



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

CL/214/SR
14 January 2025

Summary records of the Governing Council

214th session

14 and 17 October 2024

Geneva, Switzerland

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First sitting

Monday, 14 October 2024
(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 09:15, with Dr. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania), President of the IPU, in the Chair.

OPENING OF THE SITTING

The President, welcoming participants to the forum in which parliamentarians of the world met to discuss issues of mutual interest, expressed thanks for their dedication and commitment to upholding the ideals of the IPU and to attending its biannual Assemblies and related meetings. She looked forward to learning during the Assembly's special accountability segment about policy and other actions taken in Member Parliaments' respective countries to implement IPU resolutions and decisions.

The IPU always prided itself on its use of parliamentary diplomacy and dialogue in the interests of peace and security, a topic that would inevitably feature at the current Assembly in light of the deteriorating international geopolitical context. The IPU's global gatherings were the focus of attention from a world eager to hear the views of its parliamentarians on present dangers and other important issues. The 149th Assembly offered a tremendous opportunity to intensify efforts and foster innovative ideas for preserving peace, including by way of a resolution on an emergency item, which had recently proved elusive but which would serve as evidence that parliamentarians had taken charge of their responsibilities.

The busy programme of events at the Assembly testified to the IPU's dynamism and strength in uniting and engaging on numerous fronts to find lasting solutions to the major challenges of the era. She conveyed her best wishes to all for an Assembly filled with fruitful debate on key matters of global concern.

The Secretary General, similarly welcoming participants to Geneva, home of the mother of parliaments otherwise known as the IPU, said that the global state of affairs might be dire but it was essential not to lose hope. Parliamentarians had come in great numbers to the IPU Assembly from near, far and wide, united in a common purpose, which was how the parliamentary community could help to fix that state of affairs. As representatives of the peoples of the world, it was within their power to do exactly that, without feeling despair or being daunted by the challenges it entailed. Those peoples, who would be watching what they said and did to that end during the Assembly, would be disappointed if they failed to live up to expectations.

Item 1 of the agenda

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

(CL/214/A.1-rev.3)

The agenda was adopted.

Item 2 of the agenda

APPROVAL OF THE SUMMARY RECORDS OF THE 213TH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

(CL/213/SR)

The summary records of the 213th session of the Governing Council were approved.

Item 3 of the agenda

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE 149TH ASSEMBLY

The President, recalling the established practice of nominating the IPU President to preside over Assemblies taking place in Geneva, where there was no Host Parliament, said she took it that the Council would wish her to serve as President of the 149th Assembly.

It was so decided.

Item 4 of the agenda

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

(a) On her activities since the 213th session of the Governing Council

The President, accompanying her report with a digital slide presentation, said that, since the 213th session of the Governing Council, her top priority among her activities, covering eight categories in all, had been to offer support for conflict-affected regions. Following discussions in March 2024 with the IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine, she had in that context travelled to the Russian Federation, where she had addressed the 10th BRICS Parliamentary Forum in Saint Petersburg and, in the IPU spirit of dialogue, engaged in talks with the Speakers of the Council of the Federation and the State Duma, as well as with President Putin, on matters to which the IPU attached great importance, including IPU decisions relating to Ukraine. She had also communicated in that same spirit with Ukrainian leaders, whom she looked forward to meeting, including President Zelensky, in a rescheduled visit to Kyiv, her original planned visit having coincided with his absence abroad at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Summit. She would then report comprehensively to the Task Force and to the Executive Committee on her visits to both countries.

In terms of diplomatic engagement, she had had talks in Egypt with the country's Prime Minister and its Speaker of Parliament on peace in the Middle East as well as on the planned opening of the agreed IPU regional office in Cairo, which was proceeding in close cooperation with the Egyptian Parliament. The Egyptian authorities and the IPU had committed to continuing their joint efforts towards achieving peace and security in the Middle East through dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy.

In respect of enhancing parliamentary resilience and innovation, she had attended the celebrations in Beijing to mark 40 years of the affiliation of the Chinese National People's Congress to the IPU, engaging in wide-ranging discussions, including with Chinese President Xi Jinping, concerning the Chinese role in and support for the IPU's work, for which she had conveyed thanks.

With regard to promoting youth and gender participation, she had addressed the recent Tenth IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Yerevan, Armenia, where she had talked with the country's Speaker about youth and women's engagement in politics, lauding the successful involvement of Armenian youth in decision-making, including in parliament. She had also met with the Armenian President and his Prime Minister to discuss peace-related issues in light of current tensions in the region. In Hungary, where women's representation in Parliament was below the global average, she and the President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians had met with the country's Speaker and its President to discuss gender inclusivity in Parliament and other decision-making bodies. In addition to those visits, she had recorded a video message for the Fourth Eurasian Women's Forum on its theme *Women for strengthening trust and global cooperation*.

In fostering global parliamentary diplomacy, she had addressed the 2024 Global Parliamentary Forum, hosted in Washington D.C. in April 2024 by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and informed participants about the IPU and its values. She had also been invited to attend the 22nd G7 Speakers' Meeting in Verona, Italy, where she had addressed the G7 parliamentary leaders on matters relating to the interconnection between security and development, G7 support for Africa and the Mediterranean, as well as artificial intelligence and the role of parliaments in digital transformation. She had spoken bilaterally with the Speakers in attendance and effectively reignited the IPU's relationship with the G7 and the US Congress.

In July 2024 in New York, she had participated in the Parliamentary Forum at the 2024 United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, highlighting the challenges faced by some in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. In September 2024, also in New York, she had addressed the Summit of the Future, at which the Pact for the Future had been adopted, and expressed the IPU's readiness to continue working closely with the United Nations, including through the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs.

Concerning urgent global issues, in May 2024 at the International Conference on Nuclear Security held in Vienna, Austria, which the IPU had for the first time been invited to attend as an observer, she had taken part in an important ministerial panel discussion on nuclear use, non-proliferation and disarmament and had also discussed key issues with the Speaker of the Austrian Parliament. On 15 September 2024, to mark the International Day of Peace and the International Day of Democracy, she had issued a video message focused on peace, security and democracy in parliament.

As part of strengthening parliamentary cooperation, the Executive Committee had met in Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania, in June 2024, while in July 2024 she had addressed the 55th Plenary Assembly of the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum in Angola and, during an official visit to New Delhi, had met the Speaker of the Indian Parliament and Indian President Modi. Among other things, they had discussed IPU-Indian cooperation and the work of Indian centres of excellence for training parliamentarians and parliamentary staff. In September 2024 in Dubai, she and the Speaker of the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates had held discussions focused in particular on Middle Eastern peace and security as well as on women's empowerment and fostering innovation.

In sum, in her activities on behalf of IPU Member Parliaments during the preceding six months, she had conducted 15 international visits, issued in addition to the two already mentioned a video address marking Mexican Independence Day in September 2024, and chaired four online meetings relating to the 2024 Cremer-Passy Prize, to be awarded at the present Assembly. The aim of those activities had been to foster and advance constructive and peaceful parliamentary diplomacy as an IPU cornerstone.

Mr. M. Al-Mandalawi (Iraq) said that he extended greetings to all comers to the Assembly, except those from one State, which had over the preceding year and more been exterminating women, children and civilians and aiming to destroy life in Gaza and now Lebanon, signalling that its extremist Government could expand its war to engulf the region. Rather than the Russian Federation, it would have been more fitting for the IPU President to have visited Gaza, a scene of destruction and genocide where inhabitants were being denied the basic necessities as a means of forcing yet more displacement. For how long would the world – notably certain Western countries and above all the United States of America – remain deaf, blind and dumb in the face of those atrocities and heinous crimes committed in violation of international law? For how long would the rogue State responsible continue to be supported and remain above that law and all else? Calling for an end to such State terrorism, he appealed to the IPU President to visit Gaza and South Lebanon.

Mr. V. Semeska (Lithuania) asked the IPU President how she had felt when shaking hands with President Putin, who stood accused of war crimes; who had mandated her visit to the Russian Federation on behalf of the IPU; how that visit had benefited democracy as opposed to Russian propaganda; and whether she now considered it a regrettable mistake to have visited the Russian Federation before visiting its victim, Ukraine.

Mr. A. Gerasymov (Ukraine), noting that the IPU President had met with Putin only days after a leading children's hospital in Kyiv had been destroyed in a Russian missile attack, asked when the Governing Council could expect to receive a full record of the meeting; whether she had discussed with him the IPU resolutions relating to Russian aggression against Ukraine and raised the issue of abducted Ukrainian children; and why written information requests from delegations and geopolitical groups had gone unanswered. The effect of such visits was merely to prolong the war in Ukraine and the suffering created around the world by the related food crisis.

Ms. J. Kwan (Canada), stressing that President Putin was waging an illegal war against Ukraine, said that it was critical for accountability for the IPU President to provide answers about what exactly she had communicated to him on behalf of the Organization and what his response had been. Canada stood with Ukraine.

Mr. P. Katjavivi (Namibia), expressing thanks and appreciation to the IPU President for her report, said that the long list of activities conducted in the interest of fostering parliamentary diplomacy was remarkable and demonstrated her immense commitment to advancing the work of the IPU.

Mr. S. Soendergaard (Denmark), after similarly congratulating the IPU President on the impressive range of activities conducted, asked why she had still not met with President Zelensky of Ukraine, albeit that three months had passed since her meeting with the aggressor. That omission counted as a failure, especially in light of the IPU's clear stand on the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, which was that the actions of the Russian Federation were in violation of international law, with Ukraine as the victim.

Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), speaking in his capacity as President of the IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine, said that, since its establishment, the Task Force had held several meetings with parliamentary representatives from both sides. In its most recent meeting with the IPU President, in March 2024, it had gone further by requesting her to assist in its work through engagement with the Russian and Ukrainian executive branches of government. In that context, her first planned engagement had been with President Zelensky but their scheduled meeting had unfortunately been cancelled at short notice, as it had coincided with his attendance at the NATO Summit in Washington D.C. In line with her ongoing schedule, she had subsequently participated in the 10th BRICS Parliamentary Forum in Saint Petersburg, which was how she had come to meet first with President Putin and not President Zelensky.

Mr. K. Kosachev (Russian Federation), noting that the criticism directed at the IPU President had come exclusively from members of the Twelve Plus Group, said that the Group was intent on forcing her to voice its position alone. Such conduct was unedifying and unacceptable; the IPU comprised more than just one geopolitical group. As to the recent BRICS Parliamentary Forum, at which 18 parliaments had been represented, the IPU President had accepted her invitation to attend as a matter of duty. With the Russian Federation as its current Chair, the Forum had accordingly been held in a Russian venue and been addressed by the Russian President. He had naturally met with the Speakers of Parliament represented at the event, among them the IPU President, in which capacity she had acted fully within the confines of her powers and duties. Urging the IPU President to stay strong, he thanked the IPU Task Force for its efforts towards finding solutions acceptable to both sides in the conflict.

The President, in responding to the concerns expressed, recalled that her first visit after becoming IPU President in October 2023 had been to Palestine and Israel, clearly demonstrating that she was far from ignoring events in the region. The IPU dealt with all conflicts equally, for which reason it was similarly focused on events not only in the Middle East and Ukraine but also in such countries as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. In the interest of transparency, the IPU would gladly provide copies of its correspondence with her Russian and Ukrainian counterparts, which showed that she had originally been due to visit Ukraine before the Russian Federation. Following the postponement of her visit to Ukraine for the reason already mentioned, it had made little sense for her not to proceed with her planned attendance at the BRICS Parliamentary Forum, especially given the IPU's tenets of dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy. Rather than being credited for what she had done, however, she was being crucified for what she had not done. No similar questions had been asked of her when she had visited Palestine and Israel and nor did she anticipate any in respect of future visits that she might undertake elsewhere. She had been elected to deliver a mandate and should be trusted to do so instead of being unfairly treated without justification.

She had responded to the questions about her meeting with President Putin to the best of her ability and would not, moreover, have requested such a meeting were it not for her commitment to Ukraine. She treated IPU Member Parliaments with dignity and respect and asked for the same in return. She would work constantly to advance parliamentary diplomacy and would always respect IPU ideals but was only human in using her powers to do what might bring justice for the women and children suffering in Ukraine. She should be given a chance to lead the IPU in accordance with its principles and was committed to continuing her level best to do exactly that.

Concerning other matters raised, the IPU resolutions mentioned had been shared and referred to on numerous occasions; and she had indeed raised the important issue of abducted Ukrainian children, on which the IPU was continuing to work through its Task Force. As to written information requests, she had responded to all those received, which were also communicated to the IPU Secretary General and kept on file for anyone who so wished to consult.

Ms. A. Shkrum (Ukraine), noting that the IPU President, as a member of the Tanzanian delegation, had voted in favour of the two unanimously adopted IPU resolutions (in 2022 and 2023) calling for an end to the Russian aggression against Ukraine, said that she trusted her to have raised those resolutions and their substance with President Putin. She nonetheless appealed to her to use the trust placed in her wisely, to be more transparent in future and to show greater respect for the Organization over which she presided.

(b) On the activities of the Executive Committee

The President said, in respect of the activities of the Executive Committee over the preceding six months, that it had convened in Zanzibar, United Republic of Tanzania on 19 June 2024, online on 18 July 2024 and in Geneva on 11 October 2024, and would again convene on 16 October 2024. In addition to its discussions to be reported on under the relevant agenda items, the Executive Committee had in June 2024 authorized the IPU to conclude three memorandums of understanding, since signed by the Secretary General, with institutions whose collaboration with the Organization had significant consequences for its programme and resources, specifically: an organ of the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), known as the INTOSAI Development Initiative, which had been working for several years to build accountability in parliaments; the Institute for Economics and Peace, a think tank involved in the IPU's counter-terrorism work; and the King Hamad Global Center for Peaceful Coexistence, which had been working in partnership with the IPU since the 146th Assembly in Manama in March 2023.

Having also been apprised of the reporting by Members on the implementation of IPU decisions, which was a statutory requirement in the form of an annual survey of a selection of Member Parliaments, the Executive Committee had noted with satisfaction the increase in the response rate to 81% and congratulated those having provided input. It encouraged all Member Parliaments, however, to contribute to future exercises, as they were a barometer of the effective implementation of IPU decisions.

Concerning the IPU regional offices to be opened in Uruguay and Egypt, the Executive Committee had taken note of the update, in particular the positive progress towards the conclusion of the related host agreement with Egypt. The Executive Committee had also taken note of the arrangements in place, whether information campaigns at Assemblies or training programmes for the IPU Secretariat, for the implementation and promotion of recent IPU policies, including those relating to transparency, accountability and openness and the conduct of IPU governance officials. It encouraged the IPU Secretariat to conduct similar campaigns and capacity-building among Member Parliaments to ensure that those policies were well implemented. The Executive Committee had taken further note of the development of a whistle-blower policy which would enable IPU staff and other officials to report any wrongdoing without fear of reprisals. It also urged those geopolitical groups that had not yet filled their vacancies for membership of the Working Group on Transparency, Accountability and Openness, namely the African Group, the Asia-Pacific Group and the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, to do so without delay.

The Executive Committee had been apprised of recent staff movements within the IPU Secretariat, including several well-deserved promotions by the Secretary General, thanking staff who had retired, or were soon to do so, for their valuable contributions to the Organization and wishing them well in their future endeavours. It had also congratulated those who had been promoted.

With regard to the Association of Secretaries General of Parliament (ASGP), which was celebrating its 75th anniversary during the current Assembly, the Executive Committee had taken note of the recent report by the ASGP President and commended the Association's excellent cooperation with the IPU over all its years of existence.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of her report on her activities and those of the Executive Committee since the 213th session.

It was so decided.

Items 6 and 7 of the agenda

FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE IPU
(CL/214/6-R.1)
CONSOLIDATED BUDGET FOR 2025
(CL/214/7-P.1)

Mr. M. Dick (Australia), member of the Executive Committee and Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Finance, after paying tribute to his predecessor Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi of the United Arab Emirates for his service, said in presenting the financial situation of the IPU at 31 July 2024, as set out in document CL/214/6-R.1, that the Organization's budget performance for 2024 had to date remained on track and that its finances were healthy and stable. With global investment markets starting positively in 2024, the investment portfolio for the IPU and its closed Pension Fund had at the present time seen a return of 6%. The voluntary funding situation was equally positive for the remainder of the year.

With regard to the arrears in assessed contributions, currently standing at CHF 2.1 million, and the situation of certain Member Parliaments with a long-standing accumulation of arrears, it was essential to continue working through the IPU's geopolitical groups to keep the issue in sharp focus. Some of those arrears had recently been paid, enabling those concerned to exercise their full voting and participation rights during what was an important week for the IPU.

Concerning the draft 2025 consolidated budget set out in document CL/214/7-P.1, a gross operating expenditure of CHF 18.2 million was anticipated for the IPU's continuing work across the five objectives of its 2022–2026 Strategy, with an emphasis on specific areas highlighted in the document, including gender equality and women's rights, climate action, and peace and security. To enhance its impact and delivery, the IPU would also continue to invest in its digital transformation.

In respect of income, the core budget included an increase of 3% in total assessed contributions, as previously agreed by the Governing Council as a means of gradually returning contributions to their 2011 levels by the end of the current Strategy period. Through resource mobilization, voluntary contributions amounting to CHF 4.3 million, or 24% of the total budget, were expected in 2025, representing a slight increase attributable to a hoped-for extension of various major multi-year grants. All IPU Member Parliaments were encouraged to assist in that mobilization from within their own countries and geopolitical groups. Grateful to the IPU Secretariat for its comprehensive support, the Executive Committee and the Sub-Committee on Finance endorsed the draft 2025 consolidated budget and recommended its adoption by the Governing Council.

The President said she took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the financial situation of the IPU and to adopt the draft 2025 consolidated budget

It was so decided.

Item 10 of the agenda

QUESTIONS RELATING TO IPU MEMBERSHIP AND OBSERVER STATUS

(a) Consideration of requests relating to IPU membership and observer status
(CL/214/10(a)-P.1)

The President said that, as a global organization of national parliaments on a mission to represent the world's 46,000 parliamentarians, the IPU's strength lay in its ability to uphold its value of inclusiveness and to provide all national parliaments, irrespective of size, with a platform for parliamentary diplomacy and cooperation on major global issues. To that end, the voices of all parliamentarians must be heard, which was the rationale behind the Organization's long-standing goal of universal membership. In 2023, in a significant step towards that goal, it had proudly welcomed the Parliaments of Liberia and the Bahamas into its membership. It now warmly welcomed to the 149th Assembly a delegation from the Parliament of Brunei Darussalam, which was attending as an observer with a potential view to affiliation with the IPU in the near future.

Mr. P. Osman (Brunei Darussalam), speaking in an observer capacity at the invitation of the President, said that his delegation indeed hoped to participate in future IPU Assemblies following its current first attendance at such an event.

The President, after stating that the IPU looked forward to welcoming Brunei Darussalam as an IPU Member Parliament, said that the President of the Senate of Jamaica had likewise attended the 148th Assembly as an observer with a view to reaffiliating with the IPU and also to reinforcing the presence of Caribbean and small island developing States (SIDS) within the Organization. Following its recent receipt of the communication annexed to document CL/214/10(a)-P.1, the Executive Committee had unanimously endorsed the request contained therein for the reaffiliation of the Parliament of Jamaica to the IPU.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to approve that request, as recommended by the Executive Committee, in which event the Parliament of Jamaica would become the IPU's 181st Member Parliament.

It was so decided.

Mr. T. Tavares-Finson (Jamaica), describing his Parliament's reaffiliation with the IPU as a momentous occasion by which it was deeply honoured, said that the renewed Jamaican membership of such an august organization reaffirmed his small island nation's long-standing commitment to democracy and good governance. Thanks to the tremendous administrative support received from the IPU Secretary General and his staff, the reaffiliation process had been extremely smooth.

The IPU's mission aligned with the ideals of the Jamaican Government and people and their firm belief in the power of dialogue, cooperation and mutual respect to advance peace, democracy and sustainable development. Jamaica was eagerly committed to contributing to IPU discussions on critical global issues invariably connected with the core values enshrined in its Constitution and central to its approach towards domestic and international affairs. Through its advocacy, it would continue to amplify SIDS' voices within the IPU to ensure that their unique challenges and perspectives formed part of the global discourse. It hoped to see particular IPU attention devoted to the situations in Haiti and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, including with respect to the latter's ongoing claim on Guyanese territorial integrity, and would also gladly share with IPU Member Parliaments its best practices and details of its successful youth parliament and other initiatives. Currently, the improvement of the Parliament's operational efficiency through digital transformation constituted a high priority. Excited by its return to the IPU fold, the Parliament of Jamaica looked forward to engaging with fellow Member Parliaments and to contributing to the achievement of the IPU's vision for democracy and parliaments at the service of the people for peace and development.

The President, expressing thanks for those words and welcoming the Jamaican Parliament into the IPU membership, invited all Member Parliaments to redouble their efforts towards achievement of the IPU goal of universality.

Concerning a request for observer status received from the League of Parliamentarians for Al Quds and Palestine, the Executive Committee had confirmed that a similar request from the same organization, albeit minus the words "and Palestine" from its title, had been rejected in Manama in March 2023. Its recommendation therefore was that its previous decision on the matter should stand. She took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of that recommendation.

It was so decided.

The sitting rose at 10:55.

Second sitting

Thursday, 17 October 2024
(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 09:15, with Dr. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania), President of the IPU, in the Chair.

Item 5 of the agenda

INTERIM REPORT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE IPU SINCE THE 213TH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL (CL/214/5-R.1)

The Secretary General, accompanying with a digital slide presentation his interim report on IPU activities undertaken over the preceding six months, as set out in document CL/214/5-R.1, said that the report should be considered in conjunction with that provided at the previous sitting by the IPU President on her activities during that same period. A fuller overall picture could be expected in the IPU Impact Report for 2024 to be presented at the 150th Assembly in Tashkent.

In accordance with the IPU's mandate and its 2022–2026 Strategy, IPU activities were designed to make every voice count and to build an ecosystem with partners to promote democracy for all, with a focus on the four policy areas identified as priorities: climate change; democracy, human rights, gender and youth empowerment; peace and security; and sustainable development. The volume and breadth of the work conducted in recent months was borne out by the figures in document CL/214/5-P.1 pertaining to national support activities and regional and global events. The same applied to newly launched IPU publications, including the *World e-Parliament Report 2024*, which were aimed at continuing to deliver on the IPU mandate and spanned such issues as the digital transformation of parliaments, human security, climate action, women in politics, and generative AI in parliaments.

Concerning activities conducted under Strategic Objective 1, building effective and empowered parliaments, they had continued to centre on the critical work of upholding the human rights of parliamentarians. Not only unfortunate but also untenable, the ever-rising caseload of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians demanded more robust action from parliamentarians in solidarity with their colleagues around the world who were subjected to abuse in the course of performing their duties. Cases of particular concern included that of former IPU President Mr. Saber Chowdhury of Bangladesh, who had been arrested on multiple charges of murder following the recent political unrest in his country. He had since been released on bail, thanks in part to friendly pressure from the IPU, which was following up on the cases of others still languishing in jail. The IPU was also continuing to shed light on violence against women parliamentarians, extending its study on the subject to the Asia-Pacific region so as to enhance understanding of the issue and spur more robust parliamentary action to counteract it. It was furthermore involved in numerous parliamentary capacity-building programmes to increase efficiency in key policy areas such as human rights, gender equality, information and communication technology, diplomacy, peace and parliamentary transitions, climate, and health. The IPU's Indicators for Democratic Parliaments, moreover, served as a useful self-assessment tool for parliaments. Lastly, through its special focus on assisting parliaments in transition, notably in West and Central Africa, the IPU had forged a community of such parliaments to identify the collective and individual challenges faced. It was also continuing to develop a sense of IPU belonging among small island developing States (SIDS) through a similar focus on helping them to better respond to the serious existential challenge posed to them by climate change.

With regard to Strategic Objective 2, that of promoting inclusive and representative parliaments, the IPU had continued to encourage women's and youth inclusion in the political processes of numerous countries and was grateful to the respective Speakers of Parliament for collaborating with it closely towards that goal.

As to Strategic Objective 3, supporting resilient and innovative parliaments, the IPU's activities again revolved around helping parliaments to harness new technologies and scientific innovations to improve their processes, address challenges and bridge the digital divide. The continuing focus was on the use of AI in parliament, including through the work of the Centre for Innovation in Parliament and the publication of related briefs, guidelines and indeed the

World e-Parliament Report 2024 already mentioned. In seeking to forge new partnerships for building a parliamentary ecosystem, the IPU had signed a number of cooperation agreements and would continue to identify further similar opportunities and resources in support of its work.

In respect of Strategic Objective 4, catalysing collective parliamentary action, gatherings such as IPU Assemblies were valuable for bringing together the global parliamentary community to articulate the views of parliamentarians and the people on global governance issues. Invariably wide-ranging and relevant, the topics of deliberation were also supplemented by a multitude of engaging side events. At the United Nations (UN), the IPU political project was working well and included cooperation programmes with UN specialized agencies from which many IPU Member Parliaments benefited. The IPU efforts to increase parliamentary engagement in and input to UN processes were also bearing fruit, as evidenced in particular by the strong UN commitment enunciated in the Pact for the Future, adopted at the recent Summit of the Future, to deepen that engagement and to work on addressing global challenges in concert with national parliaments and the IPU. That exceptional commitment attested to the growing recognition of the legislative, oversight and budgetary roles of parliamentarians. Many IPU office-holders, including himself and the IPU President, had proudly represented the Organization at that Summit, in addition to which he had been privileged to address a special session of the UN Security Council on leadership for peace, at which he had reiterated the views of the parliamentary community on ways of working with governmental authorities to improve global governance. In addition to its involvement in numerous other UN events, including the recent High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the IPU was the subject of keen attention from the UN Secretary-General himself in the run-up to the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in 2025, with his Chef de Cabinet set to arrive in Geneva the following day to continue the related discussions. On another note, as a result of the dedicated efforts to increase IPU membership, the Parliament of Jamaica had been welcomed into the fold at the present Assembly and it was hoped that the Parliaments of Belize and Brunei Darussalam might follow suit at the 150th Assembly. As mentioned in her activities report, the IPU President had joined in celebrations held by Member Parliaments to mark the anniversaries of their long involvement with the Organization and the IPU would gladly participate in any similar celebrations organized in future by other Member Parliaments.

With reference to Strategic Objective 5, strengthening the IPU's accountability, Member Parliaments had reported the previous day during the Assembly's special accountability segment on their implementation of IPU outcomes. Information on the action being undertaken to improve accountability and transparency in the IPU's work would be provided under another item.

Lastly, the IPU's contribution to peace and security, its priority theme for 2024, was epitomized in its use of parliamentary diplomacy in bridging gaps between countries in conflict, such as the Russian Federation and Ukraine, bringing together the Parliaments of Armenia and Azerbaijan in a bid to consolidate the ongoing peace process between their two countries, and working through its Committee on Middle East Questions for peace in the region. Those examples indicated the priority accorded by the IPU to its peace endeavours in a world fraught with crisis. In sum, the IPU was always working to deliver on the mandate entrusted to it by Member Parliaments.

Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), commending the encouraging and focused activities described and applauding all Executive Committee members for having helped to shape and direct the phenomenal work involved, asked whether any progress had been made in respect of overtures to the United States Congress, which was an obvious omission from the IPU family. Were it to join, it would have much to contribute, including towards framing the collective view, and would also learn from the IPU experience. All parliamentarians should be urged to raise the issue in their dealings with United States officials, whether in embassies, at meetings or in any other setting. It would be increasingly important to do so, especially in light of the impending United States elections and a potential change in the Washington Administration.

Mr. D. Diallo (Burkina Faso), warmly thanking the Secretary General for his invaluable support to his country's Transitional Legislative Assembly, said that the IPU's recent capacity-building seminar for parliamentarians of Burkina Faso had left them well equipped to improve their legislative and oversight functions and their response to the tremendous security and humanitarian challenges facing the country. Further IPU support for implementing the seminar's outcome recommendations and strengthening the country's State institutions would be welcome. He applauded the IPU President's exceptional leadership and dynamism, citing it as proof that women could and must lead for the advancement of society.

The Secretary General, expressing thanks for those kind words, said that the IPU was ready and willing to continue working with the Transitional Legislative Assembly of Burkina Faso – and with other parliaments in transition – to implement not only the recommendations mentioned but also its strategy for placing the country back on the constitutional track. To do so was its responsibility as part of its mandate. It was, moreover, intent on living up to the trust placed in it by its Member Parliaments.

The President, after conveying similar thanks for the warm compliments given, said with respect to the United States Congress that the IPU had been engaging with it at all levels and had received a positive response. Congress members were eager and ready to return the IPU fold but the upcoming United States elections were currently uppermost in their minds. The optimism expressed by the Speaker of the United States Congress, Mr. Mike Johnson, when she had met with him on the sidelines of the G7 Speakers' Summit in Verona, Italy, was another positive sign. In its quest for universal membership, the IPU was continually striving to ensure that former Member Parliaments returned to its fold, as with the Parliaments of Jamaica and Liberia. She assured the Council that every effort was being made to reach universal IPU membership.

Concerning the interim report presented by the Secretary General, the Executive Committee had taken note of its content and expressed appreciation for the arrangements he had put in place for implementing the IPU Strategy 2022–2026 through the activities conducted. With a view to facilitating the participation of parliamentary delegations in UN meetings in New York, the Executive Committee had requested that the IPU Secretariat share the agendas of such meetings as far in advance as possible to help delegations to prepare and request any necessary budgets from their countries. The Executive Committee also encouraged parliamentary delegations attending meetings in New York to make use of the support available from the IPU Office of the Permanent Observer to the United Nations and from their respective permanent missions in New York. It was highly important for them to do so, especially now that the IPU was forging such close cooperation with the United Nations. The Secretary General would gladly write to parliaments to facilitate the attendance of their members at the IPU meetings held annually in New York in February and July.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the interim report presented by the Secretary General.

It was so decided.

Introduction to the 150th IPU Assembly in Tashkent

Ms. T. Narbaeva (Uzbekistan), speaking at the invitation of the President to provide a brief overview of the arrangements for welcoming IPU Member Parliaments to the 150th Assembly in Tashkent in April 2025, said that the Parliament of Uzbekistan was proud to have become a full-fledged Member of the IPU, which played a key role in promoting truly democratic principles of parliamentarianism on a global scale and with which it had co-organized numerous inter-parliamentary meetings in Tashkent. Well aware that the IPU held its Assemblies in countries that demonstrated significant progress towards democratic reforms and parliamentarianism, the Uzbek Parliament had welcomed with gratitude the decision to accept its invitation to host the 150th IPU Assembly. The multinational people of Uzbekistan were also eagerly awaiting that significant international event, which, as the first IPU Assembly to be held in Central Asia, underscored the region's increased role in global security and sustainable development. The preparations underway in the historic city of Tashkent, which was garnering a fast-growing reputation as an important international hub for such events, included a programme for acquainting participants with the country's rich history and culture. Her Parliament was honoured to invite all IPU Member Parliaments to Uzbekistan, which was open for dialogue and cooperation and was actively working to strengthen parliamentary ties and promote constructive initiatives.

A video showcasing Uzbek cultural and historical heritage was screened.

The President, thanking Ms. Narbaeva for her remarks, said that the IPU and its Member Parliaments were looking forward to the 150th Assembly in Tashkent.

Item 8 of the agenda

APPOINTMENT OF TWO INTERNAL AUDITORS FOR 2025

(cf. Rule 41 of the Governing Council)
(CL/214/8-P.1)

The President said that two candidatures had been received for the two internal auditor positions for 2025, namely those of Mr. M. Nadir of Guyana and Mr. L. Bugli of San Marino. She took it that the Governing Council wished to appoint the two candidates as internal auditors for 2025.

It was so decided.

Item 9 of the agenda

AMENDMENTS TO THE IPU STATUTES AND RULES

(CL/214/9-P.1-rev. and P.2)

The President, drawing attention to the final proposed amendments to the Rules of various IPU bodies, including the Governing Council, as prepared by the Working Group established for the purpose and set out in document CL/214/9-P.1-rev., said that the Executive Committee had approved those amendments at its sitting of 11 October 2024.

The Executive Committee had also endorsed a proposal by the same Working Group, as explained in document CL/214/9-P.2, to upgrade the existing Advisory Group on Health to a Committee on Health that would function along the same lines as the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians or the Committee on Middle East Questions. In that event, it would be necessary to amend the stand-alone rules governing the Advisory Group on Health to bring them into line with those of the two committees mentioned. The Executive Committee had accordingly endorsed the Rules of the Committee on Health annexed to document CL/214/9-P.2.

On another note, after thoroughly considering ways of ensuring in IPU discussions and resolutions that coverage and increased visibility were given to crisis situations in all regions, the Executive Committee had invited the Secretary General to reflect on the matter and present it with suggestions for consideration at its next meeting. As to the Working Group, it was set to continue its work by studying pending proposals relating to, among others, gender parity, the appointment of the IPU Vice-President, and the emergency item process.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the final proposed amendments to the IPU Rules of the various IPU bodies.

It was so decided.

The President said that, once adopted, the amendments would be incorporated into the IPU Statutes and Rules and published on the IPU website.

Item 10 of the agenda

(continued)

QUESTIONS RELATING TO IPU MEMBERSHIP AND OBSERVER STATUS

(b) Situation of certain parliaments

The Secretary General, accompanying with a digital slide presentation his overview of the situation of certain parliaments, said that the continually rising number of parliaments that were non-functioning or in transition was regrettable. In the case of the Parliaments of Afghanistan and Myanmar, the Governing Council's previous decision following their dissolution by, respectively, the Taliban and the military, had been to continue recognizing the parliaments in place at the time as the legitimate interlocutors of the IPU and to allow their participation in the IPU's work in a non-voting observer capacity. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the decision should continue to apply until the situation in each country was normalized.

Mr. Win Myat Aye (Myanmar Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH)) said that his country's military junta was stepping up its air strikes on civilians in response to its increasing loss of control over territory on the ground. It was, moreover, preparing to hold a sham election in 2025 that would be neither democratic nor reflective of the people's will. A fair and inclusive election would be impossible without a new federal democratic constitution, the only path for Myanmar to lasting peace and sustainable development. He urged the Governing Council not to recognize the military election and to maintain its earlier decision to acknowledge the CRPH as the legitimate representative of Myanmar at the IPU.

Ms. M. Cederfelt (Sweden) said that the already terrible situation of women and girls in Afghanistan was taking an extremely worrying backward turn. With women prohibited from employment and girls from attending school, both were being barred from participation in society and public life. The IPU should have nothing to do with any Afghan parliament.

The Secretary General said that the statement of the delegate from Myanmar very much accorded with the decision that the Governing Council was being requested to take regarding his country. Concerning Afghanistan, the IPU had no dealings with the current Taliban regime and, in the knowledge that the United Nations had begun talks with the Taliban in Qatar, had recently raised its concerns over the plight of Afghan women and girls with UN officials in New York. In so doing, it had expressed its regret that the rights of Afghan women and girls had not featured on the agenda of those talks and its profound hope that the subject could be factored at the earliest opportunity into whatever discussions were taking place with the Kabul regime.

The President, confirming the absence of any dealings with officials in Afghanistan, said that the IPU recognized only those parliamentarians who had been elected to the now dissolved Afghan Parliament, most of whom were currently living outside Afghanistan but were in a position to keep the IPU informed of the situation inside the country.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse the Executive Committee's recommendation concerning Afghanistan and Myanmar.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that Bangladesh had unfortunately joined the category of countries with no functioning parliament following the protests in August 2024 that had ended the reign of its then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He had since been personally assured by the country's interim leader Muhammad Yunus that the procedures under way were legally correct, giving rise to hope that elections would be organized by the end of November 2024 or, in other words, within 90 days of the dissolution of parliament, as stipulated in the Bangladeshi Constitution. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should take note with regret of the lack of a functioning parliament in Bangladesh and meanwhile continue to monitor the situation before revisiting it at the 150th Assembly.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that, in Guinea-Bissau, parliament had been unconstitutionally dissolved within six months of its election following a stand-off between the Speaker and the country's President, who had subsequently blocked access to parliamentary premises. The IPU had continued to recognize the dissolved parliament as its official interlocutor, on which basis a delegation from Guinea-Bissau was participating in the 149th Assembly. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation while expressing regret over recent developments and urging the authorities in Guinea-Bissau to organize general elections so as to restore normality to the country.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that there was also no functioning parliament in Haiti, where parliamentary elections had been delayed owing to the political instability prevailing throughout the country. The Executive Committee had taken note with concern of that worrying situation and urged the organization of elections as soon as possible so that a fully-fledged Haitian parliament could resume its place within the IPU membership. Until such time, its recommendation was that Haiti's membership rights should remain suspended.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said with reference to Kuwait that the country's new Emir had proceeded to assume legislative powers after dissolving parliament, which could be constitutionally suspended for a maximum of four years, leaving him until May 2028 to organize new parliamentary elections. Ongoing consultations, however, gave rise to hopes that he would do so before that date. Having taken note of the situation, the Executive Committee's recommendation was that it should continue to be monitored with a view to a possible decision at the 150th Assembly.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General, recalling that there had been no functioning parliament in Niger since the coup d'état staged in 2023, said that, through his continuing in-person contacts with the country's highest authorities, he had recently learned that the process of establishing a transitional legislative assembly was well advanced and indeed poised for completion in the very near future. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should take note of the ongoing preparations to that end, continue to monitor the situation and report back to the Governing Council at its 215th session.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that Sudan was another country with a non-functioning parliament, which had been the case since a coup d'état in 2019. With increased fighting between two rival army factions, the situation had further deteriorated and the IPU, on the basis of its monitoring, believed that no elections were presently in sight. The Executive Committee's recommendation therefore was that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation and to maintain the suspension of Sudan's membership.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General, turning to countries with transitional parliaments, said that those of Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon, Guinea and Mali faced collective as well as specific challenges. The Executive Committee had taken note of the developments in each and of the IPU support being provided. Its recommendation was that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation in all five countries and to apply friendly pressure on them to speed up their transition processes so that it could welcome fully-fledged legislative bodies from each back into the fold.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said with respect to South Sudan, another country with a transitional parliament, that elections scheduled for late 2024 had been postponed for a further two years, partly because preparations were incomplete and because, in the interest of inclusiveness, the transitional authorities had decided to allow more time for consultations among the country's

political actors. Having taken note of the situation, the Executive Committee's recommendation was that the South Sudanese authorities should be urged to work for a swift return to constitutional rule, including through organization of the overdue elections.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

It was so decided.

The President, responding to a request for clarification by Mr. A.H. Sabeti Monfared (Islamic Republic of Iran) concerning the membership status of South Sudan as opposed to that of Sudan, said that Sudan had no functioning parliament and was suspended from IPU membership on that basis. South Sudan, on the other hand, had a transitional parliament in place, with new elections pending, and retained its membership accordingly.

The Secretary General said that the final country in the same category was Libya, where the interlocutor recognized by the IPU was the transitional parliament known as the House of Representatives, now understood to have relocated from Tobruk to Benghazi. Throughout its decade of existence, however, the organization of the anticipated elections for a full-fledged parliament had been continually thwarted by crisis and civil war, recent positive developments notwithstanding. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should take note of those developments, call for elections to take place as soon as possible, and continue to monitor the situation, including through ongoing engagement with the House of Representatives.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that Palestine was the first in the category of parliaments in countries where the political situation was affecting their functioning. No elections had taken place there since 2006 and it was currently represented at the IPU by the Palestine National Council, which had full membership. The hope was that efforts would be made, as and when feasible in light of current events in the region, to organize new elections in Palestine.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of that information.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that Yemen was in the same category and that its Aden-based House of Representatives, which was aligned with the country's UN-recognized Government, had been the IPU's interlocutor since 2003.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of that information.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General, recalling that Bosnia and Herzegovina had for some time featured among a further category of countries where the political situation constituted a potential threat to the functioning of their parliaments, said that the previous ongoing tensions in that country had now eased and that life was returning to normal. As there was consequently no need for it to remain on the IPU radar, the Executive Committee's recommendation was that Bosnia and Herzegovina should be removed from the category.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that the same applied to Peru, which was also listed under that same category. The Executive Committee's recommendation therefore was that it, too, should be removed from the category for the same reason.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that the same was not true, however, for the Syrian Arab Republic, which remained in the throes of civil war. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that it should remain on the IPU radar.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

It was so decided.

The President, thanking the Secretary General and his team for their excellent work and follow-up of the situation of certain parliaments, said that he was also to be commended for his helpful advice towards decision-making aimed at promoting the restoration of constitutional rule in countries around the world.

Concerning the situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Executive Committee had extensively discussed the matter and agreed that, when reflecting on its contribution to a resolution of the country's ongoing crisis, the IPU must uphold its core values, in particular a commitment to engage in dialogue. Considering the Venezuelan people as the primary beneficiaries of any progress towards such a resolution, the Executive Committee's recommendation was that the status quo vis-à-vis Venezuela should be maintained while keeping open the channels of dialogue with the Venezuelan authorities on the basis of a timeline and road map to be prepared by the Secretary General for presentation and discussion at its next meeting.

Mr. M. Mottaki (Islamic Republic of Iran), noting that the main issue for the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was the interference by the United States of America in its internal affairs, said that no country should be treated selectively, especially not one in a situation of normality.

Mr. F.A. Iglesias (Argentina) said that it was scarcely normal for a country to have transformed over two decades from being the richest in South America to the poorest, or for millions of its inhabitants to have emigrated elsewhere in the preceding five years, including to his country, where many thousands of Venezuelans had obtained the right to vote in the recent elections. The Venezuelan opposition had exhibited proof of its candidate's overwhelming victory in the country's presidential elections, whereas none of the dictator Maduro's supporters had done likewise, despite requests to that effect from countries around the world. Dictatorship and electoral fraud were not normal and nor was the routine abduction and torture of Venezuelan opposition members by the regime. The IPU should demand that the dictatorial Venezuelan Government recognize the election victory of the opposition, there being no third alternative. As to foreign interference, the only instances in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela related to Russian involvement in its military affairs and Cuban involvement in its politics. Indeed, the Russian and Cuban presence in the country was notoriously huge.

Mr. M. Charbonet Martell (Cuba), speaking in exercise of the right of reply and drawing attention to the repeated anti-government protests witnessed in Argentina, said that the comments relating to his country were out of context, out of order and unacceptable. His delegation agreed that the Venezuelan Parliament should not be seen as in crisis and supported the Venezuelan processes under way.

Ms. M. Cederfelt (Sweden) asked whether it was possible to ascertain that the elections in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had been conducted in conformity with its Constitution.

The President said in response to the remarks made that the IPU paid particular attention in its work to parliaments faced with challenges. Two Venezuelan parliaments, elected in 2015 and 2020, claimed legitimacy, but the IPU had been unable to determine which of the two it should rightfully recognize and had thus continued to keep the situation under review.

As to whether the country had returned to normality, it was true that presidential elections had been held but they remained contested, which spoke to the question posed by Ms. Cederfelt. The IPU was not in a position, however, to comment on elections that it had not observed and

could do nothing more than seek to verify the facts as reported in the media or by election observer missions, in which it did not participate. Concerning the issues raised by the delegate from Argentina, it was in light of the Executive Committee's discussion of those very issues that she had brought the matter of Venezuela to attention in the form of the recommendation already spelled out. She took it that the Governing Council wished to approve that recommendation.

It was so decided.

(c) Consideration of the situation of Members in arrears

The President said, with respect to the situation of Members in arrears, specifically the Central African Republic and the Congo, the Executive Committee's recommendation was that, in view of their non-payment of assessed contributions for five years or more and their apparent lack of interest in engaging in IPU activities, their membership rights should be suspended. They would then be listed alongside Haiti, Honduras and Papua New Guinea as non-participating Members until such time as they re-engaged with the IPU's work. She took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

It was so decided.

The President said that the Executive Committee had also underlined the importance of engaging closely with the SIDS, which faced climate- and financial-related challenges. Its recommendation was that all possible avenues should be explored towards encouraging and facilitating their participation in the IPU's work and making their voices better heard in its deliberations. She took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

It was so decided.

Item 11 of the agenda

SIXTH WORLD CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENT

The President said, with reference to the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, that the Executive Committee had taken note of the report of the first meeting of the related Preparatory Committee, which was set to hold its second meeting on 18 October 2024, and expressed its satisfaction with the arrangements being put in place for a successful Conference. Scheduled to take place from 29 to 31 July 2025, the Conference would be preceded by the 15th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament on 28 July 2025. Members would receive a report on the work of the Preparatory Committee at the 150th Assembly in April 2025. In the interim, delegations not headed by Speakers were requested to relay the dates of what was an important quinquennial Conference to their respective Speakers and also, in the case of women Speakers, the date of the preceding Summit.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of her update on the work of the Preparatory Committee.

It was so decided.

Item 12 of the agenda

IPU PRIORITY THEMES

The Secretary General, recalling that he had referred in his earlier interim report on IPU activities to work done in implementation of the priority theme for 2024, namely peace and security, said that ongoing parliamentary initiatives in that context included those being undertaken within the Committee on Middle East Questions and the Group of Facilitators for Cyprus and those aimed at normalizing Armenian-Azerbaijani relations. In addition, moreover, to organizing panel discussions and webinars on human security and common security, the IPU had on the previous day launched its new handbook on the subject, which was aimed at helping parliamentarians better understand what those two concepts embodied.

Concerning the priority theme for 2025 and as reflected in the newly adopted consolidated budget, the proposal was to focus on gender equality in view of upcoming milestones to be celebrated in that year, among them the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 25th anniversary of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, and above all the 40th anniversary of the IPU Forum of Women Parliamentarians. The objective was to enable the global parliamentary community to review progress and challenges relating to gender equality, including in light of such prevalent issues as violence against women in politics, and to rededicate and recommit to the noble endeavour of promoting and protecting equal rights for women.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the proposed IPU priority theme for 2025.

It was so decided.

Item 13 of the agenda

IPU CHARTER ON THE ETHICS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (CL/214/13-P.1)

The President said that the final version of the IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology, as set out in document CL/214/13-P.1, was the outcome of a three-year effort initiated by the Working Group on Science and Technology and had been informed by the views of experts and the IPU membership. After giving in-depth consideration to its potential for helping parliaments to wrestle with the ethical challenges and dilemmas associated with science, technology and innovation (STI), including the ever-topical issue of AI, the Executive Committee had endorsed that version and recommended its adoption by the Governing Council.

Mr. D. Naughten (Ireland), Chairperson of the Working Group on Science and Technology, presenting the text set out in document CL/214/13-P.1, said that it aligned seamlessly with the theme of the current Assembly on harnessing STI for a more peaceful and sustainable future and was designed as a framework for guiding ethical considerations in relation to the rapid advancement of science and technology. Parliamentarians had the job of ensuring that scientific and technological progress was grounded in ethical governance and benefited humanity and the environment. While offering unprecedented opportunities for peace, sustainability and development, such progress, if unchecked, could deepen conflicts, fuel inequality and present serious ethical dilemmas.

The IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology was therefore not only relevant but essential, providing a framework of principles for ensuring that the application of science and technology was aligned with core universal values, justice, dignity and peace. It should guide the responsible leverage of innovation to benefit society while limiting unintended harm and protecting the environment. It was for every parliamentarian to turn the vision of ethical governance embodied in the Charter into laws, regulations and policies that safeguarded human rights, promoted equity and fostered peace.

That vision was outlined in the 11 key ethical principles to which the 11 articles of the Charter were devoted and which, importantly, were supported by guidelines for legislators and policymakers, helping them to create national policies and laws that incorporated those considerations into governance frameworks. By promoting global dialogue on ethical challenges in science and technology, the Charter could facilitate international cooperation, foster innovation and enhance public trust. It could also help parliamentarians use science to advance peace and development through the inclusion of women, youth and vulnerable groups in the process. Additionally, it sought to bridge the digital, scientific and technological divide between the Global North and South, ensuring equitable participation and access to innovation, and strengthening accountability.

He expressed gratitude to the IPU Member Parliaments, in particular those of Canada, Nicaragua, the Russian Federation and Switzerland, and to the IPU, relevant partners and experts whose insights and suggestions had helped to enrich and enhance the Charter and render it more comprehensive and inclusive. He likewise thanked the members of the Working Group for their expertise and dedication to making the Charter a reality and to the IPU Secretariat for its invaluable support throughout. The Working Group looked forward to the adoption of the Charter as a significant step towards ethical stewardship of scientific and technological advancements.

At the proposal of the President, the Governing Council gave a round of applause in appreciation of the Working Group on Science and Technology and its Chairperson for their excellent work in developing the IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology.

The President said she took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the Charter, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

Item 14 of the agenda

FUTURE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MEETINGS
(CL/214/14-P.1)

The Secretary General said that the list of future inter-parliamentary meetings set out in document CL/214/14-P.1 confirmed the dates of the 150th and 151st Assemblies to be held, respectively, in Tashkent in April 2025 and in Geneva in October 2025, in accordance with the IPU Statutes and Rules, which stated that at least one of the two annual IPU Assemblies should be held in Geneva, unless the IPU governing bodies decided otherwise. As indicated in the document, which also showed the policy goal and funding source of each event, a number of additional virtual and in-person meetings had been added to the list of those already approved for the remainder of 2024 and for 2025. Concerning future Assemblies, the Governing Council would be kept informed of the outcomes of any consultations with potential hosts.

Of particular note and importance was the Parliamentary Meeting to be held on 16 and 17 November 2024 in Baku, in partnership with the Parliament of Azerbaijan, on the occasion of the 29th session of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP29). The IPU hoped that the parliamentary community would be well represented at the meeting, which would be taking place in closer proximity than ever to the venue of the COP negotiations. It also hoped that Member Parliaments would plan their work around the newly confirmed dates of 13 and 14 February 2025 for the annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations in New York and the dates of the second IPU Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue to be organized in Rome by the Italian Parliament and the Vatican from 19 to 21 June 2025, for which the related agreement had now been signed. The latter event was highly topical and would undoubtedly entail crucial discussions that promised to attract large numbers of participants.

The President said she took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the list of future inter-parliamentary meetings.

It was so decided.

Item 15 of the agenda

ELECTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(cf. Article 21(k) of the Statutes and Rules 37, 38 and 39 of the Governing Council)
(CL/214/15-P.1)

The President said that a new member was to be elected to the Executive Committee to replace Ms. B. Argimón of Uruguay, whose term was set to end at the current session and whose energetic dedication and contribution to the IPU's work throughout was much appreciated. The Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) had nominated Ms. M.d.C. Alva Prieto of Peru as its candidate for a full mandate ending in October 2028. She took it that the Governing Council wished to elect the candidate as a member of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

The President congratulated Ms. Alva Prieto on her election and welcomed her as a member of the Executive Committee.

Item 16 of the agenda

IPU CREMER-PASSY PRIZE
(CL/214/16-P.1)

The President said that, following a briefing on the work of the IPU Cremer-Passy Prize Selection Board, which she chaired, the Executive Committee had taken note of the deliberations relating to the 2024 prize winner from Chad. It had also endorsed and recommended for approval by the Governing Council the suggested changes to the Prize Rules, as set out in the annex to document CL/214/16-P.1, the aim of which was to refine the process for future editions of the Prize. One such change was that the geopolitical groups would, in future, each nominate one woman and one man as candidates for the Prize. She took it that the Governing Council wished to approved those suggested changes.

It was so decided.

Item 18 of the agenda

ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES
(CL/214/18-P.1)

(a) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians
(CL/214/18(a)-R.1)

Ms. M.G. Odhiambo (President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians), accompanying with a digital slide presentation her report on the draft decisions prepared by the Committee at its recent session in Geneva, as contained in document CL/214/18(a)-R.1, said that she would, as usual, present the cases concerned in alphabetical order.

Bangladesh

The Committee had received extremely worrying information on the situation of Mr. Saber Chowdhury, Honorary President of the IPU. He had been arrested and subsequently released on bail a few days previously. He was currently facing multiple charges that appeared to be politically motivated. He had sustained injuries at the hands of protesters when he had appeared in court and was currently receiving treatment in hospital. There were serious concerns regarding his safety and his right to a fair trial.

The IPU had been engaging with the interim government of Bangladesh to seek guarantees for the rights of its former President, and the Committee called on the authorities to find speedy and satisfactory solutions.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Saber Chowdhury.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Committee had examined three cases concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, one of which was new. She wished to thank the Congolese delegation for the information provided at the hearing before the Committee and for its willingness to host and facilitate a mission to the country.

The Committee had examined the case of Mr. Chérubin Okende Senga, an opposition member of parliament who had been found dead in his car. The Committee had taken note of the information shared by the delegation concerning the judicial investigation. Nevertheless, the Committee would like to receive a copy of the investigation report and hoped to be able to gain access to it once in the country as part of its mission.

The Committee had also examined the case of Mr. Jean Marc Kabund, another opposition member of parliament who had been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for criticizing the Head of State. The Committee hoped to meet him in detention during its next mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to find a satisfactory settlement of the case.

Lastly, the Committee had examined the new case of several members of parliament whose parliamentary mandate had been initially validated by the Constitutional Court, then invalidated by the same court a few weeks later. The Committee regretted the recurrence of cases of that kind in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and called on the authorities to carry out appropriate legislative and constitutional reforms to put an end to the recurrence of such violations.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decisions relating to, respectively, the case of Mr. Jean Marc Kabund, the case of Mr. Chérubin Okende Senga and the case of 18 Congolese parliamentarians.

Eswatini

The Committee was concerned about the situation of Mr. Mabuza and Mr. Dube, who had been detained in July 2021 in the aftermath of protests calling for democratic reforms in Eswatini. In 2023, the judge in the case had found them guilty but reserved sentencing. In July 2024, they had been sentenced to prison terms of 25 and 18 years.

The IPU trial observer and the Committee failed to see how those men could have been convicted on the charges of terrorism, sedition and murder, when all they had done was express concern about the state of democracy in Eswatini, call for constitutional changes and for the people of Eswatini to be allowed to convey their concerns and wishes directly to their members of parliament. At no point had Mr. Mabuza or Mr. Dube advocated the use of violence or committed any violent acts. The Committee therefore hoped that the appeals court would critically review the lower court's verdict.

The Committee understood that the IPU Secretary General had had a very constructive meeting during the current Assembly with the President of the Senate of Eswatini and that they had discussed a possible visit to Eswatini by the IPU Secretary General to discuss different issues of mutual interest, including the case of Mr. Mabuza and Mr. Dube. The Committee hoped that the visit could soon take place. It also hoped that the authorities would allow a small Committee delegation to travel to Eswatini and meet with both men in detention.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of three Eswatini parliamentarians.

Ms. L.T. Dlamini (Eswatini), taking note of those remarks, said that her delegation was grateful for its ongoing fruitful dialogue with the IPU and appreciated the IPU's readiness to provide support for the continuing efforts to implement the recommendations that had ensued from the country's national dialogue. The parliamentary authorities of Eswatini had indeed invited the Secretary General to visit the country and looked forward to constructive deliberations at that time.

Guinea-Bissau

The Committee had examined the collective case in Guinea-Bissau of four parliamentarians, including the Speaker of Parliament, Mr. Domingos Simões Pereira, who had been prevented from travelling to Geneva to attend the 149th IPU Assembly. A parliamentary delegation had nevertheless been able to represent him. She thanked its members for the information provided during their hearing with the Committee.

The Committee deplored the new alleged violations suffered by the Speaker of Parliament, Mr. Pereira, including the arbitrary invalidation of his parliamentary mandate and position as Speaker, the violation of his rights to freedom of expression, assembly and movement, and the alleged blocking of his future candidacy in the legislative elections for purely political reasons.

The Committee denounced those violations and urged the authorities in Guinea-Bissau to take all necessary steps to end the abuse inflicted on Mr. Pereira and to refrain from instrumentalizing the justice system with the aim of removing him from political life. It also urged the authorities to ensure that the violations suffered by all the members of parliament included in the case were properly investigated.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of four parliamentarians of Guinea-Bissau.

Nicaragua

The Committee had examined for the first time and declared admissible the case of Mr. Brooklyn Rivera Bryan and Ms. Nancy Elizabeth Henríquez James. Mr. Rivera's whereabouts had remained unknown since his arrest by State agents in September 2023 and Ms. Henríquez was currently in prison. Both were opposition parliamentarians and indigenous leaders.

Ms. Tininiska Rivera Castellon, the daughter of the Mr. Rivera, was present at the sitting and wished to convey a message.

Ms. T. Rivera Castellon (special guest), speaking at the invitation of the IPU President and describing her father as a prominent leader in the history of Nicaragua and the Moskitia region, said that he had dedicated his life, including as a long-standing parliamentarian, to defending the rights and autonomy of the Miskito and other indigenous peoples and Afro-descendant communities of Nicaragua. In 2023, after participating in the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, he had been prevented from returning to Nicaragua and had instead entered the country illegally. He had soon been arbitrarily detained and the Nicaraguan Government had taken retaliatory measures against Yatama, the indigenous political party to which he belonged. His whereabouts, state of health and the charges against him remained unknown. She and other family members had been harassed and threatened by the country's police authorities and had had no response to their demands for justice. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights had therefore taken up the case and were working to secure her father's release and protection of his life, physical integrity, health and personal freedom.

In doing all she could to help her father, she had lost everything and called on all parliamentarians worldwide to join in her efforts. It was of utmost importance for all parliaments to cooperate with the IPU and other international organizations seeking to clarify his and other cases of enforced disappearance. She demanded the release of all persons arbitrarily deprived of their freedom in Nicaragua for political reasons.

The President, thanking Ms. Rivera Castellon for her message, said that the situation described was very perturbing and that the IPU would do all within its capacity to assist.

Ms. M.G. Odhiambo (President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians), also thanking Ms. Rivera Castellon for sharing her testimony and calling for parliamentary solidarity in support of her father, expressed full support for her and her family at what was a difficult time. The Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians was committed to doing everything in its power to help find her father as soon as possible.

In its decision, the Committee had made clear, among other issues, that the Nicaraguan authorities had an obligation to spare no effort to shed light on the fate of Mr. Rivera and that they should start the search immediately and expeditiously.

Regarding Ms. Hernandez, it was deeply concerned about her continued detention, the lack of access to medical treatment in prison despite her chronic health conditions, and the reported violations of her right to a fair trial.

The Committee wished to urgently send a delegation to Nicaragua to visit Ms. Hernandez in prison and meet with all relevant authorities who could assist in resolving the two cases. It sincerely hoped that the National Assembly of Nicaragua would fully cooperate in that regard.

The Committee called on the global parliamentary community present in the room and those following from a distance to take action in solidarity with their colleagues in Nicaragua.

Ms. K. Bradley (United Kingdom) said that her absent parliamentary colleague Ms. Gloria Hooper, who was familiar and indeed a friend to many in the room, wished it to be known that she was taking a very keen interest in the case and making sure that the United Kingdom Parliament was well aware of and fully supported the related draft decision.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of two Nicaraguan parliamentarians.

Pakistan

The Committee was ever more concerned about the deteriorating situation of Mr. Imran Khan and his colleagues who had been detained in May 2023 and who had been subjected to ill treatment and inhuman conditions of detention, including the use of solitary confinement. In June 2024, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention had found that the detention of Mr. Khan was arbitrary and called for his immediate release with full compensation.

That same body had identified numerous violations of Mr. Khan's right to a fair trial, as previously highlighted by the Committee. The Committee deplored that the authorities had not freed Mr. Khan or his colleague Senator Chaudhury, who had been at IPU Assemblies only recently. It called on the Pakistani authorities to free them immediately and to ensure that all their rights were respected, which required stronger action to restore due process, accountability and the rule of law in the country.

The Committee hoped to finally be able to go to Pakistan to meet all parties and make progress towards the resolution of the growing number of cases in the country.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of five Pakistani parliamentarians.

Philippines

The Committee was presenting two draft decisions. The positive news was that former Senator De Lima had finally been acquitted on the last charge. The Committee had therefore decided to close any further examination of her situation. At the same time, it was deeply concerned that Ms. de Lima had spent over six years in detention as a result of trial proceedings that, from the start, had showed that there was in fact no evidence against her. Indeed, a full analysis of Ms. de Lima's legal proceedings showed convincingly that she had been charged in response to her criticism of former President Duterte.

Turning to the second case, with regard to Ms. Castro, a current parliamentarian, the newest concern was that she had been convicted and sentenced at first instance in July 2024 for her involvement in what appeared to be a legitimate rescue operation. The aim of that initiative had been to bring to safety a group of indigenous students who risked getting caught in the crossfire of the military and paramilitary and rebel groups in Mindanao. The Committee would send a trial observer to the appeal proceedings and trusted that the court of appeals would give due consideration to all the information presented by the prosecution and the defence.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decisions relating to, respectively, the case of Ms. Leila de Lima and the case of two Filipino parliamentarians.

Thailand

The Committee had received a new complaint from the members of the Move Forward Party (MFP), the largest party elected to the Thai Parliament in May 2024. In August 2024, the party had been dissolved over a motion to discuss an amendment to the heavy penalties for breaking the *lèse-majesté* law: while 143 members of parliament had lost their party, six of its leaders had lost their seats and been stripped of their political rights for 10 years.

While it thanked the Thai delegation for the information provided to it in a hearing, the Committee failed to understand how a legislative motion to amend a law could be construed as an attempt to overthrow the monarchy. The UN treaty bodies were of the view that Thailand's *lèse-majesté* law must be revised to comply with Thailand's human rights obligations: the members of parliament in the case had been punished for attempting to achieve just that.

Some 44 MFP members of parliament might yet lose their political rights for life in a separate process over similar accusations. Another MFP member of parliament had already been sentenced under the *lèse-majesté* law. The Committee firmly believed that it was time to review the relevant Thai laws to align them with international standards: it was the only way to ensure no repeat of the situation.

Ms. S. Unnopporn (Thailand) said that, as a sovereign nation and parliamentary democracy with a constitutional monarch as head of State, Thailand had long adhered to democratic values and reiterated its commitment to the rule of law and international human rights standards.

Its Constitutional Court was exclusively empowered to dissolve political parties and, in line with the principle of the separation of powers, judicial decisions were free of all interference. Under no circumstances was the Thai National Assembly able to encroach upon the jurisdiction of the independent Constitutional Court.

The Thai Constitution guaranteed freedom of expression and the exercise of fundamental political rights, including public discussion of the monarchy, within the confines of the law, which was in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Thailand was a party. Laws protecting the head of State were common and necessary in many countries, whether monarchies or otherwise. In Thailand, the institution of the monarchy had for centuries been a main pillar of the nation and the heart and soul of the Thai people from the outset. The country's Criminal Code provided for protection of the monarchy while the law was intended to uphold public order and national security. A constitutional amendment process was currently under way with the aim of promoting more stable and sustainable democratic governance for the benefit of the Thai people.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of 152 Thai parliamentarians.

Tunisia

The Committee had examined the case of Ms. Abir Moussi and several other former Tunisian members of parliament included in a collective case. She thanked the Tunisian delegation for exchanging views with the Committee on those cases.

Concerning the case of Ms. Abir Moussi, the Committee deplored Ms. Moussi's sentencing for criticizing the legislative election process, which had come after she had spent more than 10 months in pretrial detention. The Committee called on the authorities to release her and drop the charges against her.

With regard to the collective case, the Committee reiterated its concern at the continued detention of several former members of parliament and at the referral to the military courts of the cases of nine of them. The Committee called on the authorities to drop the charges against any former member of parliament prosecuted for expressing their opposition to the President of the Republic.

The Committee regretted that the meeting with the delegation had not resulted in it receiving detailed information on the cases of the former members of parliament. It therefore called on the parliamentary authorities to take an interest in those cases as a matter of parliamentary solidarity and to provide the Committee with the information it required while respecting the separation of powers in Tunisia.

The Committee sincerely hoped that the Tunisian authorities would facilitate and welcome a Committee mission to Tunisia in the near future in order to find satisfactory solutions to all the cases under examination.

Mr. S. Rais (Tunisia), highlighting his Parliament's long-standing cooperation and readiness to engage with the IPU on issues of common concern, said that the Tunisian parliamentary authorities indeed took an interest in the Committee's work but that the sub judice rule currently applied to the cases mentioned. Parliamentary interference in judicial processes was moreover prohibited in Tunisia in accordance with the constitutional principle of the separation of powers. Independent and subject to no authority other than the law, the Tunisian judiciary operated in compliance with international standards and observed the rules of criminal procedure in the conduct of trials. It was for those reasons that no detailed information on the cases of former parliamentarians was available.

Allegations that the cases were politically motivated were entirely false; those concerned had been prosecuted under the country's laws, from which no one was immune. The Tunisian Parliament was determined to consolidate the democratic transition under way in a country based on the rule of law, with institutions that took into account the specificities of the Tunisian people and guaranteed national sovereignty. The Tunisian Ministry of Justice was responsible for judicial policy and was committed to the promotion of human rights, including through follow-up of the activity of international organizations in that sphere.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decisions relating to, respectively, the case of Ms. Abir Moussi and the case of 63 Tunisian parliamentarians.

Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

The Committee had been following the situation of more than 100 former parliamentarians in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for several years.

It strongly condemned the fact that Ms. María Corina Machado had been prevented from standing as a candidate in the presidential elections held on 28 July 2024 because of a procedure that did not allow her to exercise her right of defence. The Committee believed that recent events should be seen as a continuation of actions by State institutions to restrict Ms. Machado's political rights, which had begun when she was a prominent opposition member of parliament.

With regard to the collective case, the Committee reiterated its long-standing position that the issues involved in the case were part of the wider complex situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. It reiterated the IPU's willingness to support all efforts to strengthen democracy in the country. The Committee invited the Venezuelan authorities to provide further information on how the IPU could best assist and to respond to its requests for information on the specific issues relating to the individual situations.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decisions relating to, respectively, the case of Ms. María Corina Machado and the case of 135 Venezuelan parliamentarians.

Ms. M.G. Odhiambo (President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians), said that the cases to which she had referred were only some of the numerous cases before the Committee. In view of the record growing number of cases, it was clear that being a parliamentarian could be truly dangerous. Unfortunately, that trend was apparent in all regions of the world. The Committee counted on the support of IPU Member Parliaments to help colleagues under threat.

The IPU and UNESCO had developed a course on freedom of expression for parliaments and their members. That self-paced course was an opportunity for members of parliament to develop their skills and capacity to protect and promote freedom of expression. It would be available from 28 October 2024. She encouraged all participants to register and take the course.

Ms. N. Altaca Kayisoglu (Türkiye), expressing appreciation for the Committee's work and drawing attention to recent measures imposed on her opposition People's Equality and Democracy Party by the Turkish ruling bloc, said that the Kobani trial would be used as a pretext for banning a party and over 400 politicians, including former and current members of parliament, from participating in politics for at least five years. Contrary to expectations, the Committee had sent no one to observe the related trial, at which lengthy prison sentences had been imposed on 15 such politicians, including co-leaders of her sister party, as a means of justifying a political party's shutdown. In contrast to its oblivion to the continuing crackdown on Turkish parliamentarians, the Committee was considering cases involving former colleagues of hers who were no longer Turkish politicians but asylum seekers in Switzerland, who would be sure to accuse her party of terrorism in their defence. The difference between a normal Kurd and a terrorist Kurd came down to politics.

Ms. F. Oncu (Türkiye), speaking in exercise of the right of reply and introducing herself as a Kurdish mother and Turkish resident, said that she failed to understand why her country was now under discussion when it had not featured in the report presented. Along with the advancement of democracy, the promotion and protection of human rights remained among the key priorities for Türkiye. Parliamentarians must also be assured of free engagement in political activities without being obstructed or subjected to unwarranted legal proceedings. A parliamentary seat did not, however, provide immunity from criminal investigation or from accountability before the law.

Regrettably, some Turkish parliamentarians had clear organic ties with the Kurdistan Workers' Party, a terrorist organization that was recognized as such by, among others, the United States of America and the European Union, and was responsible for several thousand deaths. Moreover, there was evidence to prove their involvement in heinous acts for which they were now being prosecuted. Curiously, however, the files on those parliamentarians had not been updated. One-sided statements that ignored such realities were unacceptable. Parliamentarians must stand united in combating such organizations and their affiliates, with the IPU – the only universal parliamentary forum – continuing its work in a constructive, impartial and depoliticized manner.

Mr. S. Soendergaard (Denmark), commending the Committee's excellent work on Türkiye, asked about the follow-up of previous decisions taken on Turkish cases.

The President said that the cases presented were but a snapshot of the work undertaken by the Committee, which currently had 769 cases under its consideration, including the case mentioned by the two delegates from Türkiye. That snapshot was intended to keep the Governing Council informed of the Committee's follow-up of just some of those cases, which involved many different countries. Delegates who so wished were welcome to bring to attention any case of parliamentarians in peril, even if the case had not featured in the Committee's report to the Governing Council.

Concerning the election of three members to the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians to replace Mr. S. Cogolati of Belgium, Mr. M. Hussain Sayed of Pakistan and Ms. A. Reynoso of Mexico, she said that the candidates for the three vacancies satisfied the requirements set out in section I of the Rules and Practices of the Committee pertaining to its composition. Those candidates were listed in document CL/214/18-P.1, along with Ms. A. Rasheed of Maldives, who had since withdrawn her candidacy.

Currently, the membership of the Committee comprised three members from the African Group, three from the Twelve Plus Group, one from GRULAC and none from the Asia-Pacific Group. That information should be factored in when casting votes for the candidates, all of whom belonged to one or other of those groups. In the event that two candidates from the same parliament were elected for membership, only the one with the highest number of votes would be chosen. Similarly, if three women were to be elected, only the two with the highest number of votes would be chosen, together with the male candidate with the highest number of votes, in order to satisfy the stipulated gender balance rule. She invited the Governing Council to hear presentations, mostly via pre-recorded video, from each of the nine candidates.

Mr. M.A. Nasym (Maldives) said in his pre-recorded video presentation that he was a Cambridge graduate in human rights and politics who had been politically active for over a decade and had served two parliamentary terms. Having worked to bring cases of persecuted Maldivian opposition parliamentarians before the Committee, he was conversant with its role in IPU decision-making processes. He had had first-hand exposure to violence against Maldivian parliamentarians, including assassination attempts and intimidation from State-sponsored mobs, and had also recently been placed on a national security watchlist for speaking out against violent radicalization. If elected, he would contribute knowledge of patterns of violence and persecution against parliamentarians in South Asia, could facilitate the Committee's work in that region by bringing to bear the network of parliamentary friendship groups to which he belonged, and would propose plans for an awareness campaign to familiarize new parliamentarians with the Committee's work. He hoped that he could count on members to vote for him.

Ms. N. Acora Odonga (Uganda) said in her pre-recorded video presentation that she fully appreciated the responsibility that membership of the Committee entailed and was well aware that international human rights were anchored in the related core conventions focused on the promotion and protection of human rights globally. As a parliamentarian, she was committed to upholding her country's Constitution and IPU protocols. She believed that she could contribute significantly towards resolving problems to make the world a better place and stood immediately ready to assume the responsibilities of the position with which she hoped to be entrusted.

Ms. A. Brosas (Philippines) said in her pre-recorded video presentation that, in her role as a parliamentarian and member of the Board of ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights, she continued her long-standing advocacy for the protection of human rights, consistently championing in particular the rights of women and other marginalized and oppressed groups. In her legislative initiatives, she had sought not only to advance and protect the rights of such groups but also to foster equality and address issues of exploitation and violence. As a parliamentarian at risk, she had experienced first-hand the effect of human rights violations on the ability of parliamentarians to carry out their mandate. Steadfastly committed nonetheless to serving her people, she remained intent on developing strong human rights foundations to protect legislators, activists and human rights defenders in the course of their vital work.

Mr. M. Grujić (Serbia) said in his pre-recorded video presentation that his political career had begun 24 years earlier when, young, reckless and stupid, he had been arrested. But he had also been lucky; the regime he had fought against had fallen only two days after his arrest and he had been released. Since that time, Serbia had held no more political prisoners. Throughout the six of his 20 years as a parliamentarian that he had spent in opposition, he and his family had been

subjected on a daily basis to politically motivated pressure. He was standing as a candidate for membership of the Committee to help ensure that no other politicians experienced similar hardship. The simple fact was that the protection of democracy depended on the protection of parliamentarians. He was ready to undertake that task and thanked members for their trust.

Mr. I. Nizar (Maldives), expressing confidence in his pre-recorded video presentation that he possessed the skills, qualities and willingness to excel in the role for which he was a candidate, said that his academic background in information and technology and his participation in executive decision-making would swiftly add value to the Committee's success. He was a fast learner with excellent problem-solving capabilities who could take on significant workloads and who consistently strived to exceed expectations. As someone who never gave up easily on his endeavours, he believed that his input as a member of the Committee would bring substantial changes. Having researched the Committee's workings and success stories, he was eager to join its ranks and looked to Governing Council members for their votes.

Mr. S. Ali Zafar (Pakistan) said in his pre-recorded video presentation that he had joined the legal profession 40 years previously after hearing a speech that had ignited in him a passion for justice and a conviction that the law could be a powerful tool for safeguarding human dignity and rights. He had soon realized, however, that gaps existed between the rights enshrined in his country's Constitution and their implementation. The realization that those gaps resulted in the systematic violations and injustice faced in particular by those from poor backgrounds and marginalized communities had shaped his commitment to human rights and prompted his decision to advocate actively for change. He had accordingly dedicated a substantial portion of his legal practice to giving voice to and representing many hundreds whose rights had been denied.

Ms. N. Odsuren (Mongolia), delivering her presentation in person, said that her country, dubbed the oasis of democracy in its region, was committed to preserving and promoting the principles of justice, human rights and the rule of law, which were the foundational values of any thriving democracy. With parliamentarians playing a vital role in representing the voices of their citizens, democracy itself was at risk whenever their rights were violated or threatened. She was a lawyer by training and had practised in both domestic and international settings, including at the ICC International Court of Arbitration. She therefore had a strong understanding of international law and human rights as well as of the workings of parliamentary systems. If elected, she would be fully committed to ensuring that the Committee remained a strong guardian of the rights of parliamentarians, advocating for their rights and protection. She humbly requested members' support in her quest for membership.

Ms. J. Narvaéz (Paraguay) said in her pre-recorded video presentation that she was a member of her Parliament's human rights, budget and gender equality committees and had been involved in that context in plans for improving the Paraguayan prison system through the construction of two new facilities offering more humane conditions. She had also successfully worked to increase women's and youth participation in politics, while as a lawyer she had voluntarily helped those who had suffered violations of their civil and political rights and had worked to promote stability in employment and equal access to jobs. She would be hugely honoured if elected as a member of the Committee.

Mr. N. Mayoraz (Argentina) said in his pre-recorded video presentation that true justice and peace were ever more needed but were unattainable unless parliaments committed to genuine representation of those who elected them and to the unwavering defence of human rights. Believing that those rights were rooted in the non-negotiable dignity of the human person, he had co-founded the Global Center for Human Rights to promote respect for and recognition of that intrinsic dignity. He was deeply committed to fostering more integral human development and to strongly defending the life and integrity of all human beings, regardless of status, along with their freedom, especially freedom of speech. In the face of current global challenges, his defence of human rights had been a constant, as was his hope of influencing the development of proposals for truly improving lives.

The President thanked all the candidates for their presentations.

The Secretary General, recalling that voting took place in accordance with Rule 34.1 of the Rules of the Governing Council, said that the quorum of 85 established for the current session in accordance with Rule 34.2 of those Rules had been reached, that Members' representation on the Governing Council must be in accordance with Rule 1.2 of the Rules of the Governing Council, and that only delegates present in the room were entitled to vote.

Ms D. O'Neill (Australia) asked whether it would be possible to rectify the technical issue that had prevented members from hearing the interpretation of the presentation by the candidate from Paraguay.

The President said that the question was legitimate but that the pre-recorded video presentations had not arrived in time for the related interpretation arrangements to be put in place as planned, for which she apologized. The information circulated on the candidates, including their curricula vitae, should help members in their decision-making.

Ms. M. Cederfelt (Sweden), raising a point of order, said that closed voting was a more appropriate procedure for any election.

The President said that, as matters currently stood, voting must be conducted in accordance with Rule 29 of the Rules of the Governing Council, which stated that the Governing Council normally voted by show of hands or by standing vote but that a roll-call vote could be taken if the President deemed it necessary or if a member of the Governing Council so requested.

Mr. A. Sobel (United Kingdom) said that a secret ballot along the lines suggested in good faith by Ms. Cederfelt would not, in fact, be secret as the tellers would need to identify delegations to determine the allocation of votes. A vote by show of hands would probably be the quickest and simplest way to proceed and would also be in accordance with the rules.

The President, supported by **Ms. M. Alsuwaidi** (United Arab Emirates) and **Mr. S. Patra** (India), said that there was no choice but to adhere to the relevant rules, which were very clear. A secret ballot applied only in voting to elect the IPU President, the Secretary General and members of the Executive Committee.

Mr. B.O. Kalu (Nigeria) said that, in exceptional cases where there was good reason to do so, it should be possible for rules to be temporarily suspended for the sake of expediency in obtaining a desired objective.

The President said that voting results were likely to be contested in that scenario, which was something to be avoided. The only option was to proceed in accordance with Rule 29 of the Rules of the Governing Council.

Following an explanation of the procedure, a vote by show of hands was taken.

The President suggested that, in the interest of time, the Governing Council should continue its work of considering further items on its agenda until the votes had been counted.

It was so decided.

Item 17 of the agenda

IPU TASK FORCE ON THE PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE (CL/214/17-R.1)

Mr. P. Katjavivi (Namibia), member of the IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine, after presenting the report on the activities of the Task Force since March 2024, as contained in document CL/214/17-R.1, said that any observer of the war in Ukraine would recognize the challenges to peace that remained, despite some of the encouraging achievements reflected in the report.

The President said that, in a briefing on IPU initiatives in the area of parliamentary diplomacy, the Executive Committee had received an update on the work of the Task Force and commended its activities, encouraging it to continue in the same vein to overcome those challenges. Having decided to focus on humanitarian issues, above all the situation of children caught up in the conflict, the Task Force had engaged with the relevant Ukrainian and Russian authorities, specifically the Ombudsman in Ukraine and the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Russian Federation. Concerning the first Summit on Peace in Ukraine held in June 2024 in Switzerland, the negotiations had been restricted to intergovernmental parties alone, which accounted for the IPU's inability to participate. The Executive Committee had since been informed, however, that the IPU's inclusion in the second round of negotiations was under consideration.

In the same briefing, the Executive Committee had also received an update on the work of the Committee on Middle East Questions, which had been prevented from undertaking its planned visit to Israel and Palestine because of the current situation in the region. The Executive Committee had encouraged the Committee to hold hearings with heads of delegations from the region so as to obtain their informed views. A report on the Committee's deliberations during the current Assembly would be provided under the related agenda item.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the report on the activities of the Task Force.

It was so decided.

Item 18 of the agenda
(resumed)

ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES
(CL/214/18-P.1)

(f) Gender Partnership Group
(CL/214/18f)-R.1)

Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), Chairperson of the Gender Partnership Group, accompanying with a digital slide presentation the report of the Group's 50th session held on 12 and 16 October 2024, as contained in document CL/214/18f)-R.1, and citing figures set out in the report and its annexes, said that the Group had analysed women's participation in the current Assembly, examining in particular the gender composition of delegations and discussing strategies for further improvements in that respect. Proposed amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules to promote more gender-balanced delegations reaffirmed the collective commitment to that goal. The Group had learned that implementation of the IPU's anti-harassment policy was progressing well and it had engaged in dialogue sessions with the delegations of Bhutan and Oman, where urgent intervention was needed to increase women's participation in parliament. The promising news otherwise was that the number of all-male delegations at the 149th Assembly was at a record low and the number of gender-balanced delegations at a record high. The hope was that more delegations would follow suit and that concerted efforts by all would continue towards the achievement of gender parity in IPU delegations and in every parliament.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the report.

It was so decided.

(a) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians
(resumed)

The President said that the results of the vote to elect three of the nine candidates for membership of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians had been ascertained and were as follows:

Number of votes obtained:

<i>Mr. N. Mayoraz (Argentina)</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Mr. S. Ali Zafar (Pakistan)</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Mr. I. Nizar (Maldives)</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Ms. J. Narvaéz (Paraguay)</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Mr. M.A. Nasym (Maldives)</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Ms. A. Brosas (Philippines)</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>Ms. N. Acora Odonga (Uganda)</i>	<i>65</i>
<i>Ms. N. Odsuren (Mongolia)</i>	<i>67</i>
<i>Mr. M. Grujić (Serbia)</i>	<i>96</i>

Having obtained the three highest numbers of votes, Mr. M. Grujić (Serbia), Ms. N. Odsuren (Mongolia) and Ms. N. Acora Odonga (Uganda) were elected as members of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

The President, congratulating the three winning candidates on their election, said that the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians was vital to the IPU's work and that she wished them well in their new roles.

The sitting rose at 13:50.

Third sitting

Thursday, 17 October 2024
(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 14:35, with Dr. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania), President of the IPU, in the Chair.

Item 18 of the agenda
(continued)

ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES (CL/214/18-P.1)

(b) Forum of Women Parliamentarians (CL/214/18(b)-R.1)

Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche (Algeria), First Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, presenting the report on the 38th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians held on 13 October 2024, as contained in document CL/214/18(b)-R.1¹, said that, in discussing from a gender perspective a draft IPU resolution on AI, into which the Forum's proposed amendments had since been incorporated, participants had considered the adverse effects of AI, such as rises in technology-driven gender-based violence that could exclude women from public and parliamentary life, and recommended countermeasures. They had also discussed ways of enhancing women's and girls' access to justice in conflict and post-conflict situations, calling for laws to punish perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence, for victim support and for further cooperation to increase women's participation in peace negotiations and reconstruction processes, with victims' experiences taken into account. Participants had declared solidarity with women and girls suffering in bloody conflicts and explored routes to limiting the decline in gender equality. Given the worrying setbacks around the world, the participation of numerous male parliamentarians in the discussions aimed at preserving and promoting gender equality was heartening.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the report.

It was so decided.

The President said that Ms. R. Maachaoui of Tunisia and Ms. V. Techateerawat of Thailand had been elected as members of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, with a mandate ending in March 2027. She took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse their election.

It was so decided.

(c) Forum of Young Parliamentarians (CL/214/18(c)-R.1)

Mr. D. Carden (United Kingdom), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, presenting the report of the Forum's meeting held on 14 October 2024, as contained in document CL/214/18(c)-R.1², said that participants had heard enlivening video messages from the Forum's pioneers to mark its 10th anniversary, shared testimonials as to how the Forum had helped their empowerment, and committed to working for that of young women and of youth with disabilities. As detailed in the report, they had in addition provided updates on recent developments to promote youth participation in their respective parliaments, examined the theme of the current Assembly's General Debate from a youth perspective, discussed the draft IPU resolution on AI, held a question-and-answer session on further advancing the *I Say Yes to Youth*

¹ Report available in the [Results of the 149th IPU Assembly](#), page 83.

² Report available in the [Results of the 149th IPU Assembly](#), page 84.

in Parliament! campaign, and commissioned, in preparation for the 150th Assembly, youth overview reports on proposed IPU resolutions. A minute's silence had also been held for victims of the current Middle East conflict. Lastly, the Forum had held its first-ever open session on 16 October 2024 to discuss priority issues and aspirations.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the report.

It was so decided.

(d) Committee on Middle East Questions
(CL/214/18(d)-R.1)

Mr. H.-J. Talsma (Netherlands), President of the Committee on Middle East Questions, presenting the report of the Committee's two virtual meetings in June and July 2024 and its two in-person sittings at the current Assembly, as contained in document CL/214/18(d)-R.1³, said that the Committee had ultimately been obliged by safety concerns to postpone its planned Middle East visit, prompting its members to consider its mandate and role in contributing meaningfully towards the peace process in the region in the light of factors described in the report. They had recognized dialogue and openness as essential foundations for their ongoing work uniquely involving both main parties to the conflict and also favoured improved coordination to avoid fragmentation. The Committee had been briefed by a representative of the UN Works and Relief Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) on the situation in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon and on the negative impact on vital UNRWA services. It had additionally learned about the valuable activities of the King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence. Pending safe conditions for its visit to the Middle East, the Committee would explore the possibility of a regional retreat to continue discussing its mandate and future activities.

Mr. S.S. Al-Barkani (Yemen), expressing disappointment in what for him had been an eagerly awaited report, said that the Committee had seemingly changed direction in the 35 years since his first participation in IPU activities. The report was oblivious to the reality of the destruction and countless deaths in Gaza and very unfortunately gave the impression that the Committee was weak and uncaring. The Committee should have been on the ground in Israel, Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon but perhaps the full truth was that Israel had prevented its visit to the region. It could not allow Israel to continue causing suffering and death without calling it to account or sanctioning it for its actions, which were tantamount to terrorism. Instead of modestly appealing to the Knesset to refrain from further actions and improve the delivery of humanitarian aid to those in need, it should insist on it stopping the war, the genocide and the ethnic cleansing. The so-called report was a big step backwards for the IPU and would bring shame on it if left devoid of the facts.

Ms. A. Erdogan (Türkiye) said that an institution such as the IPU should do whatever necessary to remedy the injustice done to UNRWA, which Israel was seeking to portray as a terrorist organization but which worked to support the Palestinian people being starved and massacred in Gaza. IPU Member Parliaments had a humanitarian duty to respond to attacks on UNRWA and on UN agencies elsewhere by lending their full support to ensuring that they were not destroyed or prevented in future from helping those in need. It was essential to remain alert to such attacks; they must be stopped and the country responsible made to receive its just deserts.

Mr. H.-J. Talsma (Netherlands), President of the Committee on Middle East Questions, while taking note of the disappointment clearly expressed by his esteemed colleague from Yemen, said that the Committee's first objective was to pursue a peace process and foster dialogue, which would be difficult to achieve if his manner of speaking were to be the rule. To have described the Committee's approach as modest was in fact a compliment, as modesty was the very tone for which the Committee aimed in its work. As to the Committee's planned visit to the region, no objections or obstructions had ever been placed in its way by either the Israeli or the Palestinian side; the Committee had itself decided on pure grounds of safety that the visit could not go ahead as scheduled. Lastly, the Committee was at no time in any position to impose sanctions of any kind.

³ Report available in the [Results of the 149th IPU Assembly](#), page 86.

The President, expressing appreciation to the Committee for its readiness to continue its good work, including a visit to the Middle East region when possible, said that it could rely on the IPU's ongoing support. She took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the report.

It was so decided.

(e) Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law
(CL/214/18(e)-R.1)

Mr. J. Kiarie (Kenya), President of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, presenting the report of the Committee's meeting held on 15 October 2024, as contained in document CL/214/18(e)-R.1⁴, said that the Committee had heard testimonies from a landmine survivor and a statelessness advocate whose life stories were lessons in courage and hope. It had also discussed the main findings of a new report on challenges of contemporary armed conflicts, with a focus on the use of digital technologies of warfare, now a worrying reality in need of further attention by all. Concerning situations of humanitarian concern, the Committee had centred on the huge internal displacement crisis and protection concerns resulting from the conflict in Sudan and called on parliamentarians to raise the issue at every opportunity and support efforts to assist civilian victims of that conflict. It had also issued the plea set out in the report for IPU efforts to avert the spectre of a full-scale war in the Middle East region and for everyone to respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law in all its aspects.

The President, thanking the Committee for reaffirming those fundamental binding principles, took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse the Committee's plea.

It was so decided.

Mr. S.S. Al-Barkani (Yemen), praising the report as fair, said that the IPU leadership should endeavour to communicate the plea to the entire international community, which recognized that the Palestinian people were in their worst-ever situation, with the unspeakable events in Jabaliya showing that those not killed by weapons would die of hunger, thirst and lack of medical treatment. In contrast to that of the Committee on Middle East Questions, the report was worthy of the IPU; the message in its important plea should be widely disseminated, including to the media.

Mr. B.O. Kalu (Nigeria) said that he always looked forward to the Committee's comprehensive reports but was concerned by the lack of attention given in its current report to humanitarian issues and breaches of international humanitarian law in Africa, including in the likes of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Some of those issues had persisted for over 30 years without receiving the prominence merited from IPU quarters, which was frankly surprising and begged the question as to why that was.

Mr. I.M. Khraishi (Palestine), thanking the Committee for its efforts, said that he would have expected more focus in its plea on what was the most heinous violation of international humanitarian law as well as of international human rights law and international customary law, namely the occupation of Palestinian territories, which had been the subject of an advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice in July 2024 and subsequently endorsed by a resolution of the UN General Assembly. Parliamentarians must work together to end that violation, in which context the important legal distinction between the occupier and the occupied must always be made.

As to the use of such digital technologies as AI in warfare, it was not yet covered by international law, although the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent had recently adopted a resolution touching on the subject, which parliamentarians also needed to address. It was perhaps worthwhile pointing out that an IPU Member Parliament was passing laws that in themselves constituted major violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. He was well aware of the suffering endured in Sudan and beyond, but starvation as a weapon of war was a policy being used only in Palestine, currently in Gaza specifically, where

⁴ Report available in the [Results of the 149th IPU Assembly](#), page 88.

people were being burned alive and the delivery of humanitarian aid prevented. Those actions should have been mentioned in the report and should be taken on board by all parliamentarians, whom he hoped to see joining together in concerted efforts to protect humanity and the primordial right to life.

Mr. J. Kiarie (Kenya), President of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, said that he appreciated those remarks, noting that the Committee worked on a multitude of issues, interrogating and investigating situations in many parts of the world. It was also attending to its concerns relating to Africa; it had, for example, reported on the Democratic Republic of the Congo at the 148th Assembly and reviewed the critical situation in Sudan as its priority item at the current Assembly.

The President expressed appreciation and continuing support for the Committee's work and thanked its outgoing President for his dedication. She took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the report.

It was so decided.

The President said that the Governing Council was called upon to elect two members to the Committee, specifically one man from the Eurasia Group to replace Mr. E. Sinchevici of the Republic of Moldova and one woman from the African Group to replace Ms. F. Muyumba of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who was no longer a parliamentarian. To date, the candidature of Ms. E. Jailosi Jolobala of Malawi had been received from the African Group. She took it that the Governing Council wished to elect that candidate to fill one of the two vacancies on the Committee.

It was so decided.

(g) Advisory Group on Health
(CL/214/18(g)-R.1)

Mr. F. Ndugulile (United Republic of Tanzania), Vice-President of the Advisory Group on Health, in reading out the report of the Group's meeting held on 10 October 2024, as contained in document CL/214/18(g)-R.1⁵, said that the Group had discussed the follow-up to the 2019 IPU resolution on universal health coverage and to the current mpox outbreak, decided to submit a contribution to the outcome document of the Parliamentary Meeting to be held on the occasion of the 29th session of the UN Climate Change Conference, and had been briefed on the proposed amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules, including in connection with the Group's transformation into an IPU Committee on Health. It had also received updates from its technical partners and welcomed the IPU's continuing cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health.

Mr. B.O. Kalu (Nigeria) said that events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent mpox outbreak had underscored his continent's full dependence on the Western world for its survival. Africa should not be reliant on the West for vaccines or other medical supplies, but without the basic structures in place its health security was unsustainable. He wondered what the Advisory Group was doing to help address those issues, which should feature high on its agenda.

Mr. F. Ndugulile (United Republic of Tanzania), Vice-President of the Advisory Group on Health, said that the question was very pertinent in light of the connection between the rising number of health emergencies in Africa and the continent's fragile health systems. The issue was indeed a priority for the Group in its work going forward and also for the African Union and the WHO Regional Office for Africa, which were exploring options for building local capacities in the production of vaccines, medicines and other health-related commodities. He, too, would be focusing on the issue after assuming his new role as WHO Regional Director for Africa.

⁵ Report available in the [Results of the 149th IPU Assembly](#), page 90.

The Secretary General, highlighting Mr. Ndugulile's involvement in various capacities in the Advisory Group's activities from the very outset, said that the IPU would be saying goodbye to an outstanding figure in its work on health. On behalf of the parliamentary community, he congratulated Mr. Ndugulile on his new appointment and was proud that he would be exporting IPU expertise in the field of health to the WHO, as opposed to the norm of the other way round. With Mr. Ndugulile in post, the IPU would be pinning its hopes on strengthening its cooperation with the WHO and saw no reason why Africa should not be at the forefront of the health agenda. The IPU counted on his support and was determined, through such cooperation, to produce better health outcomes for all. It looked forward to seeing more of Mr. Ndugulile in future.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the report.

It was so decided.

(h) Group of Facilitators for Cyprus
(CL/214/18(h)-R.1)

Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland), Facilitator for Cyprus, in reading out the report of the Group of Facilitators for Cyprus of its meeting held on 13 October 2024, as contained in document CL/214/14(h)-R.1⁶, said it was hoped that the informal meeting held on 15 October 2024 between the UN Secretary-General and leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities would lead to a breakthrough in relations towards a lasting solution to the Cyprus problem. With further meetings planned, the Group would continue its work to that end.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the report.

It was so decided.

The President said that the Governing Council was called upon to elect one Facilitator to fill the existing vacancy in the Group, for which the candidature of Mr. H. Caneiro of Portugal had been received. She took it that the Governing Council wished to elect Mr. Caneiro as a Facilitator.

It was so decided.

(i) High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violence
(CL/214/18(i)-R.1)

Mr. M. Karlsson (Sweden), Chairperson of the High-Level Advisory Group (HLAG) on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, presenting the report of the 17th HLAG meeting held on 13 October 2024, as contained in document CL/214/18(i)-R.1⁷, said that members had agreed to the work plan presented by the IPU Secretariat and decided to establish a five-person ad hoc group charged with monitoring specific activities in the Sahel. Other important topics discussed had included the initiation of a broad parliamentary dialogue on a consensus-based definition of terrorism, the situation in the Sahel, and ways of ensuring that the HLAG's actions there remained relevant and effective, including through collaboration with all constructive forces in the region. Two experts on combating terrorism and organized crime had also given presentations. In addition, two topics for discussion at the 150th Assembly had been agreed: the use of AI in fighting organized crime and terrorism; and the prevention of violent extremism in forced migration. All IPU Member Parliaments were urged to join the Global Parliamentary Network on Countering Terrorism and to download the IPU-CTVE mobile application providing access to peace and security information.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the report.

It was so decided.

The President said that the Governing Council was called upon to elect six HLAG members to fill the vacancies for certain geopolitical groups. The nominated candidates, who would serve a four-year term ending in October 2028, were: Ms. R. Abouras of Libya for the Arab Group;

⁶ Report available in the [Results of the 149th IPU Assembly](#), page 24.

⁷ Report available in the [Results of the 149th IPU Assembly](#), page 93.

Ms. L. Wankhede of India and Ms. A. Rasheed of Maldives for the Asia-Pacific Group, which had yet to nominate its third candidate; and Mr. T.I. Mørland of Norway for the Twelve Plus Group. The Eurasia Group also had yet to nominate its one candidate.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to elect the four named candidates as HLAG members.

It was so decided.

The President congratulated the new members on their election.

(j) Working Group on Science and Technology
(CL/214/18(j)-R.1)

Mr. D. Naughten (Ireland), Chairperson of the Working Group on Science and Technology, presenting the report of the Group's meetings held on 19 and 23 September and 15 October 2024, as contained in document CL/214/18(j)-R.1⁸, said that the Group had been apprised of the results of a survey on mapping engagement between parliament and science and that, in addition to planning a second edition on AI and ethics, had discussed the follow-up to the IPU Science for Peace Schools' first edition on water and the outcome of the 10th World Water Forum in Bali, Indonesia. Having correctly foreseen that the political climate favoured the adoption of the IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology, the Group urged all parliamentarians to disseminate the text and advocate for its application and was itself planning an awareness campaign. It also planned to develop guidelines for monitoring the implementation of the Charter and evaluating its impact, all with the ultimate aim of shaping a future in which ethical and scientific innovation led to peace, security and sustainability.

As he was now set to retire, the current Assembly would be his last. His time with the IPU had been enriching and full of invaluable lessons, with lasting connections also forged. He was deeply honoured to have collaborated with so many individuals from diverse communities who were committed to working together to improve lives globally and build a future where every voice was heard and where peace and sustainability were within universal reach. He looked forward to witnessing the continued impact of those collective efforts and the promising path ahead for the IPU and its mission.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the report.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that he was again obliged to bid farewell to a dedicated champion of the IPU, Mr. Naughten, whose time at the Organization had, in the Irish tradition, been very active and dynamic. He paid tribute to Mr. Naughten for his leadership, with mixed feelings of gratitude for his work and sadness at the news that he was to retire from politics. The IPU nonetheless hoped to see him back, especially having witnessed his dedication to parliamentary diplomacy and dialogue, the enduring values of the IPU's founding fathers, and above all his sterling leadership as Chairperson of the Working Group on Science and Technology. He thanked him for his pivotal contribution to the newly adopted IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology, which took the Organization a step forward in ensuring that parliaments were equipped to grapple with the ethical dilemmas associated with STI. Welcoming the Working Group's plan to develop tools for implementation of the Charter, he again thanked Mr. Naughten for his input to the IPU's work.

The Secretary General presented Mr. Naughten with a tie in the IPU colour of blue in recognition of his contribution to the Organization's work.

The President said that the Governing Council was called upon to elect three members to the Working Group for a four-year term ending in October 2028. The candidates nominated by the geopolitical groups were: Mr. F.C. Isaac Mbunka of Cameroon for the African Group, and Mr. N. In-na of Thailand and Ms. B.K. Medhi of India for the Asia-Pacific Group. She took it that the Governing Council wished to elect those three candidates as members of the Working Group.

It was so decided.

⁸ Report available in the [Results of the 149th IPU Assembly](#), page 94.

Item 19 of the agenda

REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED MEETINGS
(CL/214/19-R.1)

The President said that participants would hear in-person or video reports on the specialized meetings listed in document CL/214/19-R.1, which also contained links to more detailed information available on each meeting via the IPU website.

Mr. F. Zon (Indonesia), reporting in a pre-recorded video on the Parliamentary Meeting held on 19 May 2024 on the occasion of the 10th World Water Forum in Nusa Dua, Indonesia, said that participants had focused on the mounting global water crisis threatening the well-being of the billions without access to basic sanitation, which, together with water, was a prerequisite for the attainment of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They had stressed the importance of legislative action for long-term equitable access to water and of parliamentary cooperation, both locally and internationally, for inclusive water management solutions tailored to local needs, with innovation and strengthened parliamentary oversight playing a key role. The inseparable link between water and climate change and the need for global cooperation in water diplomacy had also been main themes of discussion.

A video on the Regional Seminar for Parliaments of the Caribbean on climate change, held from 27 to 29 May 2024 in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, was screened.

Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), reporting on the Parliamentary Forum held on 16 July 2024 at the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in New York, said that the discussion had centred on two of the SDGs under HLPF review: SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions and SDG 13 on climate action. His takeaway had been that parliamentarians must evaluate their country's performance to determine how best to achieve the SDG targets by 2030, including by integrating related plans into national budgets, institutionalizing the SDGs and putting governance in order. More adequate and accessible financing was also needed, especially from the private sector, to implement the Paris Agreement, with developed countries assisting developing countries as the least responsible for but most affected by climate change.

A video on the Interregional Seminar on the Achievement of the SDGs for Parliaments of Developing Countries, held in Beijing from 19 to 27 August 2024, was screened.

Mr. D. Carden (United Kingdom), President of the Board of the Forum of the Young Parliamentarians, reporting on the Tenth IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians held from 12 to 14 September 2024 in Yerevan, Armenia, said that the participants had explored ways of preserving education and employment to prevent lost generations and proposed actions for guaranteeing universal access to free and compulsory education. They had also called for efforts to build digital and other skills of the future as well as for higher investment in youth employment programmes, inclusive labour markets for refugees, and more affordable housing for young people. Another focus had been on how young parliamentarians could better partner with marginalized and vulnerable groups to genuinely ensure that no one was left behind.

Ms. H. Hakobyan (Armenia), member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, said in addition that the innovation of working groups at the Conference was a proud achievement and would hopefully be taken forward alongside the policy outcomes from the event.

A video on the Tenth IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians was screened.

The President, reporting on the IPU Parliamentary Event held on 21 September 2024 at the Summit of the Future in New York, said that the main purpose of the event had been to highlight the outcome of the Summit, entitled the Pact for the Future, which was the most far-reaching UN agreement on ways of making the multilateral system work as intended to prevent conflict, advance development and allow everyone a voice. The explicit reference in Action 55 of the Pact to the role of parliaments and the IPU in overseeing the implementation of international agreements and providing support to UN deliberative processes induced pride and gave the IPU the strongest

mandate since the UN Millennium Declaration in 2000 for helping to democratize the international arena by bringing forth the voices of parliamentarians as representatives of the people. The plan now was to flesh out the broad language of Action 55 in the annual UN General Assembly resolution to be adopted in 2025 on interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU.

Most major UN meetings had a parliamentary component, in addition to which UN officials contributed their expertise at each IPU Assembly, UN country offices engaged parliaments in UN development plans, and UN partners contributed to not less than one half of IPU projects. In short, the IPU had achieved much over the years to engage parliaments more closely with the United Nations. To scale up that engagement, parliamentarians should consult the list of UN activities in which the IPU was to participate and register for them well in advance. The IPU could also send letters of invitation to parliaments as needed and counted on their support in the form of participation in those activities.

In conclusion, she took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the reports on recent IPU specialized meetings.

It was so decided.

Item 20 of the agenda

OTHER BUSINESS

The President said that there was no other business but that she wished to thank all participants for their cooperation and insightful contributions to the session. She knew that, in their commitment to the ideals of the IPU, Member Parliaments could again be counted on to implement the important decisions taken with the aim of making the world a better place for those whom they represented. She was especially grateful to the Secretary General and his entire team for their dedication to ensuring that the session had run smoothly. She looked forward to reconvening at the 150th Assembly and declared the 214th session closed.

The sitting rose at 16:30.