliaments, through their legislative, budgetary and oversight functions, could ensure respect for the rights of persons with disabilities during and after armed conflict at the national level.

Mr. S. Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso), panellist, said that, since 2016, the security situation in Burkina Faso had been gradually deteriorating with ongoing terrorist attacks and large numbers of internally displaced people. The situation affected access to basic services, particularly for vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities.

As at March 2023, statistics showed that more than two million people in Burkina Faso were internally displaced as a result of terrorism, of which 17,000 were persons with disabilities. Given the emergency situation and the limited resources available, the rights of persons with disabilities in that context were insufficiently taken into account despite the many difficulties they faced. Those difficulties included physical barriers arising from a lack of mobility equipment such as wheelchairs, limited access to shelters and other infrastructure which were not usually adapted to disability needs, and exclusion in the delivery of humanitarian assistance. During attacks, persons with disabilities were often left behind to the mercy of terrorists and exposed regularly to the risk of violence, including sexual violence. Communication barriers existed because of a lack of assistive materials, such as braille, which prevented advance warnings from reaching persons with disabilities. There were also insufficient financial resources which, when available, were rarely inclusive of the needs of persons with disabilities. The hailstorm of difficulties meant that the basic needs of persons with disabilities were not being met. With a view to delivering a more effective response, many persons with disabilities wished to be more involved in humanitarian decision-making.

The Transitional Legislative Assembly of Burkina Faso had taken steps to protect persons with disabilities in crisis situations and its legal framework was very developed. The CRPD and its optional protocol had been adopted in 2009 followed by a law on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities which domesticated the Convention and strengthened protections. The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention had been ratified in 2018 and a law granting protections to children rendered disabled as a result of terrorism had also been passed. Going forward, Burkina Faso intended to ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa with a view to addressing the lack of legislation and institutions working to protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

Other measures included oral hearings on disability rights to monitor government activities as well as parliamentary inquiries into the experience of persons with disabilities affected by crisis, focusing in particular on humanitarian aid and gender-based violence. Parliamentarians were increasingly supportive of allocating more resources to the cause with a significant amount of money having been spent on capacity building and disability-sensitive budgeting in 2024. Members of Parliament had also held meetings with local community leaders, such as tribal chiefs, urging them to provide support to persons with disabilities during terrorist attacks.

In conclusion, parliamentarians must pay more attention to the needs of persons with disabilities, particularly victims of conflict and terrorism, encouraging governments to fulfil their obligations under relevant international conventions and bolster protection. Noting that terrorists did not care about international law, it was important to expand the support services available to persons with disabilities as well as to assist countries such as Burkina Faso in the fight against terrorism.

The President opened up the discussion for questions and comments from the floor.

Mr. A. Farrugia (Malta), noting that parliamentarians had a duty to enforce the rights of persons with disabilities, including their right to compensation, said that States Parties that were in breach of the Convention should be named and shamed as part of parliamentary oversight in order to promote adherence.

Ms. D. Alzayed (Bahrain), noting that war was a major cause of disability worldwide, said that parliamentarians must, first and foremost, work towards peaceful coexistence and conflict resolution while also promoting respect for international law. She suggested that a guide be developed to support lawyers and human rights activists in providing legal assistance to landmine victims. Funds should be allocated for reintegration and rehabilitation so that persons with disabilities could live normal lives. Families of persons with disabilities should also be given support. It was of utmost importance to improve the legal framework and ensure that persons with disabilities were aware of their rights, including their right to compensation. Signatories to the Convention must abide by their commitments while mine-free countries must assist mine-affected countries.

Mr. M. Mottaki (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his country had always called for financial, technical and humanitarian aid to be provided for mine clearance operations and social and economic rehabilitation of victims. The Islamic Republic of Iran had been struggling with a landmine problem for years as a result of Saddam Hussein's aggression against the country. Five provinces of the Islamic Republic of Iran were severely affected by landmines and other explosives, which hindered reconstruction efforts, disrupted socioeconomic development, delayed the safe return of internally displaced persons and continued to cause the death and injury of citizens. Despite the illegal unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States of America against the Islamic Republic of Iran, which had impeded access to the necessary technology and aid, his country had carried out a large-scale mine clearance operation using locally-produced equipment and new demining methods.

He called on delegates to consider the thousands of women and children who had been rendered disabled as a result of the attacks in Palestine and Lebanon.

Ms. G. Morawska-Stanecka (Poland) said that Poland had ratified the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in 2012 but had been fulfilling its provisions since 1998 by refraining to produce, export or use mines in military operations. Parliaments must pass laws taking into account the needs of persons with disabilities in both conflict and peacetime, and use parliamentary diplomacy to prevent conflicts.

Mr. K. Suebsang (Thailand), noting the importance of international law, said that Thailand had ratified the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in 1998. Although parties to conflict rarely respected international legal instruments, it was vital to keep on urging them to do so. He agreed that international protection should be afforded to persons with disabilities before, during and after conflict. Protection in the aftermath of a conflict was particularly important. Acknowledging the difficulties that humanitarian organizations faced in accessing persons with disabilities, the protection principle must be mainstreamed into all of their services. Persons with disabilities must be at the centre of all humanitarian programmes and empowered to participate in decision-making processes.

Ms. D. O'Neill (Australia) said that the issue of landmines and disability rights would not be resolved until terrorism was addressed. However, terrorism would continue to reign as long as peace was disturbed through unequal distribution of opportunities, wealth and capacity. She called out a number of the countries that had not yet signed the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and urged them to do so as soon as possible. Those countries included China, Cuba, Egypt, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Myanmar, the Russian Federation and the United Arab Emirates. Australia had signed the Convention in 1999. The Secretariat should provide delegates with the action points set out by Mr. Breitegger as an impetus to move forward.

Mr. A. Al-Salihi (Iraq) said that Iraq had a big landmine problem as a result of the Iran-Iraq war, the Gulf War and the war against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. The reason that certain countries continued to use landmines, chemical weapons and cluster munitions was because they were not subject to penalties. It was important to penalize regimes, not people, so that they did not continue to act with impunity.

Although Iraq had joined the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and passed a national law protecting persons with disabilities, it did not have the resources to implement the provisions contained therein. The cost of providing prosthetic limbs and rehabilitation, for example, was extremely high. The international community must support countries struggling to deal with the issue on their own.

Mr. L. Thuch (Senior Minister, Government of Cambodia), President of the Fifth Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, invited delegates to the Review Conference which would take place in Siem Reap, Cambodia from 24 to 29 November 2024. During the conference, participants would adopt an action plan and declaration to guide implementation of the Convention over the next five years. He encouraged parliamentarians to use their power, influence and authority to persuade governments to ratify and implement the Convention which was the best way to support mine survivors and prevent further injury or death.

Mr. C. Matznetter (Austria) said that, with the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation in Ukraine, cluster munitions were becoming an increasingly significant problem. It was for that reason that the CCM must be given attention in addition to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. New instruments were also needed. He suggested that a tax be imposed on companies producing and profiting from such weapons with the acquired funds then going to support victims.

Mr. Y. Galeazzi (First Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Sovereign Order of Malta to the United Nations) said that the Sovereign Order of Malta had made a significant contribution to the issue of landmines and disability rights through humanitarian diplomacy. It worked closely with the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities and the Group of friends of the CRPD and was conducting many humanitarian operations on the ground. More must be done to take into account the needs of persons with disabilities, particularly their rehabilitation needs.

Ms. C. Pedreros (Human Rights Officer, Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disability, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)), said that, although 191 countries had ratified or acceded to the CRPD, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disability continued to observe serious violations against persons with disabilities in situations of conflict, including extrajudicial killings. Persons with disabilities must be at the centre of the decision-making processes. All legislation and plans, whether on preparedness, recovery or peacebuilding, must include persons with disabilities, regardless of the region, type of impairment or origin of impairment. The CRPD prevailed and should be continuously implemented in times of conflict with no excuse or argument to the contrary. In 2025, the Committee would be publishing a general comment interpreting the duties of States Parties under Article 11 of the CRPD. She called on parliamentarians to implement the recommendations contained therein at the national level.

Prince Mired of Jordan (Special Envoy on the Universalization of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention), keynote speaker, highlighted the need for focused and careful action on the matter of landmines and disability rights, noting that lip service was not enough. While a large number of countries had ratified the CRPD, implementation was lacking and required more proactive attention. It was insulting to survivors to suggest that there were insufficient financial resources to tackle the issue. All countries must get serious about the rights of persons with disabilities and make it a top priority.

Ms. G. Smoeun (Spokesperson, Handicap International (Humanity & Inclusion)), panellist, said that all human beings should have the means to survive and called on delegates to think of those who did not have such means.

Mr. S. Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso), panellist, said that there were grounds for hope given the many efforts being made to advance protection for persons with disabilities in crisis situations, and called for that work to continue.

Mr. A. Breitegger (Senior Legal Adviser, ICRC), panellist, said that the core rationale behind the Anti-Personal Mine Ban Convention, the CRPD and IHL more generally was to protect individual victims of armed conflict. The lived experience of persons with disabilities should therefore be elevated. Countries should be motivated to ratify the relevant Conventions but also to respect them. By taking care of persons with disabilities, the international community would be taking care of the civilian population at large. Responding to Ms. O'Neill, he said that his action points were available on the website of the 34th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent as model pledges.

The President encouraged delegates to take action in their parliaments, noting that history would judge political leaders based on how they treated the most marginalized groups.

The session rose at 13:30.

Parity Debate

Pushing back on the pushback: Men and women MPs preserving and advancing gender equality

WEDNESDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2024

(Morning)

The debate was called to order at 11:35 with Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche (Algeria), First Vice-president of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, as the Moderator.

The Moderator said that the diverse representation of countries and women at the current debate – organized by the IPU Forum of Women Parliamentarians – demonstrated the interest in women's rights. The discussion would focus on understanding the reversal of progress, the sharing of best practices to counter that reversal, the promotion of gender equality, and the developments following recent elections. No country had ever achieved gender equality, nor any of the targets related to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5. Meanwhile, tensions and wars had worsened the condition of women. However, 2025 would mark the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and see the implementation of various gender equality initiatives. Parliaments could significantly contribute to efforts to enhance gender equality, women's protection, and women's and girls' rights, and create fair and just societies through legislation. They could combat discrimination, highlight inequality, and advocate for reform. She hoped that the discussion would shed light on good practices, enable parliamentarians to learn from one another, and help counter the reversal of progress.

Ms. L. Nyirinkindi (Chair, United Nations (UN) Working Group on discrimination against women and girls), panellist, speaking via video message, said that no country had achieved gender equality, particularly in decision-making positions. Globally, women represented less than 27% of parliamentarians, which was unsurprising since efforts to silence and discredit women had increased worldwide, and women leaders often faced smear campaigns, stigmatization, and online and physical violence. In addition to the harm it caused, violence against women politicians discouraged women and girls from participating in public and political life, and perpetuated gender imbalances in political decision-making.

The Working Group applauded those governments that had adopted special or temporary measures to increase women's parliamentary participation, as per Article 4 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). However, quotas only provided a roadmap towards gender parity which was essential to achieving gender equality. Upholding women's right to participate in public and political life was a prerequisite to fulfilling other rights. The 2013 report of the Working Group – the recommendations of which remained valid – focused on women's effective participation in political and public life, which required admission to institutions and meaningful inclusion in decision-making. It was therefore the duty of democracies to achieve parity in decision-making and leadership positions.

The latest report of the Working Group highlighted that patriarchal structures – which intersected with racial, ethnic and caste-based discrimination, among others – continued to perpetuate discrimination and inequality in all aspects of women's and girls' lives. In some areas that had seen improvements, such as political representation, implementation gaps held back progress. Limited accountability for violating women's and girls' rights compounded the lack of resources, capacity, support measures and political will – particularly from male colleagues. The gender backlash was extreme in certain countries, including Afghanistan where there was a gender apartheid. Examples of that backlash included the denial of sexual and reproductive health rights, and lack of political representation and access to education. Substantive equality required de facto gender equality, and a commitment to transform the social, cultural, political and economic factors that prevented equality. Together, parliamentarians had the power to push back against the pushback.

Ms. V. Riotton (France), panellist, said that parliamentarians' commitment to ensuring gender equality was more necessary than ever, and parity entailed a daily struggle against those who sought to undermine women's rights. According to research by non-governmental

organizations (NGOs) – particularly by Ipas and the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights (EPF) – movements seeking to limit reproductive rights were extremely well organized and had significant financial resources to develop aggressive disinformation strategies, garner political influence and increase social pressure. In recent years, disinformation campaigns, anti-abortion demonstrations and actions by conservative movements had taken place in France and across Europe. Those movements – which activists familiar with advocacy, communication and political leadership had reinvigorated – operated at the international and grass-roots levels. They sought to win over public opinion and fight against abortion; contraception; assisted reproductive technology; divorce; sexual education; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights; and euthanasia. They had specific objectives and met regularly to adjust their strategies and messaging at international events. Over a decade, EPF had studied financial data on some 50 anti-gender activists operating in Europe and had revealed four mechanisms that helped raise funds: (1) citizens donated funds through participatory financing campaigns; (2) certain members of the socioeconomic elite discreetly funded pro-life groups; (3) certain States, in some cases following lobbying by religious or conservative organizations, funded pro-life movements and legitimized their discourse and actions; and (4) religiously motivated actors, who were part of particularly influential international networks, funded and spread pro-life ideologies. As part of a clear and coordinated response, those mechanisms should be denounced and funding to support reproductive rights should increase. Parliamentarians were responsible for ensuring that women worldwide could access safe and legal sexual and reproductive health services.

In France, the right to abortion had been constitutionalized, demonstrating that it was an intangible part of French democracy and a universal and inalienable right. Constitutionalization offered protection from political whims and guaranteed that the decision to allow abortion would not be reversed. During debates, it had become clear that ultra-conservatives wished to curtail rights, including in France. Parliamentarians must therefore ensure gender equality worldwide, share experiences and best practices to encourage other countries to adopt similar measures, and help ensure that women everywhere had control over their bodies and safe access to abortion. They could mobilize their peers, governments and societies. The fight against pro-life movements concerned freedom and dignity, and the constitutionalization of the right to abortion should set an example for other countries. Parliamentarians must work towards a future that was more equal, fair and respectful of fundamental rights.

Mr. S.S.K. Njie (the Gambia), panellist, said that he and the Gambia remained committed to safeguarding women's and girls' rights, which were a cornerstone of the Gambian development agenda and government policy. In 2010, Parliament had passed the Women's Act but had not managed to criminalize female genital mutilation (FGM) which was tied to religious beliefs and widely supported. Proponents of the practice were aggressive, creating the fear that banning FGM could lead to national instability and violence. However, civil society organizations and government development partners, including the UN, had raised awareness of the health implications of FGM and, in 2015, Parliament had amended the 2010 Women's Act, banning FGM and incitement to commit FGM. Following the formation of a new Government in 2017, members of the previous Government had submitted a private members' bill to reverse the ban. Those members, the majority of whom were Muslim, had used religion and traditional beliefs to support lifting the ban and mobilize thousands of Gambians. However, the Government had made it clear to Parliament that under no circumstances should the ban be lifted. In Geneva, he had engaged the IPU Secretary General on the matter. Meanwhile, the UN Population Fund had helped coordinate the engagement of other UN development partners, and the United States Embassy in the Gambia had coordinated development partners and civil society organizations. Those efforts had helped gather parliamentarians' support against the reversal of the ban, explain the health implications of FGM, and highlight the risk of sanctions from other countries – including the United Kingdom – if the ban was lifted.

Although committed to upholding deep-rooted traditions and beliefs, the Parliament was also committed to protecting women and girls. Under the instruction of his party leader, he had delivered a public statement that the ban would be maintained, prompting backlash from religious leaders and proponents of lifting the ban. It had become his responsibility to coordinate with the leader of the majority party and members of the majority caucus to instil confidence in those parliamentarians that members of society had victimized, insulted and bullied.

Mr. Njie said that he had also sent 34 parliamentarians to a study tour in Egypt – a Muslim-majority country with robust anti-FGM laws – with financial support from the IPU, the World Bank in the Gambia and the Gambian Ministry of Finance, to learn about strategies, policies, and

community practices that have effectively addressed FGM. The UN had coordinated with its office in Egypt and the parliamentarians had met with the representatives of the Shura Council, the Egyptian Ministry of Health, Al-Azhar University, and the Egyptian National Assembly, who had clearly stated that FGM was harmful and not Islamic. He had rejected a call for a tour across the Gambia to hear from religious leaders, out of fear that it would create instability. Instead, the Minister of Health and he had opted for a parliamentary hearing. Hundreds of Muslims and non-Muslims had come forward in support of and against the ban on FGM. Despite calls to delay the hearing, he had decided that the hearing should conclude by late May 2023. Following the hearing, various reports had been produced and Parliament had voted to maintain the ban.

Ms. P. Appiagyei (Ghana) said that her Parliament had passed the Affirmative Action Act, 2024 – known as the Gender Equity Bill – which addressed social, cultural, economic and political imbalances, and systemic barriers to gender equality and women's empowerment. Changing entrenched beliefs and systems took time and effort, and there had been pushback, including suggestions that affirmative action was unnecessary. However, the Presidency had had the political will to pass the Act, and the Speaker of Parliament had ensured the timely presentation of the bill to Parliament. A team of lawyers had provided research and legal resources to female parliamentarians, the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection, and the Committee on Gender and Children, which had facilitated advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns. The Act contained pre-implementation and implementation plans, the latter of which required a great deal of resources and parliamentary engagement. Having worked tirelessly to educate colleagues, particularly men, about the importance of gender equity and affirmative action, she was pleased that efforts had borne fruit.

Mr. J. Osei-Owusu (Ghana) said that the Affirmative Action Act, 2024 provided little that was new. Article 36 of the Constitution had already ensured equal opportunities, and the Children's Act had introduced free education in secondary schools, where women outnumbered men. Consequently, more women enrolled in tertiary education, which helped overcome financial barriers. Women must leverage those opportunities and work to become leaders.

Mr. W. Soto (Peru) said that the world was facing challenges in achieving gender equality and stood at a crossroads. Despite the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the SDGs, no country had achieved gender equality. Women and girls continued to experience discrimination and violence, particularly in conflict zones such as Afghanistan and in countries that had curtailed reproductive rights. Peru had striven to support gender equality. The Parliament continued to ensure that laws protected and empowered women and girls, such as Law 31945 which prevented the marriage of minors. However, that task was difficult and required collaboration to maintain progress and protect hard-won rights. Gender equality was essential to building fairer, more inclusive and peaceful societies. Parliamentarians were key to protecting those rights and must robustly defend inclusive progress when confronted with political, social and cultural barriers. Parliamentarians should reflect on how they could continue to uphold equality, build inclusive societies, ensure long-lasting change and pass laws that benefited women and girls worldwide.

Ms. R. Alyahya (Saudi Arabia) said that government efforts were essential to empowering women and challenging stereotypes. In 2017, a royal decree in Saudi Arabia had enabled women to access public services without the consent of a guardian. Women were equally important to national development. Through the Saudi Vision 2030 roadmap, the Government aimed to change social and cultural mindsets that had hindered women's progress. In 2019, a royal decree had prompted the amendment of various laws, including the labour law, the personal status law, and the law on passports which allowed women to obtain passports and travel abroad without the approval of a male guardian. As a member of the Shura Council, she exemplified the progress in her country.

Mr. A. Alharbi (Saudi Arabia) said that the National Observatory for Women had developed an index to measure Saudi women's participation in five areas: education, health, the economy, legislation and social engagement. It aimed to provide a reference point for decision-making and to promote women's participation in development. The index helped produce reports on women's contribution in those areas with a view to implementing Saudi Vision 2030. The indicator for women's empowerment in the labour market had exceeded its target of 30% seven years before

the 2030 deadline. The index also helped women to contribute to social development and tracked legislation that empowered women. It used national data to monitor Saudi women's empowerment and included 52 sub-indicators. The sub-indicator for legislation had seen the greatest increase (5%), which aligned with national plans, strategies and policies. Of the 150 members of the Shura Council, 30 were women, one of whom held a leadership position.

Ms. A. Martínez (Spain) said that, in 1985, Spain had decriminalized abortion in cases of rape or threat to the mother's life; in 2010, Organic Law 2/2010 had legalized abortion within a certain time frame; in 2022, the Penal Code had been modified to criminalize the harassment of women outside abortion clinics; and in 2023, Organic Law 2/2010 had been modified to improve sexual and reproductive health and access to abortion, and further guarantee women's sexual and reproductive rights. Following the modifications, women aged 16 and 17, and women with disabilities, no longer required their legal guardians' permission to access abortion. The three-month reflection period had been removed and women were no longer obligated to provide certain information. Abortion was guaranteed in public health centres to ensure that all women had access, regardless of their financial situation. The modifications also established a registry of health professionals who conscientiously objected to abortion, and the modifications ensured specialized healthcare in the event of an abortion.

Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada) said that gender parity had been achieved in the Canadian Senate and Cabinet, and Canada ranked high in terms of gender parity in education, health and life expectancy. However, fewer than half of parliamentary representatives were women and, since 2006, the persistent and sizeable wage gap in North America had not narrowed. She was concerned that feminist initiatives were performative. Although Canada had adopted a women- and girls-first approach to providing assistance to Afghanistan, she had had to move a motion in the Senate to recognize that Afghanistan was experiencing gender apartheid. Parliamentarians could champion gender equality within and beyond their borders, and should aim to make all women feel safe, seen and heard.

A delegate of Bahrain said that the establishment a parliamentary standing committee on women and children and a gender equality committee highlighted the commitment of Bahrain to adopting policies in favour of women. The Supreme Council for Women enhanced the role of women in all sectors. An executive plan should help establish networks between parliamentarians, State institutions, youth committees and civil society. Efforts had been made at the international level to enhance collaborations that empowered women. Sanctions for violating women's rights should be more stringent, and women should have access to lawyers. Regarding elections, women should be able to use the latest technologies. Legislation, strategies, plans, and the impact of empowering women should be reviewed continuously. Women's and girls' needs should be prioritized in armed conflicts.

A delegate of Bahrain said that his country had introduced gender parity reforms and set an example for women's empowerment. Over the previous 20 years, Bahrain had enhanced women's rights, empowering women culturally, socially and economically. The Government considered that gender equality, which was central to achieving the SDGs by 2030, affected all aspects of life, including politics, the economy, society and education. However, data showed that inequality persisted worldwide. Violence, lack of education, the pay gap, harassment and stereotypes continued to hinder women's participation at all levels. The SDGs, which included a specific goal to achieve gender equality by 2030, required inclusive gender parity strategies, specialized training in all fields, and mentoring programmes. Awareness of the importance of gender equality should be raised through the media and women should be encouraged to integrate into all fields equally. There should be policies to address violence, including in the digital space, against women and girls, and educational opportunities to support women's participation in all fields. Following a progress review, a support programme should be developed, and leadership platforms should be established to share best practices for enhancing equality.

A delegate of India said that, despite progress in parliamentary institutions, women remained underrepresented in decision-making positions. However, India was among 18 States worldwide with a woman leader. In 2023, the Indian Parliament had amended its Constitution to reserve 1/3 of seats for women in the lower House of Parliament and in all federal State legislative assemblies. Two thirds of rural local bodies, and half of urban local bodies, had expanded that

proportion to 50%. In those rural local bodies, 46% of elected members were women, a rate unparalleled elsewhere in the world. To become more gender-sensitive, the Indian Parliament had introduced gender budgeting, gender-neutral language, gender-sensitive secretariats, a complaints committee for sexual harassment and a parliamentary committee for women's empowerment. The increasing political representation of women should be leveraged to build a world in which women were valued.

Ms. N. Boulhan Houssein (Djibouti) said that promoting gender equality in all areas of political, social and economic life was a long-standing issue that shifted power dynamics. However, despite progress, inequality persisted. In 1995, the momentum to promote women's rights in Djibouti had begun with the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and the production of a five-yearly report on women's progress in politics. In 2008, that momentum had gathered pace with the establishment of the Ministry of Women and Family Affairs. In 2002, a legal quota for women in Parliament had been introduced and, in 2003, seven women had entered Parliament. In 2011, the Government had introduced a gender equality programme for women in politics which, 10 years later, had been extended for a further 5 years. In 2018 it had reformed the electoral law and introduced a 25% quota for women in elective offices and State administration positions. Consequently, 26.2% of deputies and six out of 25 ministers were women.

Ms. V.M. Kauma (Namibia) said that the national gender policy, which had led to the enactment of laws, had helped empower women and promote gender equity across Namibian society. However, work remained to ensure that gender-sensitive approaches extended to economic development, culture, education and health. Greater representation of women in leadership positions in Namibia demonstrated what could be achieved when the highest level of government prioritized gender equality. However, more politically skilled women with the willingness to receive training were required at the regional and constituency levels, leading the Parliament to establish the Rural Women Parliament.

Ms. C. Mix (Chile) said that the initiatives that the delegates from France and the Gambia had shared were commendable and worth replicating. Some initiatives – particularly those related to the political, sexual and reproductive rights that women in Chile and around the world were fighting for – required constitutional support to prevent future governments from reversing progress. In 2017, Chile had decriminalized abortion in certain cases, which she hoped would lead to the legalization of abortion, and in 2021, Chile had elected a gender-equal citizens' assembly to draft a new national constitution. It was important that men supported women's rights both at the IPU and in national parliaments.

Ms. K. Slassi (Morocco) said that women's rights were being prioritized everywhere because they so profoundly impacted all aspects of society. The scope of parliamentarians' work was vast and included implementing public policies to tackle discrimination against women and promulgating laws. Morocco had endeavoured to advance women's rights: the 1962 Constitution had ensured equality, the 2011 Constitution had additionally ensured parity, and Morocco was a signatory to the CEDAW. It was fortunate that there was royal, political and civil society support for advancing women's rights.

Mr. M. Reddad (Morocco) said that Morocco had placed great importance on women's participation in the political and administrative spheres. The first Moroccan pilot and Olympic champion had both been women. Women had assumed responsibilities in Moroccan institutions and ministries, which was a source of pride.

Mr. S. Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso) said that his country had made some progress but work remained to be done. Burkina Faso had a robust legal framework with prison sentences of up to 10 years for the perpetrators and accomplices of FGM, instances of which had significantly decreased but had not been eradicated. Women could seek abortion in particular cases, but those who did not meet the appropriate criteria faced heavy sanctions. The debate around abortion should give due consideration to the national security situation. Terrorists kidnapped and raped women as a weapon of war. Those women who subsequently became pregnant had little time to consult a doctor and obtain an abortion within the legal time limit. Some felt that their only option was suicide. The Family Code was currently under review to be amended accordingly.

Ms. V. Riotton (France), panellist, said that future work should focus on governance, women's roles, education, and gender-based and sexual violence. She was pleased to note that delegates appeared to be working in the same direction. However, they should focus on results. Quotas significantly helped to achieve parity and parliamentarians should not be satisfied with quotas of less than 50% for women. It was parliamentarians' duty to accelerate progress, to which feminist associations and NGOs contributed by blocking certain developments. Men must also support women's rights worldwide.

Ms. A.N. Kpochan (Benin) said that preventing the reversal of progress towards gender equality was an essential and ongoing struggle, and Benin had demonstrated its political will to advance women's rights. Women's political participation and economic independence had increased, and significant efforts to tackle gender-based violence were underway. The Government had established the National Institute for Women, which could represent a victim of violence in court even if the victim withdrew from the case. The Electoral Code and the Constitution had been amended to stipulate that each electoral constituency must have at least one woman. The legal framework to protect women had been strengthened, particularly a cross-cutting law to punish gender-based crimes and protect women. Despite those commendable efforts, more work was needed to increase women's representation and foster women's independence.

Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah (Egypt) said that gender equality – a basic human right – was essential to ensuring stability and unlocking societies' and communities' potential. The Constitution of 1956 had enabled women to run for elections and vote. The following year, a woman had entered the Egyptian Parliament – a national and regional first. The Constitution of 2014 had increased women's parliamentary rights and had introduced a 20% quota in parliament for women, who currently held 28% of seats. The National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030 promoted economic, social and political empowerment, the allocation of executive positions to women, and a 30% quota for women in official administrative positions. Parliamentarians must promote gender parity in all areas of life, review national legislation, and establish parliamentary gender equality committees where necessary.

A delegate of North Macedonia said that parliaments were crucial to preventing and addressing sexual and gender-based violence. The North Macedonian Parliament had adopted legislation to prevent domestic violence and promote gender equality. However, true empowerment required women's inclusion at all levels of decision-making. In North Macedonia, women represented 39.2% of parliamentarians, but only three out of 20 ministers. Efforts should focus on building inclusive societies where women and girls enjoyed equal opportunities, and on ensuring that justice and equality sustained peace. Parliamentarians should highlight psychological violence, which occurred frequently but was difficult to prove and sanction.

A delegate of Thailand said that her country had made progress in enacting laws – including the Gender Equality Act of 2015 – that ensured equal rights and increased women's representation in leadership. Women continued to face pushback, such as gender stereotyping, against which male and female parliamentarians must present a united front. Parliamentarians must ensure that legislation and policies developed towards gender equality, which was a shared responsibility.

Ms. M. Phiri (Zambia) expressed concern that Zambia failed to meet continental and international benchmarks for women's political representation. However, work was underway to promote gender equality, including through the Committee on National Guidance and Gender Matters which ensured public sector gender mainstreaming. The women parliamentarians caucus had evolved into a parliamentary committee promoting women's participation in governance. The leadership of such committees must be gender equal. The Anti-Gender-Based Violence Act, 2011, protected women, and the national gender policy of 2000 promoted men's and women's full participation in development with a view to ensuring sustainable development. In 2014, that policy had been reviewed to ensure that development was gender equal and benefited men and women equitably. The Constitution ensured the equal representation of men and women in all nominations and appointments.

Ms. D. Bühler-Nigsch (Liechtenstein) said that the introduction of women's suffrage 40 years earlier had changed Liechtenstein, and women's political, economic and social participation had steadily increased. The Gender Equality Act, a key milestone, protected against

discrimination and ensured equal work opportunities. The governmental action plan for gender equality promoted the dismantling of gender stereotypes, supported flexible work models, and advocated for a better work-life balance. Initiatives by Women's Network Liechtenstein to tackle gender-based violence and promote diversity in politics raised awareness of equality issues. Women represented 28% of parliamentarians, a proportion that she hoped would increase following the 2025 parliamentary elections.

Ms. F. Bustreo (Chair of the Governance and Ethics Committee of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)), said that the pushback against gender equality and women's rights, particularly sexual and reproductive health rights, was deeply concerning. Every two minutes, a woman died in childbirth – a rate that was not declining – and one in three women would experience violence. Efforts in the Gambia to resist the pushback against women's rights were commendable. PMNCH stood ready to provide information, model laws and expertise on women's rights, particularly health rights. The creation of the Global Leaders Network for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health was a positive development.

Mr. S.S.K. Njie (the Gambia), panellist, said that the Gambian Parliament had only five female parliamentarians, yet it had upheld the ban on FGM, demonstrating that men could effectively support women's rights. All parliamentarians, regardless of gender, should advance women's interests. Although ensuring gender equality in Arab and sub-Saharan African countries could be difficult, parliamentarians must represent their people.

The Moderator thanked participants – particularly the male participants, as they provided important support for women's rights – and said that there should be strict legal mechanisms to prevent FGM.

The debate ended at 13:20.

Adoption of resolutions, final documents and reports

SITTING OF THURSDAY, 17 OCTOBER 2024

(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 16:35, with Dr. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania), President of the IPU, in the Chair.

Item 3 of the agenda
(continued)

General Debate on the theme *Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future*
(A/149/3-Inf.1 and DR)

The President said that substantive and robust deliberations had taken place over the preceding three days of the General Debate on the subject *Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future*, during which some 157 interventions had been delivered by 113 national parliaments and 14 partner organizations. Speakers and Deputy Speakers of Parliament, parliamentarians, many of them young, experts and officials had shared their experiences, good practices and wisdom. Continuing the good practice instituted at the 148th Assembly, she would invite two young parliamentarians to speak on her behalf, on the current occasion in connection with the draft Geneva Declaration set out in document A/149/3-DR on the subject of the General Debate.

Mr. D. Carden (United Kingdom), President of the Board of the Forum of the Young Parliamentarians, said that the unprecedented technological progress under way provided immense opportunities and pressing challenges, with the STI potential and risks of deepening inequalities similarly vast. In ensuring that technological advancements served the common good, parliamentarians must remain mindful of ethical principles and the need for inclusive government and global cooperation. The precedent set for responsible technical governance by bold nations that had pre-emptively banned inhumane technologically advanced weapons reflected the urgency of acting collectively to ensure that STI fostered trust and peace alongside that cooperation.

Ms. M. Alsuwaidi (United Arab Emirates) said that recent international commitments, including the Pact for the Future and the Global Digital Compact, offered an encouraging road map for work with all stakeholders to ensure inclusive and ethical approaches to STI. For STI benefits to reach all, every digital divide must be bridged, with ethical frameworks governing STI use also put in place. In shaping the future of STI, the participation of women, youth and vulnerable groups was critical to securing the inclusivity and empowerment essential to creating a diverse and innovative future.

Mr. D. Carden (United Kingdom), President of the Board of the Forum of the Young Parliamentarians, said that nations must invest in research and development, foster science diplomacy and integrate scientific expertise into parliamentary decisions. While driving progress through STI towards sustainable development, resilience and lasting peace, steps must also be taken to mitigate its risks, including by preventing the spread of misinformation and harmful content.

Ms. M. Alsuwaidi (United Arab Emirates), underscoring international cooperation as the only means to those ends, said that parliamentarians were fully committed to global parliamentary dialogue on STI governance and welcomed both the IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology and the draft resolution on AI. Together, they could harness STI to create a more equitable, sustainable and technologically advanced world.

The President said she took it that the Assembly wished to endorse the draft Geneva Declaration set out in document A/149/3-DR.

It was so decided.

Mr. D. Naughten (Ireland) said that the one flaw in the otherwise excellent Geneva Declaration was its failure to call explicitly for the promotion of knowledge-sharing, especially North-South, in line with Article 9 of the IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology. To reflect that need, he requested the inclusion of wording focused on strengthening worldwide collaboration and exchange in scientific knowledge development and related technological innovations.

Item 9 of the agenda
(continued)

Adoption of a draft resolution on the emergency item on the theme *Response by parliamentarians to the urgent plea by the UN Secretary-General to recommit to multilateralism for global peace, justice and sustainability*

Mr. C.A. Rendon Garcia (Mexico), introducing a draft resolution on the emergency item entitled *Response by parliamentarians to the urgent plea by the United Nations Secretary-General to recommit to multilateralism for global peace, justice and sustainability*, said that the finalization of the draft resolution emanating from a proposal by the delegations of France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Netherlands and Canada had been challenging. In a lively and thought-provoking debate skilfully and efficiently chaired by Ms. M. Rempel Garner of Canada, the 10-member drafting committee had decided to remove from the draft the names of countries where conflict was ongoing. The reason was that acceptable language covering such a range of conflicts would be difficult to find and that the focus should be on the commitment to strengthening multilateralism and building a more resilient, just and sustainable world for all. Highlighting the urgent need for a collective response to current global challenges, the resulting text reaffirmed support for multilateralism through the United Nations (UN) and the obligation on parliamentarians to hold governments to account on their compliance with the Charter of the United Nations.

The drafting committee had also agreed to call for a redesign of the entire emergency item process through transparent rules aimed at facilitating productive dialogue and leading to meaningful consensus-based resolutions. The draft resolution reaffirmed the commitment to defending the principles of peace, human rights, dignity, equality, justice and solidarity, and recommitted to the purpose and principles of multilateralism. He commended it to the Assembly for adoption.

The President said she took it that the Assembly wished to adopt the draft resolution.

It was so decided.

Mr. K. Kosachev (Russian Federation) said that it was unfair to give delegations only a few hours to decide which of numerous emergency item proposals they wished to support. More importantly, the explanatory memorandum accompanying the chosen emergency item proposal cited grounds for the proposal that were false, as it stated that the UN Secretary-General had addressed the General Assembly on 20 September 2024, which was untrue. Worse still, the statements ascribed to him were inconsistent with his usual language. In short, the proposal had been misleading and, deliberately or not, manipulative, culminating in a short and lacklustre emergency item debate that might otherwise have been different. Member Parliaments had been deprived of the opportunity to discuss a truly important emergency item, such as the Middle East situation. The Assembly deserved an apology from those who had moved for the chosen emergency item. That said, the resolution adopted was highly commendable.

Mr. I. Khraishi (Palestine) said that, while the resolution contained much of significance to be implemented, measures were needed to ensure that the emergency item process was not open to destructive politicization, double standards and selectivity. Parliamentarians could ignore neither the situation of the Palestinian people stemming from an unjust UN General Assembly resolution adopted in 1947, nor the rulings of the International Court of Justice aimed at preserving human life by protecting civilians from genocide. It would benefit no one if double standards and the law of the jungle were allowed to prevail and destroy multilateralism in the process. As legislators, parliamentarians had a primary responsibility to stop that happening. With the occupying power preventing it from conducting democratic parliamentary elections, Palestine looked to the international community for solidarity in its efforts to enhance its capacities and effectiveness in the global and IPU arenas.

Mr. F.A. Iglesias (Argentina) said that the drafting committee had been tasked with fine-tuning the draft resolution – not with deleting half of the text. The Russian delegation, moreover, had been intent on obstruction designed to do away with the entire draft or, at the very least, to remove all references to the UN. Concerning the UN General Assembly resolution of 1947, it had been accepted by Israel but ignored by the Arabs, who had subsequently initiated conflict by attacking Israel. Three lost wars later, the Palestinian side was now demanding the two-State solution it had previously rejected. Regrettably, the resolution made no direct mention of a ceasefire or hostage release. As to the preservation of human life, that plea should be made to the Hamas criminals who had raped and killed, and to Hezbollah, which had been responsible for many deaths and injuries in terrorist attacks in Argentina. Life should indeed be protected and double standards ended.

Mr. I. Khraishi (Palestine), speaking on a point of order, said that the previous speaker should not have been permitted to continue his statement. The discussion was about the resolution just adopted, which was not the time for a lecture from a person who knew nothing of the region or its history.

The President, closing the discussion, thanked all those who had participated in drafting the resolution, which, despite remaining challenges, was a good step forward towards hearing a broader spectrum of voices.

Item 5 of the agenda

The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law (Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights) (A/149/5-DR)

Ms. N. Lugangira (United Republic of Tanzania), co-Rapporteur, presenting the draft resolution entitled *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*, as prepared by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights and set out in document A/149/5-DR, said after outlining the genesis and initial development of the draft resolution that she and her co-Rapporteur, Ms. M. Rempel Garner of Canada, thanked the IPU for accommodating the new consultative process that they had decided to introduce to ensure consistently strong participation in the drafting exercise. In that context, they had organized three online workshops and a further in-person workshop in Geneva on artificial intelligence (AI), together with preparatory debates. Each event had been very well attended and thus highly inclusive and participatory. In addition to triggering such interest, the process had enriched the drafting itself. Most importantly, it had enabled parliamentarians from around a world divided by conflict to come together to discuss an extremely pertinent topic and reach consensus on the related text. The hope was that the draft resolution, once adopted, would be brought to life through tangible actions and results, with the IPU pioneering a global, minimum AI standard.

Ms. M. Rempel Garner (Canada), co-Rapporteur, turning to the content of the draft resolution, said that great effort had gone into incorporating into the draft all of the many proposed amendments, which had provided differing and informative perspectives. The consensus-building approach had resulted in unanimous consent to the text, with the final product touching on numerous aspects of the debate on which it was hoped that parliamentarians would take action to add to the IPU initiatives already under way. The text emphasized education and capacity-building, within and outside parliaments, on potential socioeconomic transformations driven by AI, with an emphasis on possible benefits as well as threats to democracy and human rights.

Special thanks were due to all those who had contributed to and supported the work throughout. The outcome was a comprehensive text that could be built on and would stand the test of time. Her positive experience as co-Rapporteur had demonstrated that the IPU was a forum where parliamentarians could build trust and learn from one another. She hoped that the text would be adopted and embraced by Member Parliaments, if not also by big tech.

The President said she took it that the Assembly wished to adopt the draft resolution.

It was so decided.

The President, thanking the co-Rapporteurs for having produced such a novel resolution, said that its content would form the baseline for parliamentarians to start looking into ways of regulating AI development in their respective countries, taking into account the challenges identified, which were a real concern.

Item 6 of the agenda

Reports of the Standing Committees

Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland), Acting President of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, reporting on the Committee's work during the Assembly, said that, at its first sitting, the Committee had held a panel discussion entitled *The role of parliamentarians in preventing conflicts over natural resources*, with a focus on the increasingly important economic and climate related aspects of conflicts and the need for strong legislative bodies to ensure equitable resource management. In a second panel discussion entitled *The role of parliamentarians in nuclear security*, the focus had been on actions for ensuring the safety of radioactive material. At its second sitting, the Committee had held an expert hearing entitled *The role of parliaments in advancing a two-State solution in Palestine*, during which the related history and definitions had been explored and emphasis placed on good governance, security and human dignity in fostering lasting peace in the region. A new Malaysian Vice-President had also been elected.

In its meeting, the Bureau had talked about the Committee's security- and peace-related activities, conflicts in progress and a subject item for future deliberation by the Committee. It had also discussed the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and its impact with Prince Mired Raad Al-Hussein of Jordan, who was spearheading action to promote universalization of the Convention.

The President said she took it that the Assembly wished to take note of the report.

It was so decided.

The President recalled that, in March 2024, the 148th Assembly had approved *The role of parliaments in advancing a two-State solution in Palestine* as the topic for a new draft resolution to be prepared by the Standing Committee for adoption at the 150th Assembly. It had also identified Mr. M.A. Bouchouit of Algeria and Mr. J. Buttimer of Ireland as co-Rapporteurs. The Assembly had further agreed to a proposal from the Bureau of the Standing Committee – made in light of the complexity of the issue and the wish to render the exercise as inclusive as possible – that she, as IPU President, should engage in consultations with a view to identifying additional co-Rapporteurs from the other regions.

Following those consultations, she now proposed as additional co-Rapporteurs Ms. M. Guerra Castillo of Mexico, who would bring in the perspective of women, peace and security; Ms. T. Vardanyan of Armenia, who would bring in the youth perspective; Mr. T. Utikere of New Zealand; and Ms. T.M. Ts'ita-Mosena of Lesotho. Accordingly, a group of six co-Rapporteurs – three of them women and three men – representing among them all six geopolitical groups, would work on what was a critically important draft resolution. She took it that the Assembly wished to endorse her proposal.

It was so decided.

Mr. W. William (Seychelles), President of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, reporting on the Committee's work at the Assembly, said that, in its first debate aligned with the subject of the draft resolution it would present at the 150th Assembly, entitled *Parliamentary strategies to mitigate the long-lasting impact of conflicts, including armed conflicts on sustainable development*, parliamentarians were urged to advocate for sustainable development strategies with a positive impact on conflict prevention, response and recovery through community engagement. The Committee's second debate had focused on preparations for the Parliamentary Meeting at the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) in Azerbaijan, in particular the preliminary draft outcome document calling for parliamentary action on green issues. In its third debate entitled *Towards a fair global financial system: The role of parliaments in preventing corporate tax avoidance and achieving sustainable development*, participants emphasized the need for stronger legislative frameworks, preventive measures, enhanced transparency and multilateral cooperation, and parliamentary capacity-building. Lastly, elections to the Bureau were held and the workplan for the 150th Assembly was approved.

On a concluding note, an intensified and coordinated parliamentary action plan was urgently needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For its part, the small island developing States group looked forward to gaining more official recognition in the IPU's efforts to help vulnerable groupings towards attainment of those goals.

The President said she took it that the Assembly wished to take note of the report.

It was so decided.

Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, reporting on the Committee's work at the Assembly, said that, over its two sittings, the Committee had discussed the complexities of the UN budget, the role of the Group of 20 (G20) in relation to the UN, and the role of parliaments in the UN treaty-making process. It had also followed up on two motions, adopted at previous Assemblies, on gender equality in the UN General Assembly and Security Council reform, which all Member Parliaments were encouraged to act on and operationalize.

Key points raised in the discussions had included the instrumental role of parliamentarians in overseeing the UN budget process, which the Committee would continue aiming to demystify; the need for greater budgetary transparency and urgent steps to address the UN financial crisis and strengthen UN deliberative processes; avoidance of G20-UN competition and duplication of work; promotion of firmer links between the G20 and its Parliamentary Speakers' Summit, or P20; and treaty follow-up and awareness activities. Elections to the Bureau had also been held and parliaments encouraged to include their members in delegations to UN gatherings and events. The Committee would continue working hard to maintain the rich and growing IPU-UN relationship and seek the UN accountability needed for parliaments to properly defend the institution.

The President said she took it that the Assembly wished to take note of the report.

It was so decided.

Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe) said with all due respect that the subject matter addressed by the Standing Committee lacked the universal appeal of several other global issues currently requiring parliamentary intervention. In short, it was insufficiently broad to qualify for the attention of all 181 of the IPU's Member Parliaments.

The President said that a Standing Committee's approval of subject matter proposals presented by its Bureau did not preclude Committee members from subsequently broadening the scope of the subject matter as they saw fit in the light of ongoing developments. The leadership and members of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs would undoubtedly take the comments made into consideration.

Item 7 of the agenda

Approval of the subject item for the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights at the 151st IPU Assembly and appointment of the co-Rapporteurs (A/149/7-R.1)

The President, drawing attention to document A/149/7-R.1, said that, as set out therein, the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights had proposed *Recognizing and supporting the victims of illegal international adoption and taking measures to prevent this practice* as its subject item for the upcoming one-year cycle and had designated Ms. L. Crexell (Argentina) and Mr. M. De Maegd (Belgium) as co-Rapporteurs. She took it that the Assembly wished to approve that subject item and the designated co-Rapporteurs.

It was so decided.

Item 8 of the agenda**Amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules**
(A/149/8-P.1-rev and -Am)

The President said that, in 2023, a broad consultation had been carried out on possible amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules, further to which proposals had been gathered from Member Parliaments, the geopolitical groups, the IPU's specialized bodies, and the IPU Secretariat. A working group established in March 2024 by the Executive Committee had extensively studied those proposals in three meetings held between March and May 2024. Subsequently, at its meeting in Zanzibar in June 2024, the Executive Committee had agreed on the series of proposed amendments set out in document A/149/8-P.1-rev for submission to the membership three months prior to the 149th Assembly, as per Article 30 of the IPU Statutes.

By the deadlines of 2 September 2024 for amendments to the Statutes and 14 September 2024 for amendments to the Rules, several Member Parliaments had availed themselves of the opportunity to provide feedback and propose sub-amendments. The admissible sub-amendments and clarifications from the IPU Secretariat on several related points had been sent to the membership on 26 September 2024 in document A/149/8-P.1-Am.

At its meeting on 11 October 2024, the Executive Committee had endorsed the sub-amendments proposed by France and Switzerland and referred the proposed amendment to Article 10.1 of the Statutes, together with sub-amendments proposed by Thailand and Türkiye, back to the working group for further consideration. The working group would resume its work later in 2024 to consider the matter as well as other pending requests.

The Assembly was invited to adopt the final proposed amendments to the IPU Statutes, as set out in document A/149/8-P.1-rev. A separate document – CL/214/9-P.1-rev – had been approved earlier that day containing amendments to the Rules of the Governing Council, the Rules of the Executive Committee, the Rules of the Standing Committees, the Rules of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, and the Rules and Working Modalities of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

She took it that the Assembly wished to adopt the proposed amendments to the IPU Statutes.

It was so decided.

Closure of the Assembly

Mr. H. Mahjoub (Tunisia), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, said in the first of concluding remarks by representatives of the geopolitical groups that the lively and passionate debates held during the Assembly would help to guide parliamentary activities, with an emphasis on dialogue and respect for cultural and religious values. The Group had hoped for winning support for the emergency item request submitted by Palestine on behalf of the Arab Group with the aim of signalling to the world that the war in Gaza and the Middle East must stop, as must the silence around the violent attacks perpetrated with impunity by the Zionist entity. Voices calling for compliance with international law must be raised high to prevent others from parroting that entity's attitude, which would end in complete lawlessness. In striving for an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon and Gaza and independence for Palestine, parliamentarians must also actively work for the implementation of all relevant UN resolutions and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice with a view to establishing long-awaited peace and ending injustice.

Mr. Zhang Yong (China), speaking on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, said that the Group's meeting during the Assembly had been a great success marked by the high degree of consensus within the Group. Members had expressed strong support for and a keen interest in participating in IPU-related work, with many competing to represent the Group in IPU bodies and five eventually selected from among the candidates. The Group had also deliberated the emergency item proposals and been briefed on the first preparatory meeting for the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament. Overall, common ground had been widened on issues including the subject of the General Debate, AI regulation, corporate tax avoidance, strengthening UN ties and multilateralism, and the maintenance of international peace. Pleased and privileged to be part of such progress, the Group stood ready to follow through on its achievements with parliaments to promote cooperation, dialogue and solidarity for a bright common future.

Ms. M.d.C. Alva (Peru), speaking on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC), said that she had been honoured during the Group's meeting to have been nominated as its candidate to fill a vacancy on the Executive Committee, to which she had subsequently been elected. In other work, the Group had approved the emergency item request formulated by some of its members on the protection of children in armed conflicts, which had received the required two-thirds majority in the vote but not the highest number of positive votes. The Group believed, however, that there would be future opportunities to discuss the topic. Meanwhile, it was pleased that, unlike at the two preceding Assemblies, agreement had been reached on an emergency item, resulting in the adoption of the resolution on recommitting to multilateralism for global peace, justice and sustainability.

Mr. K.K.P. Kouassi (Côte d'Ivoire), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the worrying humanitarian situation in the Middle East, notably in Gaza and Lebanon, called for a resolute commitment to action for lasting peace through the implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions. Nor could the armed conflicts in Africa be ignored, especially with the continent also vulnerable to natural disaster and epidemic disease. Resilience to challenges was possible, however, through consistent defence of multilateralism, political dialogue, respect for international law, and solidarity for peace and development. Parliamentarians had a duty to meet the expectations of the people and indeed of the IPU founders. The Group favoured the work to amend the IPU Statutes and Rules around the emergency item, as the IPU needed structural change for it to function smoothly, with transparency enhanced and all voices taken into account.

Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland), speaking on behalf of the Twelve Plus Group, said that the Group had met on five occasions during the Assembly and had also engaged in intense discussion with the IPU President. While appreciating that she worked with the best intentions to explore all possible avenues of dialogue for peace, the Group continued to deplore her encounter with President Putin, who had an arrest warrant issued against him by the International Criminal Court for war crimes in Ukraine and for the deportation of Ukrainian children to his country. Ukraine respected international law, had become a sovereign State through peaceful means and was simply defending itself against a brutal aggressor that attacked it on false pretexts. The Group was glad of its frank and fruitful exchange with the IPU President and it was time to move forward. It therefore stood ready to work with her in support of all IPU actions for peace and the attainment of shared objectives.

The Secretary General said in his concluding remarks that he was deeply satisfied with how the Assembly had unfolded. Opposing views had at times been aired, with passions running high, sometimes creating tension and discomfort, but such debates were a main *raison d'être* of the Assembly. All participants in the IPU's global forum for dialogue and diplomacy must feel at ease to express themselves, listen respectfully to others and seek common ground. Coupled with the outcomes of the deliberations, the resilience shown in not yielding to despair in the face of daunting global challenges convinced him that his message of hope at the start of the Assembly had been heard. Participants had shared many examples of good parliamentary practices for improving working modalities through properly harnessing and regulating the technological advances that could help realize significant achievements, including in conflict resolution. AI also clearly offered exciting opportunities but parliamentarians must prepare to mitigate its risks through appropriate legislation.

The UN Secretary-General's appeal for greater support of multilateralism had prompted the IPU Member Parliaments to rededicate themselves to that cause and inspired the newly adopted emergency item resolution as a fitting response to the message encapsulated in the Pact for the Future. With the Pact clearly expressing the determination and commitment of UN Member States to work with parliaments and the IPU to resolve current conflicts, the importance of that resolution was unequivocal.

The celebration of many important anniversaries and milestones during the Assembly had put back on the agenda such key issues as youth participation, mutual support for stronger parliaments, and the elimination of anti-personnel landmines. Fulfilment of the IPU's greatest aspiration – that of universal membership – had come nearer to fruition with the return of the Jamaican Parliament to the fold and the prospect of others to follow. All Member Parliaments were urged to convey to non-members the benefits of being part of the wonderful global parliamentary community.

He paid tribute to the IPU President for her sterling management of the deliberations and thanked her for her leadership, assuring her in addition that the IPU Secretariat would continue to offer her its assistance in discharging the duties of her high office. It had done its best to deliver on expectations for a smooth Assembly and apologized for any shortcomings in that regard. He thanked all the unsung heroes working behind the scenes for their contribution towards making the Assembly a success and saluted the foot soldiers who were the IPU staff.

The President said in her closing remarks that she had noted with regret the tense and polarized atmosphere sometimes evident during the Assembly. As acknowledged in the emergency item resolution and stated by the UN Secretary-General, the world was edging towards becoming a powder keg, paralysed by dysfunction and held hostage by geopolitical tensions. A further regret was the inability to present a united position on the Middle East situation, which was a must.

More positively, the solutions were already available in the form of a reinvigorated multilateral system; better respect for the fundamental principles of international law; rejection of violence and human suffering; global cooperation to find solutions for a better future; and, most importantly, dialogue, which was what parliaments were all about. Parliamentary diplomacy would be key in repairing the damage wrought by recent global tensions, with the emergency item resolution a first step towards identifying the abundance of common ground and rebuilding consensus on ways of constructing a more peaceful world.

Other proud achievements of the Assembly included the strong plea for Member Parliaments to exert pressure on the parties in the Middle East conflict to avert a full-scale regional war affecting all. In the General Debate, STI had been considered to offer great hope for a more peaceful and sustainable future, with true optimism heard from Mr. Piccard on that score if existing solutions for protecting the environment for future generations were embraced. The impact of AI on democracy, human rights and the rule of law must remain a foremost consideration as AI continued to advance in directions as yet unimaginable. Lastly, the IPU Statutes and Rules had been modernized in a sustained process to make the IPU fit for the future. Urging Member Parliaments to continue upholding all IPU values and aspiring to the certainty of a brighter future, she thanked them for their commitment and hard work.

On that note, she declared the 149th Assembly closed.

The IPU Anthem was played.

The sitting rose at 18:20.

Geneva Declaration

Harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) for a more peaceful and sustainable future

*Endorsed by the 149th IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 17 October 2024)*

We, Members of Parliament from around the world, gathered together at the 149th IPU Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, reaffirm our commitment to harnessing science, technology and innovation (STI) to address the pressing global challenges of our time and to advance peace, sustainable development and human rights.

We are meeting at a time of unprecedented technological advancement and interconnectedness. From the transformative potential of artificial intelligence and the urgent need to combat climate change, to the persistent digital divide and the ethical challenges posed by emerging technologies, the multifaceted opportunities, challenges and risks we face underscore the need for parliaments to take urgent collective and forward-looking action, informed by common ethical standards regarding STI development and governance. We note that some nations have already taken bold decisions to pre-emptively ban certain inhumane technologically advanced weapons, creating a good practice precedent. The challenges we face demand a shared global commitment to leveraging STI for the common good.

We conclude this Assembly recognizing the potential of STI, when guided by ethical principles and inclusive governance, as a powerful means for building trust, promoting cooperation, bridging divides and enhancing the contribution of parliaments and parliamentarians to build a more peaceful, equitable and sustainable world. We welcome the work of the IPU to foster dialogue and cooperation on issues related to STI and we commit to continue and expand these efforts.

We note with satisfaction that the themes of science, technology and innovation permeate the important commitments adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2024, namely the Pact for the Future, the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations. We are committed to working closely with the executive branches of our governments, the United Nations system and civil society on implementing these commitments.

As representatives of the people, we parliamentarians are keenly aware of our responsibility to ensure that the benefits of STI reach all segments of society, to bridge the technological divide between and within nations, communities, genders and generations, and to find consensus on how to overcome the challenges posed by rapid technological change.

We recognize that parliamentarians are uniquely positioned to develop and implement ethical frameworks for STI governance, ensuring that scientific and technological progress aligns with human rights standards and societal values, and contributes to the well-being of all.

Parliaments must address the complex challenges of an increasingly interconnected and rapidly changing world, leveraging strategic foresight to anticipate future trends, opportunities and risks. Parliaments have an important role to set legal boundaries, establish accountability mechanisms and prevent uses of technology that lead to human rights violations, exacerbate inequalities or undermine the rule of law and democratic processes.

We must pay particular attention to the situation of women, youth and groups in vulnerable or marginalized situations who risk being left behind in the digital age, and recognize the vital role they can and should play in shaping the future of STI. Parliamentary action is crucial in empowering all sections of society to participate in and benefit from technological advancements. Parliaments must address the specific needs of these groups by embracing inclusive technological solutions that simultaneously preserve dignity, uphold rights, reduce exposure to digital risks and provide the conditions for them to realize their socioeconomic potential.

We especially commit to fostering the more substantial involvement of women and youth in STI, including in education, public health, research, innovation and technology governance, and to the effective implementation of gender-responsive and youth-inclusive STI policies by ensuring that technological development processes integrate diverse perspectives and guarantee the equal and meaningful participation of all segments of society.

We reiterate our commitment to evidence-based and efficient policymaking and to fostering a culture of scientific inquiry and innovation. We urge all States to invest in research and development, promote international science diplomacy, and adhere to global standards for responsible innovation. We advocate for increased recourse to scientific expertise in parliamentary decision-making processes as an essential mechanism for addressing complex global challenges.

We recognize the close link between STI, peace and development. The ethical and inclusive application of STI is crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, building resilient societies and strengthening accountability. Conversely, the misuse of or unequal access to technology can exacerbate existing inequalities and conflicts, or risk creating new ones.

Our focus should be on harnessing STI to tackle the underlying causes of global challenges, which are often rooted in socioeconomic exclusion, inequality, discrimination, lack of access to education and environmental degradation. We should increase our focus on leveraging technology to enhance human security, which encompasses citizens' protection by addressing essential needs such as food security, healthcare, shelter, education – including digital literacy – political security, environmental sustainability and climate action. STI can also be harnessed to anticipate and mitigate the impacts of natural hazards and public health emergencies.

We must monitor the potential risks and challenges posed by emerging technologies and take necessary and pre-emptive action to mitigate negative impacts, foster responsible innovation and ensure compliance with international standards and ethical principles. In this vein, we recognize the importance of ethical AI development, cybersecurity and digital privacy protection to ensure the peaceful use of technology that is grounded in human rights. In particular, we commit to ensuring a safe online environment to prevent harassment, bullying and cybercrime, particularly when they are gender-based. Particular attention must be paid to addressing, through regulation and targeted policy, the proliferation of misinformation, disinformation, and AI-generated content that propagates hate speech, as these can undermine public trust and threaten social cohesion.

Today's technological challenges transcend borders and demand a collective global response. As members of parliament, we agree on the importance of international cooperation in STI governance. It is only through collaborative efforts and upholding ethical standards that we can bridge the STI gap between and within nations, address growing technological risks, build digital solidarity, strengthen common security and trust to reduce tensions, find lasting solutions to establish a shared sense of security and prosperity in the digital age, and strengthen worldwide collaboration and exchange in scientific knowledge development and related technological innovations.

We reconfirm our commitment to inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation on STI issues. We emphasize the IPU's unique role in fostering global parliamentary cooperation on STI governance. We welcome the adoption of the IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology and IPU resolution on *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*. We further acknowledge the reports, recommendations and guidelines on digital transformation and AI that have been developed through the IPU's Centre for Innovation in Parliament, including the World e-Parliament Report 2024. We commit to work for the implementation of these new standards.

We pledge to take this Declaration back to our respective parliaments, disseminate the outcome of our collective work to our national authorities and seek to implement its principles through legislative, budgetary and oversight actions.

As parliamentarians, we commit to lead the way towards a more equitable, sustainable and technologically advanced world, pursuing informed, inclusive and innovative approaches to STI governance. We therefore pledge to do our utmost, individually and collectively, to harness the power of science, technology and innovation for the benefit of all humanity and the preservation of our planet

The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law

*Resolution adopted unanimously by the 149th Assembly
(Geneva, 17 October 2024)*

The 149th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Reaffirming international law, in particular the Charter of the United Nations, and *recalling* the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Recognizing that rapid advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) may provide significant opportunities and challenges for humanity, with impacts, including on human rights, experienced differently between nations,

Acknowledging that greater knowledge and understanding of AI systems is a prerequisite for informed debate and decision-making, including the following considerations:

- a. ongoing initiatives that call for a balanced, inclusive and risk-based approach to the governance of AI, as a means to achieve an open, sustainable, fair, free and secure future for all,
- b. the methods by which AI systems are trained and deployed, which have the potential to entrench existing societal prejudices, discrimination, biases and inequalities, both within developing countries as well as between developing and more developed countries,
- c. the ways in which AI can facilitate the spread of false or misleading information, discrimination, and extremism leading to misinformation, disinformation, distrust and online violence, as well as AI-facilitated gender-based violence against women, including women serving in politics, all of which undermines the credibility of democratic institutions and actors, posing significant challenges to public discourse and societal trust,

Noting that advances in AI have impacts on democracy, human rights and the rule of law, including by facilitating the spread of misinformation and disinformation which can undermine democratic institutions, incite extremism and violate personal rights to privacy and data ownership, all of which may disproportionately affect children, women and girls, as well as disabled persons,

Aware that, at the same time, AI technologies, if developed and harnessed in a responsible manner and made available to all, can have a positive impact on democracy, including through increasing the accountability and transparency of public institutions, and facilitating citizens' engagement in political processes,

Highlighting the risk of AI widening economic inequalities on a global scale,

Acknowledging that an inclusive, responsible, human-centric and evidence-based approach to setting rules that mitigate risks pertaining to the creation, development, deployment and use of AI technologies is required in order to ensure equitable policy outcomes for the entire world, including the Global South and countries which may face unique challenges caused by disparities in keeping up with the rapid pace of AI development and deployment,

Stressing that, in the absence of gender-balanced perspectives, data and decision-making, AI technologies, in particular generative AI, can create, perpetuate and amplify gender inequalities and gender-based discrimination and violence,

Noting that AI-generated deepfake material can negatively impact all women, and that for women in politics, these impacts often have the effect of silencing and excluding them from public and political life,

Concerned by the lack of comprehensive legislation, regulations and a globally agreed upon framework for the responsible creation, deployment and use of AI technology, and by the slow pace of the global community in developing these rules, and *underlining* the need for transparency and respect for democratic values in AI development,

Acknowledging the importance of regulating AI without constraining the emergence of responsibly developed and managed innovations that positively benefit humanity,

Alarmed that big technology companies have lobbied extensively to influence and set rules that may primarily benefit them, and to assert their control over training data sets and thus the technological development of AI for the foreseeable future to the detriment of the global community and the preservation of individual rights, including through the manipulation of personal data, unethical business marketing, non-socially responsible behaviour and algorithmic biases that reinforce existing inequalities and discrimination,

Noting that countries may already have existing legislation and regulations that could be adapted to meet emerging challenges and opportunities relating to AI, and that the principle of national sovereignty should be recognized in any initiative to regulate AI,

Noting also numerous international and regional initiatives to develop ethical standards and governance frameworks for AI, and that any such initiatives should employ a multi-stakeholder approach that guarantees a broad consensus across the global community,

Applauding the welcome efforts of key international organizations to assist parliamentarians and other actors in developing regulatory frameworks and policies,

1. *Calls for* increased international multi-stakeholder cooperation, collaboration, and exchange of information and experiences to ensure a united worldwide effort to maximize the benefits of AI, while mitigating risks to humanity, including through initiatives designed to reduce disparities in technological development between nations;
2. *Calls for* urgent measures to bridge the divides among and within countries in terms of digital infrastructure, connectivity and skills, including by removing digital gender barriers and scaling up international digital cooperation, as a precondition for equitable and inclusive access to AI benefits for all;
3. *Insists on* the inclusion of perspectives from, and the equal participation of, all countries of the world in debates on AI standards, frameworks and other governance mechanisms, while emphasizing the need for the active presence of the Global South;
4. *Calls upon* parliaments to effectively and transparently adopt or maintain strong legal frameworks and policies for the responsible creation, deployment and use of AI technology, and to contribute to efforts to establish global standards and frameworks;
5. *Recommends* that these legal frameworks set out requirements for transparency and information in the implementation of AI systems, affirm the accountability of the public and private entities who use them, and provide recourse for victims whose rights are violated by AI technology;
6. *Invites* parliaments, in cooperation with civil society groups, academia and research groups, to give priority to reviewing existing legislation and regulations to ensure that advances in AI technology do not result in loopholes in existing protections for democracy, human rights, the rule of law and State sovereignty;
7. *Urges* parliaments to prioritize the prevention and elimination of, and response to, all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination generated or facilitated by AI, including better content moderation, accessible and effective reporting mechanisms and the establishment of procedures to remove illegal content;
8. *Calls on* parliaments, with a view to enhancing gender mainstreaming in the development of AI, to promote legislation and policies aimed at enabling and increasing girls' and women's access to education, careers and leadership in science, technology, engineering and mathematics;
9. *Invites* parliaments to ensure that advances in AI do not result in the perpetuation of discrimination stemming from biases present in training data and algorithms;
10. *Urges* legislative action to prevent the creation and distribution of deepfake intimate images, recognizing that most of such content is pornographic in nature and disproportionately targets women and girls, as well to as to prevent the distribution of other AI-generated content that propagates hate speech or incites violence, including gender-based violence;

11. *Calls for* the development, deployment and accessibility of new and existing tools to help people verify the provenance and authenticity of AI-generated images and content, to protect data privacy, and to prevent the misuse of personal information and data;
12. *Calls upon* parliaments to promote AI systems that advance, protect and preserve linguistic and cultural diversity, taking into account multilingualism in their training data and throughout the life cycle of the AI system;
13. *Urges* parliaments to place a high priority on debates related to AI and to ensure their policy responses evolve in line with advances in AI technology, so as to ensure these responses are conducive to the well-being of humanity and the principles of sustainable development;
14. *Calls on* parliaments to strengthen their capacity to proactively address rapid technological developments, particularly in the AI field, including through: training programmes for members of parliament and staff; the establishment of specialized bodies; innovative formats for policy dialogues with the technical and academic communities, the private sector and all other stakeholders; and platforms for enhanced inter-parliamentary cooperation and sharing knowledge, good practices and solutions related to AI;
15. *Calls for* the development of effective strategies to address the impact of AI on the labour market, including education, training and measures to mitigate the effects of automation on specific job sectors and to provide support to affected individuals;
16. *Urges* parliaments to cooperate with their governments in raising the awareness of citizens on the impact of AI on democracy, human rights and the rule of law;
17. *Calls for* increased and ongoing education and capacity-building on the uses and risks of AI, including for parliamentarians, to keep pace with quickly evolving technological developments;
18. *Calls upon* parliaments to accelerate efforts to tackle information privacy violations caused by the use of unacceptable AI practices, such as AI-enabled surveillance and biometric categorization technology in unwarranted political surveillance and personal data collection, which threatens citizens' fundamental rights and individual freedoms, thereby weakening democracy and the rule of law;
19. *Urges* parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union to advocate against international decoupling of data sets and AI models in order to prevent censorship and the walling in of individual systems, and to make AI as inclusive, culturally open and nuanced as possible;
20. *Notes* the need for independent research on AI, guided by high ethical standards;
21. *Calls for* the promotion of sustainable research and development in the field of AI, encompassing innovations designed to address global challenges related to human rights, particularly in the areas of epidemic prevention, public health enhancement, educational development and climate change mitigation;
22. *Urges* the enhancement of transparency and accountability in the deployment of AI by establishing standards that require companies to disclose their data usage and decision-making processes involved in AI applications;
23. *Calls for* the development of specific cybersecurity standards for AI to safeguard systems against cyberattacks and bolster the security of personal and sensitive data;
24. *Invites* the Inter-Parliamentary Union, given the crucial role of parliaments in achieving internationally agreed AI commitments, to explore modalities of providing a parliamentary input to AI-related processes at multilateral organizations;
25. *Urges* parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union to continue to focus attention on the responsible development, deployment and use of AI, including through capacity-building initiatives and establishing linkages with relevant global initiatives, as a critical goal of their work.

Report of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

*Noted by the 149th Assembly
(Geneva, 17 October 2024)*

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security held two sittings during the 149th IPU Assembly. Ms. F. Belhirsch (Netherlands) and Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland) served as acting Chairs respectively on 14 and 16 October due to the absence of the President of the Committee, Ms. A. Kuspan (Kazakhstan), and the vacancy left by the Vice-President, Mr. M. Rezakhah (Islamic Republic of Iran).

On 14 October, after procedural items and official communications, Ms. F. Belhirsch (Netherlands) introduced the first panel discussion on *The role of parliamentarians in preventing conflicts over natural resources*. The moderator, Mr. J.-M. Rousseau, Head of the Business and Security Division at the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF), set the tone by emphasizing the role of parliamentarians in governing resource wealth, in particular their responsibility in mitigating conflicts over natural resources.

The first panellist, Ms. C. Seymour, Senior Researcher at the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding at the Graduate Institute (IHEID), provided a comprehensive analysis of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a country rich in natural resources but plagued by conflict and poor human development. She pointed out the stark contrast between the country's immense resource wealth and its low ranking on the Human Capital Index. Speaking from a political economy perspective, Ms. C. Seymour stressed the need to address the root causes of the conflict, particularly the economic drivers. She also linked the ongoing humanitarian crisis to violent resource extraction practices and advocated for honest narratives about the situation, urging parliamentarians to take proactive roles in governance to alleviate these issues.

Mr. A. Ware, Global Coordinator of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) focused on the multifaceted risks of uranium mining, including its health, environmental and territorial impacts, particularly on indigenous communities. He also discussed the proliferation risks of uranium, noting its potential use in nuclear weapons, and emphasized the need for rigorous parliamentary oversight to ensure its peaceful use. Mr. A. Ware highlighted the economic implications and long-term costs of land rehabilitation, and stressed the importance of sustainable development. He provided successful examples of parliamentary oversight, such as the Costa Rican Supreme Court's involvement in uranium mining regulation, demonstrating the importance of international cooperation.

Fourteen delegates took the floor and contributed to the discussion, focusing on various aspects of resource management. One delegate highlighted the importance of democratic processes and regional cooperation in preventing conflicts, while another stressed the need for equitable access to resources and sustainable lifestyles. Additional contributions included calls for developing recycling technologies to reduce resource dependency and proposals to establish climate action committees, particularly with a focus on enhancing women's roles in resource management. Another delegate underscored the importance of parliamentarians fostering dialogue and addressing grievances to ensure equitable resource distribution.

The session concluded with the panellists calling for collective action and the involvement of local communities in resource management, alongside honest analyses of who benefits from resource extraction. Both panellists emphasized the importance of due diligence and oversight in preventing resource-related conflicts, and of exploring success stories like Costa Rica.

Ms. F. Belhirsch (Netherlands) introduced the second panel discussion on *The role of parliamentarians in nuclear security*. The session featured three panellists and was moderated by Ms. S. Case Lackner, Senior Fellow at the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP), who highlighted the importance of nuclear security and the critical role parliamentarians play in safeguarding nuclear and radiological materials through legislation and budget oversight.

Ms. E. Buglova, Director of the Division of Nuclear Security at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), stressed the importance of a strong nuclear security regime to prevent nuclear terrorism and promote the safe use of nuclear technologies in energy, healthcare and food security. She emphasized the need for countries to adopt the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and its 2005 Amendment, as nuclear security is both a national responsibility and a contributor to global safety.

Ms. M. Lorenzo Sobrado, Head of the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Terrorism Prevention Programme, Terrorism Prevention Branch (TPB), at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) focused on the legal frameworks for nuclear security, stressing the importance of international cooperation. She outlined seven key legal instruments that address the misuse of nuclear materials and are crucial for preventing nuclear terrorism and ensuring justice. She urged parliamentarians to ratify and implement these treaties and work closely with international organizations like the IAEA and UNODC.

Ms. C. Scotto de César, Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives Policy Analyst at the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), highlighted the role of law enforcement in nuclear security, detailing INTERPOL's efforts to track incidents involving radioactive materials. She emphasized that non-State actors pose a real threat and called for stronger cooperation between law enforcement and legislators to create legal frameworks that criminalize nuclear offences and ensure international coordination.

The debate that followed involved eight delegates and covered a wide range of concerns, focusing on the role of parliamentarians in shaping and enforcing policies that promote transparency, public accountability and international cooperation. The importance of democratic processes was emphasized as crucial for managing nuclear resources and preventing conflicts. Participants highlighted the need for equitable access to energy, particularly stressing that sustainable nuclear energy can address energy shortages and contribute to economic growth, and that public education is vital to overcoming misconceptions that equate nuclear energy solely with weapons. Legal frameworks and international treaties, such as the CPPNM, were identified as key tools in preventing nuclear proliferation and ensuring cross-border security. The debate also brought attention to environmental issues, particularly the health and ecological risks associated with uranium mining, calling for stronger parliamentary oversight to ensure safe nuclear energy development and proper environmental rehabilitation. Challenges related to nuclear proliferation and the risk of non-State actors gaining access to nuclear materials were discussed, with participants urging more proactive legislative measures to criminalize illegal activities and enhance international enforcement cooperation.

The panel concluded with a call for parliamentarians to continue to strengthen nuclear security measures, ensure responsible management of nuclear materials and foster global peace.

On 16 October, the Committee, chaired by Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland), held a hearing of experts on *The role of parliaments in advancing a two-State solution in Palestine*. The purpose of the hearing was to inform members in advance of a resolution on the subject, which is scheduled for discussion and adoption at the 150th IPU Assembly in April 2025.

The hearing was introduced by a video presentation featuring two activists from the region.

Ms. M. Pundak, Co-Director of A Land for All – Two States, One Homeland, and Ms. R. Salman, Co-Director of Combatants for Peace, outlined a vision for a two-State solution grounded in the principles of self-determination, equality and sustainability. They emphasized the urgent need to end the ongoing conflict, stressed the importance of a shared future for both Israelis and Palestinians and highlighted the crucial role of the international community in seizing the opportunity to implement a two-State solution. Both underscored the importance of a people-driven peace process and called for new leadership to foster reconciliation and coexistence between the two communities.

Ms. M. Durrieu, a specialist in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and lecturer at Sciences Po Paris, emphasized that the conflict is fundamentally about land, with both sides laying claim to the same territory. She provided a comprehensive overview of the historical evolution of the two-State solution, presenting it as the only viable option to resolve the territorial dispute between Israelis and Palestinians. While initially rejected by Palestinians, she noted that over time, this solution emerged as the most realistic path forward. Ms. M. Durrieu also outlined key challenges, including the difficulty of legitimizing the Palestinian Authority, the urgent need to stop Israeli settlement expansion in the occupied territories, and the growing disillusionment among younger Palestinians who are losing faith

in the two-State solution due to ongoing violence. She stressed the importance of international organizations and parliaments in ensuring that any resolution is fair, enforceable and leads to the establishment of a legitimate, sovereign Palestinian state.

Ms. A. Chenoy, Adjunct Professor at Jindal Global University in India, and Member of the International Peace Bureau (IPB) Common Security working group, emphasized the importance of a *common security* approach, linking the two-State solution to broader principles of peace, justice and human security, while reflecting on the lessons of decolonization and non-alignment. Drawing on her experience in conflict zones and decolonization, she argued that lasting peace can only be achieved by recognizing the rights, dignity, and security of both Palestinians and Israelis, and by addressing the root causes of violence, including militarization and occupation. Ms. A. Chenoy also underscored the historical support of the Global South for a two-State solution and called for greater involvement of non-aligned countries in the peace process, advocating for solutions that go beyond traditional power politics to embrace a more inclusive, multilateral approach. She also urged the international community to bolster its support for a two-State solution and to prioritize the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people in this pursuit.

Following the expert interventions, three out of the six co-Rapporteurs for the forthcoming resolution, Mr. M. Bouchouit (Algeria), Mr. J. Buttimer (Ireland), and Ms. M. Guerra Castillo (Mexico), provided their initial reflections on the subject. They stressed the importance of maintaining a focus on human rights, international law and political will in advancing a two-State solution. Mr. Bouchouit called for fairness and humanity in addressing the plight of Palestinians, while Mr. J. Buttimer, in a recorded video, highlighted the need for mutual recognition between Israelis and Palestinians to break the cycle of violence, and emphasized the importance of trust, cooperation and courage to continue talks to build peace. Ms. M. Guerra Castillo emphasized the importance of intercultural dialogue, diplomacy and respect for international humanitarian law, urging parliaments to support a ceasefire and humanitarian aid to Gaza.

The debate that followed featured interventions from 16 delegates, parliamentarians representing various regions and one permanent observer. Key themes included the importance of international law and the critical role of parliaments in promoting diplomatic efforts for conflict resolution. While there were differing views on the two-State solution, most speakers reaffirmed their support for the two-State framework, calling for international collaboration to achieve peace. Additionally, there were recommendations to leverage artificial intelligence for positive outcomes in international security, and calls for reforms in global parliamentary systems to enhance their impact. Discussions also highlighted ongoing challenges, particularly related to actions perceived as undermining international institutions. This prompted calls to recognize Palestine as a State, emphasizing the importance of including women in peacebuilding efforts. Overall, the discussions highlighted the need for continued negotiation, multilateral cooperation and inclusive strategies to achieve a peaceful resolution, with parliaments playing a central role in these processes. A written declaration from a delegation that was directly concerned but unable to attend was made available and will be included in the summary records.

The hearing concluded with a call from panellists for parliamentarians to take proactive steps in supporting peace efforts, advocating for human dignity and fostering international collaboration to achieve a just and lasting resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

At the end of the Hearing, the Committee elected Mr. H. Mohammad (Malaysia) both as a Bureau member and as its Vice-President to complete the mandate of the Asia-Pacific Group until October 2025.

The report on the work of the Committee was presented to the Assembly at its last sitting on 17 October by Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland) as acting Chair.

The Bureau of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security met on 16 October 2024. Ten members, including the representatives of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, and the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, were present. Discussions addressed what Bureau members have been working on regarding peace and security since the last meeting, as well as their feelings and willingness to act on the proliferation of conflicts in the world. Bureau members also started thinking of potential subjects to be submitted in March 2025 to the Standing Committee. The meeting ended with a lively discussion on the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the impact of landmines on individuals and communities with Prince Mired Bin Raad Zeid Al-Hussein of Jordan, who is leading efforts to promote the universalization of the Convention.

Report of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development

*Noted by the 149th IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 17 October 2024)*

The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development held its sittings on 15 and 16 October. Both sittings were chaired by the Committee President, Mr. W. William (Seychelles).

Debate on the theme of the next resolution entitled *Parliamentary strategies to mitigate the long-lasting impact of conflicts, including armed conflicts, on sustainable development*

The theme of the next resolution was introduced by four experts: Ms. A. Gill, Team Leader, Core Government Functions and Local Governance, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Crisis Bureau; Mr. G. Connor, Programme Specialist, Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding, UNDP Crisis Bureau; Mr. M. Talhami, Strategic Programme Manager at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); and Mr. H. Born, Head of the Policy and Research Department at the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF). The co-Rapporteurs, Ms. H. Fayez (Bahrain), Ms. E. Muteka (Namibia) and Mr. R. Fogiel (Poland), were also present.

Ms. A. Gill and Mr. G. Connor from the UNDP highlighted the importance of inclusion and participation as essential for sustainable development and peace. They emphasized linking efforts at the subnational level to national processes, ensuring local voices are heard. However, growing inequalities and the rise of AI and digital technologies, which have fuelled hate speech and misinformation, complicate peacebuilding efforts and underscore the need for proactive governance. They pointed to the critical role of parliaments in combating hate speech, with the UNDP providing resources and guidelines to assist in these efforts. An example from North Macedonia was shared, where a parliamentary committee on inter-community relations has successfully promoted dialogue between ethnic groups, demonstrating how inclusive governance can foster peace.

Mr. M. Talhami from the ICRC said that modern conflicts are increasingly centred in urban areas, amplifying the complexity of humanitarian responses. He emphasized that the growing frequency and intensity of climate hazards must be integrated into planning efforts, as these risks compound the challenges faced in conflict zones. Today, nearly two billion people live in fragile environments with limited or no access to clean water and other essential services, leaving them especially vulnerable to both conflict and environmental crises.

To address these challenges, Mr. M. Talhami presented five key recommendations for the Rapporteurs' consideration. First, he stressed the importance of protecting and ensuring safe access to essential services, such as healthcare and water, during conflicts. Second, he advocated for open-ended exemptions in sanctions regimes to allow for the uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian aid. Third, he recommended securing flexible, multi-year financing that takes into account the risks posed by climate change. Fourth, he called for a shift towards forward-thinking strategies that anticipate future hazards. Lastly, he urged an all-hazard approach to emergency planning and preparedness that incorporates a wide range of potential risks, from armed conflict to natural disasters, into response frameworks.

Mr. H. Born from DCAF reminded the Committee that all governments have committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasizing the particular relevance of SDG 16, which focuses on promoting peace, justice and strong institutions. He underscored that the successful implementation of SDG 16 requires not only robust institutions but also a proactive and sustained engagement with the security sector and the military. In this context, he highlighted the critical role of parliamentary oversight in ensuring accountability and transparency within the armed forces, advocating for their inclusion in broader governance and development frameworks. This, he argued, is key to fostering stability, building trust between civilians and the military and reinforcing democratic governance.

Following the expert presentations, twenty delegates shared their countries' experience in addressing the interconnected nature of conflict and sustainable development. Delegates unanimously recognized that conflicts hinder progress towards the SDGs, often reversing gains already made. Parliamentarians were urged to advocate for sustainable development strategies that positively impact conflict prevention, response and recovery. Central to these efforts is engaging with communities, addressing their needs, and empowering them to participate in decision-making. Additionally, responses should be climate sensitive.

Delegates shared specific examples of how their countries are addressing conflict and promoting sustainable development. Many focused on efforts to engage internally with conflict-prone regions, emphasizing the importance of fostering public participation and driving economic development. One example highlighted as a best practice was the prohibition of trade in conflict minerals sourced from countries of origin. More broadly, parliamentary diplomacy and the promotion of trade relationships were seen as crucial for identifying and advancing common interests among nations.

The co-Rapporteurs addressed the Committee at the end of the sitting, thanking everyone for their contributions, which would be helpful in their work on the draft resolution.

Preparations for the Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29) in Azerbaijan

The Chair highlighted that the IPU has promoted parliamentary engagement in climate change processes for more than a decade and that the annual Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conferences (COPs) is an important vehicle for advancing climate action among parliaments. The Parliamentary Meeting at COP29 will take place on 16-17 November 2024 in the Green Zone in Baku, Azerbaijan and will, for the first time, be a two-day event.

The Rapporteur of the Parliamentary Meeting, Mr. S. Mammadov, a member of the Parliament of Azerbaijan, described his country's commitment to advancing climate action, including by investing in renewable energy. He then presented the main orientations of the preliminary draft outcome document that is expected to be adopted at the meeting.

Mr. S. Mammadov highlighted that the draft outcome document calls on parliaments to take several actions to enhance climate efforts, including: to support legislation that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, to facilitate the transition to green and renewable energy and to support the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement. Amendments to the draft outcome document were received from five countries by the deadline of 4 October 2024, and were being thoroughly considered. Parliamentarians from eight countries and from the IPU Advisory Group on Health provided additional suggestions during the discussion, including on incorporating language on green jobs, agroforestry, sustainable tourism, health-related climate impacts and climate finance.

Panel discussion: *Towards a fair global financial system: The role of parliaments in preventing corporate tax avoidance and achieving sustainable development*

The panel featured experts from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), who engaged in a discussion moderated by Ms. D. O'Neill (Australia) on how tax revenue can support the achievement of the SDGs.

It was noted that approximately USD 4 trillion is required to achieve the SDGs, and taxation can play a key role in reaching these targets. Effective taxation can generate the necessary funds for public services, promote economic growth, combat illicit financial flows, reduce inequality and foster fairness. It also has the potential to reduce reliance on financial aid.

Parliaments have a crucial role in mobilizing domestic resources, overseeing tax authorities and helping citizens understand how taxes contribute to public services and sustainable development. Parliamentarians should also share evidence on how taxes can improve service delivery for sustainable development.

Delegates strongly supported the need for action in this area, emphasizing the importance of enforcing stricter regulations, preventing corporate tax avoidance, promoting transparency and strengthening multilateral cooperation.

As companies can operate across borders without a physical presence, addressing loopholes is critical. This calls for a robust legal framework, enhanced global collaboration and transparency in information exchange. A global minimum standard of cooperation should be established, and tax incentives should be carefully evaluated for their effectiveness.

Tax evasion undermines fair competition, deepens inequality – especially for vulnerable and marginalized groups – and can negatively impact employment. Parliaments must address tax evasion and avoidance to prevent these outcomes.

Progress will depend on countries adopting transparent approaches and showing a real commitment to addressing these challenges, with a strong emphasis on prioritizing the mobilization of domestic resources.

Report of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

*Noted by the 149th IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 17 October 2024)*

The Committee held two sittings on 15 and 16 October 2024 with the President of the Committee, Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), presiding as Chair. Drawing attention to the new IPU anti-harassment policy, he opened the session and invited all present to adopt the agenda of the session and approve the summary record of the previous session, held at the 148th Assembly in Geneva in March 2024.

Financing the United Nations system: A critical perspective

This event was the first of a series to help MPs better understand how the United Nations (UN) is funded, looking at both quantitative and qualitative aspects. Presenters included Mr. P. Linnér, Programme Director at the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation; Ms. S. Gruener, Deputy Director at the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation; and Mr. B. Christiaens, Portfolio Manager, Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Thirty-one delegations were present and eight took the floor during the discussion.

The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office have formed a partnership to help the general public and decision-makers understand the UN budget process. After acknowledging that the UN budget remains somewhat opaque and unintelligible, the presenters explained the basic principles governing the process, the main sources of funding, and the constraints and gaps that impinge on the overall performance of the UN system. The presentations included a live survey of participants, which revealed a low level of familiarity with the subject matter.

The UN budget consists of a mix of core and non-core resources. Core funding includes assessed contributions, which account for only 18% of the total UN budget, and voluntary contributions that donor countries pay to various UN system agencies and programmes. Core funding gives the recipient agency the flexibility to prioritize spending in response to shifting needs on the ground. Non-core funding consists of donations earmarked for specific projects or programmes and cannot be reallocated for other purposes. Earmarked funds are given directly to each UN entity (hard earmarking) or pooled into common funds (soft earmarking), the latter being preferable to reduce transaction and reporting costs.

The current UN budget is just over \$74 billion annually, which, surprisingly, equates to 1–2% of global military spending. While the UN budget has increased in real terms from previous years (factoring in inflation), it is significantly below actual development needs, and about 40% of the total budget comes from a shortlist of five donors who have signaled plans to cut their contributions in future years. On the expenditure side, half of the budget is spent on assistance to some 42 developing countries. Finally, while most of the budget comes from government sources, a small share comes from the private sector and other non-governmental entities.

The lion's share of the UN budget is dedicated to humanitarian needs. Development assistance receives a comparatively lower level of funding. This imbalance between humanitarian and development spending leads to an underinvestment in preventing the root causes of humanitarian crises. Investing in development assistance would be vastly more efficient from a value-for-money standpoint. However, it is important to acknowledge that the growing number of conflicts around the world, along with millions of people internally displaced or forced to seek refuge in other countries, is putting a significant strain on specialized UN agencies.

A Funding Compact was recently established between the UN and its Member States, in which Member States pledged to improve the quality of funding (through pooled funding, less earmarking and long-term predictability), and the UN committed to improving transparency and cost-saving efficiencies.

The debate that followed highlighted the following key points:

- Parliaments have a key role to play in overseeing the UN budget process. This means first and foremost ensuring that their nation's assessed contributions are paid in full and on time.

- Parliamentarians need a better understanding of the UN budget process, and more discussion within the Committee is welcome. Parliaments should not hesitate to invite the UN Resident Coordinator or other UN officials for briefings.
- The current financial crisis at the UN needs to be addressed without delay to ensure continuity of support to countries in need.
- While funding for the UN needs to increase, the Organization also needs to improve efficiency and make the best use of available resources. This includes using innovative approaches and cost saving technologies.
- Understandably, donor countries of the UN will always consider their national interests when setting funding priorities, but this must be better aligned with the global mission of the UN.
- Where possible, the UN should try to increase the contribution of private donors to be relatively less reliant on public funding.

United Nations treaties: A review of ratifications and entry into force

This 30-minute segment provided a broad view of the UN treaty-making process as one of the most important expressions of multilateralism. The two presenters were Ms. M. Régimbal, Chief of Service of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) in Geneva, and Deputy Secretary General to the Conference on Disarmament; and Mr. A. Motter, Senior Advisor, Economic and Social Affairs, IPU. Thirty delegations were in attendance and six took the floor during the debate.

The presenters walked participants through the stages of the treaty-making process, including negotiation, consent, and entry into force. Each stage was broken down to show opportunities for active parliamentary engagement. This includes providing input during the negotiation process, giving a final seal of approval to a treaty negotiated at the UN, and helping translate the treaty into national legislation.

It was noted in particular that while the UN General Assembly is the principal locus for the adoption of all treaties, in the case of disarmament instruments, a special role is played by the Conference on Disarmament. Disarmament treaties often have a regional dimension, making it important for parliaments to work with others in a region to better understand the real implications of treaties or to coordinate their implementation. Unfortunately, many disarmament treaties signed by governments have not been ratified by their parliaments, which means that some treaties have never come into force or are not applicable to a large number of countries. Disarmament treaties need to be taken more seriously as they have direct implications for development, in addition to global security.

The debate that followed the presentations highlighted the following key points:

- Parliaments have a role to play in the ratification and implementation of treaties, even where the constitution establishes a strict separation of powers between executive and legislative branches. At a minimum, parliaments can help raise public awareness of a new treaty while it is being negotiated and can ask the government for regular briefings on the treaty-making process.
- International treaties that have come into force must be fully implemented in a way that is faithful to the letter and the spirit of the original text. Not all parliaments have the capacity to adopt enabling legislation, however, and may need support from the IPU or the UN.
- A good review of current disarmament treaties and how they work is available through the handbook, *Supporting Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament*, produced jointly by the IPU and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND).

The United Nations and the G20: Complementarity or redundancy?

The Chair opened the segment by posing key questions regarding the role of the G20 in global economic governance. He asked whether the G20 was filling a gap in a weakened multilateral system or merely contributing to an already crowded landscape of international organizations. He also asked where the legitimacy of the G20 comes from, and how effective it is compared to the United Nations.

Twenty-five delegations were in attendance and eight took the floor during the debate.

The presenters were Mr. B. Ellmers, Director, Sustainable Development Finance, Global Policy Forum (participating virtually from Berlin) and Ms. L. Crexell (Argentina), Vice-President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs.

In response to the Chair's questions, the presenters noted that the G20 had a soft start in 1999 as an extension of the G8 at the ministerial level, and only came of age at the level of heads of government in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis.

For years, the group was seen as lacking legitimacy as a global body because it mainly represented leading economies and left out most of the Global South. This has changed somewhat as the Group now includes the African Union. The G20 also strives to include outside constituencies (engagement groups) such as civil society (C20), the private sector (B20), labour unions (L20), parliamentarians (P20) and others who seek to influence outcomes. While the G20 countries account for most of the global economy, the G20 does not represent all members of the United Nations. The engagement groups are not equal in the eyes of the G20, which seems more receptive to input from the business community. Also, the G20's original focus on the global economy has been extended to a host of other issues where the UN remains the principal actor.

In terms of its effectiveness, the G20 has both advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side, the Group appears more nimble than the more bureaucratized UN. When heads of government convene, they not only address the official agenda, but also take the opportunity to meet bilaterally and get to know each other better, which helps to build trust and smooth over political differences. A significant drawback of the G20 is its lack of accountability, as there is no permanent Secretariat or other mechanism to track the implementation of agreed commitments. Because the G20 agenda is set by a different host country each year, there is little continuity in the work undertaken over time.

While the G20 claims special expertise on global economic issues, with economic growth as its overarching priority, the UN, through its Economic and Social Council, takes a broader sustainable development perspective that is rooted in human rights and integrates economic issues with social and environmental ones.

In reality, the UN does have a mandate to lead on global economic governance. All of the issues routinely discussed at G20 meetings are within the remit of the Economic and Financial Committee of the General Assembly as well as of the Economic and Social Council. While these bodies may be cumbersome, they can deliver on important issues like the reform of international taxes (a UN convention on international taxation is underway). Although these UN bodies have been under reform for many years, certainly more can be done to make their work more effective.

During the negotiation of the Pact for the Future, UN Member States had an opportunity to clarify their relationship with the G20 in the chapter dedicated to reforming global governance. An earlier proposal to create a coordination mechanism between the two bodies was dropped in the final text, suggesting that the UN is uneasy seeing itself on par with the G20.

The following key points emerged from the discussion with participants:

- Ideally, the UN should have a lead role in coordinating global economic governance and the G20 should be focused on implementing those UN outcomes that are more fully within the power of leading economies to deliver on. For this to happen, however, the UN would first need to strengthen its own deliberative processes.
- Parliaments are ultimately responsible for funding the UN and the G20 and for making sure that the two bodies work well together. This means asking some hard questions and looking deeper into the ways the two bodies work alone and complementarily. Every effort should be made to avoid competition and duplication of work between the two organizations.
- The P20's role needs further clarification, which may be the subject of a future Committee motion. The concerned parliaments need to contribute more actively in P20 deliberations with debates held within the relevant parliamentary committees. There needs to be a stronger institutional link between the P20 and the G20 so that the input of the parliamentary community is heard.

Sharing best practices and lessons learned: Follow-up on the first two motions of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

This 30-minute segment was intended as follow-up to two motions adopted by the Committee in the past two years: one on gender equality in the General Assembly, and another on Security Council reform.

The Chair said that the practice of adopting motions would be extended to the other three IPU Standing Committees if statutory changes were adopted during the 149th Assembly. He invited participants to report on any actions undertaken in support of the two motions.

Delegates from the United Arab Emirates, Germany, India, Thailand, and Zimbabwe took the floor to report on progress on gender equality in their own foreign service and in other government branches, including the parliament. Some interventions also highlighted the need for reforming the Security Council.

In particular, a delegate from India noted that his country has long been a pioneer in women's leadership, including at the UN, where the first female President of the General Assembly was Indian. A delegate from Germany noted that his parliament's sub-committee on UN affairs was set up precisely to discuss such reform issues, and may serve as a model for other parliaments to follow.

Enforcing UN General Assembly resolution ES-10/24 and ensuring accountability

Results of roll-call on the request of the delegation of Palestine on behalf of the Arab Group for the inclusion of an emergency item

Results

Affirmative votes.....	651	Total of affirmative and negative votes ..	1,064
Negative votes	413	Two-thirds majority.....	709
Abstentions	346		

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Albania		Absent		France		18		Oman	12		
Algeria	16			Gabon		Absent		Palestine	12		
Andorra		10		Gambia (The)		Absent		Paraguay		11	1
Angola	15			Germany		19		Peru	5		10
Argentina			16	Ghana		Absent		Philippines	20		
Armenia	10		1	Greece		10		Poland		15	
Australia		14		Guinea	10			Portugal		13	
Austria		12		Guinea-Bissau	8			Republic of Korea			17
Azerbaijan		Absent		Guyana	10			Romania			13
Bahamas		Absent		Hungary		10	2	Russian Federation	20		
Bahrain	11			Iceland		Absent		Rwanda			11
Belarus	12			India			23	San Marino			10
Belgium		10	3	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	19			Sao Tome and Principe		10	
Benin		Absent		Iraq	16			Saudi Arabia	15		
Bhutan	10			Ireland	6		6	Serbia		Absent	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	11			Israel		12		Seychelles	10		
Botswana	10			Italy		10		Slovakia		10	
Brazil			20	Jamaica		Absent		Slovenia	7	4	
Burkina Faso		Absent		Japan			20	Somalia	13		
Burundi	13			Jordan	13			South Africa	18		
Cabo Verde			10	Kenya		Absent		South Sudan			10
Cambodia			13	Latvia		11		Spain	8	8	
Cameroon		Absent		Lesotho	11			Suriname	8		2
Canada		15		Libya	12			Sweden		13	
Chad			13	Liechtenstein		10		Switzerland		12	
Chile	5	7	1	Lithuania		11		Thailand			18
China	23			Madagascar		Absent		Timor-Leste	11		
Côte d'Ivoire	15			Malawi			14	Tonga	10		
Croatia	2	9		Malaysia	15			Tunisia	13		
Cuba	13			Maldives	10			Türkiye	19		
Cyprus	2	4	5	Malta	10			Turkmenistan		Absent	
Czechia		13		Mexico		20		Uganda		Absent	
DR of the Congo			20	Monaco		Absent		Ukraine	2		13
Denmark		10		Mongolia		Absent		United Arab Emirates	13		
Djibouti	11			Montenegro		Absent		United Kingdom		18	
Dominican Rep.		Absent		Morocco	15			United Republic of Tanzania			18
Ecuador	11			Mozambique		Absent		Uzbekistan	15		
Egypt	20			Namibia	11			Viet Nam		Absent	
Equatorial Guinea	11			Nepal		Absent		Yemen	13		
Estonia		11		Netherlands		13		Zambia			14
Eswatini		Absent		New Zealand		12		Zimbabwe	13		
Ethiopia			20	Nigeria			22				
Fiji		Absent		North Macedonia	7	4					
Finland		12		Norway		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.

Response by parliamentarians to the urgent plea by the UN Secretary-General to recommit to multilateralism for global peace, justice and sustainability

Results of roll-call vote on the request of the delegations of France, United Kingdom, Germany, Netherlands, and Canada for the inclusion of an emergency item

Results

Affirmative votes..... 795	Total of affirmative and negative votes .. 1,104
Negative votes 309	Two-thirds majority..... 736
Abstentions 306	

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Albania		Absent		France	18			Oman		12	
Algeria		16		Gabon		Absent		Palestine		12	
Andorra	10			Gambia (The)		Absent		Paraguay	12		
Angola			15	Germany	19			Peru	15		
Argentina	16			Ghana		Absent		Philippines	20		
Armenia	10		1	Greece	10			Poland	15		
Australia	14			Guinea			10	Portugal	13		
Austria	12			Guinea-Bissau	4		4	Republic of Korea	17		
Azerbaijan		Absent		Guyana	10			Romania	13		
Bahamas		Absent		Hungary	12			Russian Federation		20	
Bahrain		11		Iceland		Absent		Rwanda			11
Belarus		12		India			23	San Marino	10		
Belgium	13			Iran (Islamic Republic of)		19		Sao Tome and Principe			10
Benin		Absent		Iraq		16		Saudi Arabia		15	
Bhutan			10	Ireland	12			Serbia		Absent	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	11			Israel			12	Seychelles		10	
Botswana			10	Italy	10			Slovakia	10		
Brazil	20			Jamaica		Absent		Slovenia	11		
Burkina Faso		Absent		Japan	20			Somalia		13	
Burundi			13	Jordan		13		South Africa		18	
Cabo Verde	10			Kenya		Absent		South Sudan			10
Cambodia	13			Latvia	11			Spain	16		
Cameroon		Absent		Lesotho			11	Suriname	8		2
Canada	15			Libya		12		Sweden	13		
Chad	13			Liechtenstein	10			Switzerland	12		
Chile	10		3	Lithuania	11			Thailand	18		
China		23		Madagascar		Absent		Timor-Leste			11
Côte d'Ivoire	5		10	Malawi	14			Tonga	10		
Croatia	11			Malaysia			15	Tunisia		13	
Cuba			13	Maldives		10		Türkiye	2	17	
Cyprus	11			Malta	10			Turkmenistan		Absent	
Czechia	13			Mexico	20			Uganda		Absent	
DR of the Congo			20	Monaco		Absent		Ukraine	15		
Denmark	10			Mongolia		Absent		United Arab Emirates		13	
Djibouti			11	Montenegro		Absent		United Kingdom	18		
Dominican Rep.		Absent		Morocco	15			United Republic of Tanzania	18		
Ecuador			11	Mozambique		Absent		Uzbekistan			15
Egypt		20		Namibia			11	Viet Nam		Absent	
Equatorial Guinea			11	Nepal		Absent		Yemen		13	
Estonia	11			Netherlands	13			Zambia	14		
Eswatini		Absent		New Zealand	12			Zimbabwe			13
Ethiopia			20	Nigeria	22						
Fiji		Absent		North Macedonia	10	1					
Finland	12			Norway	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.

The security and humanitarian situation in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Results of the roll-call vote on the request of the delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the inclusion of an emergency item

Results

Affirmative votes.....	121	Total of affirmative and negative votes ..	745
Negative votes	624	Two-thirds majority.....	497
Abstentions	665		

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

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Mobilizing parliamentarians for the protection of children in armed conflicts to avoid risks, suffering and consequences

**Results of roll-call vote on the request of the delegations of Argentina, Chile, Peru,
Mexico, Brazil and Guyana for the inclusion of an emergency item**

R e s u l t s

Affirmative votes.....	709	Total of affirmative and negative votes ..	1,029
Negative votes	320	Two-thirds majority.....	686
Abstentions	381		

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Albania		Absent		France	18			Oman		12	
Algeria		16		Gabon		Absent		Palestine		12	
Andorra	10			Gambia (The)		Absent		Paraguay	12		
Angola	15			Germany	19			Peru	15		
Argentina	16			Ghana		Absent		Philippines	20		
Armenia	11			Greece	10			Poland	15		
Australia	14			Guinea			10	Portugal	13		
Austria	12			Guinea-Bissau	8			Republic of Korea	17		
Azerbaijan		Absent		Guyana	10			Romania	13		
Bahamas		Absent		Hungary	12			Russian Federation		20	
Bahrain		11		Iceland		Absent		Rwanda			11
Belarus		12		India			23	San Marino			10
Belgium	13			Iran (Islamic Republic of)		19		Sao Tome and Principe			10
Benin		Absent		Iraq		16		Saudi Arabia		15	
Bhutan			10	Ireland	12			Serbia		Absent	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	11			Israel			12	Seychelles		10	
Botswana			10	Italy	10			Slovakia	10		
Brazil	20			Jamaica		Absent		Slovenia	11		
Burkina Faso		Absent		Japan	10		10	Somalia			13
Burundi			13	Jordan		13		South Africa		18	
Cabo Verde	10			Kenya		Absent		South Sudan			10
Cambodia			13	Latvia	11			Spain	16		
Cameroon		Absent		Lesotho			11	Suriname	10		
Canada	15			Libya		12		Sweden	13		
Chad			13	Liechtenstein	10			Switzerland	12		
Chile	13			Lithuania	11			Thailand	18		
China	23			Madagascar		Absent		Timor-Leste			11
Côte d'Ivoire			15	Malawi			14	Tonga	10		
Croatia	11			Malaysia			15	Tunisia		13	
Cuba			13	Maldives		10		Türkiye		19	
Cyprus	11			Malta	10			Turkmenistan		Absent	
Czechia	13			Mexico	8	8	4	Uganda		Absent	
DR of the Congo			20	Monaco		Absent		Ukraine	15		
Denmark	10			Mongolia		Absent		United Arab Emirates		13	
Djibouti		11		Montenegro		Absent		United Kingdom	18		
Dominican Rep.		Absent		Morocco			15	United Republic of Tanzania			18
Ecuador			11	Mozambique		Absent		Uzbekistan			15
Egypt		20		Namibia			11	Viet Nam		Absent	
Equatorial Guinea			11	Nepal		Absent		Yemen		13	
Estonia	11			Netherlands	13			Zambia	14		
Eswatini		Absent		New Zealand	12			Zimbabwe		13	
Ethiopia			20	Nigeria			22				
Fiji		Absent		North Macedonia	10	1					
Finland	12			Norway	12						

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Response by parliamentarians to the urgent plea by the UN Secretary-General to recommit to multilateralism for global peace, justice and sustainability

*Resolution adopted unanimously by the 149th IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 17 Octobre 2024)*

The 149th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Deeply concerned that, at the United Nations General Assembly on 24 September 2024, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said: “Our world is in a whirlwind. We are in an era of epic transformation – facing challenges unlike any we have ever seen – challenges that demand global solutions. Yet geo-political divisions keep deepening. The planet keeps heating. Wars rage with no clue how they will end. And nuclear posturing and new weapons cast a dark shadow. We are edging towards the unimaginable – a powder keg that risks engulfing the world”, echoing his warning just two years earlier, on 20 September 2022, when he underscored his increasing despair at the state of global affairs, saying: “Our world is in big trouble. Divides are growing deeper, inequalities are growing wider, challenges are spreading faster... We need hope... We need action across the board”,

Alarmed that the UN Secretary-General has also consistently described numerous times in recent years international action on major challenges as being “paralyzed by dysfunction and held hostage to geopolitical tensions”,

Fully comprehending the UN Secretary-General’s concerns of a world destabilized by interconnected crises driven by impunity, inequality and uncertainty, which threaten global stability and solidarity and undermine the collective commitment to the principles of multilateralism,

Comprehending the dire circumstances facing the world, which motivated the UN Secretary-General to call on the international community to mobilize collectively to address these crises, uphold human rights and work towards sustainable solutions,

Preoccupied by the erosion of global commitments to democratic values and universal human rights,

1. *Reaffirms* its unwavering support for multilateralism, both through the United Nations system and other key global and regional institutions, and its attachment to an international order based on the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as laid out in the Pact for the Future;
2. *Fully respects* that the United Nations remains the cornerstone of the multilateral system and of international cooperation and *pledges* its full support to its mission through a deepening cooperation;
3. *Highlights* the gravity of the challenges the global community is facing, from a growing number of international conflicts to the consequences of climate change and the risk of pandemics, as well as other global threats like famine and food insecurity, resulting in a multiplication of humanitarian crises;
4. *Emphasizes* the urgent need for a collective response, founded on renewed political will, to cooperate at the international level and to share responsibilities across geopolitical divisions, to build a more peaceful world and create a better future for current and succeeding generations;
5. *Calls for* a significant concerted effort by the international community, including the IPU membership, to achieve:

- a. complete rejection of the indiscriminate targeting by armed forces of civilians, wherever they may be, particularly emergency personnel, health and education workers, and medical, education and other public infrastructure, which represents a grave breach of international humanitarian law based on the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols;
 - b. the end of sexual violence, war crimes against women and girls in international and domestic conflicts; greater recognition of the insidious impact of gender discrimination and the undermining of women's rights; and the identification of urgent remedies to address these phenomena;
 - c. concerted action to end the appalling impact of conflict on children, who are experiencing unacceptable levels of death and injury in war, forced displacement and kidnapping, loss of education and economic opportunity, and the wanton destruction of their families and wider communities;
6. *Expresses its full commitment to:*
- a. strengthen multilateralism by working tirelessly to uphold and reinforce the multilateral frameworks that are essential for addressing global challenges, including undertaking the necessary reforms to ensure the legitimacy and efficiency of the multilateral system, such as: the expansion of the membership of the Security Council, ensuring fair and balanced representation of all regions of the globe; the modernization of UN peacekeeping tools in compliance with the New Agenda for Peace; and the reform of international financial institutions;
 - b. promote equity and justice by advocating for food security and fair access to resources, including water and health supplies, and strive to bridge the gaps which perpetuate inequality and poverty to ensure that no one is left behind, especially the most vulnerable in our communities, particularly women and girls, people with disabilities and the elderly;
 - c. tackle the climate crisis by pursuing ambitious climate action in line with the Paris Agreement, fully appreciating that the urgency of the situation requires immediate and sustained efforts to reduce emissions and support climate resilience, particularly through financial support for developing countries;
 - d. defend the rights of all people by being champions for the protection and promotion of universal human rights, ensuring that the fundamental freedoms and dignity of all individuals are respected and upheld, including by rebuilding faith in the integrity of independent accountability and human rights institutions;
 - e. call for action against impunity for international crimes;
 - f. rebuild trust by addressing misinformation on both social and traditional media and by addressing the new challenges posed by rapidly developing advances in artificial intelligence and other technologies;
 - g. foster inclusive dialogue, particularly encompassing the most vulnerable in our societies, to enhance global prospects for cooperation based on collective values, shared principles and common objectives in the interests of all peoples;
7. *Resolves to raise awareness that a recommitment to the cause of multilateralism and the collective efforts of the international community through the United Nations and other global institutions is a critical move in stepping back from the brink of a geopolitical abyss of increasingly violent conflict, social injustice and economic decline, which, without a change in course, threatens all countries;*

8. *Underscores* the full relevance of the founding principles of the IPU in its 135th year of existence, in favour of the pursuit of peace and cooperation through worldwide parliamentary dialogue, and *reaffirms* its commitment to deepening parliamentary cooperation with the United Nations and other multilateral institutions;
9. *Highlights* the obligations of Member Parliaments to ensure legislators hold to account their respective national governments to show full respect for the Charter of the United Nations, redouble their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and to fully implement the newly adopted Pact for the Future, which also seeks to deepen cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations;
10. *Reaffirms* its commitment to the defence of the principles of peace, human rights, dignity, equality, justice and solidarity, and *confirms* the determination of Member Parliaments to play a key role in navigating the complexities of current crises, to recommit to the purposes and principles of multilateralism, and to contribute to building a more resilient, just and sustainable world for the benefit of every nation and the constituents of all parliamentarians.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS ***LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS***

Dr./Dr Tulia Ackson
President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
Speaker of the National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania
Présidente de l'Union interparlementaire
Présidente de l'Assemblée nationale de la République-Unie de Tanzanie

Mr./M. Martin Chungong
Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
Secrétaire général de l'Union interparlementaire

I. MEMBERS – MEMBRES**ALBANIA – ALBANIE**

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Mr. Florenc SPAHO	Member of Parliament (SP)
Ms. Mesila DODA	Member of Parliament (C)
Ms. Monika KRYEMADHI	Member of Parliament (C)
Mr. Xhelal MZIU	Member of Parliament (C)
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Mr. Genci GOLI Secretary of the delegation	Director, Parliament
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H. E. Mrs. Vasilika HYSI Ambassador	Permanent Representative of Albania to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva
Mrs. Miranda PISTOLI	First Secretary of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Albania to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva
C Democratic Party of Albania	
SP Socialist Party of Albania	

ALGERIA – ALGÉRIE

M. Brahim BOUGHALI Chef de la délégation	Président de l'Assemblée populaire nationale
M. Ahmed KHARCHI Président du groupe UIP Membre du Comité exécutif	Vice-président du Conseil de la nation Membre, Commission des affaires juridiques et administratives
M. Monder BOUDEN Président du Groupe Geo Politique Afrique Membre du Groupe consultatif de haut niveau sur la lutte contre le terrorisme et l'extrémisme violent Président du groupe Africain	Vice-président de l'Assemblée populaire nationale Membre de l'Assemblée populaire nationale Membre, Affaires étrangères (RND)
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RND Rassemblement National Démocratique

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CC Ciutadans Compromesos

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Member, Family, Childhood and Social Action
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Ms. Nildeice BARRICA Secretary of the delegation	Adviser, National Assembly
Ms. Silvia SITA Secretary of the delegation	Adviser, National Assembly
MPLA	The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
UNITA	The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
PHA	Humanist Party of Angola

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Ms. Lucila CREXELL Vice-President, Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs	Member of the Senate Secretary, Mining, Energy and Fuels Committee Member, Foreign Affairs Committee (MPN)
Mr. Juan de Dios CINCUNEGUI	Adviser, Chamber of Deputies
Ms. Lucía AGUERRE	Scientific Research Unit Coordinator National Congress Library, Chamber of Deputies
PRO	Propuesta Republicana
GEN	Generación Para un Encuentro Nacional
MPN	Movimiento Popular Neuquino

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Mr. Davit ARAKELYAN	Secretary General of the National Assembly
Mr. Mamikon MARGARYAN	Adviser, National Assembly
Mr. Movses HARUTYUNYAN	Press secretary of the President, National Assembly
Mr. Tigran SEIRANIAN	Director, National Assembly
Ms. Zabela GHAZARYAN Secretary of the delegation	Adviser, National Assembly
CC Civil Contract	

AUSTRALIA – AUSTRALIE

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Ms. Deborah O'NEILL Member of the Committee to Promote Respect of International Humanitarian Law	Member of the Senate (ALP) Chair, Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Delegated Legislation; Member, Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Mr. Graham PERRETT	Member of the House of Representatives (ALP) Chair, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works; Member, Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Ms. Linda REYNOLDS Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians	Member of the Senate (LP) Deputy Chair, Joint Statutory Committee on Public Accounts and Audit; Member, Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Mr. Warren ENTSCH	Member of the House of Representatives (LNP) Deputy Chair, Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia
Ms. Claressa SURTEES	Clerk, House of Representatives
Mr. Charlie HIGGINS	Chief of Staff, House of Representatives
Ms. Jane THOMSON Secretary of the delegation	Committee Secretary, Senate
ALP Australian Labor Party LP Liberal Party of Australia LNP Liberal National Party of Queensland	

AUSTRIA – AUTRICHE

Mr. Andreas MINNICH Leader of the Delegation	Member of the National Council (ÖVP)
Mr. Christoph MATZNETTER	Member of the National Council Chairperson, Foreign Affairs Committee (SPÖ)
Mr. Hubert FUCHS	Member of the National Council (FPÖ)
Ms. Maria HUBER	Member of the Federal Council (GRÜNE)

Mr. Alexis WINTONIAK

Secretary General of the National Council

Mr. Matthias MATUSCHEK
Secretary of the delegation

Adviser, National Council

Ms. Désirée SCHWEITZER
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations and other international organizations in Geneva

ÖVP Austrian Peoples Party
 SPÖ Social Democratic Party
 FPÖ Austrian Freedom Party
 GRÜNE The Green Party

AZERBAIJAN – AZERBAÏDJANMs. Sahiba GAFAROVA
Leader of the Delegation

Speaker of the Milli Majlis (YAP)

Mr. Soltan MAMMADOV

Member of the Milli Majlis
Member, Healthcare Committee

Ms. Sevil MIKAYILOVA
 Member of the Executive Committee
 Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

Member of the Milli Majlis
 Member, Family and Women's and Children's Affairs
 Committee; Member, Foreign and Interparliamentary
 Relations Committee

Ms. Amina AGHAZADA
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Member of the Milli Majlis
 Member, Law Policy and State-Building Committee

Mr. Rizvan NABIYEV

Member of the Milli Majlis

Mr. Teymur TAGHIYEV

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PS Parti Socialiste
MR Mouvement Réformateur
Open VLD Flemish Liberal Democrats

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Secrétaire général administratif de l'Assemblée
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UPR Union Progressiste le Renouveau
BR Broc Républicain
LD Les Démocrates

BHUTAN – BHOUTAN

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Mr. Kenan HODŽIĆ	Adviser, House of Representatives
Ms. Marija ČOSIĆ	Adviser, House of Representatives
NIP People and Justice (Narod i Pravda) SDP Social Democratic Party HDZ Croatian Democratic party	

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BDP Botswana Democratic Party	

BRAZIL – BRÉSIL

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PP	Progressives
PSD	Social Democratic Party
Republicans	Republicans
Uniao	Uniao
PL	Liberal Party

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PAICV	African Party of Independence of Cabo Verde

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RDPC	Rassemblement Démocratique du Peuple Camerounais
UNDP	Union Nationale pour la Démocratie et le Progrès

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LIB	Liberal Party of Canada
BQ	Bloc Québécois
ISG	Independent Senators Group
NDP	New Democratic Party
CPC	Conservative Party of Canada

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Pro Secretary-General of the Chamber of Deputies

PSC	Partido Social Cristiano
FA	Broad Front Party
UDI	Independent Democratic Union
RN	National Renewal Party
EVOP	Political Evolution Party
PC	Communist Party
PPD	Partido por la Democracia
IND	Independent Party
PS	Socialist Party

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HDZ	Croatian Democratic Union

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STAN
Liberal
ODS
ANOMayors and Independents Caucus
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A/A-UNC	Action des Alliés et Union pour la Nation Congolaise
UDPS	Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social
AUN	Action pour l'Unité Nationale
MEDR	Mouvement des Ecologistes pour le Développement Responsable

DENMARK – DANEMARK

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EL	The Red-Green Alliance
V	The Liberal Party
S	The Social Democratic Party

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RPP Rassemblement Populaire pour le Progrès
FRUD Front pour la Restauration de l'Unité et la Démocratie
UDJ Union pour la Démocratie et la Justice

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC – RÉPUBLIQUE DOMINICAINE

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Member of the Board of the Forum of Young
Parliamentarians

Member of the National Assembly (RC)

Ms. Esther Adelina CUESTA SANTANA
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on
Sustainable Development
Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

Member of the National Assembly (RC)

RC Revolucion Ciudana

EGYPT – ÉGYPTE

Mr. Hanafy GEBALY
Leader of the Delegation

Speaker of the House of Representatives

Mr. Karim DARWISH
Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions
Vice-President of the Delegation

Member of the House of Representatives
Chairman of the Foreign Relations committee

Ms. Aida Nassif AYYOUB AWADALLAH
2nd Vice-President of the Bureau of Women
Parliamentarians

Member of the Senate
Secretary of the Foreign, Arab and African Affairs
committee (Liberal)

Mr. Hazem ELGENDY

Member of the House of Representatives
Member, Committee of Industry

Ms. Sahar ATTIA
President of the Working Group on Science and
Technology

Member of the House of Representatives
Member, Tourism and Civil Aviation committee

Mr. Abanoub AZIZ

Member of the House of Representatives
Member, Economic Affairs Committee (Liberal)

Mr. Ahmed MANAA	Secretary General of the House of Representatives
Mr. Haytham NOURELDIN	Director, House of Representatives
Mr. Moataz HASSAN	Director, House of Representatives
Mr. Mohamed WAGIH	Director, House of Representatives
Mr. Mohamed HOSNY ELBARBARY	Deputy Director, House of Representatives
Liberal Future's Nation Party	

EQUATORIAL GUINEA – GUINÉE ÉQUATORIALE

Mr. Atanasio-Ela NTUGU NSA Leader of the Delegation	Member of the Senate Secretary of the Senate Bureau, Permanent Committee on Sustainable Development; Member, Permanent Committee on Democracy and Human Rights (PDGE)
Ms. Amparo MELE COLIFA	Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PDGE)
Ms. Inocencia Constanca MOCACHE EYEMAM	Member of the Senate Member, Permanent Committee on Sustainable Development; Member, Permanent Committee on Women Parliamentarians (PDGE)
Mr. Jesús Evuy MONSUY NSUE	Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PDGE)
Mr. Bienvenido-Ekua ESONO ABE Secretary of the delegation	Secretary General of the Chamber of Deputies
Mr. Jesús OBAMA NZANG Secretary of the Group	Secretary General of the Senate
PDGE Partido Democrático de Guinea Ecuatorial	

ESTONIA – ESTONIE

Ms. Maris LAURI Leader of the Delegation President of the IPU Group	Member of the Estonian Parliament Chairman, Security Authorities Surveillance Select Committee; Member, Finance Committee (REF)
Mr. Toomas KIVIMÄGI	Vice-President of the Estonian Parliament (REF)
Ms. Helle-Moonika HELME	Member of the Estonian Parliament Member, Cultural Affairs Committee (EKRE)
Ms. Helmen KÜTT	Member of the Estonian Parliament Member, Social Affairs Committee (SOC)
Mr. Peeter TALI	Member of the Estonian Parliament Chairman, European Union Affairs Committee Member, National Defence Committee (E200)
Mr. Antero HABICHT	Secretary General of the Estonian Parliament
Ms. Enel OTSTAVEL	Adviser, Estonian Parliament
REF Reform Party	
EKRE Estonian Conservative People's Party	
SOC Social Democratic Party	
E200 Estonia 200	

ESWATINI

Ms. Lindiwe Thulile DLAMINI Leader of the Delegation	President of the Senate Member, Prime Minister's Office Portfolio Committee Member, Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Portfolio Committee
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Mr. Mshengu Victor DLAMINI	Member of the House of Assembly Member, Agriculture Portfolio Committee Member, Housing Portfolio Committee
Ms. Lindiwe Patricia NGWENYA	Member of the Senate Chairperson, IPU Committee; Member, Finance Committee; Member, Commerce, Labour, Works and Natural Resources
Mr. Sandile NXUMALO	Member of the House of Assembly Member, IPU Committee; Chairperson, Health Portfolio Committee
Ms. Zanele Nomsa MASHABA Member, Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians	Member of the House of Assembly Member, Women Caucus; Vice Chairperson, Home Affairs Portfolio Committee; Member Housing and Public Service Portfolio Committee, Deputy Prime Minister (Alternate)
Mr. Lunga Vulindlela DLAMINI	Adviser, Senate

ETHIOPIA – ÉTHIOPIE

Mr. Agegnehu Teshager GESSESSE Leader of the Delegation President of the IPU Group	President of the House of the Federation
Ms. Bali TSEHAY	Member of the House of the Federation
Mr. Gonda Hailu EFA	Member of the House of the Federation
Mr. Mihretu GIDI	Member of the House of People's Representatives (PP)
Mr. Tesfaye DARA	Member of the House of People's Representatives (PP)
Ms. Mesrak YETNEBERK	Secretary General of the House of People's Representatives
Mr. Olango TIGLU MELESE	Secretary General of the House of the Federation
Ms. Gelaw Haymanot YENENEH	Adviser, House of the Federation
PP Prosperity Party	

FIJI – FIDJI

Mr. Naiqama T. LALABALAVU Leader of the Delegation	Speaker of Parliament Chairperson, Select Committee on Standing Orders Chairperson, Select Committee on Business; Chairperson, Select Committee on House Affairs
Ms. Alitia Vakatai Bavou CIRIKIYASAWA BAINIVALU	Member of Parliament Member, Standing Orders Committee; Member, House Committee (PAP)
Mr. Inia Batikoto SERUIRATU	Member of Parliament Leader of the Opposition (FFP)
Ms. Jeanette Tanari Terubea EMBERSON Secretary of the delegation, Secretary of the Group	Clerk of Parliament
Ms. Neomai Bale DOLOKOTO Secretary of the delegation	Senior Media Officer, Parliament
Mr. Senitieli Ratumira WAINIU Secretary of the delegation	Manager, Inter-Parliamentary Relations & Protocol Parliament
PAP People's Alliance Party	
FFP Fiji First Party	

FINLAND – FINLANDE

Mr. Ari KOPONEN
Leader of the Delegation
President of the IPU Group

Member of Parliament
Vice-President, Education and Culture Committee
Member, Legal Affairs Committee (PS)

Ms. Anne KALMARI

Member of Parliament
Vice-Chair, Agriculture and Forestry Committee;
Member, Foreign Affairs Committee (Kesk)

Mr. Markku EESTILÄ

Member of Parliament
Chair, Agriculture Subcommittee; Member, Finance
Committee (Kok)

Ms. Sanna ANTIKAINEN

Member of Parliament
Member, Grand Committee; Deputy Member, Foreign
Affairs Committee (PS)

Ms. Mai KIVELÄ

Member of Parliament
Member, Grand Committee; Member, Environment
Committee (Vas)

Mr. Antti PELTTARI

Secretary General of Parliament

Ms. Outi LEHTIMAKI
Secretary of the delegation

Assistant

Mr. Teemu VUOSIO
Adviser, Secretary of the Group

Adviser

PS The Finns Party
Kesk Centre Party
Kok National Coalition Party
Vas Left Alliance
PS The Finns Party

FRANCE

M. Xavier IACOVELLI
Chef de délégation
Président du groupe UIP
Membre du Comité exécutif

Membre du Sénat
Vice-président, Commission des affaires sociales
(RDPI)

M. Etienne BLANC
Membre du Comité des droits de l'homme des
parlementaires

Membre du Sénat
Membre, Commission des affaires étrangères, de la
défense et des forces armées (LR)

Mme Florence BLATRIX CONTAT

Membre du Sénat
Membre, Commission des affaires européennes ;
Membre, Commission du Finance (SER)

Mme Laetitia SAINT-PAUL
Membre du groupe consultatif de haut niveau sur la
lutte contre le terrorisme et l'extrémisme violent

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale
Vice-présidente, Commission des affaires étrangères
(HOR)

M. Louis-Jean DE NICOLAY
Membre du Comité sur les questions relatives au
Moyen-Orient

Membre du Sénat
Membre, Commission de l'aménagement du territoire et
du développement durable ; Membre, Commission des
affaires européennes (LR)

Mme Marie-Noëlle BATTISTEL

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale
Vice-présidente, Commission des affaires économiques
(PS)

Mme Virginie DUBY-MULLER

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale
Membre de la Commission des affaires culturelles et de
l'éducation (DR)

Mme Véronique RIOTTON
Membre du Bureau des femmes parlementaires

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale
Membre, Commission des affaires culturelles et de l'éducation (ENS)

Mme Capucine CAPON
Secrétariat de l'ASGP

Administratrice de l'Assemblée nationale

Mme Cécile LAMBRECQ
Secrétaire de la délégation

Conseillère, Sénat

Mme Claire GLOAGUEN
Secrétaire de la délégation

Administratrice, Assemblée nationale

M. Eric TAVERNIER

Secrétaire général du Sénat

M. Jean-Luc LALA

Directeur, Assemblée nationale

Mme Karine VELASCO
Secrétariat de l'ASGP

Assistante de Direction et de gestion, Assemblée nationale

M. Philippe DELIVET

Directeur, Sénat

RDPI Rassemblement des Démocrates, Progressistes et Indépendants
DR Droite Rêpublicaine
LR Les Républicains
HOR Horizons et indépendants
PS Socialistes et apparentés
SER Socialiste, Écologiste et Républicain
ENS Ensemble pour la République

GABON

M. Jean-François NDONGOU

Président de l'Assemblée nationale de la transition (PDG)

M. Gabriel MALLY

Vice-président de l'Assemblée nationale de la transition

Mme Huguette TSONO

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale de la transition

M. Mesmin Boris NGABIKOUMOU WADA

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale de la transition

M. Patrick NDONGO
Membre de l'ASGP

Secrétaire général, Assemblée nationale de la transition

M. Ghislain Claude ESSABE
Secrétaire de la délégation
Secrétaire du Groupe

Directeur, Assemblée nationale de la transition

M. John William YOUNBI

Protocole, Assemblée nationale de la transition

PDG Parti Démocratique Gabonais

GAMBIA (THE) – GAMBIE

Mr. Seedy S.K NJIE
Leader of the Delegation

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly (NPP)

Mr. Assan TOURAY

Member of the National Assembly (UDP)

Ms. Fatou CHAM

Member of the National Assembly (UDP)

Mr. Kebba JALLOW

Member of the National Assembly (NPP)

Mr. Musa CHAM

Member of the National Assembly (PDOIS)

Mr. Sainey KONTEH
Secretary of the delegation

Deputy Director, National Assembly

NPP National Peoples Party

UDP United Democratic Party
PDOIS Peoples Democratic Organization for Independence and Socialism

GERMANY – ALLEMAGNE

Mr. Volkmar KLEIN Leader of the Delegation	Member of the German Bundestag Member, Committee for Economic Cooperation and Development (CDU/CSU)
Mr. Andreas LAREM	Member of the German Bundestag Deputy Chair, Subcommittee on United Nations, International Organizations and Civilian Crisis Prevention; Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs (SPD)
Ms. Bettina LUGK	Member of the German Bundestag Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs; Member, Subcommittee on Cultural and Education Policy Abroad (SPD)
Mr. Axel SCHÄFER	Member of the German Bundestag Member, Committee on European Union Affairs (SPD)
Mr. Nicolas ZIPPELIUS	Member of the German Bundestag Member, Committee for Economic Cooperation and Development; Member, Committee on Digital Affairs (CDU/CSU)
Mr. Ottmar VON HOLTZ	Member of the German Bundestag (Member, Committee for Economic Cooperation and Development; Member, Subcommittee on United Nations, International Organizations and Civilian Crisis Prevention Green Party/Les Verts)
Mr. Ulrich LECHTE	Member of the German Bundestag Member, Foreign Affairs Committee; Alternate member, Subcommittee on United Nations, International Organizations and Civilian Crisis Prevention (FDP)
Mr. Malte KAUFMANN	Member of the German Bundestag Member, Committee on Economic Affairs; Alternate member, Committee for Economic Cooperation and Development (AfD)
Ms. Silke ALBIN Member of the ASGP	Deputy Secretary General for International Affairs of the German Bundestag Director General for External Relations, Europe and Analysis
Mr. Georg KLEEMANN Member of the ASGP	Deputy Secretary General of the German Bundesrat
Ms. Katalin ZÁDOR Secretary of the delegation	Adviser, German Bundestag
Ms. Claudia BRAMMER Assistant to the delegation	Adviser, German Bundestag
Ms. Katharina STASCH Ambassador	Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations and international organizations in Geneva
Mr. Lars-Uwe KETTNER	Federal Foreign Office
CDU/CSU SPD AfD Green Party / Les Verts FDP	Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union Social Democratic Party Alternative for Germany Bündnis90/Die Grünen Free Democratic Party

GHANA

Mr. Joseph OSEI-OWUSU Leader of the delegation	First Deputy Speaker of Parliament Member, Privileges Committee, Member, Appointments Committee (NPP)
Mr. Ahmed IBRAHIM	Member of Parliament Member, Special Budget Committees; Member, Committee on Communications (NDC)
Ms. Angela Oforiwa ALORWU-TAY	Member of Parliament Member, Special Budget Committee; Member, Local Government and Rural Development Committee (NDC)
Mr. Emmanuel MARFO	Member of Parliament Chairman, Environment Science and Technology Committee; Member, Gender Committee (NPP)
Mr. Habib IDDRISU	Member of Parliament Member, Mines and Energy Committee; Member, Business Committee (NPP)
Mr. Osei KYEI-MENSAH-BONSU	Member of Parliament Parliament; Chairperson, Special Budget Committee Chairperson, House Committee (NPP)
Ms. Patricia APPIAGYEI	Member of Parliament Member, Special Budget Committee; Member, Lands and Forestry Committee (NPP)
Ms. Rita Naa Odoley SOWAH	Member of Parliament Member, Youth, Sports and Culture Committee; Member, Gender and Children Committee (NDC)
Mr. Ebenezer Ahumah DJIETROR	Deputy Clerk
Mr. Isaac Larthey Annan	Adviser
Mr. Jonathan Rexford MAGNUSEN	Adviser
Mr. Leslie Lloyd MCDANQUAH	Deputy Director
NDC National Democratic Congress NPP New Patriotic Party	

GREECE – GRÈCE

Ms. Dionysia-Theodora AVGERINOPOULOU Vice-President of the Executive Committee Leader of the Delegation	Member of the Hellenic Parliament Chairwoman, Special Permanent Committee on Environmental Protection; Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Water Resources (ND)
Mr. Vasileios BAGIOKOS Secretary General	Secretary General of the Hellenic Parliament
Ms. Aikaterini KARTSAKLI Secretary of the delegation	Deputy Director, Hellenic Parliament
Ms. Thalia PAPADOPOULOU	Parliamentary staff, Hellenic Parliament
ND New Democracy PASOK-KINAL Movement for Change PASOK-KINAL	

GUINEA

Mr. Dansa KOUROUMA Leader of the Delegation	Speaker of the Transitional National Council
Mr. Seny Facinet SYLLA	Deputy Speaker of the Transitional National Council

Mr. Aboubabcar DRAME

Adviser

GUINEA BISSAU

Mr. Octavio LOPES

Member of the National Assembly

Ms. Ruth MONTEIRO

Adviser

GUYANA – GUYANAMr. Manzoor NADIR
Leader of the DelegationSpeaker of the National Assembly;
Chairperson, Parliamentary Management Committee;
Chairperson, Assembly Committee

Mr. Mohabir NANDLALL

Member of the National Assembly;
Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs; Member,
Parliamentary Management Committee; Chairperson,
Parliamentary Standing Committee for Constitutional
Reform (PPP/C)Ms. Vindhya PERSAUD
Member of the Bureau of Women ParliamentariansMember of the National Assembly;
Minister of Human Services and Social Security;
Chairperson, Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on
Social Services; Member, Committee on Appointments
(PPP/C)

Ms. Geeta CHANDAN-EDMOND

Member of the National Assembly; Member,
Parliamentary Standing Committee for Constitutional
Reform; Member, Parliamentary Management
Committee (APNU/AFC)Ms. Carleeta CHARLES
Secretary of the delegation

Parliamentary Executive Officer, National Assembly

His Excellency Dr. Leslie S. Ramsammy

Ambassador, Permanent Representative

APNU/AFC
PPP/CA Partnership For National Unity + Alliance For Change
People's Progressive Party/Civic**HUNGARY – HONGRIE**Mr. Mihály BALLA
Leader of the Delegation
President of the IPU GroupMember of the National Assembly
President of the Hungarian IPU Group
Vice-Chair of Committee for Foreign Affairs (Fidesz)

Ms. Mónika Éva BARTOS

First Vice-President of the Hungarian IPU Group
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Affairs; Member, Committee for Social Affairs (Fidesz)Mr. László TOROCZKAI
Vice-President of the Hungarian IPU Group

Member of the National Assembly (MH)

Mr. Dávid BEDŐ

Member of the National Assembly
Vice-President of the Hungarian IPU Group
(Momentum)

Mr. György SUCH

Director General of the National Assembly
Secretary General of the National AssemblyMs. Katalin SOMFAINÉ ÁDÁM
Secretary of the GroupHead of Office of the Hungarian IPU Group,
National AssemblyFidesz
Momentum
MHFidesz
Momentum Movement
Mi Hazánk

ICELAND – ISLANDE

Ms. Hildur SVERRISDÓTTIR
Leader of the Delegation

Member of Parliament
Member, Constitutional and Supervisory Committee

Mr. Jóhann Friðrik FRÍÐRIKSSON

Member of Parliament Chair, Foreign Affairs
Committee; Member, Economic Affairs and Trade
Committee (C)

Ms. Thorunn SVEINBJARNARDÓTTIR

Member of Parliament
Member, Environment and Communication Committee;
Member, Constitutional and Supervisory Committee
(SP)

Ms. Arna Gerdur BANG
Secretary of the delegation

Adviser

C Progressive Party
SP Social Democratic Alliance

INDIA – INDE

Mr. Om BIRLA
Leader of the Delegation
President of the IPU Group

Speaker of the Lok Sabha
Chairperson, Business Advisory Committee

Mr. Harivansh SINGH

Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha
Chairman, Committee on Member of Parliament Local
Area Development Scheme (MPLADS); Chairman,
Committee of Privileges (JD(U))

Mr. Bhartruhari MAHTAB
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on
Peace and International Security

Member of the Lok Sabha
Chairperson, Committee on Finance (BJP)

Mr. Anurag Singh THAKUR

Member of the Lok Sabha
Chairperson, Committee on Coal, Mines and Steel
(BJP)

Mr. Rajiv SHUKLA

Member of the Rajya Sabha
Member, Committee on Energy (INC)

Mr. Vishnu Dayal RAM
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on
Sustainable Development

Member of the Lok Sabha
Member, Committee on Home Affairs (BJP)

Ms. Aparajita SARANGI
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Pacific Group
Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

Member of the Lok Sabha
Member, Committee on Health and Family Welfare
Member, Committee on External Affairs (BJP)

Mr. Sasmit PATRA

Member of the Rajya Sabha
Member, Committee on Ethics; Member, Committee on
Communication and Information Technology (BJD)

Ms. Mamata MOHANTA

Member of the Rajya Sabha
Member, Committee on Energy; Member, Committee
on Social Justice and Empowerment (BJP)

Mr. Utpal Kumar SINGH
Secretary of the IPU Group

Secretary General, Lok Sabha

Mr. Pramod Chandra Gyandeo MODY
Secretary of the Group

Secretary General, Rajya Sabha

Mr. Sreenivasa Reddy Somashekhar KAGATI

Additional Secretary, Rajya Sabha

Mr. Anjani KUMAR
Secretary to the delegation

Joint Secretary, Lok Sabha Secretariat

Mr. Rajeev DUTTA	Officer on Special Duty to the Hon'ble Speaker of the Lok Sabha
Mr. Akshay SHARMA	Protocol Officer, Rajya Sabha
Mr. L.V. RAMANA	Director, Lok Sabha Secretariat
Mr. Yogendra SINGH	Deputy Secretary, Lok Sabha Secretariat
Mr. Deepak KALRA	Deputy Secretary, Rajya Sabha Secretariat
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
JD(U)	Janata Dal United
INC	Indian National Congress
BJD	Biju Janata Dal

IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF) – IRAN RÉPUBLIQUE ISLAMIQUE D'

Mr. Mohammad Bagher GHALIBAF Leader of the Delegation	Speaker of the Islamic Parliament of Iran
Mr. Manouchehr MOTTAKI President of the IPU Group	Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran Member, Economy Committee
Mr. Ali Ashgar BAGHERZADEH	Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran Member, Health and Medical Committee
Mr. Amir Hossein SABETI MONFARED	Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran Member, Cultural Committee
Ms. Elham AZAD Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians	Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran Secretary, Planning and Budget Committee
Mr. Mohammad MAHDI SHAHRYARI	Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran Member, National Security and Foreign Policy Commission
Mr. Seyed MAHMOUD NABAVIAN	Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran Vice-President, National Security and Foreign Policy Committee
Mr. Sharli ENVIEH TEKIEH	Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran Member, Civil Committee
Mr. Ali Reza SHARIFI BARZEGAR Member of the ASGP	Secretary General, Islamic Parliament of Iran
Mr. Amin AEINI	Adviser, Islamic Parliament of Iran
Mr. Amir ZELLATI	Adviser, Islamic Parliament of Iran
Mr. Hasan ASHTARI	Adviser, Islamic Parliament of Iran
Mr. Hossein ERFANIAN	Director, Islamic Parliament of Iran
Mr. Iman SHAMSAEI GHAYHAZI	Director, Islamic Parliament of Iran
Mr. Kazem GHARIB ABADI	Adviser, Islamic Parliament of Iran
Mr. Kazem SHAFEI	Director, Islamic Parliament of Iran
Mr. Mahdi SHOUSHARI	Director, Islamic Parliament of Iran
Mr. Saeid MONAZAM	Adviser, Islamic Parliament of Iran
Mr. Seyed Mohammad ORAZANI	Adviser, Islamic Parliament of Iran
Mr. Seyed Mohammad YASREBI	Director, Islamic Parliament of Iran

IRAQ

Mr. Muhsin AL-MANDALAWI Leader of the Delegation	Speaker of the Council of Representatives
Mr. Arshed FATH ALLAH	Member of the Council of Representatives Chairman, Parliamentary Human Rights Committee
Mr. Muthanna NADER	Member of the Council of Representatives Member, Foreign Relations Committee
Ms. Najwa Hamid Mohammed KAKY Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions	Member of the Council of Representatives Member, Parliamentary Education Committee
Ms. Siham HAMMOOD Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians	Member of the Council of Representatives Member, Foreign Relations Committee
Mr. Watban MANSOOR	Member of the Council of Representatives Member, Foreign Relations Committee
Ms. Wihda FAHAD Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security	Member of the Council of Representatives Deputy Chairman, Parliamentary Human Rights Committee
Mr. Asaad HAMZAH	Adviser, Council of Representatives
Mr. Safwan YOUNUS	Secretary General, Council of Representatives
Mr. Sadeq HAMEED	Deputy Secretary General, Council of Representatives
Mr. Salam MOHAMMED	Director, Council of Representatives
Mr. Wameedh SHUKUR	Adviser, Council of Representatives

IRELAND – IRLANDE

Mr. Denis Naughten Chair, Working Group on Science and Technology Leader of the delegation	Member of the House of Representatives (Independent)
Mr. Gerard CRAUGHWELL	Member of the Senate (Independent))
Mr. Garret AHEARN	Member of the Senate (FG)
Mr. Martin CONWAY	Member of the Senate (FG)
Ms. Elaine GUNN	Clerk Assistant of Dáil Éireann
Ms. Bernadette MATHEWS Secretary of the Group	Adviser, Senate
FG Fine Gael	

ISRAEL – ISRÄEL

Mr. Dan ILLOUZ Leader of the Delegation President of the IPU Group Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions	Member of the Knesset (Likud)
Ms. Tsega Tseganesh MELAKU	Member of the Knesset (Likud)
Mr. Elazar STERN	Member of the Knesset (Yesh Atid)
Mr. Dan MARZOUK	Secretary General of the Knesset
Ms. Liat MARGALIT Secretary of the IPU Group Secretary of the delegation	Adviser

Mr. Uri MICHAEL

Adviser

Likud Conservative
Yesh Atid Yesh Atid**ITALY – ITALIE**Mr. Pier Ferdinand CASINI
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Leader of the delegationMember of the Senate
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Secretary General of the Group

Chamber of Deputies

Ms. Susanna RADONI
Secretary of the Delegation

Protocol Office, Chamber of Deputies

Ms. Maria Teresa CALABRO'
ASGPInternational Relationships Office,
Chamber of DeputiesMs. Beatrice GIANANI
ASGPPermanent Representative to European Union,
SenateMr. Vincenzo GRASSI
AmbassadorItalian Mission, Geneva
Permanent Representative to International
OrganizationsFI-PPE Forza Italia-Partito Popolare Europeo
PD Partito Democratico**JAMAICA - JAMAÏQUE**Mr. Thomas TAVARES-FINSON
Leader of the Delegation
President of the IPU GroupPresident of the Senate
Chairman, The Standing Order Committee
Chairman, Committee of Privileges (JLP)

JLP Jamaica Labour Party

JAPAN – JAPONMr. Akira YOSHII
Leader of the DelegationMember of the House of Councillors
Director, Committee on Land and Transport
Member, Committee on Rules and Administration (LDP)

Ms. Makiko KISHI

Member of the House of Councillors
Director, Special Committee on Regional Revitalization
and Formation of a Digital Society; Member, Committee
on General Affairs (CDP)Mr. Jun ISHIHARA
Secretary of the Group

Director, House of Councillors

Mr. Tomoya KONDO
Secretary of the Group

Deputy Director, House of Councillors

Mr. Ryohei IMUTA
Secretary of the GroupAdviser
House of CouncillorsLDP Liberal Democratic Party of Japan
CDP The Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan**JORDAN**Mr. H.E. Mr. Ahmad TBAISHAT
Leader of the DelegationMember of the Senate
Chairman, the Legislative CommitteeMs. H.E. Dr. Mahasen ALJAGHOUB
Member of the Committee on Middle East QuestionsMember of the Senate
Chair, the Education Committee

Mr. H.E. Eng. Khaled AWAD

Member of the Senate
Rapporteur, Palestine Committee

Mr. H.E. Mr. Issa MURAD

Member of the Senate
Chairman, the Labour and Social Development
CommitteeMr. Awwad ALGHUWAIRI
ASGPSecretary General
House of RepresentativesMr. HAZEM HAWAMDEH
Secretary of the delegation

Director, House of Representatives

Mr. MOAD ALABBADI
Secretary of the delegation

Director, Senate

KENYA

Mr. Geoffrey MULANYA

Member of the National Assembly (Independent)
Member, Departmental Committee on Energy
Member, Constitutional Implementation and Oversight
CommitteeMr. John KIARIE WAWERU
President of the Committee to Promote Respect for
International Humanitarian LawMember of the National Assembly
Chairperson, Communication Information & Innovation
Committee (UDA)Ms. Josephine LESUUDA
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on
Sustainable DevelopmentMember of the National Assembly
Vice Chairperson, Public Investments Committee on
Governance and Education; Member, Budget and
Appropriations Committee (KANU)Ms. Millie ODHIAMBO
President of the Committee on the Human Rights of
ParliamentariansMember of the National Assembly
Member, Budget and Appropriations Committee
Member, Defence, Intelligence and Foreign Relations
Committee, Minority Chief Whip (ODM)Ms. Rebecca TONKEI
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on
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Member, Public Investments Committee on Governance
and Education; Member, Education and Research
Committee (UDA)Mr. George JUSA
Secretary of the delegationPrincipal Clerk Assistant
National AssemblyUDA United Democratic Alliance
KANU Kenya African National Union
ODM Orange Democratic Movement**LATVIA – LETTONIE**Mr. Edmunds TEIRUMNIEKS
Leader of the DelegationMember of Parliament
Deputy Chairman, Legal Affairs Committee
Member, Sustainable Development Committee(NA)

Ms. Linda LIEPINA

Member of Parliament
Member, Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee
Member, Parliamentary Inquiry Committee (LPV)

Ms. Lelde RAFELDE

Secretary General, Parliament

Ms. Sandra Paura
Secretary of the delegation, Secretary of the Group

Director

NA National Alliance
LPV LATVIA FIRST

LESOTHO

Ms. Tsepang Matlhohonolofatso TS'ITA-MOSENSA Leader of the Delegation	Vice- President of the National Assembly (MEC)
Mr. Tsukutlane AU	Vice-President of the Senate
Mr. Lebohang PHOHLELI	Member of the National Assembly Member, The Law Cluster, Member, The Natural Resources Cluster (RFP)
Mr. Lerotholi Denis SEEISO	Member of the Senate Member, Ethics, Code of Conduct, Immunities and Privileges Committee, Member, Health, Nutrition and Gender Committee
Mr. Tello KIBANE	Member of the National Assembly Member, The Natural Resources Cluster (BAP)
Mr. Khotso Brutus MANAMOLELA	Adviser
Mr. Lebohang Fine MAEMA	Clerk, National Assembly
MEC Movement for Economic Change RFP Revolution for Prosperity BAP Basotho Action Party	

LIBERIA

Mr. Francis Saily DOPOH II Leader of the delegation	Member of the Senate
Mr. Crayton O. DUNCAN	Member of the Senate Chairman, Autonomous Commissions and Agencies Committee, Member, Ways, Means, Finance and Budget Committee (CDC)
Mr. J. Nanborlor F. SINGBEH Member of ASGP	Secretary of the Senate
Mr. Yarta S. BUCHWEISER	Adviser, Senate
CDC Coalition for Democratic Change	

LIBYA – LIBYE

Mr. Fouzi SALIM Leader of the Delegation President of the IPU Group	First Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives
Mr. Musbah AWHIDA	Second Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives
Ms. Rabeeah ABOURAS	Member of Parliament of the House of Representatives
Mr. Ramdan SHMBSH	Member of the House of Representatives
Ms. Sultna ABD ULRRAHIM	Member of the House of Representatives
Mr. Abd Ualla MUSSA	Secretary General of the House of Representatives
Mr. Abdullah AMER	Adviser, House of Representatives
Mr. Ahmed HASHASH	Adviser, House of Representatives
Mr. Ali ALBAKOUSH	Office Manager of the Second Deputy President House of Representatives
Mr. Rafia ALI	Office Manager of the First Deputy President House of Representatives

LIECHTENSTEIN

Mr. Albert FRICK
Leader of the Delegation
President of the IPU Group

President of the Diet (FBP)

Ms. Dagmar BÜHLER-NIGSCH

Member of the Diet (VU)

Ms. Jessica F. BUCHER
Secretary of the delegation

Secretary of the delegation

FBP Progressive Citizens' Party
VU Patriotic Union Party

LITHUANIA – LITUANIE

Ms. Guoda BUROKIENE
Leader of the Delegation
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on
Sustainable Development

Member of Parliament (LFGU)

Mr. Vilius SEMESKA

Member of Parliament (C)
Member, Committee on Legal Affairs

Ms. Asta Skirmantiene
Secretary of the delegation

Adviser

LFGU Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union
C Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrats

MADAGASCAR

Mme Nadine ANDRIANASOLO VVE ANDRIANO
Cheffe de la délégation

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale
Membre, Population et tourisme (TGV)

M. Harson RAHOLJAONA

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale
Rapporteur général adjoint ; Membre, Comité, Finance
et juridique

M. Miarintsoa Andriantsitonta RAKOTOMALALA

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale
Présidente du réseau des jeunes parlementaires
Malagasy, Membre, Comité Juridique

M. Adrien Braun RAKOTOARISON
Secrétaire de la délégation

Directeur

TGV Tanora Gasy Vonona

MALAWI

Ms. Catherine Gotani HARA
Leader of the Delegation
President of the IPU Group

Speaker of the National Assembly
Chairperson, Business Committee; Member, Women's
Caucus (MCP)

Mr. Claude Clement MLOMBWA

Member of the National Assembly
Member, Legal Affairs Committee; Member,
International Relations Committee (MCP)

Ms. Esther JAILOSI JOLOBALA

Member of the National Assembly
Member, International Relations Committee; Member,
Natural Resources and Climate Change Committee
(UDF)

Mr. Kenny Edward KANDODO

Member of the National Assembly
Member, Budget and Finance Committee; Member,
International Relations (MCP)

Mr. Misolo Mussa KAPICHILA

Member of the National Assembly
Member, Legal Affairs Committee; Member,
International Relations (UDF)

Mr. Victor Hetherwick MUSOWA
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on
Peace and International Security

Member of the National Assembly
Member, International Relations Committee; Member,
Health Committee (DPP)

Ms. Fiona KALEMBA

Clerk, National Assembly

Mr. Gerald DUBE

Adviser

Ms. Gloria KOMBO DZIDEKHA

Adviser

Ms. Kettie Catherine MUSUKWA

Adviser

Ms. Nancy Pilirani CHIKANDIRA

Adviser

MCP Malawi Congress Party
UDF United Democratic Front
DPP Democratic Progressive Party

MALAYSIA – MALAISIE

Mr. Nur Jazlan MOHAMED
Leader of the Delegation

Deputy-President of the Senate (BN)

Mr. Chen WONG
Member of the Working Group on Science and
Technology

Member of the House of Representatives
Chairman, Special Select Committee on International
Relations and International Trade (PKR)

Mr. Hasni MOHAMMAD

Member of the House of Representatives
Member, Special Select Committee on Human Rights,
Elections and Institutional Reform (BN)

Mr. Jamaludin YAHAYA

Member of the House of Representatives (PAS)

Ms. Vivian WONG SHIR YEE

Member of the House of Representatives
Member, Special Select Committee on Environment,
Science and Plantation (DAP)

Mr. Muhd Sujairi ABDULLAH

Secretary of the Senate

Ms. Mas Liza MASLAN

Research Officer, Senate

Ms. Nurul Fadhilah IBHARIM
Secretary of the delegation

Assistant Secretary, Senate

H.E. Dato' Nadzirah Osman
Ambassador

Permanent Representative

Ms. Rina Hanis binti Rodzli

Deputy Permanent Representative

BN Barisan Nasional
PKR People's Justice Party
PAS Malaysian Islamic Party
DAP Democratic Action Party

MALDIVES

Mr. Abdul Raheem ABDULLA
Leader of the Delegation
President of the IPU Group

Speaker of the People's Majlis (PNC)

Mr. Ali FAZAD

Member of the People's Majlis
Chair, Economic Affairs Committee; Member,
Government Oversight Committee (PNC)

Mr. Ameen FAISAL

Member of the People's Majlis
Member, General Purposes Committee; Member,
Economic Affairs Committee (MDP)

Ms. Asma RASHEED	Member of the People's Majlis Chair, Social Affairs Committee; Member, Human Rights and Gender Committee (PNC)
Mr. Mohamed ISMAIL	Member of the People's Majlis Chair, Government Oversight Committee; Member, Members Privileges and Ethics Committee (PNC)
Mr. Mohamed SHAHID	Member of the People's Majlis Chair, General Purposes Committee; Member, National Security Services Committee (PNC)
Ms. Fathimath NIUSHA	Secretary General, People's Majlis
Mr. Ahmed Nihan HUSSAIN MANIK	Chief of Bureau, People's Majlis
Ms. Aishath EAMAN Secretary of the delegation	Senior Foreign Relations Officer, People's Majlis
PNC	People's National Congress
MDP	Maldives Democratic Party

MALTA – MALTE

Mr. Angelo FARRUGIA Leader of the Delegation Member of the Committee to Promote Respect of International Humanitarian Law	Speaker of the House of Representatives Chairperson, House Business Committee Chairperson, Privileges Committee
Ms. Davina SAMMUT HILI	Member of the House of Representatives Member, Family Affairs Committee; Member, Social Affairs Committee (PL)
Mr. Ivan CASTILLO	Member of the House of Representatives Member, Petitions Committee (PN)
Mr. Ian Paul BAJADA Secretary of the Group	Research Officer House of Representatives
PL	Partit Laburista
PN	Partit Nazzjonalista

MEXICO – MEXIQUE

Mr. Cesar Augusto RENDON GARCIA	Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PAN)
Ms. Cynthia Iliana LÓPEZ CASTRO President, Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians	Member of the Senate (PRI)
Ms. Julia Arcelia OLGUÍN SERNA	Member of the Chamber of Deputies (MORENA)
Ms. Magdalena del Socorro NÚÑEZ MONREAL	Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PT)
Ms. Marcela GUERRA CASTILLO Vice-Chairperson, Member of the High-level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism	Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PRI)
Mr. Saúl MONREAL ÁVILA	Member of the Senate Chair, Committee on Jurisdictional affairs Member, Committee on Human Rights (MORENA)
Mr. Pedro HACES BARBA	Member of the Chamber of Deputies (MORENA)
Ms. Anabel ACOSTA ISLAS	Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PVEM)
PAN	The National Action Party
PRI	Partido Revolucionario Institucional
MORENA	National Regeneration Movement

PT Labor Party
PVEM Ecologist Green Party

MONACO

M. Fabrice NOTARI
Chef de la délégation

Membre du Conseil national (L'UNION)

Mme Karen ALIPRENDI

Membre du Conseil national (L'UNION)

M. Sébastien LUBERT
Secrétaire de la délégation

Chargé de Mission, Conseil national

L'UNION L'Union Nationale Monégasque

MONGOLIA – MONGOLIE

Ms. Bulgantuya KHURELBAATAR
Leader of the Delegation
President of the IPU Group

Vice President State Great Hural (MPP)

Ms. Nominchimeg ODSUREN

Member of the State Great Hural
Member, Standing Committee on State Structure
Member, Standing Committee on Legal Affairs (MPP)

Mr. Ganbat KHOSBAYAR

Member of the State Great Hural
Member, Standing Committee on Security and Foreign
Policy; Member, Standing Committee on Education,
Culture, Science and Sports (DP)

Mr. Baasandorj BARSUREN

Secretary General of the State Great Hural

Mr. Batbold MARUUSH
Secretary of the delegation

Adviser, State Great Hural

Ms. Khongorzul BAYARSAIKHAN

Adviser, State Great Hural

Mr. Kherlen GOMBOSUREN

Media Adviser, State Great Hural

DP Democratic Party
MPP Mongolian People's Party

MONTENEGRO

Ms. Jelena BOZOVIĆ
Leader of the Delegation

Member of Parliament

Mr. Gordan STOJOVIĆ

Member of Parliament

Ms. Jevrosima PEJOVIĆ

Member of Parliament

Ms. Branka MARKOVIĆ

Member of Parliament

Mr. Aleksandar KLARIĆ

Secretary General of Parliament

Ms. Jovana KOVAČEVIĆ

Head of Secretary General's Office, Parliament

Ms. Marija MILOŠEVIĆ
Secretary of the delegation

Adviser, Parliament

Ms. Tijana ROSANDIĆ
Deputy secretary of the delegation

Adviser, Parliament

Ms. Ivana KRUNIC

Adviser, Parliament

MOROCCO – MAROC

M. Omar HEJIRA
Chef de la délégation

Membre de la Chambre des représentants,
Président du Groupe Istiqlal (PI)

Mme Khaddouj SLASSI

Membre de la Chambre des représentants (USFP)

M. Mustapha REDDAD

Membre de la Chambre des représentants (RNI)

M. Najib EL KHADI
Président de l'ASGP

Secrétaire général, Chambre des représentants

M. Oussama SOUHAIL
Secrétaire de la délégation adjointCadre à la Direction des Relations Extérieures et de la
Coopération, Chambre des représentantsM. Said SATRAOUY
Co-Secrétaire administratif du Groupe
interparlementaire marocainChef de la division des relations multilatérales
Chambre des représentants

PAM Parti d'Authenticité et de Modernité
 PI Parti Istiqlal
 RNI Rassemblement national des Indépendants
 USFP Parti de l'Union socialiste des forces populaires

MOZAMBIQUE

Mr. Eduardo MULEMBWE
 Leader of the Delegation
 President of the IPU Group
 Member of the High-level Advisory Group on
 Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism

Member of the Assembly of the Republic (FRELIMO)

Mr. Alfredo NAMPETE

Secretary General, Assembly of the Republic

Mr. Jaime MATIAS

Adviser, Assembly of the Republic

Mr. José MADROBA

Adviser, Assembly of the Republic

Mr. Narciso MANJATE
Secretary of the Group

Adviser, Assembly of the Republic

FRELIMO Front of Liberation of Mozambique
 RENAMO Mozambican National Resistance

NAMIBIA – NAMIBIE

Mr. Peter Hitjitevi KATJAVIVI
 Leader of the Delegation
 President of the IPU Group
 Member of the IPU Task Force on Ukraine

Speaker of the National Assembly
 Chairperson, Standing Rules and Orders and Internal
 Arrangements Committee; Chairperson, Privileges
 Committee (SWAPO)

Ms. Victoria Mbawo KAUMA
 Leader of the Delegation

Vice-Chairperson of the National Council
 Chairperson, Implementation and Coordination
 Committee; Member, Commonwealth Women's Forum
 (CWF), (SWAPO)

Mr. Alfeus Kaushiweni ABRAHAM

Member of the National Council
 Chairperson, Standing Committee on Transport,
 Infrastructure and Housing (SWAPO)

Ms. Emma Tangi MUTEKA
 Member of the Board of the Forum of Young
 Parliamentarians

Member of the National Council
 Vice-Chairperson, Standing Committee on Health,
 Social Welfare and Labour Affairs; Member,
 Commonwealth Women Forum (SWAPO)

Ms. Loide Namutenya IIPINGE

Member of the National Assembly (PDM)

Ms. Maria Sirombo KAMUTALI

Member of the National Assembly (APP)

Mr. Paul ISAAK

Member of the National Council
 Member, Standing Committee on Transport,
 Infrastructure and Housing (LPM)

Mr. Vincent Joseph MAREKA	Member of the National Assembly (SWAPO)
Ms. Lydia Tjihimise KANDETU	Secretary, National Assembly
Mr. Johannes Tousy NAMISEB Secretary of the delegation	Secretary, National Council
Mr. Ndaningaweni Protasius NGHILEENDELE Secretary of the Group	Adviser National Assembly
Mr. Simon UIRAB Secretary of the delegation	Director National Assembly
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
PDM	Popular Democratic Movement
APP	All People's Party
LPM	Landless People's Movement

NEPAL – NÉPAL

Mr. Narayan Prasad DAHAL Leader of the Delegation President of the IPU Group	Speaker of the National Assembly
Mr. Krishna Prasad POUDYAL	Member of the National Assembly (NC)
Ms. Nisha DANGI	Member of the House of Representatives (RSP)
Ms. Sunita BARAL	Member of the House of Representatives (CPN (UML))
Mr. Tara Man SWAR	Member of the National Assembly (CPN (MC))
Mr. Padma Prasad PANDEY	Secretary General, National Assembly
Mr. Bishnu Prasad SAPKOTA	Chief Private Secretary to the Chairperson, National Assembly
Mr. Nama Raj NAGARKOTI	Undersecretary, National Assembly
Ms. Sita KAFLE WAGLE	Joint Secretary, National Assembly
NC	Nepali Congress
RSP	Rastriya Swatantra Party
CPN (UML)	Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist)
CPN (MC)	Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Center)

NETHERLANDS – PAYS-BAS

Mr. Hendrik-Jan TALSMA Leader of the Delegation Chair of the Committee on Middle East Questions,	Member of the Senate (CU)
Ms. Fatimsaara BELHIRCH Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security	Member of the Senate (D66)
Mr. Remco NEHMELMAN ASGP	Secretary General of the Senate
Ms. Femmy BAKKER-DE JONG Secretary of the delegation	Secretary of the delegation House of Representatives
Ms. Monique CHRISTIAANSE Secretary of the delegation	Deputy secretary House of Representatives
CU	ChristenUnie
Social Liberals	D66

NEW ZEALAND – NOUVELLE-ZÉLANDE

Mr. Stuart SMITH
Leader of the Delegation
President of the IPU Group

Member of the House of Representatives
Chairperson, Finance and Expenditure (NAT)

Ms. Kahurangi CARTER

Member of the House of Representatives
Member, Maori Affairs (GP)

Ms. Rachel BROOKING

Member of the House of Representatives
Member, Environment (L)

Mr. Tangi UTIKERE

Member of the House of Representatives
Member, Business and Privileges
Member, Transport and Infrastructure (L)

Mr. Winton HOLMES
Secretary of the delegation

Senior Inter-Parliamentary Relations Adviser
House of Representatives

NAT National
GP Green
L Labour

NIGERIA – NIGÉRIA

Mr. Benjamin Okezie KALU

Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives (APC)

Mr. Abang VICTOR BISONG

Member of the House of Representatives
Chairman, IPU (APC)

Mr. Asuquo EKPENYONG

Member of the Senate
Chairman, Niger Delta Development Commission (APC)

Mr. Ibrahim Hassan DANKWAMBO

Member of the Senate
Chairman, Drugs and Narcotics Commission; Member,
Finance (PDP)

Mr. Jimoh IBRAHIM FOLORUNSHO

Member of the Senate
Chairman, Inter-Parliamentary Affairs Commission
Member, Gas Commission (APC)

Mr. Titus Tartenger ZAM

Member of the Senate
Chairman, Rules and Business Commission; Member,
Air Force Commission (APC)

Ms. Marie Enenimiete EBIKAKE

Member of the House of Representatives (PDP)

Mr. Mark Udo ESSET

Member of the House of Representatives
Chairman, Inter-Parliamentary Commission (PDP)

Mr. Nasiru SHEHU

Member of the House of Representatives
Member, Youth in Parliament (APC)

Mr. Olaminjuwonlo Ayodej ALAO AKALA

Member of the House of Representatives
Chairman, Youth in Parliament Commission
Member, Gas Commission (APC)

Mr. Samaila Dahuwa KAILA
Adviser

Member of the Senate (PDP)

Mr. Anamero Sunday DEKERI
Adviser

Member, House of Representatives
Member, Banking Regulation Commission
Member, Industry Commission

Mr. Osita NGWU
Adviser

Member of the Senate
Senate, Chairman, Federal Capital Territory
Commission
Member, Works Commission

Mr. Sani Tambawal MAGAJI Member of the ASGP	Secretary General, Senate
Mr. Godwin Okon EKPENYONG Secretary of the Group	Secretary, Senate
Mr. Adewale Emmanuel ADEKANYE	Adviser, Senate
Ms. Aisha Ali KOTOKO	Director, House of Representatives
Ms. Florence Olanike FOFAH	Adviser, Senate
Ms. Hassana Danimoh ABDULWAHAB	Adviser, Senate
Ms. Mfonobong Dominic USORO	Adviser, Senate
Mr. Udo Ogbu UMEKWE Secretary of the delegation	Assistant Director, Senate
APC	All Progressives Congress
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party

NORTH MACEDONIA – MACÉDOINE DU NORD

Mr. Afrim GASHI Leader of the Delegation President of the IPU Group	President of the Assembly of the Republic Chair, Constitutional Committee (AAA)
Ms. Arbana PASHOLI	Member of the Assembly of the Republic (DUI)
Mr. Boban KARAJEVOVSKI	Member of the Assembly of the Republic (ZNAM)
Mr. Borislav KRMOV	Member of the Assembly of the Republic (LEVICA)
Ms. Dafina STOJANOSKA	Member of the Assembly of the Republic (VMRO-DPMNE)
Mr. Halil SNOPCHE	Member of the Assembly of the Republic (VLEN)
Mr. Fatmir BYTYQI	Member of the Assembly of the Republic (SDSM)
Mr. Adem JASHARI	Associate, Assembly of the Republic
Ms. Biljana OGNENOVSKA Secretary of the delegation	Deputy Director, Assembly of the Republic
Mr. Driton NEBIU	Adviser, Assembly of the Republic
Ms. Emanuela STOJKOSKA	Adviser, Assembly of the Republic
Ms. Marina DIMOVSKA Secretary of the Group	Secretary General of the Assembly of the Republic
Mr. Rexhep PREKOPUCA Secretary of the delegation	Adviser, Assembly of the Republic
AAA	Alternativa
DUI	Democratic Union of Integration
ZNAM	For Our Macedonia
LEVICA	The Left
VMRO-DPMNE	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization -Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity
VLEN	VLEN Coalition
SDSM	Social Democratic Union of Macedonia

NORWAY – NORVÈGE

Mr. Tellef Inge MØRLAND
Leader of the Delegation
President of the IPU Group

Member of Parliament (Labour Party)

Ms. Birgit Oline KJERSTAD

Member of Parliament (Socialist Left Party)

Mr. Ola Borten MOE

Member of Parliament (Centre Party)

Ms. Silje HJEMDAL

Member of Parliament (Progress Party)

Mr. Christian GAHRE

Head of Section, Parliament

Ms. Lisbeth Merete STOCK
Secretary of the delegation

Adviser, Parliament

Mr. Thomas FRASER
Secretary of the Group

Adviser, Parliament

Labour Party

Labour Party

Socialist Left Party

Socialist Left Party

Conservative Party

Conservative Party

Centre Party

Centre Party

Progress Party

Progress Party

OMAN

Mr. Khalid AL MAAWALI
Leader of the Delegation

Chairman of the Shura Council

Mr. Abdullah AL HINAI

Member of the Shura Council

Mr. Ahmed AL SHARQI

Member of the Shura Council

Ms. Sana AL KHANJARI

Member of the State Council

Mr. Yasir AL MABIYAHASI

Member of the Shura Council

Ms. Zuwaina AL MASKARI

Member of the State Council

Mr. Abdullah AL HABSI

Director, Shura Council

Mr. Khalid AL SAADI

Secretary General, State Council

Mr. Ahmed AL NADABI

Secretary General, Shura Council

Mr. Hamdoon AL HARTHI

Director, Shura Council

Mr. Said AL BADI

Director, State Council

Ms. Muna AL HADI

Adviser, Shura Council

Mr. Khaloud AL BOUSAFI

Adviser, Shura Council

Ms. Sumaiya ALAMRI
Secretary of the delegation

Adviser, Shura Council

PALESTINE

Mr. Musa HADID
Leader of the Delegation
President of the IPU Group
Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions

Deputy Speaker of the Palestine National Council
(FATEH)

Ms. Deema ASFOUR

Member of the Palestine National Council

Ms. Riham BARGHOUTH

Member of the Palestine National Council

Mr. Ibrahim KHRAISHI

Member of the Palestine National Council (FATEH)

Mr. Khaled ABDALLAH

Secretary General of the Palestine National Council

Mr. Bashar Sulaiman
Adviser, Secretary of the Group, Secretary of the
delegation

Director, Palestinian Legislative Council

FATEH Palestinian National Liberation Movement

PARAGUAYMr. Marcelo SALINAS
Leader of the Delegation
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on
United Nations Affairs

Member of the Chamber of Deputies

Ms. Jazmin NARVAEZ

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (ANR)

Ms. Maria Rocio ABED

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (ANR)

Mr. Nestor CASTELLANO

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (ANR)

Mr. Rodrigo BLANCO

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PLRA)

Mr. Rodrigo GAMARRA

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (ANR)

ANR Asociación Nacional Republicana
PLRA Partido Liberal Radical Auténtico**PERU – PÉROU**Ms. Maria del Carmen ALVA PRIETO
Leader of the Delegation
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on
Democracy and Human Rights

Member of the Congress of the Republic (AP)

Mr. Alex Antonio PAREDES
Member of the Committee to Promote Respect for
International Humanitarian LawMember of Parliament
Congress of the Republic (SP)Mr. Wilson SOTO PALACIOS
Member of the Board of the Forum of Young
ParliamentariansMember of Parliament
Congress of the Republic (AP)AP Accion Popular
FP Fuerza Popular**PHILIPPINES**Mr. Ferdinand Martin ROMUALDEZ
Leader of the Delegation,
Member of the Governing Council

Speaker of the House of Representatives (Lakas–CMD)

Mr. Joseph Victor EJERCITO
Member of the Governing CouncilDeputy Majority Leader of the Senate
Chairperson, Committee on Local Government (NPC)

Ms. Maria Lourdes Nancy BINAY

Member of the Senate
Chairperson, Committee on Sustainable Development
Goals, Innovation and Futures Thinking (UNA)

Ms. Grace POE

Member of the Senate
Chairperson, Committee on FinanceMs. Divina Grace YU
Member of the Governing CouncilMember of the House of Representatives
Vice Chairperson, Committee on Appropriations
Vice Chairperson, Committee on Constitutional
Amendments (Lakas–CMD)

Mr. Allan TY	Member of the House of Representatives Vice Chairperson, Committee on Appropriations Vice Chairperson, Committee on Banks and Financial Intermediaries (LPGMA)
Mr. Ramon Jr NOLASCO	Member of the House of Representatives Deputy Majority Leader, Committee on Rules Member for the Majority, Committee on Information and Communications Technology (NPC)
Mr. Renato Jr BANTUG ASGP Member	Secretary of the Senate
Mr. Reginald VELASCO ASGP Member	Secretary General, House of Representatives
Ms. Gracelda N. ANDRES ASGP Member	Adviser, House of Representatives
Mr. Edgardo PANGILINAN ASGP Member	Deputy Secretary General, House of Representatives
Mr. Jose Maria Antonio TUAÑO ASGP Member	Deputy Secretary General, House of Representatives
Mr. David Robert AMORIN ASGP Member	Deputy Secretary General, House of Representatives
Ms. Karen E. RESIDE Delegation Secretary	Director, House of Representatives
Ms. Czarina Grace SERRANO CALMAG ASGP Member	Executive Director for Legislation, Senate
Ms. Sheryl VARGAS	Chief of Staff, Office of Senator JV Ejercito Senate
Ms. Ma. Judith CLAUDIO	Supervising Legislative Staff Officer, Office of Senator JV Ejercito, Senate
Ms. Ayn Rand NEPOMUCENO RAZ	Head Executive Assistant, Office of Senator JV Ejercito Senate
Mr. Efren Jr BUENDIA Technical Officer	Supervising Legislative Staff Officer, Office of International Relations and Protocol, Senate
Ms. Marjorie CUENCO Secretary of the delegation	Director, House of Representatives
Mr. Ronyll MENDOZA Secretary of the delegation	Legislative Staff Officer, Office of International Relations and Protocol, Senate
Lakas– CMD	Lakas–Christian Muslim Democrats
NPC	Nationalist People's Coalition
LPGMA	LPG Marketers Association, Inc
PDP	Partido Demokratiko Pilipino Lakas ng Bayan
Laban	
UNA	United Nationalist Alliance

POLAND – POLOGNE

Ms. Gabriela MORAWSKA-STANECKA Leader of the Delegation Member of the Executive Committee, Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Member of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law	Member of the Senate Member, European Union Affairs Committee Member, Environment and Climate Change Committee (KO)
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Ms. Dorota OLKO	Member of the Sejm Member, Education and Science Committee Member, Physical Culture, Sports and Tourism Committee (L)
Ms. Jolanta ZIĘBA-GZIK	Member of the Sejm Deputy Chair, Children and Youth Committee Member, Health Committee (PSL)
Ms. Kinga GAJEWSKA	Member of the Sejm Vice-Chair, Education and Science Committee Member, Committee for Contacts with Poles Abroad (KO)
Mr. Radosław FOGIEL	Member of the Sejm Vice-Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee (PiS)
Mr. Rafał KASPRZYK	Member of the Sejm Vice-Chair, Public Finance Member, Infrastructure Committee (PL 2050 TD)
Mr. Stanisław GAWŁOWSKI	Member of the Senate Chairman, Committee on Climate and Environment Member, Legislative Committee (PO)
Mr. Wiktor DURLAK	Member of the Senate Member, Local Government and State Administration Committee Member, Sport Committee (PiS)
Ms. Agata KARWOWSKA-SOKOŁOWSKA	Director, Senate
Ms. Agata WÓJCIK-PAWLICZAK	Adviser, Senate
Ms. Anna TRĘBACZKIEWICZ	Head of Multilateral Division, Sejm
Ms. Ewa POLKOWSKA	Secretary General of the Senate
Mr. Michał DESKUR	Deputy Secretary General of the Sejm
Ms. Natalia KOWALSKA	Adviser, Senate
Mr. Wojciech GRUBA Secretary of the Group	Adviser, Sejm
KO	Civic Coalition
L	Left
PSL	Polish People's Party
PiS	Law and Justice
PL 2050 TD	Poland 2050 - Third Way
PO	Civic Platform

PORTUGAL

Ms. Manuela TENDER Leader of the Delegation President of the IPU Group	Member of the Assembly of the Republic President, Committee on Education and Science, Member, Committee on Local Authorities and Territorial Cohesion (CH)
Mr. André PINOTES BATISTA	Member of the Assembly of the Republic Member, Committee on Economic Affairs, Public Works and Housing
Mr. António MENDES	Member of the Assembly of the Republic Member, Committee on Budget, Finance and Public Administration (PS)

Mr. Hugo CARNEIRO	Member of the Assembly of the Republic Coordinator for the PSD group; Member, Committee on Budget, Finance and Public Administration; Member, Committee on Transparency and the Statute of Members of the Assembleia da República (PSD)
Mr. Miguel SANTOS	Member of the Assembly of the Republic President of the Committee on Economic Affairs, Public Works and Housing (PSD)
Mr. Rui Paulo SOUSA	Member of the Assembly of the Republic Member, Committee on Transparency and the Statute of Members; Member Committee on National Defense (CH)
Ms. Ana SANTOS	Member of the Assembly of the Republic Member, Committee on Constitutional Affairs, Rights, Freedoms and Guarantees; Member, Committee on Transparency and the Statute of Members (PSD)
Mr. João CAMPOS COELHO Head of International Division and Cooperation	Secretary General, Assembly of the Republic
Ms. Anabela CABRAL FERREIRA	Secretary General, Assembly of the Republic
Ms. Suzana SANTOS	Adviser, Assembly of the Republic
CH	Chega
PS	Socialist Party
PSD	Social Democratic Party

REPUBLIC OF KOREA – RÉPUBLIQUE DE CORÉE

Mr. In Young LEE Leader of the Delegation	Member of the National Assembly Member, National Policy Committee; Member, Intelligence Committee (DPK)
Ms. Sun Mee JIN	Member of the National Assembly Member, Education Committee (DPK)
Mr. Byoungkyu PARK	Adviser, National Assembly
Mr. Minki KIM	Secretary General of the National Assembly
Ms. Moonkyung KIM	Deputy Director, National Assembly
Mr. Myeong Jun KIM	Adviser, National Assembly
Mr. Myoungseop KIM	Chief of Staff, National Assembly
Mr. Sin Hwa YOON	Adviser, National Assembly
Ms. Saera LEE	Adviser, National Assembly
Ms. Seolah CHOI	Adviser, National Assembly
Mr. Sung Yong PARK Adviser	Deputy Director National Assembly
DPK	Democratic Party of Korea

ROMANIA – ROUMANIE

Mr. Ioan CUPȘA Leader of the Delegation	Member of the Chamber of Deputies Deputy Chairman, Committee for Legal Affairs, Discipline and Immunities; Member, Committee for Education (NLP)
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Ms. Laura-Mihaela MOAGHER	Member of the Senate Secretary, Committee for Legal Affairs, Nominations, Discipline, Immunities and Validations; Member, Committee for Entrepreneurship and Tourism (SPD)
Ms. Liliana SBÎRNEA	Member of the Senate Secretary, Committee for Education; Member, Committee for National Defense, Public Order and National Security (SPD)
Ms. Arany VIKARIUS	Deputy Secretary General of the Senate
Ms. Cristina IONESCU Secretary of the delegation	Director, Senate
Ms. Cristina DUMITRESCU Secretary of the Group	Director, Senate
Ms. Luminița TEODOREL Secretary of the delegation	Adviser, Senate
Ms. Teodora-Elena POTERAȘU Secretary of the Group	Adviser, Chamber of Deputies
NLP National Liberal Party SPD Social Democratic Party	

RUSSIAN FEDERATION – FÉDÉRATION DE RUSSIE

Mr. Konstantin KOSACHEV Leader of the Delegation	Deputy Speaker of the Council of the Federation Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs
Mr. Petr TOLSTOY Leader of the Delegation	Vice-Chairman of the State Duma (UR)
Mr. Aleksei CHEPA	Member of the State Duma First Deputy Chairman, Committee on International Affairs (JRFT)
Mr. Alexandr DVOINYKH	Member of the Council of the Federation Chair, the Federation Council Committee on Agriculture and Food Policy and Environmental Management
Mr. Andrei KLIMOV	Member of the Council of the Federation Deputy Chair, Federation Council Committee on Foreign Affairs
Ms. Galina KARELOVA Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians	Member of the Council of the Federation First Deputy Chair, Federation Council Committee on Federal Structure, Regional Policy, Local Government and Northern Affairs
Mr. Leonid SLUTSKIY	Member of the State Duma Chairman, Committee on International Affairs (LDPR)
Ms. Liliia GUMEROVA Member of the Working Group on Science and Technology	Member of the Council of the Federation Chair, the Federation Council Committee on Science, Education and Culture
Ms. Roza CHEMERIS	Member of the State Duma Member, Committee on International Affairs (NP)
Mr. Sergei GAVRILOV Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development	Member of the State Duma Chairman, Committee on Property, Land and Property Relations (CPRF)
Mr. Andrei BORZOV	Director, State Duma

Mr. Dmitrii ANDRIIANOV
Secretary of the Group

Adviser, Council of the Federation

Mr. Dmitrii STEPANOV
Secretary of the delegation

Deputy Director, State Duma

Ms. Maria ZHOLOBOVA
Secretary of the delegation

Adviser, Council of the Federation

Ms. Olga SHMACHKOVA
Secretary of the Group

Adviser, Council of the Federation

Ms. Valeriya GOROKHOVA
Secretary of the delegation

Head of the International Relations department of the
Central Executive Committee of the United Russia
Party, Council of the Federation

UR United Russia
JRFT Just Russia - For Truth
LDPR Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia
NP New People
CPRF Communist Party of the Russian Federation

RWANDA

Ms. Espérance NYIRASAFARI
Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians
Leader of the delegation

Deputy Speaker of the Senate (RPF)

Ms. Alice MUZANA
Member of the Working Group on Science and
Technology

Member of the Chamber of Deputies
Member of the Working Group on Science and
Technology(PSD)

Mr. Aimable MUSAFARI

Adviser to the Vice-President of the Senate

RPF Rwandese Patriotic Front
PSD Parti Social Democrate

SAN MARINO – SAINT-MARIN

Mr. Francesco MUSSONI
Leader of the Delegation
President of the IPU Group

Member of the Great and General Council
Member, Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs
(PDCS)

Ms. Gemma CESARINI

Member of the Great and General Council
Member, Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional
Affairs (LIBERA/PS)

Mr. Giovanni Maria ZONZINI

Member of the Great and General Council
Member, Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional
Affairs (RETE)

Mr. Lorenzo BUGLI

Member of the Great and General Council
Member, Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs
(PDCS)

PDCS Partito Democratico Cristiano Sammarinese
LIBERA/P Libera San Marino
S
RETE Movimento Civico RETE

SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE – SAO TOMÉ-ET-PRINCIPE

Ms. Celmira SACRAMENTO
Leader of the delegation

Speaker of the National Assembly (ADI)

Mr. Jozino VEIGA
President of the IPU Group

Member of the National Assembly
Member, Committee on Human Rights, Citizenship,
Cooperation and Communities (ADI)

Ms. Celisa Maria AGUIAR	Member of the National Assembly Fifth position, Committee on Gender, the Family, Social Cohesion, Youth, Sport and the Media (ADI)
Mr. Eldimiro MANUEL	Member of the National Assembly Member, Committee on Social Affairs, Health, Education, Culture, Science, Labour and Solidarity (MCI/PS- PUN)
Mr. Wuando ANDRADE	Member of the National Assembly Member, Committee on Political, Legal, Constitutional Affairs, Public Administration and Ethics (MLSTP/PSD)
Mr. Domingos BOA MORTE	Secretary General, National Assembly
Mme Yonelma D'ALVA	Director, National Assembly
ADI	Acção Democrática Independente
MCI/PS- PUN	Coligação Movimento de Cidadãos Independentes/Partido Socialista- Partido de Unidade Nacional
MLSTP/PSD	Movimento de Libertação de São Tomé e Príncipe

SAUDI ARABIA – ARABIE SAOUDITE

Mr. Abdullah AL SHEIKH Leader of the Delegation President of the IPU Group	Speaker of the Shura Council
Mr. Ali ALKAHTANI	Member of the Shura Council
Mr. Abdulrahman ALHARBI Member of the High-level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism	Member of the Shura Council
Mr. Abdulaziz ALMUHANA	Member of the Shura Council
Ms. Rimah ALYAHYA	Member of the Shura Council
Ms. Raedah ABUNAYAN	Member of the Shura Council
Mr. Mohamad ALMUTAIRI	Secretary General of the Shura Council
Mr. Abdullah ALTAMMAMI	Director, Shura Council
Ms. Afnan ALORAIJ Secretary of the delegation, Secretary of the Group	Adviser, Shura Council
Mr. Ahmed ALSHAHRANI Secretary of the Group, Secretary of the delegation	Deputy Director, Shura Council
Mr. Khalid ALMUBARK Secretary of the Group, Secretary of the delegation	Adviser, Shura Council
Mr. Khalid ALTURKI Secretary of the Group, Secretary of the delegation	Director, Shura Council
Mr. Khalid ALMANSOUR	Director, Shura Council
Mr. Mansour ALTAKHAIS Secretary of the Group, Secretary of the delegation	Adviser, Shura Council
Mr. Turki ALSAUD Secretary of the Group, Secretary of the delegation	Adviser, Shura Council
Mr. Youssef ALHARBI	Deputy Director, Shura Council

SERBIA – SERBIE

Ms. Snežana PAUNOVIĆ Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians Leader of the Delegation	Vice-President of the National Assembly Chairperson, Committee on the Economy, Regional Development, Trade, Tourism and Energy; Member, Committee on Administrative, Budgetary, Mandate and Immunity Issues (SPS)
Mr. Edin ĐERLEK	Vice-President of the National Assembly Member, Foreign Affairs Committee; Member, Committee on the Rights of the Child (SPP)
Ms. Ivana STAMATOVIĆ	Member of the National Assembly Member, Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management Committee; Deputy member, Foreign Affairs Committee (ZS)
Ms. Ivana ROKVIĆ	Member of the National Assembly Member, Culture and Information Committee Deputy member, Environmental Protection Committee (NPS)
Ms. Jelena JERINIĆ	Member of the National Assembly Member, Committee on the Judiciary, Public Administration and Local Self-Government; Deputy member, Defence and Internal Affairs Committee (ZLF)
Mr. Mladen GRUJIĆ	Member of the National Assembly Member, Committee on Human and Minority Rights and Gender Equality (SNS)
Mr. Srđan SMILJANIĆ	Secretary General of the National Assembly
Ms. Aleksandra MLAĐAN	Adviser, National Assembly
Ms. Jasminka UROŠEVIĆ	Adviser, National Assembly
Mr. Vladimir FILIPOVIĆ Secretary of the Group, Secretary of the delegation	Director National Assembly
NPS	People's Movement of Serbia
SNS	Serbian Progressive Party
SPP	Justice and Reconciliation Party
SPS	Socialistic Party of Serbia
ZS	Health Serbia
ZLF	Green – Left Front

SEYCHELLES

Mr. Roger MANCIENNE Leader of the Delegation President of the IPU Group	Speaker of the National Assembly Chairperson, Assembly Business Committee Chairperson, House Committee (LDS)
Ms. Audrey VIDOT	Member of the National Assembly Vice-Chairperson, Women's Parliamentary Caucus Member, Defence and Security Committee (US)
Mr. Waven WILLIAM President, Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development	Member of the National Assembly Chairperson, International Affairs Committee Vice-Chairperson, Standing Orders Committee (LDS)
Ms. Emma DIDON Secretary of the delegation,	Research Officer IPU desk officer, National Assembly
Ms. Paulina KANGUATJIVI	Adviser, National Assembly
Mr. Ronald WINDWAAI Adviser	Adviser, National Assembly

LDS Linyon Demokratik Seselwa
US United Seychelles

SLOVAKIA – SLOVAQUIE

Mr. Peter ŽIGA
Leader of the Delegation
President of the IPU Group

Speaker of the National Council (HLAS)

Mr. Daniel GUSPAN
Secretary General

Secretary General of the National Council

Mr. Marek LISANSKY

Adviser, National Council

HLAS Voice - Social Democracy

SLOVENIA – SLOVÉNIE

Mr. Predrag BAKOVIC
Leader of the Delegation
President of the IPU Group

Member of the National Assembly
Chair, Committee on Foreign Policy
Member, Committee on Infrastructure, the Environment
and Spatial Planning (Socialist Party)

Ms. Mirjam BON KLANJSCEK

Member of the National Assembly
Chair, Committee on Education, Science, Sport and
Youth; Member, Commission of the National
Communities (Liberal)

Mr. Zoran MOJSKERC
Member of the High-level Advisory Group on
Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism

Member of the National Assembly
Member, Committee on EU Affairs; Member, Committee
on Justice (Conservative Party)

Ms. Tatjana PANDEV
Secretary of the delegation

Director, National Assembly

Socialist Party Social Democrats
Liberal Svoboda
Conservative Party Slovene Democratic Party

SOMALIA – SOMALIE

Mr. Abdullahi Omar ABSHIR
Leader of the Delegation
President of the IPU Group

Deputy Speaker of the House of the People

Mr. Ismail Eid MOHAMED
Leader of the Delegation
President of the IPU Group

Member of the House of the People
Member, Justice and Judiciary Committee

Ms. Zamzam Dahir MOHAMUD
Leader of the Delegation

Member of the Upper House
Secretary of the National Resource, Infrastructure and
Transport Committee; Member of the Joint Committee
on the Review and Implementation of the Constitution of
the Federal Parliament of Somalia

Mr. Farah Moalim BISHAR

Member of the House of the People
Member, Information & Communication Committee

Mr. Mohamud Ahmed MOHAMED

Member of the House of the People
Deputy Chairperson, Transportation, Civil Aviation
Committee

Ms. Naimana Hassan HAJI MOHAMUD GADH-WEYNE

Member of the Upper House
Chairperson, Committee for Justice Affairs, Religious
Affairs & Endowments, Human Rights, Women and
Children; Member of the Women Caucus

Mr. Noradin OLUJOG

Member of the House of the People
Member, Committee on Telecommunication, Media and
Technology

Mr. Abdirahman ABDULLE	Secretary General of the House of the People
Mr. Abdulkadir Abshir OMAR Secretary of the delegation	Adviser, House of the People
Mr. Abdullahi Haji Gedi MUMIN Secretary of the delegation	Adviser, Upper House
Ms. Hanifa Mohamed IBRAHIM	Adviser, Upper House

SOUTH AFRICA – AFRIQUE DU SUD

Ms. Refilwe Maria MTSHWENI-TSIPANE Leader of the Delegation	Speaker of the National Council of Provinces (ANC)
Ms. Annelie LOTRIET	Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly (DA)
Ms. Dorries DLAKUDE	Member of the National Assembly (ANC)
Ms. Duduzile ZUMA-SAMBUDLA	Member of the National Assembly (MKP)
Mr. Marshall Mzingisi DLAMINI	Member of the National Assembly (EFF)
Mr. Baxolile Babongile NODADA	Member of the National Assembly (DA)
Mr. Nhlanhla HADEBE	Member of the National Assembly
Mr. Dennis Richard RYDER	Member of the National Assembly
Mr. Gideon Christian WIEGAND	Adviser, National Assembly
Mr. Xolile Christopher GEORGE	Adviser, National Assembly
Mr. Malusi MBATHA	Adviser, National Council of Provinces
Mr. Modibedi Eric PHINDELA	Adviser, National Council of Provinces
Ms. Rosaline MONNAKGOTLA	Researcher, National Assembly
Ms. Sebolelo Constance MVULANE	Adviser National Council of Provinces

ANC	African National Congress
DA	Democratic Alliance
MKP	Mkhonto Wesizwe Party
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party

SOUTH SUDAN – SOUDAN DU SUD

Mr. Gabriel Guot Guot ACIEN	Member of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly
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SPAIN – ESPAGNE

Mr. Agustín ALMODÓBAR BARCELÓ Leader of the Delegation Member of the Executive Committee	Member of the Senate Spokesperson, Committee on Industry and Tourism (PP)
Ms. Ana MARTÍNEZ	Member of the Senate (PSOE)
Mr. Fernando CASTILLO	Adviser, Congress of Deputies
Ms. Paloma MARTINEZ SANTA MARIA	Deputy Secretary General of the Senate

Ms. Teresa GÓMEZ-BERNARDO
Secretary of the Group, Secretary of the delegation

Secretary, Congress of Deputies

PP Popular Party
PSOE Partido Socialista Obrero Español

SURINAME

Mr. Asiskumar GAJADIEN
Leader of the Delegation
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on
Democracy and Human Rights

Member of the National Assembly
Chairman, Standing Committee on Finance and
Planning
Chairman, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs,
International Business, and International Cooperation
Member, Standing Committee on Domestic Affairs and
Natural Resources (VHP)

Ms. Cheryl DIJKSTEEL

Member of the National Assembly
Chairwoman, Standing Committee on Public Health,
Education, Science, and Culture; Member, Committee
on Human Rights and Domestic Affairs (VHP)

Mr. Josafat KANAPE

Member of the National Assembly
Chairman of the Standing Committee on Transport,
Communication, and Tourism; Member, Standing
Committee on Finance and Planning; Member,
Standing Committee on Domestic Affairs, Natural
Resources (ABOP)

Mr. Melvin BOUVA
Member of the Working Group on Science and
Technology

Member of the National Assembly
Member, Standing Committee on Transport and
Communication; Member, Standing Committee on
Tourism, Education, Science, and Culture; Member,
Standing Committee on Domestic Affairs and Natural
Resources (NDP)

Mr. Ronny ASABINA

Member of the National Assembly
Member, Standing Committee on Economic Affairs,
Entrepreneurship, and Technological Innovation,
Regional Development and Sport; Member, Standing
Committee on Finance and Planning; Member,
Standing Committee on Domestic Affairs (BEP)

Mr. Dino OEDIT

Deputy Secretary General of the National Assembly

Ms. Lydia JORDAN

Adviser, National Assembly

VHP Progressive Reform Party
ABOP General Liberation and Development Party
NDP The National Democratic Party
BEP Brotherhood and Unity in Politics

SWEDEN – SUÈDE

Ms. Margareta CEDERFELT
Leader of the Delegation
President of the IPU Group;
Member, Working Group on Science and Technology

Member of the Riksdag
Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs
Member, Committee on Defense (C)

Mr. Mattias KARLSSON
Chairperson, High-level Advisory Group on Countering
Terrorism and Violent Extremism

Member of the Riksdag
Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs; Member,
Committee on Culture (SD)

Mr. Serkan KÖSE

Member of the Riksdag
Member, Committee on Labour;
Member, Committee on EU Affairs (S)

Mr. Ulrik NILSSON

Member of the Riksdag
Member, Committee on Constitution (C)

Ms. Angelika BENGTTSSON

Member of the Riksdag
Substitute member, Committee on Cultural Affairs
Substitute member, Committee on Foreign Affairs (C)

Mr. Ingvar MATTSON

Secretary General of the Riksdag

Mr. Björn SONDÉN
Secretary of the IPU Group

Adviser, Riksdag

Mr. Ralph HERMANSSON

Adviser, Riksdag

C Conservative Party
GP Green Party
SD Sweden Democrats
S Social democratic Party**SWITZERLAND – SUISSE**M. Daniel JOSITSCH
Chef de la délégationMembre du Conseil des Etats
Membre, Commission de politique extérieure
Membre, Commission de la politique de sécurité
(SP/PS)

M. Franz GRÜTER

Membre du Conseil national
Membre, Commission de politique extérieure
Membre, Commission de l'immunité (SVP/UDC)M. Christian LOHR
Membre du Bureau de la Commission permanente de la
démocratie et des droits de l'HommeMembre du Conseil national
Membre, Commission de la sécurité sociale et de la
santé publique (M/C)Mme Laurence FEHLMANN RIELLE
Membre du Comité des droits de l'homme des
parlementaires ; Membre du Comité sur les questions
relatives au Moyen-OrientMembre du Conseil national
Membre, Commission de politique extérieure
Membre, Commission des finances (SP/PS)M. Laurent WEHRLI
Membre de la Commission permanente de la paix et de
la sécurité internationale ; Membre du Groupe de
facilitateurs concernant ChypreMembre du Conseil national
Président, Commission de politique extérieure
Membre, Commission de gestion (FDP/PLR)

M. Philippe SCHWAB

Secrétaire général de l'Assemblée fédérale

M. Jérémie EQUEY
Secrétaire du groupe, Secrétaire de la délégation

Relations internationales, Conseil national

Mme Anna-Lea GNÄGI
Secrétaire adjointe du Groupe, secrétaire de la
délégation

Relations internationales, Conseil des Etats

SP/PS Parti Socialiste
M/C Le Centre
SVP/UDC Union Démocratique du Centre
FDP/PLR Les Libéraux / Les Libéraux-Radicaux**THAILAND – THAÏLANDE**Mr. Mongkol SURASAJJA
Leader of the Delegation

President of the Senate

Ms. Saratsanun UNNOPORN

Member of the House of Representatives
Chairperson, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs,
House of Representatives (PTP)

Mr. Chavaphon WATTANAVEKIN

Member of the Senate
First Vice-Chairperson, Standing Committee on Foreign
Affairs, Senate

Mr. Kannavee SUEBSANG Member of the Committee to Promote Respect of International Humanitarian Law	Member of the House of Representatives Third Vice-Chairperson, Standing Committee on Legal Affairs, Justice, and Human Rights, House of Representatives (Fair Party)
Ms. Tuangthip JINTAWET	Member of the House of Representatives Fourth Vice-Chairperson, Standing Committee on Children, Youth, Women, Older Persons, Persons with Disabilities, Ethnic Groups, and LGBTs (BJT)
Mr. Saran TIMSUWAN	Member of the House of Representatives Fifth Vice-Chairperson, Standing Committee on Communications, Telecommunications, and Digital Economy and Society, House of Representatives (PTP)
Mr. Parinya WONGCHERDKWAN	Member of the Senate Fifth Vice-Chairperson and Spokesman, Standing Committee on Higher Education Science, Research and Innovation, Senate
Mr. Chaiwat SATHAWORNWICHIT	Member of the House of Representatives Secretary, Standing Committee on Debt, Poverty Problems Solutions, and Inequality Reduction, House of Representatives (PP)
Mr. Akara TONGJAISOD	Member of the House of Representatives Spokesperson, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives (PPRP)
Mr. Veerapun SUVANNAMAI	Member of the Senate First-Vice-Chairperson, Standing Committee on Public Health, Senate
Ms. Suppornrattana SUKPUM	Deputy Secretary General, House of Representatives
Ms. Steejit TAIPIBOONSUK Member of the ASGP	Deputy Secretary General, House of Representatives
Mr. Tanukom BAMRUNGPON Secretary of the delegation	Director of the IPU Division, House of Representatives
Ms. Neeranan SUNGTO Assistant Secretary of the delegation	Foreign Affairs Officer, House of Representatives
Ms. Pilanthana THONGSAMRIT Assistant Secretary of the delegation	Foreign Affairs Officer, House of Representatives
Mr. Saritpon SATAWEDIN Assistant Secretary of the delegation	Foreign Affairs Officer, House of Representatives
Ms. Pathomporn RAKSAPOLMUANG Interpreter	Foreign Affairs Officer, House of Representatives
Ms. Pimpa CHAIHAN Assistant Secretary of the delegation	Foreign Affairs Officer, House of Representatives
Ms. Panitee CHATAKANONDA Secretary to the ASGP Delegation	Director of the Asian-Pacific Parliamentarians' Union Division, House of Representatives
Ms. Shakariya SATHAPORNWAJANA Assistant Secretary to the ASGP Delegation	Foreign Affairs Officer, Practitioner Level House of Representatives
PPRP Palang Pracharath Party	
PP People's Party	
Fair Party Fair Party	
PTP Pheu Thai Party	
BJT Bhumjaithai Party	

TIMOR-LESTE

Mr. Saul Salvador Haleluya Judelju AMARAL Leader of the Delegation President of the IPU Group	Member of Parliament
Ms. Carminda CARLOTA	Member of Parliament
Ms. Maria Ana Bela SAVIO	Member of Parliament
Ms. Maria Teresa GUSMAO Member of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians	Member of Parliament
Mr. Anildo DA CRUZ	Advise, National Parliament
Mr. Edgar SEQUEIRA MARTINS Secretary of the Group	Secretary General of the National Parliament
Ms. Izilda Da Silva PEREIRA	Head of Division Protocol, National Parliament
Ms. Maria Imaculada Conceição SABINO Secretary of the Delegation	Secretary, National Parliament
Ms. Melisa Ibela Diliã E SILVA CALDAS	Adviser, National Parliament
Mr. Joaquim da Conceição SOARES	Adviser, National Parliament
Ms. Lurdes BESSA,	Ambassador and Permanent Representative
Ms. Ralyana RIBEIRO	First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Timor-Leste

TONGA

Lord Fatafehi FAKAFANUA Leader of the Delegation Member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians	Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Chair, Environment Climate Change Standing Committee; Member, Law Standing Committee
Mr. Tevita Fatafehi PULOKA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
Ms. Dulcie TEI	Member of the Legislative Assembly
Ms Silivia ATIOLA	Adviser

TUNISIA - TUNISIE

M. Housseem MAHJOUB Chef de la délégation	Membre de l'Assemblée des représentants du peuple Assesseur du Président chargé de la législation
M. Sami RAIS	Membre de l'Assemblée des représentants du peuple Vice-Président, Commission d'Organisation administrative, développement, digitalisation, gouvernance et lutte contre la corruption
Mme Rim MAACHAOU	Membre de l'Assemblée des représentants du peuple Rapporteur, Commission de l'Industrie, du commerce, des richesses naturelles, de l'énergie et de l'environnement
M. Mohamed Zied EL MAHER	Membre de l'Assemblée des représentants du peuple Membre, Commission des finances et du budget
M. Nader MNIF Secrétaire de la délégation	Directeur général à l'Unité des Relations Extérieures Assemblée des Représentants du peuple

TÜRKİYE

Mr. Numan KURTULMUŞ
Leader of the Delegation
President of the IPU Group

Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye
(AK)

Ms. Asuman ERDOĞAN
President of the IPU Group
Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye
(AK)

Mr. Mevlut KARAKAYA

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye
(MHP)

Ms. Fatma ÖNCÜ

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye
(AK)

Mr. Burak AKBURAK

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye
(İYİ)

Mr. Selman OZBOYACI

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye

Mr. Ceylan Akça CUPOLO

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye
(DEM)

Ms. Nurhayat ALTACA KAYIŞOĞLU

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye
(CHP)

Mr. Abdulkadir Emin ÖNEN

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye
(AK)

Mr. Serkan BAYRAM

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye
(AK)

Mr. Ahmet ÖZGÜR
Adviser

Senior Advisor of Speaker of Turkish Parliament in
charge of press

Mr. Ahmet Aydın DOĞAN
Adviser

Ambassador and Senior Advisor of Speaker of Turkish
Parliament in charge of foreign relations

Mr. Ali Murat NAS
Adviser

Head of Foreign Relations Department
Grand National Assembly of Türkiye

Mr. Aydın DEMİRÖZ

Chief of Cabinet of Speaker of Turkish Parliament

Ms. Saren AKSELI

Adviser, Grand National Assembly of Türkiye

Ms. Handan KARAKAS DEMİR
Secretary of the delegation

Legislative Specialist, Grand National Assembly of
Türkiye

AK Justice and Development Party
CHP Republican Peoples' Party
DEM People's Equality and Democracy Party
İYİ İYİ Party
MHP National Movement Party

TURKMENISTAN

Ms. Jenet OVEKOVA
Leader of the delegation

Member of the Assembly
Member, Committee on Legislation and Norms (DP)

Mr. Yenish MOLLABERDIYEV

Member of the Assembly
Member, Committee on Human Rights and Freedoms
(DP)

DP Democratic Party

UGANDA – OUGANDA

Mr. Alex RUHUNDA Leader of the Delegation	Member of Parliament Member, Budget Committee Member, Natural Resources Committee (NRM)
Mr. Charles AYUME	Member of Parliament Member, Finance Committee; Member, HIV/AIDS Committee (NRM)
Mr. Fox ODOI-OYWELWO	Member of Parliament Member, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs; Chairperson, Human Rights (NRM)
Ms. Susan AMERO Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security	Member of Parliament Member, Local Government and Public Service; Member, Public Accounts Committee Central
Mr. Alex RUHUNDA	Member of Parliament
Mr. Hassan KIRUMIRA	Member of Parliament
Mr. Adolf Kasaija MWESIGE	Clerk of Parliament
Ms. Jane Rose Semakula IKIROR	Clerk of Parliament
Mr. Meshach NUWABIINE Secretary of the delegation	Deputy Director, Parliament
Mr. Police Fred BUSINGE	Deputy Director, Parliament
Ms. Sitnah Chemisto CHEROTICH	Deputy Secretary General of Parliament
NRM National Resistance Movement	

UKRAINE

Mr. Oleksandr KORNIYENKO Leader of the Delegation	Deputy Speaker of Parliament (SN)
Mr. Arsenii PUSHKARENKO	Member of Parliament Deputy Chairman of the Committee, Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Foreign Policy and Interparliamentary Cooperation (SN)
Mr. Artur GERASYMOV Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development	Member of Parliament Member of the Committee, Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Agrarian and Land Policy (YeS)
Ms. Lesia VASYLENKO Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights	Member of Parliament Head of the Subcommittee on Climate Change and Air Protection, Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Environmental Policy and Nature Management (Voice)
Ms. Alona SHKRUM	Member of Parliament Member of the Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Finance, Tax and Customs Policy (Batkivshchyna)
Mr. Oleksandr MEREZHKO	Member of Parliament Chairman of the Committee, Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Foreign Policy and Interparliamentary Cooperation (SN)

Mr. Oleksii ZHMERENETSKYI	Member of Parliament Head of the subcommittee on adaptation of Ukrainian legislation to the provisions of European Union law (EU acquis), fulfillment of Ukraine's international legal obligations in the field of European integration, Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Anti-corruption Policy (SN)
Ms. Olga RUDENKO Member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians	Member of Parliament Head of the subcommittee on ensuring foreign economic ties and effective use of international aid, Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Foreign Policy and Interparliamentary Cooperation (SN)
Mr. Zhan BELENIUK	Member of Parliament First Deputy Chairman of the Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Youth and Sports (SN)
Mr. Viacheslav SHTUCHNYI Secretary of the Group	Secretary General of Parliament
Mr. Andriy KANIUKA Secretary of the Delegation	Adviser, Parliament
Mr. Oleksandr SANCHENKO	Adviser, Parliament
Ms. Olha KURYSHKO	Adviser, Parliament
Mr. Naryman DZHELIALOV	Adviser, Parliament
Ms. Antonina FEDOSOVA	Adviser, Parliament
Ms. Olha RYBAK Secretary of the Delegation	Adviser, Parliament
Mr. Dmytro KYRYCHENKO	Adviser, Parliament
Ms. Iryna SUSLOVA	Adviser, Parliament
SN	"Servant of the People" political party
YeS	"European Solidarity" political party
Voice	Political Party "Voice"
	"Batkivshchyna" political party

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES – ÉMIRATS ARABES UNIS

Mr. Saqr GHOBASH Leader of the Delegation President of the IPU Group	Speaker of the Federal National Council
Mr. Dr. Ali ALNUAIMI Vice-President of the Executive Committee, Member of the Finance and Economic Affairs Committee	Member of the Federal National Council
Mr. Ahmed KHOORI	Member of the Federal National Council
Mr. Marwan ALMHEIRI	Member of the Federal National Council
Ms. Meera ALSUWAIDI Vice President of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development	Member of the Federal National Council
Ms. Moza ALSHEHHI	Member of the Federal National Council
Mr. Saeed AL AABDI ALNUAIMI	Member of the Federal National Council

Ms. Sara FALAKNAZ Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions	Member of the Federal National Council
Ms. Sedra ALMANSOORI	Member of the Federal National Council
Mr. Omar AL NUAIMI Secretary of the delegation	Secretary General of the Federal National Council
Mr. Tareq ALMARZOOQI	Secretary General of the Federal National Council
Mr. Abdulrahman ALSHEHHI	Director, Federal National Council
Mr. Belal ALALI	Deputy Director, Federal National Council
Mr. Fahad ALSHEHHI	Director, Federal National Council
Mr. Juma AL MHEIRI	Director, Federal National Council
Mr. Saif ALSHAMSI	Protocol, Federal National Council
Mr. Sami ALABBOUD	Director, Federal National Council

UNITED KINGDOM – ROYAUME-UNI

Mr. Alex SOBEL Leader of the Delegation	Member of the House of Commons (L)
Mr. Dan CARDEN President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians; Ex-officio Member of the Executive Committee; Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs; Member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians	Member of the House of Commons (L)
Mr. Fabian HAMILTON	Member of the House of Commons (L)
Ms. Pam COX	Member of the House of Commons (L)
Dame Karen BRADLEY	Member of the House of Commons Chair, Home Affairs Committee (C)
Mr. Chris LAW	Member of the House of Commons (SNP)
Lord Christopher RENNARD	Member of the House of Lords (LD)
Lord Ross KEMPSSELL	Member of the House of Lords (C)
Mr. Rick NIMMO	Director, BGIPU
Ms. Dominique REES	Deputy Director, BGIPU
Ms. Rhiannon EDWARDS	Multilateral Programme Manager, BGIPU
Ms. Mathilde OLLIVO	International Project Manager, BGIPU
Ms. Sarah DAVIES	Clerk of the House of Commons
Ms. Chloe MAWSON	Clerk of the House of Lords
Ms. Elektra GARVIE-ADAMS Joint Secretary to ASGP	Adviser, House of Commons

L	Labour
LD	Liberal Democrats
C	Conservative
SNP	Scottish National Party

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA – RÉPUBLIQUE-UNIE DE TANZANIE

Mr. Joseph MHAGAMA Leader of the Delegation	Member of the National Assembly (CCM)
Mr. Elibariki KINGU	Member of the National Assembly (CCM)
Ms. Neema LUGANGIRA	Member of the National Assembly (CCM)
Ms. Esther MATIKO Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights	Member of the National Assembly (CHADEMA)
Mr. Faustine NDUGULILE Member of the Health Advisory Group	Member of the National Assembly (CCM)
Ms. Mwanaisha ULENGE	Member of the National Assembly (CCM)
Mr. Ramadhan RAMADHAN	Member of the National Assembly (CCM)
Ms. Katherine KAIHULA Secretary of the delegation	Adviser, National Assembly
Mr. Joshua CHAMWELA Secretary of the Group	Secretary General, National Assembly
CCM Chama Cha Mapinduzi CHADEMA Chama Cha Demokrasia Na Maendeleo	

UZBEKISTAN – OUZBÉKISTAN

Ms. Tanzila NARBAEVA Leader of the Delegation	Chairwoman of the Senate
Mr. Ravshanbek ALIMOV	Member of the Senate Chairman, Committee on International Relations, Foreign Economic Relations, Foreign Investments and Tourism (Adolat SDP)
Ms. Oral ATANIYAZOVA Member of the Advisory Group on Health	Member of the Senate Member, Committee on Development of the Aral Bay Region and Ecology of the Senate (UzLiDeP)
Mr. Anvarkhon TEMIROV	Member of the Legislative Chamber Member, Committee on Industry, Construction and Trade of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan (PDPUz)
Mr. Mukhammad VALIEV	Member of the Legislative Chamber Member, Committee on Anti-Corruption and Judicial Affairs of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis (Adolat SDP)
Mr. Ulugbek AKBAROV	Chief consultant, International Relations Department, Senate
Mr. Sherzod RIKHSIBOEV	Lead specialist, International Relations Department, Senate
PDPUz People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan Adolat SDP Adolat Social Democratic Party UzLiDeP Liberal-Democratic Party of Uzbekistan	

VIET NAM

Mr. Manh TIEN NGUYEN Leader of the Delegation	Member of the National Assembly Vice-Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee (CPV)
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Mr. Phuong TUAN NGUYEN	Member of the National Assembly Vice-Chair, Science, Technology, and Environment Committee (CPV)
Ms. Thi HONG YEN PHAM	Member of the National Assembly Standing Member, Economics Committee (CPV)
Mr. Viet ANH TRAN	Member of the National Assembly Standing member, Foreign Affairs Committee (CPV)
Mr. Truong GIANG NGUYEN	Secretary General of the National Assembly
Ms. Quynh THI NGUYEN Secretary of the delegation	Senior officer, National Assembly
Ms. Kieu, NHI VU UYEN Secretary of the delegation	Officer National Assembly
CPV Communist Party of Vietnam	

YEMEN – YÉMEN

Mr. Sultan Saeed AL-BARKANI Leader of the Delegation	Speaker of the House of Representatives
Mr. Abdullah Hamood AL-KATEB	Member of the House of Representatives
Mr. Hamid Abdullah AL-AHMAR Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights	Member of the House of Representatives
Mr. Mohammed Saleh AL-QOBATY	Member of the House of Representatives
Mr. Saleh Salem AL-AMERI	Member of the House of Representatives
Mr. Sultan Hezam AL-ATWANI	Member of the House of Representatives
Mr. Ameen Ali ZUHRA	Head of public relations and protocol department, House of Representatives
Mr. Suhaib Sultan ALBARKANI	Private secretary to the Speaker, House of Representatives

ZAMBIA – ZAMBIE

Ms. Nelly Butete Kashumba MUTTI Leader of the Delegation President of the IPU Group Member of the Executive Committee	Speaker of the National Assembly
Ms. Given KATUTA - MWELWA Member of the Advisory Group on Health	Member of the National Assembly Vice-Chairperson, Cabinet Affairs Committee Member, Delegated Legislation Committee (Independent)
Mr. Harry Simbeleko KAMBONI KAZIMETE Member of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians	Member of the National Assembly Chairperson, National Guidance & Gender Matters Committee; Member, Education, Science & Technology Committee (UPND)
Mr. Imanga WAMUNYIMA	Member of the National Assembly Member, Public Accounts Committee (PNUP)
Ms. Jaqueline SABAO	Member of the National Assembly; Member, Standing Orders Committee; Vice-Chairperson, Public Accounts Committee (UPND)

Ms. Melesiana PHIRI	Member of the National Assembly Vice-Chairperson, Education, Science & Technology Committee (PF)
Mr. Nicholas Muluka MUKUMBI	Member of the National Assembly Member, Public Accounts Committee (UPND)
Mr. Oliver Mumbuna AMUTIKE Member, Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions	Member of the National Assembly Member, Media, Information & Communication Technologies Committee (UPND)
Mr. Stephen C KAWIMBE Secretary of the Group	Secretary General, National Assembly
Mr. Dominic MWINAMO	Director, National Assembly
Mr. Macdonald MWIINGA	Adviser, National Assembly
Ms. Pauline M MONGA Secretary of the delegation	Adviser, National Assembly
Mr. Sage C SAMUWIKI	Director, National Assembly
Independent UPND PNUP PF	Independent United Party for National Development Party for National Unity Progress Patriotic Front

ZIMBABWE

Mr. Jacob Francis Nzwidamilimo MUDENDA Leader of the Delegation President of the IPU Group	Speaker of the National Assembly Chairperson, Committee on Standing Rules and Orders (ZANU PF)
Ms. Mabel Memory CHINOMONA Leader of the Delegation	President of the Senate Vice-Chairperson, Committee on Standing Rules and Orders; Patron, Zimbabwe Women Parliamentarians Caucus (ZANU PF)
Mr. Jona NYEVERA	Member of the National Assembly Member, Committee on Mines and Mining Development Member, Committee on Local Government, Rural and Urban Development (ZANU PF)
Ms. Lusyomo NYELELE	Member of the National Assembly Member, Mines and Mining Development Member, Youth Empowerment Development and Vocational Training Committee (ZANU PF)
Ms. Maureen KADEMAUNGA	Member of the National Assembly Member, Public Accounts Committee; Member, Budget, Finance and Economic Development Committee (CCC)
Mr. Mtshane Lucas KHUMALO	Member of the Senate Member, Committee on Standing Rules and Orders Member, Liaison Coordination Committee
Mr. Sengezo TSHABANGU	Member of the Senate Member, Thematic Committee on Climate Change Member, Thematic Committee on Peace and Security (CCC)
Mr. Tawanda KARIKOGA	Member of the National Assembly Member, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Committee; Member, Lands and Agriculture Committee (ZANU PF)

Ms. Tsitsi Veronica MUZENDA	Member of the Senate Member, Sustainable Development Goals Committee Member, Human Rights Committee (ZANU PF)
Mr. Kennedy Mugove CHOKUDA	Clerk of Parliament
Mr. Asha JENJE	Director, National Assembly
Mr. Califinos Kudakwashe GUV	Director, Senate
Mr. Farai Nicholas MAKUBAZA	Director, National Assembly
Mr. Frank Mike NYAMAHOWA	Director, National Assembly
Ms. Rumbickai Pamela CHISANGO IPU Desk Officer	Principal External Relations Officer
Mr. Kumbirai MAKAMURE	External Relations Officer, Senate
Ms. Martha MUSHANDINGA	Adviser, National Assembly
Ms. Rumbidzai Pamela CHISANGO Secretary of the Group	Adviser, National Assembly
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
CCC	Citizens Coalition for Change

**DELEGATIONS PARTICIPATING IN AN OBSERVER CAPACITY /
DÉLÉGATIONS PARTICIPANT EN QUALITÉ D'OBSERVATEURS****AFGHANISTAN**

Mr. Mir Rahman Rahmani QALANDERKHAN Leader of the Delegation	Speaker or President House of the People
Ms. Elham Khalili KHADIJA	Member of Parliament House of the People
Mr. Mohammad Akbar STANIKZAI	Second Vice-Chairman of the House of Elders
Mr. Abdul Qader ARYUBI Adviser	Secretary General House of the People

MYANMAR**COMMITTEE REPRESENTING PYIDAUNG SU HLUTTAW (CRPH)**

Mr. Win Myat AYE Leader of the Delegation	Member of the House of Nationalities (NLD)
Ms. THANDA	Member of the House of Representatives Member, CRPH International Relations Committee (NLD)
Ms. Mya THIDA	Adviser, House of Nationalities
Ms. Nan Su MON AUNG	Adviser, House of Representatives
NLD	National League for Democracy (NLD)

II. ASSOCIATE MEMBERS – MEMBERS ASSOCIES**ARAB PARLIAMENT
PARLEMENT ARABE**

Mr. H.E. Adel AL ASOOMI Leader of the Delegation	Speaker
Mr. Kamel SHARWY	Secretary General / Clerk
Mr. Ashraf ELSEIDY	Adviser
Mr. Ahmed HASSABALLA	Protocol Coordinator

**EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (EALA)
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'EST**

Mr. Joseph NTAKIRUTIMANA Leader of the Delegation	Speaker Chairperson, Commission
Mr. George Stephen ODONGO	Member of Parliament Member, The Commission Member, Committee on Accounts
Mr. Alex Lumumba OBATRE	Clerk
Mr. John Njoroge MUTEKA	Deputy Clerk
Mr. Anatole NAHAYO	Deputy Clerk
Mr. Ajak Nicodemus BIOR	Senior Public Relations Officer
Ms. Emilly Okema KIRUNGI	Administrative Assistant
Ms. Priscilla AMODING	Senior Administrative Assistant to the Speaker

**EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (EP)
PARLEMENT EUROPÉEN**

Mr. Nicolae ȘTEFĂNUȚĂ	Vice-President
Ms. Iarina Aurora BADEA	Adviser
Ms. Udina MARTA	Head of Parliamentary Support and Capacity Unit

**INTER-PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE OF THE WEST AFRICAN ECONOMIC
AND MONETARY UNION (WAEMU)
COMITÉ INTERPARLEMENTAIRE DE L'UNION ÉCONOMIQUE
ET MONÉTAIRE OUEST-AFRICAINE (UEMOA)**

Mr. Abdoulaye SOMA Leader of the Delegation	Speaker
Mr. Seydou ISSAKA	Secretary General / Clerk

**LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN PARLIAMENT (PARLATINO)
PARLEMENT LATINO-AMÉRICAIN ET CARIBÉEN**

Mr. Rolando GONZALEZ PATRICIO Leader of the Delegation	President
Mr. Carlos NUÑEZ SALINAS	Vice-President
Ms. Norma CALERO	Adviser

**PARLIAMENT OF THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)
PARLEMENT DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ ÉCONOMIQUE DES ÉTATS DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST
(CEDEAO)**

Ms. Memounatou IBRAHIMA Leader of the Delegation	Speaker
Mr. Edwin Melvin SNOWE JR	Member of Parliament Chairman, Committee on Political Affairs, Peace and Security and APRM
Ms. Moussokoura Chantal FANNY	Member of Parliament Vice-Chair, Public Accounts
Mr. Senou SOKLINGBE	Member of Parliament Vice-Chair, Trade, Customs and Free Movement Committee
Mr. Koutouon Bertin SOME	Secretary General
Mr. Kouao N'Dessonn Yves N'GUESSAN	Committee Clerk
Mr. Mohammed Kabeer GARBA	Director
Mr. Toba TANAMA	Adviser

**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION (PABSEC)
ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DE L'ORGANISATION DE COOPÉRATION ÉCONOMIQUE DE LA
MER NOIRE (AP-OCEMN)**

Mr. Yılmaz BÜYÜKAYDIN Leader of the Delegation	Member of Parliament Member, Committee of National Education, Culture, Youth and Sports
Ms. Fikriye YAKIŞTIRAN	Secretary

**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF LA FRANCOPHONIE
ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE (APF)**

M. Nicolas WALDER	Conseiller National
M. Damien CESSÉLIN	Secrétaire général
M. Benoit ONAMBELE	Conseiller appui diplomatique

PARLIAMENT OF MERCOSUR (PARLASUR)

Ms. Fabiana MARTÍN Leader of the Delegation	President
Mr. Derlis MAIDANA	Vice-President
Mr. Celso RUSSOMANNO	Member of Parliament
Mr. Franco METAZA	Member of Parliament
Mr. Diego MOLINAS	Secretary of the Presidency
Mr. Lucas SERNA	Secretary of International Relations and Integration
Ms. María Julia ANDRADE CARVALHO	Adviser
Ms. Yanina Montserrath MAIDANA	Adviser

III. OBSERVERS – OBSERVATEURS**UNITED NATIONS / NATIONS UNIES**

Ms. Carolyne Mélanie RÉGIMBAL, Chief, UN Office for Disarmament Affairs Geneva

Mr. Casper MULLIE, Consultant, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO) / ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DU TRAVAIL (OIT)

Ms. Aurélie HAUCHERE VUONG, Forced Labour Specialist

Mr. Pierre MARTINOT-LAGARDE, Special Advisor

OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (OHCHR) / HAUT-COMMISSARIAT DES NATIONS UNIES AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME (HCDH)

Mr. Bikramjeet BATRA, Human Rights Officer

Ms. Layla ABI-FALAH, Associate Human Rights Officer

Ms. Ema HAZAROSYAN, Intern

PARTNERSHIP FOR MATERNAL, NEWBORN AND CHILD HEALTH (PMNCH) / PARTENARIAT POUR LA SANTÉ DE LA MÈRE, DU NOUVEAU-NÉ ET DE L'ENFANT (PMNCH)

Ms. Flavia BUSTREO, Chair, Governance and Ethics Committee

Mr. Mohit PRAMANIK, Technical Officer

Mr. Rajat KHOSLA, Executive Director

UN WOMEN / ONU FEMMES

Ms. Adina WOLF, Monitoring Specialist and Grants Manager

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) / ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTÉ (OMS)

Dr. Bruce AYLWARD, Assistant Director-General

Ms. Elisa SCOLARO, External Relations officer, parliamentary engagement

Mr. Gaudenz SILBERSCHMIDT, Director, Health and Multilateral Partnerships

AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION (APU) / UNION PARLEMENTAIRE AFRICAINE

M. Boubacar IDI GADO, Secrétaire Général

M. Pierre Flambeau NGAYAP, Membre

M. Samir CHEROUATI, Administrateur

ARAB INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION (AIPA) / UNION INTERPARLEMENTAIRE ARABE (UIPA)

Mr. Ahmed Alawi Hafeedh BA ABOOD, Secretary-General

Mr. Samir NIHAWI, Director of Parliamentary Relations

Ms. Elyssar JABRE, Translator

ASIAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (APA) / ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE ASIATIQUE

Mr. Mehdi GHASHGHAHI, Deputy Secretary General for Executive Affairs

Mr. Mohammad Reza MAJIDI, Secretary General

Mr. Seyed Javad HASHEMI HASSANABADI, Director for International Division

COLLECTIVE SECURITY TREATY ORGANIZATION PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (CSTO PA) / ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DE L'ORGANISATION DU TRAITÉ DE SÉCURITÉ COLLECTIVE (AP-OTSC)

Mr. Gleb BOKHANOVICH, Secretary of delegation

Mr. Sergei POSPELOV, Executive Secretary

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION (CPA) / ASSOCIATION PARLEMENTAIRE DU COMMONWEALTH

Mr. James PINNELL, Deputy Head of Programmes - Multilateral Engagements

Ms. Miral PANKHANIA, Communications and Office Administrator

FORUM OF PARLIAMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION (FP-ICGLR) / FORUM DES PARLEMENTS DE LA CONFÉRENCE INTERNATIONALE SUR LA RÉGION DES GRANDS LACS (FP-CIRGL)

Mr. Onyango KAKOBA, Secretary General
Mr. Jean-Marie BAAFO NKONG'OTO, Accounts Officer

INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK FOR EDUCATION (IPNED) / RÉSEAU INTERNATIONAL DES PARLEMENTAIRES POUR L'ÉDUCATION (IPNEd)

Ms. Aqsa SHAH, Parliamentary Advocacy Coordinator [Education]
Mr. Joseph NHAN-O'REILLY, Executive Director

INTERPARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY ON ORTHODOXY (IAO) / ASSEMBLÉE INTERPARLEMENTAIRE SUR L'ORTHODOXIE (AIO)

Mr. Ioan VULPESCU, President of the General Assembly of the IAO
Mr. Maximos CHARAKOPOULOS, Secretary General
Mr. Konstantinos MYGDALIS, Adviser of the IAO
Mr. Goran TRPCHEVSKI, Secretary

MAGHREB CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL / CONSEIL CONSULTATIF MAGHRÉBIN

Mr. Said MOKADEM, Secrétaire général

PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT (PNND) / PARLEMENTAIRES POUR LA NON-PROLIFÉRATION ET LE DÉSARMEMENT NUCLÉAIRES

Mr. Alyn WARE, Global Coordinator
Ms. Margareta KIENER NELLEN, Council member

PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANIAN (PAM) / ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA MÉDITERRANÉE (APM)

Mr. Lyes ACHOUR, Senior Manager of the Algerian Delegation to PAM

PARLIAMENTARY UNION OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION MEMBER STATES (PUIC) / UNION PARLEMENTAIRE DES ÉTATS MEMBRES DE L'ORGANISATION DE LA COOPÉRATION ISLAMIQUE (UPCI)

Mr. Mouhamed Khouraiichi NIASS, Secretary General
Mr. Ali Asghar MOHAMMADI SIJANI, Deputy Secretary General

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PARLIAMENTARY FORUM (SADC-PF) / FORUM PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ DE DÉVELOPPEMENT DE L'AFRIQUE AUSTRALE

Ms. Boemo SEKGOMA, Secretary General
Mr. Mahendrasing KHOOBLALL, Accountant

GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA / FONDS MONDIAL DE LUTTE CONTRE LE SIDA, LA TUBERCULOSE ET LE PALUDISME

Mr. Scott BOULE, Senior Specialist, Parliamentary Affairs
Ms. Susanne VON WACHTER, Specialist Donor Relations
Ms. Alessia MONTANARI, Donor Relations Officer

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF SUPREME AUDIT INSTITUTIONS (INTOSAI) / ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DES INSTITUTIONS SUPÉRIEURES DE CONTRÔLE DES FINANCES PUBLIQUES

Ms. Camilla FREDERIKSEN, Senior Manager INTOSAI Development Initiative

PERMANENT CONFERENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (COPPPAL) / CONFÉRENCE PERMANENTE DES PARTIS POLITIQUES D'AMÉRIQUE LATINE ET DES CARAÏBES

Ms. Erika AMOEDO, Technical Secretary

SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL (SI) / INTERNATIONALE SOCIALISTE

Mr. Carlos WALLHEAD, Special Advisor and Head of International Projects
Ms. Chantale YIMGA WANDJI Epse KAMBIWA, General Coordinator

AFRICAN UNION (AU) / UNION AFRICAINE (UA)

Mr. Anicet TAMFUTU IYABE, Observer
Ms. Esther HAWOLANGI, Secretary

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC) / COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE (CICR)

Mr. Alexander BREITEGGER, Senior Legal Adviser
Mr. Fahad AHMED, Legal Adviser

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION (IDLO) / ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DE DROIT DU DÉVELOPPEMENT

Mr. Mark CASSAYRE, Permanent Observer
Mr. Arsen KHANYAN, Liaison and Advocacy Officer

LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES / LIGUE DES ÉTATS ARABES

Mr. Ali CAROUIE, Expert

SOVEREIGN ORDER OF MALTA / ORDRE SOUVERAIN DE MALTE

Ms. Marie-Thérèse PICTET-ALTHANN, Ambassadeur, Observateur permanent
Mr. Yannick GALEAZZI, Premier secrétaire de la Mission permanente d'observation

**IV. PARLIAMENTS PARTICIPATING AS OBSERVERS WITH A VIEW TO A POSSIBLE AFFILIATION/REAFFILIATION
PARLEMENTS PARTICIPANT EN QUALITÉ D'OBSERVATEURS EN VUE D'UNE AFFILIATION/REAFFILIATION EVENTUELLE**

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Mr. Pehin Dato Suyoi OSMAN	Member of the Legislative Council
Ms. Huraini HURAIRAH	Clerk of the Legislative Council
Mr. Mohammad Amalul Muttaqin ISMAIL	Research Officer

**V. ADVISERS AND OTHER PERSONS TAKING PART IN THE WORK OF THE 148th ASSEMBLY –
CONSEILLERS ET AUTRES PERSONNES PARTICIPANT AUX TRAVAUX DE LA
148^e ASSEMBLÉE**

KUWAIT

Mr. Jasem ALNUSIF Adviser	Deputy Director National Assembly
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QATAR

Mr. Hamad AL-HAMADI Adviser	Adviser Shura Council
Mr. Khalaf AL-KAABI Secretary of the delegation	Adviser Shura Council
Mr. Mohammed AL-HASSAN Adviser	Adviser Shura Council
Mr. Mohammed SHAHBAIK Adviser	Director Shura Council
Mr. Rashid AL-MASLAMANI Secretary of the delegation	Adviser Shura Council

SRI LANKA

Mr. Chaminda Kumara KULARATNE Secretary of the delegation	Deputy Secretary General, Parliament
Ms. Kushani Anusha ROHANADEERA Secretary of the Group	Secretary General, Parliament

URUGUAY

Mr. José Pedro MONTERO	Secretary General, Senate
Ms. Carina GALVALISI Secretary of the delegation, Secretary of the Group	Director, Senate

PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT

Mr. Xolile Christopher George	Secretary General / Clerk National Assembly
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**VI. SPECIAL GUESTS TAKING PART IN ACTIVITIES FORESEEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE
149th ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION
INVITES SPECIAUX PRENANT PART A DES ACTIVITES PREVUES A L'OCCASION DE LA
149^e ASSEMBLEE DE L'UNION INTERPARLEMENTAIRE**

Mr. Duarte PACHECO, Former IPU President
Mr. Robert DEL PICCHIA, Former IPU Executive Committee member, Former President of the Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group

General Debate / Débat général

Mr. Bertrand PICCARD, Solar Impulse Foundation
HRH Prince Mired Raad Zeid AL-HUSSEIN, Jordan, Special Envoy on the Universalization of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Governing Council / Conseil directeur

Ms. Tininiska RIVERA CASTELLON, Nicaragua, invited by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

**Standing Committee on Peace and International Security / Commission permanente de la paix et de la
sécurité internationale**

Ms. Elena BUGLOVA, Director, Division of Nuclear Security, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
Ms. Sarah CASE LACKNER, Senior Fellow, Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP)
Ms. Camille SCOTTO DE CÉSAR, Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and high yield Explosives Policy Analyst (INTERPOL)
Ms. Maria LORENZO SOBRADO, Programme Officer, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Mr. Jean Michel ROUSSEAU, Business and Security Division, Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF)
 Ms. Claudia SEYMOUR, Senior Researcher, Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding at the Graduate Institute (IHEID)
 Mr. Paul DZIATKOWIEC, Director of Mediation and Peace Support, Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)
 Ms. Marie DURRIEU, Researcher and Professor in International Relations and Political Science, Paris
 Mr. Itonde KAKOMA, President, InterPeace

Standing Committee on Sustainable Development / Commission permanente du développement durable

Mr. Hans BORN, Head of the Policy and Research Department, Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF)
 Mr. Gregory CONNOR, Policy Specialist, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
 Mr. Michael TALHAMI, Strategic Programme Manager, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
 Ms. Amy GILL, Team Leader, Core Government Functions and Local Governance, Crisis Bureau, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
 Mr. Ben DICKINSON, Deputy Director of the Centre for Tax Policy and Administration, OECD
 Ms. Kalale MAMBWE, Project Manager, Tax Inspectors Without Borders Initiative (TIWB) Secretariat, OECD
 Mr. Ahtesham KHAN, Head of Tax for SDGs, Tax Inspectors Without Borders Initiative (TIWB), Sustainable Finance Hub, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
 Mr. Thomas BELOE, Director, Sustainable Finance Hub, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs / Commission permanente des Affaires des Nations Unies

Mr. Peter LINNÉR, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation
 Mr. Bavo CHRISTIAENS, Fund Portfolio Manager, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
 Mr. Bodo ELLMERS, Global Policy Forum
 Ms. Sigrid GRUENER, Deputy Director, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation

Forum of Women Parliamentarians / Forum des femmes parlementaires

Ms. Sofia CALLTORP, Director and Chief of Humanitarian Action, UN Women
 Ms. Madeleine REES, Former Secretary-General, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
 Ms. Friederike TSCHAMPA, Head of Section Human Rights in the European Union Delegation in Geneva

Ms. Nanna ANDERSEN, First Secretary, European Union Delegation to the United Nations, Geneva
 Ms. Adina WOLF, Resource Mobilization and Reporting Specialist, UN Women Brussels

Open Session of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law / Session ouverte du Comité chargé de promouvoir le respect du droit international humanitaire

Ms. Gniep SMOEUN, Spokesperson of Handicap International (Humanity & Inclusion)
 Ms. Odile BLANC, Institutional Partnerships Officer, Handicap International
 HRH Prince Mired Bin Raad AL-HUSSEIN, Jordan, Special Envoy on the Universalization of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
 HE Dr. Ly THUCH, Senior Minister of the Government of Cambodia and President of the Fifth Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
 Mr. Juan Carlos RUAN, Director, Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit
 Mr. Alexander BREITEGGER, Senior Legal Adviser, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism / Groupe consultatif de haut niveau de l'UIP sur la lutte contre le terrorisme et l'extrémisme violent

Mr. Serge STROOBANTS, Director for the Europe and MENA region at the Institute for Economics and Peace
 Ms. Fernanda LOMBARDI, Officer-in-Charge Implementation Support Section III (Middle East, Gulf, Latin America & the Caribbean) Terrorism Prevention Branch United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

Working Group on Science and Technology / Groupe de travail sur la science et la technologie

Ms. Sonja KOEPEL, Secretary of the UN Water Convention
 Mr. Remy KINNA, Legal officer at the UN Water Convention

Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law / Comité chargé de promouvoir le respect du droit international humanitaire

Mr. Fahad AHMED, Legal Adviser, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
 Ms. Amélie SMOEUN, Handicap International
 Ms. Odile BLANC, Handicap International

Workshop on Practical tools to achieve sustainable development / Atelier : Les outils pratiques pour atteindre le développement durable

Ms. Angeli RAYNER, Technical Officer, World Health Organization
 Mr. Pierre BERENDES, Learning Delivery Consultant, World Health Organization

Ms. Alexandra MACKEY, Zoï Environment Network/Adaptation at Altitude
Ms. Helen VERSLAND, Technical Officer, World Health Organization

Panel discussion on the theme *Common Principles: Parliamentary development as a defence to democratic backsliding* / Réunion-débat sur le thème *Principes communs : le développement parlementaire comme rempart face à l'érosion démocratique*

Prof. Nyokabi KAMAU, Executive Director, Centre for Parliamentary Studies and Training (CPST),
Mr. Alexander READ, Chief Technical Officer, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Kristen SAMPLE, Director, Democratic Governance team, National Democratic Institute (NDI)
Mr. Juan DE DIOS CINCUNEGUI, Assistant Director, Universidad Austral, Argentina

Workshop on *Parliamentary Leadership in Disarmament - Preventing and alleviating human suffering caused by weapon proliferation* / Atelier : *Le rôle moteur des parlementaires en matière de désarmement : prévenir et atténuer les souffrances humaines liées à la prolifération des armes*

Ms. Kathleen LAWAND, Senior consultant on arms control, Geneva Centre for Security Policy fellow
Mr. Carlos Mario FORADORI, Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations Office at Geneva, President of the 11th Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty
Mr. Lode DEWAEGHENEIRE, StopKillerRobots
Ms. Tamar GABELNICK, Director, International Campaign to Ban Land Mines – Cluster Munition Coalition
Mr. Fahad AHMED, Legal Adviser, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

Workshop organized by the IPU, WHO and PMNCH: *Can parliaments tip the balance for sexual and reproductive health and rights?* / Atelier organisé par l'UIP, l'OMS et le PMNCH : *Les parlements peuvent-ils faire pencher la balance en faveur de la santé sexuelle et reproductive et des droits connexes ?*

Mr. Neil DATTA, Secretary, European Parliamentary Forum on Sexual and Reproductive Rights (EPF)

Workshop on *Redoubling efforts to combat child labour and forced labour: What support can parliaments provide?* / Atelier : *Redoubler d'efforts pour lutter contre le travail des enfants et le travail forcé : Quel concours les parlements peuvent-ils apporter ?*

Ms. Sophie KILADZE, Vice-Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

Panel on the theme *Fostering peaceful coexistence : The IPU Science for Peace Schools* / Réunion-débat sur le thème *Favoriser la coexistence pacifique : les Écoles de la science au service de la paix de l'UIP*

Mr. Steve KILLELEA, Founder and Executive Chairman, Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)
Professor Jean Trần Thanh VÂN, Director, International Centre for Interdisciplinary Science and Education (ICISE)
Mr. Rolf HEUER, President of the SESAME Council
Mr. Maurizio BONA, former CERN International Relations Adviser
Mr. Abdulla AL MANNAI, Executive Director, King Hamad Global Centre for peaceful coexistence
Mr. Ali Abdulla AL ARADI, Deputy-Chairman, King Hamad Global Centre for peaceful coexistence Board of Trustees
Mr. Trần Thanh SƠN, Vice-Director, International Centre for Interdisciplinary Science and Education
Mr. Remy KINNA, Legal Officer, UN Water Convention -
Ms. Sonja KOEPEL, Secretary, UN Water Convention
Mr. Michel LARIVE, former Chair of the Working Group on Science and Technology
Mr. Mastoura bint Obaid Lafi AL-SHAMMARI, King Salman Social Centre, Saudi Arabia
Mr. Karim Sayed Abdel RAZIK, Associate Professor of Political Science at Alexandria University, Egypt

GLOSSARY / GLOSSAIRE**English****Titles/Functions:**

Speaker of Parliament
President of the Group

Adviser
Chair/Chairman/Chairperson
Clerk
Deputy Speaker
Head
Leader of the Delegation
Officer
Researcher
Secretary of the Group/delegation
Spokesman

Parliaments:

House of Commons
House of Representatives
National Assembly
People's Representatives

Parliamentary Committees:

Abroad
Agreements
Broadcasting
Building
Citizenship
Complaint Reception
Computer Science
Cross-cutting Issues
Directive Board
Elderly
Fishery
Food
Foreign Affairs
Freedoms
Funding
Gender Equality
Growth
Health/Healthcare
Heritage
Home Affairs
Housing
Human Rights
Intelligence
Investigation/Inquiry
Joint Committee
Labour/Work
Law
Legal
Local Self-government
Missing, Adversely Affected Persons
Oversight
People with Disabilities
Physical Planning, Land Use Planning, Country Planning
Public Expenditure
Public Works
Rehabilitation
Social Welfare
Standing Committee
Standing Orders/Rules
State Device
Sustainable Development

Français**Titres/Fonctions :**

Président du Parlement
Président(e) du Groupe

Conseiller
Président(e)
Secrétaire général/Greffier
Vice-Président(e)
Chef
Chef de la délégation
Fonctionnaire
Chercheur
Secrétaire du Groupe/ de la délégation
Porte-parole

Parlements :

Chambre des Communes
Chambre des représentants
Assemblée nationale
Représentants du peuple

Commissions parlementaires :

A l'étranger
Approbations
Radiodiffusion
Bâtiment
Citoyenneté
Instruction des plaintes
Informatique
Matières transversales
Comité directeur
Aînés
Pêche
Alimentation
Affaires étrangères
Libertés
Financement
Égalité entre les sexes
Croissance
Santé
Patrimoine
Affaires internes
Logement
Droits de l'homme
Renseignement
Enquête
Comité mixte
Travail
Lois
Juridique
Autonomie locale
Personnes disparues ou lésées
Surveillance
Personnes handicapées
Aménagement du territoire

Dépenses publiques
Travaux publics
Réinsertion
Protection sociale
Comité permanent
Règlement
Dispositif étatique
Développement durable

Trade
Training
Truth
Underprivileged
Ways and Means
Wildlife
Women, Children and Youth

Commerce
Formation
Vérité
Défavorisés
Voies et moyens
Faune
Les femmes, les enfants et les jeunes

IPU Committees:

Advisory Group on Health
Bureau of Women Parliamentarians
Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians
Committee on Middle East Questions
Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL)
Executive Committee
Forum of Young Parliamentarians
Gender Partnership Group
Group of Facilitators for Cyprus
Standing Committee on Peace and International Security
Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade
Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights
Standing Committee on UN Affairs

Commissions et Comités de l'UIP :

Groupe consultatif sur la santé
Bureau des femmes parlementaires
Comité des droits de l'homme des parlementaires
Comité sur les questions relatives au Moyen-Orient
Comité chargé de promouvoir le respect du droit international humanitaire (DIH)
Comité exécutif
Forum des jeunes parlementaires
Groupe du partenariat entre hommes et femmes
Groupe de facilitateurs concernant Chypre
Commission permanente de la paix et de la sécurité internationale
Commission permanente du développement durable, du financement et du commerce
Commission permanente de la démocratie et des droits de l'homme
Commission permanente des affaires des Nations Unies