



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

CL/216/SR
15 December 2025

Summary records of the Governing Council

216th session

20 and 23 October 2025

Geneva, Switzerland

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First sitting

Monday, 20 October 2025
(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 09:25, with Ms. G. Morawska-Stanecka (Poland), Vice-President of the IPU, in the Chair.

OPENING OF THE SITTING

The Vice-President, welcoming participants to the 216th session of the Governing Council, said that she was honoured to be standing in for the IPU President, Dr. T. Ackson of the United Republic of Tanzania, who was currently occupied with the country's impending parliamentary elections and sent her warm regards to all.

The Governing Council embodied a shared desire to engage in dialogue and cooperate in building solutions tailored to the challenges ahead. In an uncertain and complex world of constant change, the IPU Member Parliaments must pool their expertise, sensibilities and convictions to advance the Organization's projects and ideals. The diverse backgrounds and perspectives that they represented enriched the Governing Council and formed a solid foundation for collective action.

Central to that action were solidarity, responsibility and respect for humanitarian standards, above all in the current global context of unprecedented humanitarian needs, with the resilience of vulnerable populations severely tested by conflicts, natural disasters and health crises. Parliamentarians were crucial to ensuring compliance with universally recognized humanitarian standards and must resolutely support humanitarian action through facilitating access to crisis areas, mobilizing resources and advocating for a rapid and effective response. International cooperation and parliamentary engagement were key to ensuring that aid reached those most in need, with their dignity respected.

All participants were encouraged to participate actively in the current session, which was an opportunity to address major issues, exchange views respectfully and openly, and take decisions that would shape the future. In such times of international difficulty, the IPU and its work were extremely important.

The Secretary General, also welcoming participants, said that he and his colleagues stood ready to offer any support and assistance requested by the Governing Council towards facilitating fruitful outcomes to its deliberations.

Item 1 of the agenda

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (CL/216/A.1-rev)

The agenda was adopted.

Item 2 of the agenda

APPROVAL OF THE SUMMARY RECORDS OF THE 215TH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL (CL/215/SR)

The summary records of the 215th session of the Governing Council were approved.

Item 3 of the agenda

PROPOSALS FOR THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE 151ST ASSEMBLY

The Vice-President, recalling the established practice of nominating the IPU President to preside over Assemblies taking place in Geneva, where there was no Host Parliament, took it that the Council would wish her to preside over the 151st Assembly in place of the IPU President.

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/216/10(a)-P.1 and P.2)

The Vice-President, thanking all those who continued to support the IPU's core objective of universal membership, recalled that a delegation from the Parliament of Brunei Darussalam had attended the 149th Assembly in an observer capacity with a view to affiliation with the IPU. As detailed in document CL/216/10(a)-P.1, the Executive Committee had now received a request from that Parliament for affiliation, which it had unanimously endorsed. Its recommendation was that the Governing Council should approve the request, whereupon the Parliament of Brunei Darussalam would become the 182nd Member Parliament of the IPU.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

It was so decided.

Mr. A.R. Taib (Brunei Darussalam), expressing sincere appreciation for the warm welcome extended to his delegation, said that his country's Parliament was deeply proud and honoured to be accepted into the IPU membership in fulfilment of a long-cherished aspiration. In recognizing the vital role of parliamentary diplomacy and collaboration in a world of complex challenges without borders, it pledged to play its part in advancing the IPU's objectives and ideals for the benefit of the people of Brunei Darussalam and for the international community. It was thus fully committed to contributing constructively to the IPU's work, to learning from the experiences of fellow Member Parliaments, and to sharing its own perspectives in a spirit of solidarity and mutual respect. In sum, it looked forward to meaningful cooperation with the IPU towards building a future of peace, stability and sustainable progress.

The Vice-President, after congratulating the Parliament of Brunei Darussalam on its membership, said that the Executive Committee had also received a request for reaffiliation, set out in document CL/216/10(a)-P.2, from the Parliament of Niger, which had had its affiliation to the IPU suspended at the Council's 215th session in consequence of the continuing absence of any functioning parliament in the country. In May 2025, however, a transitional parliament – the Advisory Council for the Refoundation – had been established in a move mirroring that taken in other West and Central African countries following coups d'état, which had enabled the parliaments concerned to maintain their affiliation to the IPU.

Over the course of two fruitful conversations with the Executive Committee, the Speaker of the Advisory Council for Refoundation had explained the nature and composition of the transitional body, the extensive reforms under way in Niger, and the rationale for the reaffiliation request. In essence, the Advisory Council was seeking IPU support in its efforts to restore democracy and good governance in Niger. In line with the IPU mission to strive for inclusivity and universality and to assist all national parliaments seeking to uphold democratic values, the Executive Committee had endorsed the request. Its recommendation therefore was that it should be approved by the Governing Council and that the Secretary General should continue to engage with the Advisory Council for Refoundation and explore ways in which the IPU could best provide it with support.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

It was so decided.

Mr. M.H. Djingarey (Niger), conveying delight over the readmission of Niger to the IPU, said that the President of Niger likewise welcomed the decision to approve the reaffiliation request submitted. The Advisory Council reiterated its resolve to fulfil its commitments to the IPU and to report regularly on its progress.

The Vice-President, after welcoming the Parliament of Niger back into the IPU family, said that all IPU Member Parliaments were invited to redouble their outreach efforts towards the attainment of universal membership through the inclusion of the parliaments of all United Nations (UN) Member States.

Item 4 of the agenda

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

(a) On her activities since the 215th session of the Governing Council

The Secretary General, accompanying his presentation of the IPU President's report on her behalf with a series of digital slides, said that pressing national issues in her country had not distracted the IPU President from fulfilment of the responsibilities entrusted to her in that capacity. Since the 215th session of the Governing Council, she had actively represented the IPU in high-level regional and global meetings, including, in May 2025, the 19th Meeting of the East African Community Bureau of Speakers of National Legislatures and the East African Legislative Assembly held in Dar-es-Salaam and, in July 2025, the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development held in New York to take stock of progress and setbacks in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with an emphasis on SDG 3, concerning good health and well-being, and SDG 5, concerning gender equality.

In support of the IPU mandate to promote inclusive societies, the IPU President had moreover participated in the Second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue, held in June 2025 in Rome in collaboration with the Italian Parliament, to which she conveyed her thanks for its gracious hospitality. Centred on the theme *Strengthening trust and embracing hope for our common future*, the Conference was aimed at enhancing cooperation for building coexistence among different communities in furtherance of social peace and harmony. Participants had also attended an audience with Pope Leo XIV.

In addition, the IPU President had chaired numerous IPU and partner meetings, including, in July 2025, the meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in Geneva, at which she had led the Committee towards finalizing the related outcome document now constituting a foundation for the IPU's future work. In that same month, she had also represented the IPU and moderated discussions at the interactive multi-stakeholder hearing held in New York on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, during which the IPU's trailblazing efforts to promote the rights of women and girls had been duly noted. As well as chairing ongoing consultations on the upcoming election of a new IPU Secretary General and virtual meetings of the Cremer-Passy Prize Selection Board, the IPU President had participated during the HLPF in New York in the inauguration of the "European Union with Friends" meeting focused on sharing experiences in the implementation of the SDGs.

In conclusion, the IPU President wished to thank all those who had contributed to the success of the historic Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, including her colleagues on the related Preparatory Committee. She had been honoured to welcome participants to that event and to the preceding 15th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament, which she had also helped to chair.

The Vice-President, reporting on the meetings she had attended on behalf of the IPU President since the 215th session, said that, in September 2025, she had participated in that capacity in the 11th Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Lima, at which an unprecedented full gender parity among participants had been achieved. Discussions had focused on uniting generations for gender equality, with concerns expressed about the slowing or, in some cases, reversal of progress indicated by data showing that young women accounted for under one third of parliamentarians globally. Participants had called for urgent remedial action, with an emphasis on partnership with civil society and youth-led organizations to expand civic education, promote inclusive leadership and ensure the centrality of young voices in politics. The future lay with young people, whose strenuous efforts in Lima for the advancement of gender equality had been inspirational.

In October 2025, she had also participated in the 11th G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit (P20) in Cape Town, South Africa, centred on the theme *Harnessing parliamentary diplomacy for the realization of global solidarity, equality and sustainability*. In her opening address, she had underlined the need to address climate change, gender equality, responsible trade, and the impact of artificial intelligence (AI). Key global challenges discussed had included the climate crisis, rising debt in developing countries, and efficient use of natural resources, with a focus on supporting the green transition, ensuring access to clean energy, and involving local communities in decision-making. The joint statement emanating from the Summit called for stronger international cooperation, increased support for vulnerable groups, and greater involvement of women and youth in politics and policymaking. In the bilateral meetings held on the sidelines, growing interest had been shown in closer cooperation with her country, Poland, especially in future G20 initiatives.

The Executive Committee had taken note of the report of the IPU President, thanked her for the activities undertaken, and expressed its best wishes for her re-election in the upcoming Tanzanian parliamentary elections.

She took it that the Governing Council wished likewise to take note of the reports of the IPU President and Vice-President.

It was so decided.

(b) On the activities of the Executive Committee

The Vice-President, reporting on the activities of the Executive Committee since the 150th Assembly, said that the Committee had held intensive and productive sittings on 29 June 2025 in Olympia, Greece, and on 17 and 18 October 2025 in Geneva, with a further meeting scheduled for 22 October 2025 to complete its business. Apart from the discussions to be reported on under the corresponding items of the Council's agenda, the Executive Committee had taken note of the encouraging outcomes of the annual Members reporting exercise, welcoming the substantial number of responses and congratulating Member Parliaments on their good practices resulting from the implementation of IPU resolutions. The Committee encouraged their continuing participation in that exercise, which was an important tool for accountability in the implementation of the IPU Strategy. It also encouraged them to circulate reports on IPU events internally with a view to promoting parliamentary debates on their outcomes and to continue drafting legislation aligned with IPU recommendations.

Concerning the 151st IPU Assembly, the Executive Committee was apprised of the preparations and had been pleased to note a level of participation, including by special guests from academia, civil society, think tanks, UN agencies and more, that demonstrated the IPU's strong convening power. The Committee had welcomed the ongoing efforts aimed at maintaining the IPU's relevance in promoting peace and security through parliamentary channels and encouraged Members to take the opportunity provided by the Assembly to advance the peace so sorely needed around the world. It had also noted with satisfaction a practical improvement in the organization of the Assembly, exemplified in the introduction of tear-resistant and biodegradable badges in response to cost and environmental considerations. It had furthermore commended the Secretariat's tireless efforts to foster a climate-sensitive environment.

In reviewing the IPU's crisis management and parliamentary diplomacy mechanisms, the Executive Committee had built on previous discussions and stressed the importance of continuing to strengthen parliamentary capacity for such management, as well as for negotiation and mediation, including through the roll-out of tools and workshops. It had called for continued reliance on existing structures and for openness to the creation of ad hoc bodies or sub-committees, as opposed to the establishment of new permanent groups dedicated to specific conflict situations.

With regard to the IPU Strategy for 2027-2031, the Executive Committee had received an update from the consultant responsible for reviewing the current Strategy and preparing the next update. It had taken note of the objective of the review process, which was to seek even greater inclusivity than in previous cycles, find new ways to engage Member Parliaments, and leverage evidence of the IPU's impact. It encouraged broad participation in the survey and focus group discussions among all relevant contacts and delegations, in addition to further benchmarking efforts and the gathering of perspectives on strategic positioning especially vis-à-vis the United Nations.

The Executive Committee had furthermore reviewed the initial draft IPU Sustainability Policy, which was subject to ongoing development aimed at clarifying and guiding sustainability practices across the IPU. It had made recommendations to support the implementation of the policy, specifically: the development of biannual implementation plans with measurable targets and budget allocation; and an exploration of how other organizations tracked the emissions resulting from large conferences.

With respect to the selection of the next IPU Secretary General, the Executive Committee had received an update on the process, which was strictly governed by the Organization's Statutes and Rules, and on a specific procedure most recently updated in March 2025. The announcement for the position had been widely publicized and some 58 candidates had applied by the deadline of 1 August 2025. The IPU President, Vice-President and Registrar had been involved in the initial longlisting and shortlisting processes, which had culminated in a shortlist of 20 candidates. Through a secure channel, the Registrar would share the applications of those candidates with the Executive Committee for confidential review and voting. The top five candidates would be invited to the 152nd Assembly in Istanbul to be interviewed by the Committee and make presentations in advance

of a vote by the Governing Council on the top two or three candidates. An executive search firm would assess the shortlisted candidates and facilitate the interview process. The members of the Executive Committee were requested to maintain confidentiality and adhere strictly to the prescribed process.

Concerning the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP), the Executive Committee had received an update from ASGP President, Dr. José Pedro Montero, on the fruitful cooperation between the IPU and the ASGP, which was further strengthening the active complementarity between the two institutions. In welcoming that cooperation, the Committee had encouraged the ASGP to continue the exchanges and shared learning among national parliaments and between the ASGP and the IPU.

The Executive Committee had echoed the condemnation of the Israeli attack carried out in September 2025 on a residential area in Qatar, which had resulted in civilian casualties. Describing the attack as undermining the Middle East peace process, members had advocated respect for Qatar's sovereignty and called for compliance with international law. The Committee had also renewed its plea for stronger parliamentary involvement in supporting and promoting Middle East peace initiatives, particularly following the recent Sharm El-Sheikh peace agreement. It appealed to the international community to prioritize humanitarian assistance, above all for children, and reconstruction efforts, notably through the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. It had also called for strengthening of the relationship between the IPU and the United Nations, especially in regard to influencing UN outcomes and ensuring the integration of parliamentary voices into global decision-making.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the activities of the Executive Committee and approve its decisions.

It was so decided.

Item 5 of the agenda

**INTERIM REPORT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE IPU
SINCE THE 215TH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL
(CL/216/5-R.1)**

The Secretary General, accompanying his interim report with a digital slide presentation, recalled that such reports simply listed the IPU activities in progress, whereas the impact reports traditionally delivered during each year's first Assembly analysed the effects of those activities. His report would highlight some of the activities listed in document CL/216/5-R.1, all of which were, as prescribed under the IPU Strategy for 2022-2026, aimed at building parliamentary ecosystems conducive to democracy for all.

In seeking to promote and safeguard the values and principles of that democracy, the IPU had identified five priorities or strategic objectives, namely: building strong parliaments; promoting inclusive and representative parliaments; supporting resilient parliaments; catalysing collective parliamentary action; and strengthening IPU accountability. Parliaments were the fulcrum of all IPU activities, which took into consideration the perspectives, opinions and proposals of the galaxy of stakeholders that revolved around the Organization.

Over the preceding nine months, the IPU had supported activities in 17 countries aimed at promoting democracy, human rights, gender equality, and sustainable development. It had also published tools for inspiring parliaments in the performance of their duties as representatives of the people, including a report on the recent Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament; an issue brief on military expenditure; a new toolkit for use in onboarding new parliamentarians; and an updated toolkit on gender-responsive assemblies, which would help in prosecuting the IPU agenda to ensure practices responsive to the needs of all parliamentarians.

With respect to the human rights of parliamentarians, the IPU was disheartened by the continually increasing caseload of the Committee dedicated to that subject, which was currently examining about 880 cases of parliamentarians in 52 countries with a view to swiftly resolving as many of them as possible. The Committee's work was strongly supported by the IPU Secretariat, with progress recently achieved in cases in Bangladesh, Eswatini and Pakistan.

The IPU was actively engaged in fighting sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament, producing in April 2025 another regional study on the topic, for the Asia-Pacific region, with findings almost identical to those previously noted in other parts of the world about the prevalence of such treatment of women parliamentarians. Reducing that prevalence was intrinsic to

building effective and empowered parliaments. The IPU was also working to strengthen parliamentary administrations and committee work, including by fostering the use of new information, communication and other technologies to improve parliamentary business processes, promote human rights, freedom of expression and freedom of religion, combat terrorism, advance gender equality, ameliorate healthcare and bolster climate action.

The IPU was grateful to the leaderships of all those parliaments with which it was working for their firm support of its activities. In West and Central African countries where the IPU was helping transitional parliaments, it was pleased to note the progress achieved towards a return to constitutional normalcy, notably in Chad, which had now completed that journey with the establishment of a bicameral parliament. In Guinea, where a new Constitution had been adopted, the IPU was assisting the transitional parliament to devise organic laws for governing society in the coming years. Gabon was also close to concluding its own inclusive transitional process, in record time, thanks to support from the IPU, which could be assured of welcoming a newly minted Gabonese Parliament to the 152nd Assembly.

In terms of promoting inclusive and representative parliaments, the IPU had issued a new edition of its Women in Politics map showing the global rankings for women's representation. Activities aimed at advancing gender equality, the IPU priority theme for 2025 – the year of the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 40th anniversary of the IPU Forum of Women Parliamentarians – included the IPU campaign *Achieving gender equality, action by action*, which was now gaining traction following its launch at the 150th Assembly in Tashkent. All Member Parliaments were encouraged to throw their weight behind the campaign in what was not only a celebratory year but also a year of stocktaking and rededication to democratic and inclusive governance.

In that connection, a particular highlight was the IPU's work with the Parliament of Nigeria on a bill designed to strengthen women's political empowerment and their inclusion in the country's institutions. Women currently accounted for under one third of the world's parliamentarians, representing substantial progress over the decades but belying nonetheless a negative trend of slowdown and backlash. In addition to opposing those seeking to unravel that progress, Member Parliaments must continue working to rejuvenate democracy and its institutions in light of the fall in young parliamentarians under 30 years of age over the preceding year to just of 2.7% of all parliamentarians.

In terms of supporting resilient and innovative parliaments, the IPU's Centre for Innovation in Parliament actively sought to keep parliaments worldwide abreast of developments in new technologies that could be harnessed to improve their working methods. The IPU relied on continuing support for its efforts to enhance digital technology, exemplified by its new Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology, which encouraged the global parliamentary community to ensure proper governance of AI and other emerging technologies so as to minimize risks and maximize advantages.

With regard to catalysing collective parliamentary action, the IPU's efforts had included its organization of the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, the 15th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament, and the P20 Summit. The IPU was moreover working to influence outcomes at the United Nations by ensuring its presence at all major UN gatherings, most recently the HLPF, and was also continuing its work with the World Health Organization (WHO) to improve health outcomes by bringing together experts and policymakers to that end. With WHO agreement, it had also officially instituted an annual gathering of parliamentarians at the World Health Assembly, thereby providing an added platform for parliamentary input into the deliberations.

Lastly, the IPU continued to promote an equitable, inclusive and transparent international trading system through the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization (PCWTO). It had recently hosted a meeting of the PCWTO Steering Committee at IPU headquarters, at which the WTO Director-General had expressed thanks for the IPU's advocacy role in promoting the ratification of the new WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies.

Mr. R. Parmessar (Suriname), thanking the Secretary General for his extensive report and hard work with an eye to the future, called on the IPU to devote more attention to small island States, especially in relation to the huge and unique challenges posed to them by climate change.

The Vice-President said that, having taken note of his interim report, the Executive Committee had thanked the Secretary General and his team for their unwavering efforts to implement the IPU Strategy through the activities described. To promote impactful activities on gender equality, the Committee encouraged the Secretary General to develop best practices, with a focus on methodologies and policy approaches, and share those approaches followed in countries where

women were well represented in parliament. It also encouraged continued monitoring and support of legislative efforts in countries with low representation of women as well as the facilitation of intercountry dialogue and mentorship.

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

It was so decided.

Items 6 and 7 of the agenda

FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE IPU
(CL/216/6-R.1)
CONSOLIDATED BUDGET FOR 2026
(CL/216/7-P.1)

Mr. M. Dick (Australia), member of the Executive Committee and President of the Sub-Committee on Finance, said that, as shown in the report on financial questions contained in document CL/216/6-R.1, the financial situation of the IPU at 31 July 2025 had been healthy and stable and the Organization's budget performance remained on track. Despite global investment market fluctuations in early 2025, the IPU's investment portfolio and closed pension fund had seen a positive return of just over 1%. The voluntary funding situation also looked positive for the remainder of the year. Since the 150th Assembly, the balance of outstanding assessed contributions had been reduced from CHF 2.5 million to CHF 1.5 million, with efforts to reduce the balance further continuing, including by his delegation in its work with small island Pacific nations. All Member Parliaments were encouraged to pursue that same aim from within their respective geopolitical groups.

Concerning the consolidated budget for 2026, the Sub-Committee had reviewed the details set out in document CL/216/7-P.1, which showed a projected figure of just under CHF 19 million in income and expenditure for what was to be the fifth and final year of the IPU Strategy for 2022-2026. Funds had been set aside for an evaluation of the Strategy for learning purposes and for the design of a bold new Strategy covering the years 2027 to 2031. The budget also reflected the IPU's engagement with global crises, including conflict, climate change, environmental emergencies, post-pandemic effects and growing inequality. Parliamentary ecosystems would be mobilizing around the range of international agreements and instruments identified in the budget document. Integration among the IPU programmes on democracy, peace and security, development, climate change, and scientific and technological innovation was proceeding alongside the vital transformation of the Organization's working practices. The IPU was supporting parliamentary efforts to manage and regulate the development and use of emerging technologies, including through harnessing the potential of AI and minimizing its risks. It was also investing in the digitalization of its archives so as to preserve and share its long and proud history as a means of learning from the past and recognizing the achievements on which to build the future. The activities planned for 2026 across the five strategic objectives were fully detailed in document CL/216/7-P.1.

With the IPU Secretariat driving down costs wherever possible and striving to do more with less, the Secretary General and his team were to be commended for ensuring that the Organization followed best practice and delivered value for money to parliaments around the globe. The IPU had accordingly taken steps to reduce costs associated with electricity and heating, language services, travel and printing, helping at the same time to reduce emissions and promote a carbon-neutral IPU. Parliaments, above all those in small island nations and other smaller countries, should also be encouraged and supported towards becoming greener and cleaner.

For gender equality, the consolidated budget allocation amounted to 9% of the total, with the IPU itself practising what it preached; 57% of its staff positions, including leadership roles, were filled by women. As to income, the core budget included an increase of 3% in total assessed contributions, in line with the Governing Council's earlier decision to take total contributions back to 2011 levels following a 15-year reduction. Meanwhile, the IPU membership had now reached 183 with the most recent admission of Brunei Darussalam and readmission of Niger.

Resource mobilization from external donors was estimated to generate voluntary contributions amounting to some CHF 4.7 million, equivalent to about 25% of total income. Major grant extensions were either already in place or being negotiated with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Parliaments of China and Qatar. Additional funding agreements such as those concluded with the European Commission, Irish Aid, the King Hamad Center for Peaceful Coexistence and Tolerance, and the United Arab Emirates were important for the delivery of more

outcomes for parliaments worldwide. In all, 80% of the budget went directly towards delivering programmatic and collective outcomes and 20% towards running the IPU and strengthening its accountability through effective management and governance, representing value for money. Member Parliaments were therefore encouraged to help mobilize voluntary funding at home and within their geopolitical groups.

The Executive Committee had endorsed the consolidated budget for 2026, which the Sub-Committee on Finance commended to the Governing Council for adoption.

The Secretary General added that he and his colleagues had been pleased to provide all necessary support requested by the Sub-Committee on Finance in its preparation of a consolidated budget for 2026 that reflected the Organization's resources and priorities. The IPU's financial health was heartening at a time when many international organizations were being obliged to cut back on their human resources and operating expenses as a result of difficulties prompted by the suspension of funding from traditional and other donors. The Organization looked forward to further consolidating its financial position and hoped that the Governing Council would fully support the recommendation for adoption of the budget. In that event, there would nonetheless be no room for complacency. Given their financial and other constraints, the IPU very much appreciated the sacrifice made by its Member Parliaments in providing the resources needed for the performance of its mandate and assured them that it would continue putting those resources to good use, including to enhance efficiency.

The IPU also welcomed the increasing number of donors providing voluntary funding, which was testament to their belief in the Organization. In addition to the examples cited in document CL/216/7-P.1, the IPU owed gratitude to the Parliament of Bahrain for its recent contribution of CHF 90,000 towards the IPU's digital transformation and hoped that parliaments and other donors alike would continue to place their trust in it.

The Vice-President said that the Executive Committee had unanimously expressed confidence that the IPU finances were currently sound and healthy. It recommended the organization of a workshop or roundtable for Member Parliaments interested in exploring innovative opportunities for new funding. It also suggested that the IPU should share best parliamentary practices for efficiency gains and digital transformation. Lastly, it thanked the President and members of the Sub-Committee on Finance for their valuable support

Mr. M.A.O. Ba Sarra (Yemen) said that his country's involvement in a years-long war made for scant resources and that Yemen was reliant on support from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. His Parliament therefore requested exemption from its payment of assessed contributions until the Yemeni economy was in recovery.

Mr. D. Diallo (Burkina Faso), thanking the IPU for its assistance to transitional parliaments such as his, voiced the hope that such support would continue following the appointment of a new Secretary General in 2026.

The Vice-President said that the Executive Committee had expressed full support for the consolidated budget for 2026 and recommended its adoption by the Governing Council.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the report on financial questions and to adopt the consolidated budget for 2026.

It was so decided.

Item 11 of the agenda

SIXTH WORLD CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENT AND 15TH SUMMIT OF WOMEN SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENT

Ms. N.B.K. Mutti (Zambia), member of the Executive Committee and of the Preparatory Committees of the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament and of the 15th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament, reporting first on the latter meeting held on 28 July 2025 in Geneva, said that the discussion had revealed deep concerns about rising polarization, declining trust in institutions, and continuing conflict around the world. Agreeing that women and girls must be empowered to exercise leadership for the sake of peace, democracy and sustainability, participants had identified four main areas for action to rebuild trust in democracy. Those areas were focused on ensuring: in the first case, inclusive and representative parliaments that were gender-sensitive and

free from violence and harassment; in the second, the centrality of gender equality to peace and security, with women leading and participating fully in peace negotiations and in humanitarian response and recovery efforts; in the third, women's participation in climate action, science and innovation in the interest of sustainable progress and inclusive digital and green transitions; and in the fourth, gender parity as the norm in light of its key importance for democratic legitimacy and effective governance.

Having joined the IPU campaign *Achieving gender equality, action by action*, many participants had committed to taking the transformative actions promoted therein and had also renewed their collective commitment to the full implementation of the UN's Women, Peace and Security agenda adopted 25 years previously. In so doing, they had recognized the crucial role played by parliaments in advancing that endeavour through guaranteeing that it was led by women. Lastly, participants had reaffirmed that inclusive leadership founded on parity was the strongest formula for the achievement of peace, security and sustainable development.

At the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, held from 29 to 31 July 2025, also in Geneva, parliamentary leaders from some 120 countries had gathered amid rising tension and conflicts around the world to urge efforts to address present challenges and reaffirm the importance of a stronger and more effective multilateralism. Several keynote addresses had been delivered during the inaugural session, followed over the three-day period by a lively General Debate, a number of panel discussions, and an interactive debate among major stakeholders. The Preparatory Committee had met on numerous occasions, either in person or online, to establish the rules, modalities and programme for the Conference and to draft the outcome document, a high-level Declaration entitled *A world in turmoil: Parliamentary cooperation and multilateralism for peace, justice and prosperity for all*, which was now before the Governing Council for endorsement along with the final Declaration adopted at the 15th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament. The text of the Conference report and of both declarations were available on the IPU website.

The Vice-President said that the Executive Committee had been apprised of the outcomes of the two major events outlined and extended thanks to the two Preparatory Committees and to the IPU Secretariat for its support, which had been vital to the success of both meetings.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse the outcome documents from the two events.

It was so decided.

The sitting rose at 11:05.

Second sitting

Thursday, 23 October 2025
(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 09:30, with Ms. G. Morawska-Stanecka (Poland), Vice-President of the IPU, in the Chair.

Item 8 of the agenda

APPOINTMENT OF TWO INTERNAL AUDITORS FOR 2026

(cf. Rule 40 of the Governing Council)

(CL/216/8-P.1)

The Vice-President said that two candidatures had been received for the two internal auditor positions for 2026, namely those of Mr. R. Parmessar of Suriname and Mr. S. Patra of India.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to appoint the two candidates as internal auditors for 2026.

It was so decided.

Item 9 of the agenda

AMENDMENTS TO THE IPU STATUTES AND RULES

(CL/216/9-P.1-rev)

The Secretary General, recalling the previous adoption of amendments formulated by the Working Group on amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules established in March 2024, said that stakeholders had conducted further consultations on outstanding amendments relating to the formalization in the Statutes of the status of non-voting observer parliaments that were no longer functioning within their respective countries, and to the Rules and Practices of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians with a view to enhancing its geopolitical composition.

The resulting proposed amendments had been submitted to the IPU membership, in accordance with the IPU Statutes, on 1 August 2025, with no sub-amendments, objections or reservations received by the deadline of 19 September 2025. The amendments concerned were as set out in document CL/216/9-P.1-rev. If adopted, they would be inserted into the IPU's legislative framework.

The Vice-President said that the Executive Committee had endorsed the proposed amendments at its sitting of 29 June 2025 and again on 17 October 2025, on which basis she took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the amendments to the Rules and Practices of the Committee on Human Rights of Parliamentarians and recommend the amendment to the Statutes for adoption by the Assembly.

It was so decided.

Item 10 of the agenda

(continued)

QUESTIONS RELATING TO IPU MEMBERSHIP AND OBSERVER STATUS

(a) Consideration of requests relating to IPU membership and observer status

(continued)

(CL/216/10(a)-P.3)

The Vice-President said that the Executive Committee had received requests for observer status from Parliamentarians for Global Action, with which the IPU had worked previously on advocacy relating to human rights, democracy and the rule of law; the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights, with which the IPU had established cooperation and implemented activities; and the World Future Council, known for its advocacy on future generations

and its previous collaboration with the IPU. On the basis of past cooperation and the objectives that the IPU shared with those three organizations, the Executive Committee had endorsed their requests. Its recommendation was for their approval by the Governing Council.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to approve that recommendation.

It was so decided.

The Vice-President said that the Executive Committee had also received requests for observer status from the Conference of Speakers and Presidents of African Legislatures (CoSPAL) and the Asian-African Parliamentary Council. While welcoming the interest in the IPU of those two recently established organizations, the Executive Committee had requested, in accordance with the requirements for obtaining observer status, that they should each grow their engagement with the IPU and demonstrate evidence of shared objectives.

(b) Consideration of the situation of Member Parliaments in arrears

The Vice-President said that the Executive Committee had been pleased to learn that the Parliament of Togo had recently paid its outstanding arrears to the IPU. It had noted, however, that several other Member Parliaments, primarily small Caribbean and Pacific island nations, remained in arrears. It had generally taken a flexible case-by-case approach to dealing with such Member Parliaments, recognizing in particular the unique challenges faced by small island nations.

Given the non-payment of its assessed contributions since joining the IPU in 2018 and its failure to participate actively in IPU events over that period, the Executive Committee's recommendation concerning the Parliament of Saint Lucia was that its membership rights be suspended. The same recommendation applied to the Parliament of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, which was several years in arrears and had not responded to outreach efforts or communicated its intentions.

Suspension of the membership rights of those two parliaments would prevent their accumulation of further arrears while enabling them to regain their full rights and re-engage in the IPU's work upon payment of not more than the three earliest years of arrears. Until then, they would be listed as non-participating Member Parliaments.

As to the Parliament of Vanuatu, it had paid no contribution since 2019, despite reminders from the IPU. In light of information that negotiations aimed at resolving the issue were ongoing, the Executive Committee had decided to postpone a decision on that Parliament's membership until its next meeting in January 2026 in Doha. With regard to the Andean Parliament, which had paid no contribution since 2019, the Executive Committee's recommendation was that its Associate membership rights be suspended.

Mr. R. Parmessar (Suriname) requested that a decision concerning the membership rights of the small island States mentioned be postponed until the 152nd Assembly in Türkiye to allow them time in the interim to find a solution to their problem.

The Secretary General said that the IPU appreciated the plight of those small island developing States, as indicated by the flexibility it had shown over the years in refraining from recommending the suspension of their membership rights. On the other hand, the Organization was bound to comply with the recommendations of its External Auditor, which had drawn attention to the worrisome trend in unpaid contributions, to the IPU's apparent non-observance of the applicable statutory provisions, and to the funding imbalance and instability that could result were the arrears situation to continue. The IPU was moreover aware that the burden on Member Parliaments that continued to accumulate arrears would ultimately become untenable.

It was only with the aim of alleviating that burden and not as a form of penalty that the Executive Committee recommended a suspension of membership rights, subject to review whenever the parliament concerned was ready. In that event, it would be required to pay an amount not exceeding its three earliest years of arrears. In other instances of financial difficulty, Member Parliaments could be supported by the IPU's Parliamentary Solidarity Fund to enable their full participation in major IPU events.

Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe) asked how the IPU Parliamentary Solidarity Fund worked, whether it could be used to assist the small island nations in arrears and, if so, what the application deadline was.

The Secretary General said that the Parliamentary Solidarity Fund had initially been established to give non-Member Parliaments the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the workings of the Organization with a view to their possible affiliation. In that context, it had funded the attendance of certain parliaments at IPU events and some had indeed since joined the Organization. Subsequently, in light of financial constraints impeding the engagement of Member Parliaments from small island nations in the Organization's activities, resources from the Fund had also been used to enable the parliaments concerned to participate in key IPU events. The Fund had insufficient resources at its disposal for the payment of arrears in assessed contributions and was in any case barred from making such payments, which were a statutory obligation incumbent on all IPU Member Parliaments.

Solutions to the issue of arrears mooted in the Executive Committee had included twinning arrangements whereby more affluent Member Parliaments would assist those in financial difficulty by paying their arrears, which had in fact already happened in some cases. Such arrangements could perhaps be adopted within the IPU as a good practice in the name of solidarity.

Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe) said that it was invidious for the IPU to have a fund that supported others over Member Parliaments facing suspension on account of financial difficulties. The latter should take priority as a matter of principle, which called for a review of the existing approach. He requested deferral of the decision on the suspension of the membership rights of the small island States concerned until the 152nd Assembly to allow time for determining how those States could best be assisted, including by potential benefactors.

The Secretary General reiterated that, as well as supporting parliaments wishing to join the Organization, the Solidarity Fund was used to support IPU Member Parliaments to participate in IPU events that they would otherwise find it difficult to attend. The Speaker from Saint Lucia, for example, had been sponsored to attend the recent Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament. The aim of the Parliamentary Solidarity Fund was purely twofold: to promote the IPU goal of universality and to facilitate the participation of IPU Member Parliaments in the Organization's work. The only limiting factor in those aspects was the resources available to the Fund.

Concerning the requests to defer until the 152nd Assembly the decision on the membership rights of the Parliaments of Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, similar decisions had been deferred on at least one previous occasion – as was indeed also now being recommended in the case of Vanuatu. He therefore saw no harm in acceding to those requests.

The Vice-President, on that understanding, took it that the Governing Council wished to defer the decision relating to those two Member Parliaments, along with that pertaining to the Parliament of Vanuatu, and to endorse the Executive Committee's recommendation to suspend the Associate membership rights of the Andean Parliament.

It was so decided.

(c) Situation of certain parliaments

The Secretary General, accompanying his customary update on the situation of certain parliaments with a digital slide presentation, recalled that the IPU Secretariat, in accordance with its mandate to monitor political developments around the globe, reported regularly to the Governing Council on parliaments that were either non-functioning, in transition, or functioning in a context that affected their performance, and on the IPU response to the related challenges. Those situations were notably not confined to parliaments in any one region but were widespread across multiple continents.

The first category of countries with non-functioning parliaments included Afghanistan, where the IPU had been monitoring the situation since the Taliban takeover in 2021. To date, the IPU had consistently recognized the Afghan Parliament in place at that time, which had essentially been democratically elected and which henceforth could be formally classed as a non-voting observer parliament following the adoption of the related amendment to the IPU Statutes and Rules. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should continue to recognize that Parliament as its legitimate interlocutor.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that another such country under IPU monitoring was Bangladesh, where the Parliament had been dissolved in 2024. The country's transitional authorities were reportedly keen for a quick return to constitutional rule, with parliamentary elections due in February 2026. Those authorities had also firmly reassured the IPU that the former parliamentary structure was still in place and would be populated immediately after those elections. On a related note, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians would later be reporting on its examination of cases in Bangladesh involving violation of the human rights of former members of parliament, among them an Honorary IPU President.

The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation in Bangladesh while stressing the importance of holding the planned parliamentary elections, in which event, the IPU would be pleased to welcome a new fully fledged Bangladeshi Parliament to its 152nd Assembly in Istanbul.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General, turning to the case of Eritrea, said that the IPU had been unable to secure any reliable information on the situation of its Parliament since 2001, despite its outreach to the country's authorities, including its diplomatic representatives in Geneva. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should take note of the situation and continue its monitoring with a view to identifying entry points for a dialogue with those authorities towards the establishment of a functioning Eritrean Parliament.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that, beset by instability and internal squabbling between the legislative and executive arms of government, Guinea-Bissau had long been on the IPU's radar. Its Parliament had been dissolved by the country's President in 2022 but the IPU had continued to recognize it nonetheless. The situation had now evolved substantially. Parliamentary elections were scheduled for November 2025, but the IPU had been aggrieved to learn that the Speaker and his party were disqualified from taking part.

The Executive Committee had thus expressed grave concerns over the restrictions placed on the political rights of the country's parliamentarians, which was a matter to be revisited at the 152nd Assembly. Its recommendation was that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation and show strong solidarity with the existing Parliament of Guinea-Bissau in the hope that the upcoming elections would be free and fair and produce an outcome that the IPU could recognize, which was not yet a given.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that Haiti had had no functioning parliament for the preceding two years but that parliamentary elections would hopefully take place as foreseen on 15 November 2025, as the country was in dire need of a fully fledged parliament. The Executive Committee's recommendation was for the IPU to take note of the situation and express hope that the elections would take place as planned.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that, in Kuwait, the situation remained in limbo, with its Parliament suspended and legislative power exercised by the country's Emir, reportedly for a maximum period of four years, as from 2023, during which elections were to be organized. That being so, Kuwait's IPU membership rights had not been suspended and indeed it had continued to pay its assessed contribution and send delegates to observe the proceedings of the Assembly.

The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should continue monitoring the situation and underline the need for the promised elections to take place as soon as possible within the four-year deadline set.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that the case in Myanmar resembled that in Afghanistan. After seizing power in 2021, the country's military had dispensed with what had been a democratically elected parliament. The IPU did not recognize the military administration and had continued its support for that Parliament, since reconstituted by many of its members into a body known as the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH). With a few brave exceptions, the majority of CRPH members operated in exile and, as the Organization's legitimate interlocutor, the CRPH had continued to attend IPU meetings. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should continue to recognize the CRPH as the legitimate representative of Myanmar, in the non-voting observer category.

Mr. R. Parmessar (Suriname), while grateful for the reports on the situation of certain parliaments, said that words alone were not enough. All parliamentarians must take immediate steps to amplify the IPU voice by calling in all relevant international organizations for urgent action to address those situations and their consequences for parliamentary colleagues in Myanmar and elsewhere.

The Secretary General, acknowledging the point, said that the inclusion of Myanmar on the agenda was an indication of the particular attention paid to that country's situation. The IPU was certainly no favourite institution of the military authorities in Myanmar, which reacted with hostility to the IPU decisions communicated to them with regularity. The Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians was examining cases involving violation of the human rights of colleagues in the country, on which it would be reporting separately. His updates on the situation of certain parliaments reflected the political aspect and the efforts of the IPU, as an organization dedicated to democracy, to fight any attempts to subvert a country's democratic institutions. The moral weight of that approach of expressing solidarity with parliamentary colleagues was considerable and could not be underestimated. The authorities in Myanmar clearly paid attention to IPU decisions, to which they never failed to react. The IPU's aim was to find entry points that would contribute to the international efforts to resolve the country's crisis. Moreover, its decision not to recognize the military administration was consistent with the United Nations approach.

Mr. K. Suebsang (Thailand) said that the CRPH was evidently keen to join the IPU membership and should be allowed to do so in a mark of solidarity.

The Secretary General said that, to all intents and purposes, the CRPH had IPU membership by virtue of its inclusion in the category created for parliaments in particular circumstances that were functioning outside the territory of a sovereign State. Parliaments in that category enjoyed IPU support in solidarity and had the same right as others to address IPU Assemblies as legitimate representatives of their people. On account of their special circumstances, however, they were not permitted to vote or stand for election to positions on IPU bodies.

The Vice-President took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse the Executive Committee's recommendation concerning the CRPH.

It was so decided.

Mr. A.S.S. Al-Naomani (Yemen) said that, apart from on two brief occasions, his Parliament had been unable to convene since 2015 owing to the ongoing war being played out in his country. The executive had also placed obstacles in its way, as had certain elements opposed to a return to constitutional legitimacy for fear of being held to account for their corrupt practices and crimes. He called on the IPU to provide the support that had to date been lacking to enable Parliament to resume its legislative and oversight roles on a fully permanent basis and ensure a decent life for the Yemeni people.

The Secretary General said that he would be covering the situation in Yemen in the current update but meanwhile noted that its Parliament was a fully fledged IPU Member. In that capacity, it attended IPU Assemblies and took part in the Organization's decision-making, which qualified as

strong support for a parliament that was not necessarily functioning on the territory of a sovereign State. Several years previously, moreover, the IPU had signed an agreement with the Speaker of the Yemeni Parliament on technical and other support, the provision of which had been inevitably limited by the prevailing civil war. The IPU was open to discussing any entry points for increasing that support.

In regard to the situation in the Sudan, a civil war was similarly raging and there had been no functioning parliament since 2019. With little hope on the horizon, the IPU could do no more than express concern over that ongoing war and the lack of any early prospect for a return to normalcy and the establishment of a new functioning parliament. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should continue to monitor developments with a view to providing support if the situation progressed.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that progress could be reported in the Syrian Arab Republic, where an interim administration had been established following the ousting of President Bashar al-Assad. With elections for a transitional parliament now organized, the IPU could soon expect to have an interlocutor with which to discuss possible support for that body. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should acknowledge the significant progress achieved in the Syrian Arab Republic and continue to engage with the Syrian authorities with a view to supporting the country's transition and democratic process.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General, moving to the category of transitional parliaments, said that there was also significant progress to report in Burkina Faso, where the Transitional Legislative Assembly was continuing its mission as the country's legislative body and elaborating a new legislative framework. Although no date for elections had yet been set, the process was apparently on track despite the instability and insecurity resulting from a major insurgency in the north of the country. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should take note of the situation and express the wish for the transitional period to be accelerated in the interest of establishing a new parliament as soon as possible.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that, with its transitional period begun in 2023 now coming to an end, Gabon was another country that had achieved significant progress. It had kept to the timelines for a return to normalcy and was currently engaged in setting up the institutions of its recently elected Parliament. At the 152nd Assembly, the Governing Council would be called upon to invite the Secretariat to discontinue its monitoring of Gabon as it would have a fully-fledged Parliament in place.

The Vice-President took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of those developments.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that progress had also been recorded in Guinea, which had adopted a new Constitution and was developing organic laws for its implementation. In that connection, it had requested the IPU to provide expert advice and other consultative services to ensure the conformity of those laws with international standards. Presidential elections were scheduled for December 2025, with parliamentary elections to follow. The presence of a fully fledged Guinean Parliament at the 152nd Assembly in Istanbul was therefore a reasonable expectation.

The Vice-President took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of those developments.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that, in Libya, the IPU had been monitoring developments and engaging in discussions with the Benghazi-based House of Representatives, which was an IPU Member Parliament, to determine the support that the IPU could offer. His planned mission to Libya to pursue those discussions further and to encourage the organization of elections through which to establish more durable institutions of governance had not, however, taken place. The Executive Committee had nonetheless encouraged him and his team to continue their activities aimed at promoting Libya's return to normalcy.

Ms. F. Alsuweee (Libya) said that the country's new electoral laws were now in place but that the regional and international interference in Libyan affairs was obstructing the conduct of presidential and parliamentary elections alike. IPU assistance towards the establishment of a unified interim government would be appreciated so that elections could then be organized as planned.

The Secretary General, welcoming the positive news about the election plans, said that, before the Libyan delegation left Geneva, the IPU would seek to determine with it what the Organization could do to assist the efforts for a return to normalcy.

The Vice-President took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the developments in Libya.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that the IPU continued to monitor developments in Mali and assist the efforts of its Transitional National Council to achieve the country's return to constitutional normalcy. In recent weeks, however, there had been worrying signs of a slowdown in progress, with the banning of political parties and no indication of when elections might take place. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation and engage in discussions with the Malian parliamentary authorities to determine how it could best support the transition process.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General recalled with respect to Niger that its transitional parliament, the Advisory Council for the Refoundation, established earlier in 2025 had now been readmitted to the IPU. Following his recent visit to the country for discussions with its governmental and parliamentary authorities, the Advisory Council had formally asked the IPU for assistance with the transition process. The outcome was that, in December 2025, the IPU would run an induction programme for the country's new parliamentarians, most of whom were first-timers with no experience. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should continue to support the Advisory Council and ensure that it adhered to the timelines for the transition.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that no progress could be reported in South Sudan, where recent worrying developments had impeded the organization of elections. Given the country's unstable leadership and the inability of coalition partners to agree on a way forward, the indications were that the Government had collapsed. At the present Assembly, he had conveyed the IPU's concern to the Speaker of the South Sudanese Transitional Legislative Assembly, who had welcomed the IPU's readiness to provide the support needed to put the transition process back on track.

The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should take note of those disquieting developments, express deep concern over the ongoing events in South Sudan, and continue to engage with the country's transitional authorities.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General, turning to the category of parliaments whose capacity to function was affected by the political situation in their countries, said that Madagascar topped the list alphabetically and was the newest addition in light of disquieting developments, notably the deepening instability across the country and the military seizure of power a few days previously. While the Malagasy Parliament had not been entirely dissolved, the elections for the President of the Senate had not taken place as scheduled.

The IPU was closely monitoring the situation and had now published on its website a leadership statement setting out the IPU position on that situation and expressing the resolve of the global parliamentary community to support ongoing efforts to return the country to stability and constitutional rule as swiftly as possible. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation and offer every possible assistance as and when required.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that recent unrest in Nepal had affected the country's new administration but that its Parliament remained in place, with elections next due in early 2026. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation and express its willingness to pursue its efforts with the Nepalese parliamentary authorities to normalize the situation.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said with regard to Palestine that there had been no significant developments towards a return to normalcy. Elections had last taken place some two decades previously and no further elections were anticipated for as long as the chief focus remained on efforts to bring lasting peace to the region, which would create an environment conducive to free and fair elections. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should continue to monitor developments in Palestine.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that, in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, parliamentary elections had taken place in May 2025, with a new parliament due to assume office in January 2026. That being so, the Executive Committee's recommendation was that consideration of the status of that parliament within the IPU should be deferred until the 152nd Assembly in April 2026.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said with respect to Yemen that, in the prevailing circumstances already described by its delegate, it would appear that no elections were in sight. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should engage with the Yemeni authorities to determine the support that it could provide.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General, concluding his update, said that there had been worrisome developments in Georgia to which the IPU simply wished to draw attention for possible future reference. Among other things, a number of parliamentarians had been stripped of their mandate. If requested, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians was ready to take up their case.

The Vice-President thanked the Secretary General for his update, for his continuous efforts to monitor the situation in the countries concerned, and for his follow-up of the recommendations of the IPU governing bodies aimed at contributing to the restoration of constitutional order in many of those countries.

The Executive Committee had been apprised of the situation of certain parliaments and encouraged the Secretary General to continue strengthening the capacity of countries, especially those in crisis, for speeding up the return to constitutional normalcy. It also recommended the continuation of outreach to authorities in Eritrea to clarify the fate of missing parliamentarians; encouraged neighbouring States to use influence in Afghanistan for progress towards normalization; and requested the IPU Secretariat to prepare for follow-up support to Gabon, Guinea and the Syrian Arab Republic as they moved towards constitutional rule and elections.

Briefing on the 152nd Assembly to be held in Istanbul, Türkiye, in April 2026

Ms. A. Erdoğan (Türkiye), speaking at the invitation of the Vice-President to brief delegates on preparations for the 152nd Assembly to be held in Istanbul from 15 to 19 April 2026, said that her Parliament was proud to be hosting an IPU Assembly for the fourth time since 1934 and to again have the honour of welcoming delegates from around the world to Istanbul. Since signing the Host Country Agreement in July 2025, it had been working hard on the arrangements for the Assembly in close cooperation and coordination with the IPU and would continue to do so in following the roadmap created for the event.

With the unique cultural heritage of Istanbul as its backdrop, the 152nd Assembly promised to be an unforgettable experience – and on numerous counts. A cradle of history and a veritable melting pot, Istanbul was the ideal setting in which to bring together ideas and share hopes for the future through inter-parliamentary dialogue, which was all the more vital in a world faced with such a multiplicity of challenges. She urged the entire IPU membership to come and stand together, reflect together, discuss together and build the future together in the historical city of Istanbul.

A video showing Istanbul sights and landmarks was screened.

The Vice-President, thanking Ms. Erdoğan for her briefing, said that the IPU membership was indeed looking forward to the 152nd Assembly in Istanbul.

Item 12 of the agenda

UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITY THEME FOR 2025 – FINDINGS AND THE WAY FORWARD (CL/216/12-P.1)

The Secretary General, accompanying his update on the implementation of the IPU priority theme for 2025 with a digital slide presentation, recalled that gender equality had been chosen for the theme with an eye to celebrating the progress achieved in that domain, marked in 2025 by such milestones as the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 25th anniversary of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. Another motive, however, had been to draw attention to disquieting trends towards rolling back that progress.

With that in mind, the IPU had used to its advantage its unmistakable capacity to mobilize and catalyse a global parliamentary response in support of the priority theme, first of all through its campaign *Achieving gender equality, action by action*, launched in April 2025, which comprised 10 actions designed to give impetus to the gender equality agenda. It hoped that as many champions and leaders as possible would sign up to the campaign.

The IPU was also pushing more robustly for increased women's participation in political life with the goal of achieving gender parity, organizing in that context the IPU Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians, held in March 2025 in Mexico City. Among the Conference's outcomes was the plan of action for gender parity in parliament set out in document CL/216/12-P.1, which stood as a visionary roadmap from which the IPU membership could draw inspiration. Reflecting a parliamentary perspective on General Recommendation No. 40 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, developed in conjunction with the IPU to promote the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making positions, the plan identified such objectives as 50/50 representation, an end to violence against women in politics, and the creation of a culture of parity within institutions. It was now proposed to seek the Governing Council's endorsement of the plan.

The 2025 focus on gender equality had also been evident in many of the IPU's global events, including the commemoration of the 40th anniversary session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians at the 150th Assembly in Tashkent; the Parliamentary Meeting on the theme *Parliaments and Beijing +30: Resisting backlash and shifting paradigms towards gender equality*, held in partnership with UN Women at the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2025 in New York; and a panel discussion on inclusive participation against polarization and adversity conducted at the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament held in July 2025 in Geneva.

Also in July 2025, the 15th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament had marked the 25th anniversary of the Women, Peace and Security agenda by focusing its discussions around the theme of inclusive and lasting peace. Mindful of the proven evidence of women's effective contribution to peace processes, its main recommendation had been that more robust efforts should be made to streamline gender equality in those processes.

Another highlight had been the intergenerational synergies created within the IPU through intergenerational platforms aimed at bringing together men and women parliamentarians and youth-related civil society organizations, including those involved in the Generation Equality Forum to which the IPU belonged. Those platforms were designed to promote a multi-stakeholder approach to gender equality, in particular among youth as key players. Related events had been organized on the sidelines of various meetings, including the recent 11th Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Lima, where synergies had been created between the gender equality and youth empowerment agendas. Such cross-fertilization was clearly beneficial to the IPU's inclusive governance goals.

The IPU had also developed tools to provide more robust support to parliaments in their gender mainstreaming efforts. Its *Policy to prevent and address harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and events* was one example, another being its study on sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in the Asia-Pacific region. The latest in a regional series focused on that topic, the study would be rolled out at IPU events and workshops in that region with a view to better preparing its parliaments to deal with the scourge of gender-based violence. With regard to the IPU-UN Women map of women in politics, the special 2025 version provided an overview of the substantial progress achieved towards gender equality in decision-making over the 30 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Although that progress had plateaued, it still merited celebration and rededication to the promotion of more robust measures to promote gender equality.

In addition to its work around youth and gender equality, the IPU endeavoured to ensure that gender equality was viewed through the lens of sustainable development, of which it was a key driver. Among other things to that end, the Organization was keen to promote investment in public health and care systems to address gender equality and explore the impact of beliefs and social norms on women's health.

Concerning its own progress on gender equality, the IPU had reviewed its internal mechanisms and put forward suggestions for amendments to its Statutes and Rules with the aim of making parity the norm. It was also continuing with determination to implement the anti-harassment policy mentioned earlier to ensure that the IPU was an institution in which both women and men could operate safely.

The Vice-President, thanking the Secretary General for his update, confirmed that the plan of action for gender parity in parliament had been adopted by the 500 participants at the very successful and game-changing Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians held under the patronage of Mexico's first woman President and the leadership of the President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians. The aim of the plan was to advance parity in numbers of parliamentarians and leadership as well as to foster a culture of parity by creating gender-sensitive environments and applying zero tolerance for violence against women in politics.

Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe), applauding the IPU for the plan of action and the meetings mentioned, said that it was important to invite male parliamentarians to such meetings so that they could join in the efforts of women parliamentarians to advance gender equality.

The Vice-President, strongly agreeing with that sentiment, said that men had indeed been invited to participate in the Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians. Without cooperation among men and women, there could be no gender equality.

The Secretary General, turning to the choice of priority theme for 2026, said that foremost among the landmarks to be celebrated in that year was the 50th anniversary of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, which constituted the foundation for the IPU's work on human

rights. The Executive Committee's recommendation therefore was that respect for human rights should be chosen as the new priority theme. If endorsed, the topic would be factored into the IPU workplan for 2026 and colleagues in the relevant units would no doubt be pleased to organize activities and campaigns for promoting rededication to the cause of human rights.

The Vice-President took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the Secretary General's update and endorse the Executive Committee's recommendations to approve the plan of action for gender parity in parliament and the proposed topic of respect for human rights as the IPU priority theme for 2026.

It was so decided.

Item 13 of the agenda

FUTURE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MEETINGS

(CL/216/13-P.1)

The Secretary General, providing an overview of the list of future inter-parliamentary meetings set out in document CL/216/13-P.1, said that the list had been compiled for information and planning purposes and included the 152nd Assembly to be held in Istanbul in April 2026. The Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania had also offered to host the 153rd Assembly in October 2026, with the dates and venue to be confirmed in due course.

Of the many specialized and other meetings listed, some had already been approved and the remainder were pending approval. All activities covered by those meetings, whether in-person, online or hybrid, were within the scope of the IPU Strategy and assured of funding from the core budget or from extrabudgetary resources.

Mr. R. Parmessar (Suriname), noting the range of countries in which IPU meetings were to be held, suggested that a day should in future be set aside on such occasions for field trips of relevance to the IPU's work.

The Secretary General said that such trips were indeed an important aspect of the IPU's work and were usually organized during Assemblies hosted in cities other than Geneva. Past examples included visits to health facilities, refugee camps and child welfare centres. The IPU would continue to organize similar visits, the aim being to provide opportunities for delegates to learn from good practices in other countries.

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

It was so decided.

Item 14 of the agenda

ELECTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(cf. Article 21(I) of the IPU Statutes and Rules 36, 37 and 38 of the Rules of the Governing Council)
(CL/216/14-P.1)

The Vice-President said that three new members were to be elected to the Executive Committee to replace Mr. A. Kharchi of Algeria, Ms. D.-T. Avgerinopoulou of Greece, and Mr. A. Almodóbar Barceló of Spain, whose mandates were set to end at the current session. She extended heartfelt thanks to each for their much appreciated contributions to the work of the Executive Committee and of the IPU in general. The candidatures received for a four-year mandate ending in October 2029 were: from the African Group, Mr. H. Aden Guedi of Djibouti; and from the Twelve Plus Group, Ms. K. Bradley of the United Kingdom and Mr. A. Gryffroy of Belgium. Those candidatures, including accompanying letters and curricula vitae, had been shared with the full IPU membership.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to elect the three nominated candidates as members of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

Item 15 of the agenda

ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES

(CL/216/15-P.1)

(g) Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine

(CL/216/15(g)-R.1)

Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), President of the Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine, read out the report on the work of the Task Force, as set out in document CL/216/15(g)-R.1, underlining in addition that it was essential to support the IPU's crucial role in resolving conflict through mediation for peace, security and stability worldwide. The Task Force remained fully committed to advancing dialogue, fostering trust and supporting all efforts towards a just and lasting peace in Ukraine.

Ms. M. Cederfelt (Sweden) said that, Mr. Al Nuaimi's admirable engagement in its work notwithstanding, the Task Force had produced no positive results; the Russian Federation was still the aggressor. It had not responded constructively on the issue of kidnapped children and was continuing to destroy Ukrainian infrastructure and make life difficult for the Ukrainian people. The aggressor responsible for the war was also responsible for ending it by withdrawing its troops and respecting international humanitarian law and the values held dear by the IPU.

Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), President of the Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine, agreed that it was important to focus on serving IPU principles, which notably included that of dialogue as the only means of ending conflict. Member Parliaments should accordingly invest in building national capacities for mediation and for building bridges between the parties to a conflict. Parliamentarians were moreover responsible for saving the people whom they represented from the consequences of conflict by working to bring all conflicts to an end.

Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe), commending the Task Force on its work, said that such work was extremely difficult and demanded courage to act and achieve results. His hope was that President Trump's laudable efforts to bring together the two sides in the war would have the desired outcome. As to the information contained in the report that Ms. D'Hose of Belgium had been appointed as the successor to Mr. Katjavivi of Namibia, who had served as Vice-President of the Task Force, the fact was that such bodies should be more representative of Africa, which, given the size of its population, had a voice to be reckoned with that deserved recognition. On that basis, a parliamentarian from the African Group should have been selected to follow in the footsteps of Mr. Katjavivi.

Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), responding to the first point, said that the Task Force sought to coordinate its efforts to end the war in Ukraine with those of President Trump and others, which it was following with optimism.

The Secretary General said, with regard to the second point about membership, that it had been agreed from the outset that the IPU President would nominate Task Force members on the basis of consultations, taking into consideration fair geographical representation and any added value that a nominee could bring to discussions within the Task Force, including in the sense of projecting the IPU as an impartial and neutral body. Currently, the Task Force comprised two members from the African Group, namely the Speakers of the Parliaments of Ghana and Malawi.

Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates) confirmed that Ms. D'Hose had played a leading role in the work of the Task Force and as such had been proposed to replace Mr. Katjavivi as Vice-President of the Task Force, which indeed comprised two representatives from Africa.

Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe) said that it was unclear whether the Malawian Speaker was still a member of parliament following her party's loss in the country's recent elections. Secondly, the African Group had supported Mr. Katjavivi's appointment to the Task Force on the strength of his wide experience in diplomacy. Such qualities must be taken into account when appointing Task Force members. As a matter of principle, moreover, the Task Force had no authority to "decide", as asserted in the report, who should succeed Mr. Katjavivi. That decision lay with the Governing Council.

The Vice-President said that, as per the Terms of Reference of the Task Force, it was the prerogative of the IPU President to decide on appointments to the Task Force.

The Secretary General said with regard to the status of the Malawian Speaker that she had by all accounts been returned to Parliament, in which case she qualified for membership of the Task Force. If it turned out otherwise, a decision on her replacement would be made.

That apart, the wise thoughts of Mr. Mudenda concerning the Task Force's membership profile were well noted. He was indeed correct that subsidiary bodies were unauthorized to take decisions on their membership and leadership, and that ultimately it was for the Governing Council to endorse the recommendations made. The issue raised was down to nothing more than semantics.

The Vice-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
(CL/216/15(a)-R.1)

Mr. E. Blanc (France), President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, accompanying with a series of digital slides his presentation of the draft decisions prepared by the Committee at its recent session in Geneva, as contained in document CL/216/15(a)-R.1, said that the Committee had in that context held 10 hearings with national delegations and civil society organizations. It was grateful to all those who had responded to its invitation and who, through their participation, had contributed to constructive dialogue.

During the session, the Committee had examined the situation of 300 parliamentarians, 30% of them women, in 17 countries. The Committee had also declared admissible nine new cases concerning parliamentarians that had been submitted: one in Algeria, one in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, three in Somalia and four in Türkiye. The Committee had further decided to declare inadmissible a complaint concerning a parliamentarian in Ecuador.

The draft decisions that he would now submit for adoption by the Governing Council concerned the situation of 288 parliamentarians in 14 countries. He would present the cases in alphabetical order.

1. Algeria

The Committee had examined the new case of Mr. Abdelkader Djedei, a former member of the Council of the Nation of Algeria. The Committee had had the pleasure of meeting the President of the Council of the Nation and warmly thanked him for his openness to dialogue.

The Committee was concerned about the disproportionate sentence of three years' imprisonment handed down *in absentia* to Mr. Djedei for non-abusive and non-hostile comments in which he had criticized national policies on the redistribution of wealth in the country. The Committee was of the view that Mr. Djedei's comments had been made in the exercise of his fundamental right to freedom of expression and should not have led to his conviction.

The Committee called on the Algerian authorities to drop the proceedings against Mr. Djedei and to strengthen the protection of the freedom of expression for all members of the Council of the Nation.

The Governing Council adopted by consensus the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Abdelkader Djedei.

Mr. A. Guenchouba (Algeria), objecting to the decision, said that it was baseless, not least because freedom of expression was guaranteed under the Algerian Constitution. The allegations made were consequently unfounded, as were the contentions about the lack of comprehensive development in southern Algeria and the inequitable distribution of resources. The fact was that human, social and economic development projects were being implemented countrywide. Moreover, the accusations related to actions that fell outside the remit of parliament.

2. Bangladesh

The Committee had again examined the cases of six former members of the Parliament of Bangladesh, including Honorary President of the IPU, Mr. Saber Chowdhury. According to the complainant, the parliamentarians in question were victims of a revenge spree against members of the Awami League, the former ruling party.

The Committee regretted the absence of responses to the various formal communications sent since August 2024. It also regretted that, on two separate occasions, the independent trial observer mandated by the IPU had been unable to travel to Bangladesh owing to delays in the issuance of visas, and that repeated requests in view of a Committee mission had gone unanswered.

The Committee expressed its solidarity with the Bangladeshi parliamentarians currently being held in what were said to be appalling conditions of detention, as well as with those in exile and those on trial for charges that in some cases carried the death penalty. The Committee urged the authorities to guarantee their fundamental rights, including the right to life and to humane treatment, to allow them to receive proper medical treatment and, where appropriate, to consider their release on bail on humanitarian grounds, as well as to guarantee their right to a fair trial.

The Committee reiterated its wish to mandate a trial observer to monitor the upcoming court proceedings and to send a delegation to Bangladesh as soon as possible.

The Committee had also received reports that more than 100 former parliamentarians, all members of the Awami League, were currently in detention and facing ongoing criminal proceedings. Although those cases had not been formally referred to the Committee, it expressed its grave concern about the scale of that phenomenon and about violations of the right to a fair trial. The Committee also deeply regretted the death in custody, on 29 September 2025, of former IPU colleague Mr. Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun, who had been a sitting member of parliament at the time of its dissolution.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of six Bangladeshi parliamentarians.

3. Burundi

Since receiving the first complaint in 1994, the Committee had consistently examined the cases of the murders of seven Burundian parliamentarians and two assassination attempts targeting another colleague. Thirty years on, the cases in question regrettably remained unresolved.

The Committee was closely following the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and hoped that it would pay particular attention to the political violence committed during the 1990s and 2000s, including the cases of the parliamentarians in question.

It thanked the delegation from Burundi participating in the 151st IPU Assembly for the information provided and for the constructive spirit and openness to dialogue it had demonstrated during its hearing with the Committee. It also thanked the delegation for the invitation to visit Burundi extended to the Committee and wished to receive details of proposed dates in due course so that the visit could take place as soon as possible. The visit would provide an opportunity to strengthen cooperation with the Parliament and to work together towards a satisfactory resolution to the long-standing case.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of eight Burundian parliamentarians.

4. Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Committee had examined two cases concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo: one relating to the situation of Mr. Chérubin Okende, and a collective case concerning former members of parliament.

The Committee had examined the case of Mr. Okende, an opposition parliamentarian who had been found dead in his car after being shot in the head. The Committee was extremely concerned about the information submitted by the complainant regarding the absence of conclusive proof that his death had been a suicide. The Committee deplored the absence of transparency in the case and urged the Congolese authorities to take all necessary measures to establish the truth.

The Committee had also examined a collective case concerning several former parliamentarians whose candidacies in the 2023 general elections had been invalidated. In that regard, the Committee had received a new complaint from Ms. Mamie Ngaluka Kalala, which it had declared admissible. The Committee regretted the repetitive nature of cases of that kind concerning electoral disputes, a recurring problem in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and called on the Congolese authorities to ensure consistency and transparency in the application of the laws adopted.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decisions relating to the case of Mr. Chérubin Okende Senga and the case of 19 Congolese parliamentarians.

5. Ecuador

The Committee had examined the complaint lodged by Mr. Patricio Alberto Chávez Zavala, whose parliamentary mandate had been suspended in April 2024 for 56 days.

It sincerely thanked the Ecuadorian delegation to the 151st IPU Assembly for its appearance before the Committee, for the extensive information it had kindly provided and for its openness to dialogue.

After hearing the complainant and the authorities and carefully examining the documentation submitted by the National Assembly, the Committee had concluded that the case was not admissible. Having taken a series of administrative and judicial steps, the parliamentarian in question had been reinstated to his seat and resumed the exercise of his functions without hindrance. He had been subsequently re-elected in the most recent election and currently sat in parliament, where he held senior roles.

The Committee had also confirmed that the IPU remained ready to provide institutional capacity-building and other assistance to the National Assembly of Ecuador in order to prevent similar situations occurring again in the future. To that end, the Committee wished to receive official information regarding the most appropriate way to provide such assistance, should the Ecuadorian authorities deem it necessary.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Patricio Chávez.

6. Eswatini

The Committee was continuing to examine the cases of three former independent members of the Parliament of Eswatini who had been handed lengthy prison sentences for their involvement in calls for democratic reforms. Following a visit by the IPU Secretary General in February 2025, the King of Eswatini had granted a royal pardon to one of the parliamentarians, Mr. Mthandeni Dube, who was to be released shortly. The Secretary General had been invited to make a return visit to Eswatini to attend Mr. Dube's release and to explore prospects for a speedy settlement of the situation of Mr. Mduduzi Mabuza, who remained in detention. The Committee welcomed those positive developments and encouraged the authorities to continue with efforts in that direction.

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

The Secretary General, saluting the progress achieved in the case, recalled that, one year previously, at the 214th session in Geneva, the leader of the Swazi delegation had taken note of the report prepared by the Committee and invited him to visit Eswatini for consultations with the relevant authorities. He had consequently travelled to Eswatini in pursuit of the mandate entrusted to him to support all IPU structures, including the highly important Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, in the performance of their respective mandates.

The outcome reported to the Governing Council was the result of the Committee's truly laudable approach of giving pride of place to dialogue with authorities and other stakeholders so as to achieve satisfactory settlement of the cases before it. Dialogue was the IPU's leitmotif and had obvious benefits. He commended the Committee and indeed the Swazi authorities on their spirit of accommodation and cooperation, which would hopefully prevail in the collective efforts to prosecute the IPU agenda and resolve all outstanding cases under examination by the Committee.

7. Iraq

The Committee was pleased to announce a positive development in the case of Mr. Ahmed Al-Alwani, a former member of the Council of Representatives of Iraq.

Mr. Al-Alwani, who had been sentenced to death following an arbitrary trial, had been acquitted and released on 23 April 2025. That positive outcome was the result of the Iraqi authorities' determination to resolve the case and the perseverance of the Committee, which had visited Iraq in 2023 to support the authorities in their efforts to settle the case once and for all.

The Committee welcomed that resolution, which had been achieved through cooperation and constructive dialogue between the competent authorities and the Committee. That outcome was also the result of a long-term effort by the Committee, reflecting the IPU's purpose and the important role it played in promoting democracy and human rights.

The Committee had therefore decided to close the case.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Ahmed Jamii Salman Al-Alwani.

8. Israel

The Committee had again examined the situation of Mr. Ofer Cassif, a member of the Knesset, who had again been suspended by the Knesset Ethics Committee.

That new two-month suspension had come shortly after a previous decision to significantly restrict Mr. Cassif's ability to participate in Knesset debates. Both suspension orders had been imposed as a result of Mr. Cassif's outspoken views on the policies and actions of the State of Israel in Gaza.

The Committee was of the view that that latest decision by the Knesset Ethics Committee was arbitrary in nature because it punished Mr. Cassif on account of his rightful exercise of freedom of speech. The Committee called on the Israeli authorities to fully restore Mr. Cassif's parliamentary rights.

The Committee regretted the decision of the Supreme Court dismissing Mr. Cassif's petition challenging his suspension without examining its substance, considering that it was the last possible resort for Mr. Cassif.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Ofer Cassif.

9. Myanmar

The Committee had once again examined a case in Myanmar concerning 79 parliamentarians who had faced reprisals and been prevented from being sworn in following the coup d'état in 2021. Ten of them had died while trying to avoid arrest, and 18 were being held incommunicado. The Committee had received allegations of torture and worrying reports about their health. The list of detainees included Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi, who was 80 years of age and had reportedly developed a heart condition for which she was not receiving the necessary medical treatment while in prison.

With the resistance movement gaining ground, the military junta had lost control of almost 80% of the territory of Myanmar. Against that backdrop, the military authorities had announced plans to hold elections in December 2025 – a move that had been challenged by the country's parliamentarians. The Committee reiterated its call for the release of the detained parliamentarians, which was an essential step towards restoring peace and parliamentary democracy, with credible elections reflecting the will of the entire population of Myanmar. In the meantime, the Committee called on parliamentarians around the world to do more to secure the release of their colleagues.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of 79 parliamentarians of Myanmar.

10. Pakistan

The Committee had met with the delegation of Pakistan, which had shared its observations about the case concerning five opposition parliamentarians. Despite the delegation's assurances as to the detention conditions of Mr. Imran Khan, a former parliamentarian and the country's former Prime Minister, the Committee remained concerned about increasingly worrying reports from the complainant that Mr. Khan and members of his party were subject to a campaign of persecution, including allegations of torture, ill-treatment, arbitrary detention and multiple violations of the right to a fair trial. The Committee reiterated its call for the release of the detained parliamentarians and considered that, in order to resolve the case, the need for a Committee mission to Pakistan had never been more pressing. The Committee awaited an unequivocal response from the authorities.

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

11. Palestine

The Committee had again examined the cases of Mr. Marwan Barghouti and Mr. Ahmad Sa'adat, two former Palestinian parliamentarians who were still being held in detention in Israel.

The Committee regretted that those two high-profile Palestinian politicians, and especially Mr. Barghouti, continued to languish in prison on charges that had never been substantiated following trials that had not met fair-trial standards.

The Committee was also deeply concerned about the account provided by B'Tselem and Physicians for Human Rights, two leading human rights organizations in Israel, and about the decision of the Israeli Supreme Court, which confirmed that Palestinian detainees had been systematically deprived of adequate food since the Hamas attack on 7 October 2023.

The Committee urged the Israeli authorities to respect the human rights and dignity of Mr. Barghouti, Mr. Sa'adat and all Palestinian detainees, and to grant its request to visit Israel to verify their conditions of detention as part of a diplomatic and humanitarian mission.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decisions relating to the cases of Mr. Marwan Barghouti and Mr. Ahmad Sa'adat.

12. Somalia

The Committee had received a new complaint concerning Somalia, where three parliamentarians had been violently attacked. The complainant alleged that a group of opposition parliamentarians had been fired on by law enforcement officers while visiting a citizen who had been arbitrarily arrested by the police. The complainant claimed that the parliamentarians had been shot at as they were about to hold a press conference outside the police station. Some of their staff had been killed in the attack and several others were injured. The Committee was deeply concerned by the seriousness of those allegations and called on the authorities to do their utmost to protect the lives and rights of parliamentarians in Somalia, including the right to freedom of peaceful assembly.

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

13. Thailand

The Committee had again examined the case of 47 Thai parliamentarians whose party had been dissolved by the Constitutional Court for having attempted to amend a provision providing for heavy penalties for the crime of lèse-majesté. The Committee thanked the delegation of Thailand, which it had met during the Assembly. The Committee nevertheless remained concerned about the cases of those parliamentarians, including two women who faced potential custodial sentences for exercising their freedom of expression, and 44 parliamentarians who could be permanently stripped of their political rights for having tabled a draft amendment in parliament. The Committee called on the National Assembly of Thailand to make every effort to protect the rights of the parliamentarians in question, including their right to participate in the elections scheduled for 2026.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of 47 Thai parliamentarians.

14. Türkiye

The Committee was submitting two separate draft decisions concerning cases in Türkiye: one relating to former parliamentarians from the People's Democratic Party (HDP) and, for the first time, one concerning a group of sitting parliamentarians from the Peoples' Equality and Democratic Party (DEM Party) and other related groupings.

The Committee remained deeply concerned that several former HDP parliamentarians continued to languish in prison, including Mr. Selahattin Demirtaş and Ms. Figen Yüksekdağ, who had been handed heavy sentences in connection with the so-called Kobane trial. In July 2025, the European Court of Human Rights had again ordered the release of Mr. Demirtaş without delay, finding that his detention served the purpose of circumventing an earlier judgment. The Committee urged the Turkish authorities to implement the Court's decisions in good faith and to ensure the release of the parliamentarians in question. The Committee appreciated the official invitation extended to it to visit Türkiye and hoped that the mission could take place as soon as possible.

For the first time, the Committee was also submitting for adoption by the Governing Council a new collective case concerning 43 opposition members of parliament from the DEM Party and other related groupings. The parliamentarians in question were reportedly facing harassment, intimidation, malicious prosecution, and attacks on their freedom of expression and association. The Committee was concerned by the apparent similarity between the patterns observed in the case and those in the case of the former HDP parliamentarians and hoped that those issues could also be addressed during the planned mission to Türkiye.

Mr. A. Gajadien (Suriname), while expressing support for the draft decision, said that the ideal would be for the cases to be satisfactorily resolved before the 152nd Assembly in Türkiye.

Mr. A. Özkaya (Türkiye) said that, in a productive meeting with the Committee, his delegation had provided information, thanked the Committee for its work, and invited it to conduct a fact-finding mission to the country. As to the Committee's report, it included two unsubstantiated allegations and 10 cases that were entirely undocumented and hence unknown to the Turkish authorities, whose request for their dismissal had nonetheless met with no response.

Together with freedom of expression and freedom of association, parliamentary immunity was fully guaranteed under the Turkish Constitution. Parliamentarians could not therefore be criminally investigated unless that immunity was withdrawn, which had happened on only three occasions since 2000, all in cases involving parliamentarians affiliated with the terrorist Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK). When the Committee visited Türkiye, it would be presented with the official police files in possession of the Turkish Parliament concerning crimes perpetrated by certain parliamentarians before they were elected to office.

Ms. C. Akça Cupolo (Türkiye), introducing herself as one of those whose cases were under examination by the Committee, said that she stood accused of terrorism offences, which was frankly astonishing. Another of those cases involved a former colleague who had placed himself in exile rather than returning home to a long prison term for speeches he had made.

Despite such violations of the human rights of Turkish parliamentarians, the IPU was convening its 152nd Assembly in Istanbul, which had seen its Mayor imprisoned along with sitting parliamentarians and an elected parliamentarian who had never been permitted to take office. She invited all delegates when in Istanbul to stand outside their prisons and express solidarity with democracy and human rights.

Mr. B. Akburak (Türkiye), speaking as an opposition party member, said that a Turkish parliamentary commission had recently been established to foster an environment of peace throughout the country. In Türkiye, which had a Constitution and was a democracy, anyone suspected of involvement in terrorism was tried and punished if found guilty. When delegates came to Istanbul, they would come to know Türkiye, experience the Turkish hospitality, and see that the Turkish authorities were not committing any constitutional crime. All Turkish parliamentarians had the right to immunity, which could not easily be withdrawn.

Ms. N. Altaca Kayisoglu (Türkiye) said that she belonged to the Republican People's Party (CHP), which had polled most votes in the country's last elections and was the leading opposition party. Also CHP members, the Mayor of Istanbul and 15 other mayors had been detained on charges of corruption alleged by an individual who was far more likely to be involved in that crime but had never been investigated. She and many other parliamentarians from her party, both past and present, had been charged on false or flimsy evidence with insulting the country's President, who was moreover seeking to turn the party over to a trustee in a process being prolonged by a non-independent judiciary. Despite – or because of – the CHP's success, its members were subjected to such pressures on a daily basis but were nonetheless resisting. Delegates would see the situation for themselves when they arrived in Istanbul.

Mr. S. Soendergaard (Denmark), noting that the European Court of Human Rights had repeatedly called for the release of Turkish parliamentarians whose cases it had investigated and found to be baseless, said that the 152nd Assembly should be seen as a positive opportunity for addressing the serious issues reported. The present focus should be on sending a strong signal to the Turkish authorities that the IPU hoped to see the cases under examination by the Committee resolved before the Assembly in Istanbul.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to, respectively, the case of 66 Turkish parliamentarians and the case of 43 Turkish parliamentarians.

Mr. E. Blanc (France), President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, said that he would be grateful if the Turkish delegation were to refrain from calling into question the Committee's impartiality. The Committee had engaged in a clear dialogue with the delegation and stood ready to receive comments on the cases before it, which it always examined with the utmost impartiality. In compiling its report, it took into account the views of all parties in a fair and balanced manner.

The cases to which he had referred in his report were only some of the many before the Committee. While it was not now submitting decisions on those other cases, the Committee was continuing to examine them, closely monitoring the situation of over 800 parliamentarians in more than 50 countries.

Given the unprecedented number of cases referred to the Committee, one thing was certain: the institution of parliament and democracy itself were in danger, and it was a collective responsibility to defend them with strength and determination. Now more than ever, he called on each and every delegate to return to their parliaments and rally their colleagues behind the cause of parliamentary solidarity. Together, they must speak out on behalf of their colleagues who, at the present time, could no longer make their voices heard – because they were imprisoned, threatened or missing. They should not be forgotten. Inaction should never be an option.

(c) Forum of Young Parliamentarians
(CL/216/15(c)-R.1)

Ms. J. Sierra (Uruguay), member of the Bureau of Young Parliamentarians, presenting the report of the meeting of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians held on 20 October 2025, as contained in document CL/216/15(c)-R.1, and noting that youth participation in the 151st Assembly was below target, said that all Member Parliaments should include at least one parliamentarian under 40 in their delegations and work to amplify the important youth voice through empowerment. In that connection, the capacity-building programmes and other actions described in the report for promoting youth participation in parliament were especially welcome. The Forum had deliberated its contribution from the youth perspective to the General Debate and to the draft resolution on illegal international adoption; and appointed youth rapporteurs for two draft resolutions proposed for consideration at the 152nd Assembly, one on the parliamentary role in regard to post-conflict management mechanisms and the other on protectionism, tariffs and corporate tax evasion. Concerning the 12th Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians to be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, the intention was to incorporate a human rights focus in line with the IPU's priority theme for 2026.

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

It was so decided.

The Vice-President said that the Governing Council was called upon to elect one member from the African Group to the Bureau of Young Parliamentarians and that the candidature of Ms. J. Quashie of Ghana had been received.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to elect Ms. Quashie as a member of the Forum.

It was so decided.

(e) Committee on Middle East Questions
(CL/216/15(e)-R.1)

Mr. K.A.K. Darwish (Egypt), member of the Committee on Middle East Questions, presenting the report of the Committee's two sittings, held on 20 and 22 October 2025, as contained in document CL/216/15(e)-R.1, said that the Committee had acknowledged the widespread hope for an end to the unbearable suffering in Gaza while also recognizing the fatigue engendered by repeatedly unkept promises. In its discussions, it had stressed that true understanding began with human testimony; humanitarian assistance was a universal duty grounded in international law; education for coexistence was key to successful diplomatic accords; peace was premised on security; and political progress and educational reform went hand in hand. Concerning proposals for its restructuring, the Committee's frank exchange had been inspired by a unity of purpose and a shared understanding that the IPU role was not to replicate government diplomacy but to elevate parliamentary dialogue above political restraints. Lastly, after examining its future workplan, including a possible retreat, the Committee had reiterated its firm belief in unconditional humanitarian access to Gaza, a genuine ceasefire, and a two-State solution as the only viable path towards lasting peace.

Mr. H.R.H. Babaei (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the report was commendable but contained omissions. It should identify the regime responsible for the atrocities in Gaza and the West Bank and name the United States of America as the provider of support. Going forward, the Committee should think about how to address the crimes of that Zionist regime and its United States backer.

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

It was so decided.

The Vice-President said that the Governing Council was called upon to elect one member to the Committee on Middle East Questions and that the candidature of Ms. L. Quartapelle of Italy, submitted in an individual capacity, had been received.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to elect Ms. Quartapelle as a member of the Committee.

It was so decided.

(f) Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law
(CL/216/15(f)-R.1)

Mr. K. Suebsang (Thailand), member of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, presenting the report of the Committee's meeting held on 21 October 2025, as contained in document CL/216/15(f)-R.1, said that the Committee had among other things been briefed on the dire humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and called on all parties to the ongoing conflict there to respect international humanitarian law and facilitate access to humanitarian assistance for those in need. Member Parliaments could and must do more to raise awareness of all such humanitarian crises and secure more government support for humanitarian responses, especially in light of recent funding cuts. The Committee had also discussed legislative and other measures for ending childhood statelessness, protecting medical facilities, in particular hospitals in armed conflicts, and reducing without delay the suffering caused by cluster munitions. All Member Parliaments could help to promote respect for international humanitarian law by encouraging their governments to join the Global Initiative to Galvanize Political Commitment to International Humanitarian Law. The Committee would continue its efforts to mobilize parliaments to such ends.

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

It was so decided.

The Vice-President said that the Governing Council was called upon to elect one man from the Asia-Pacific Group as a member of the Committee but that no candidatures had been received. She looked forward to the submission of candidatures at the 152nd Assembly in April 2026.

(b) Forum of Women Parliamentarians
(CL/216/15(b)-R.1)

Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, presenting the report of the Forum's 40th session held on 19 October 2025, as contained in document CL/216/15(b)-R.1, said that, in contributing towards the work of the Assembly from a gender perspective, participants had conducted a debate, detailed in the report, on the draft IPU resolution on illegal international adoption and proposed amendments that had been incorporated into the text. The Forum had welcomed the IPU initiatives to promote gender equality within its own governing and other bodies through gender balance and gender rotation, including in respect of the IPU Presidency. It encouraged the participation of still more male colleagues in its events and also urged all Member Parliaments to join the IPU's campaign *Achieving gender equality, action by action* and promote its 10 actions. For its part, the Bureau had called for a sharpened IPU focus on women's key role in peacebuilding. She looked forward in June 2026 to welcoming male and female parliamentarians alike to the Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians in Serbia.

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

It was so decided.

The Vice-President said that the Governing Council was called upon to elect one member from the Asia-Pacific Group as a member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians with a mandate ending in March 2028 and that Ms. S. Claydon of Australia had been nominated for the position.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to elect Ms. Claydon to the position.

It was so decided.

(h) Committee on Health
(CL/216/15(h)-R.1)

Ms. O. Ataniyazova (Uzbekistan), member of the Committee on Health, read out the report of the Committee's inaugural meeting held on 19 October 2025, as contained in document CL/216/15(h)-R.1.

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

It was so decided.

The Vice-President said that the Governing Council was called upon to elect three members to the Committee on Health for a four-year term ending in October 2029. In accordance with the Committee's Rules, not more than eight of its members should be of the same sex and as many of the geopolitical groups as possible should be represented. In light of the Committee's current composition, applications from men and from under-represented geopolitical groups were encouraged. To date, three candidatures had been received from Mr. M.I. Ravalia of Canada, Mr. H. Obeidat of Jordan, and Mr. J. Danfa of Senegal.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to elect those three candidates as members of the Committee.

It was so decided

(d) Gender Partnership Group
(CL/216/15(d)-R.1)

The Secretary General, presenting the report of the 52nd session of the Gender Partnership Group held on 18 and 22 October 2025, as contained in document CL/216/15(d)-R.1, and citing figures set out in the report and its annexes, said that women's participation in the 151st Assembly was higher than in the preceding five and that the gender composition of delegations comprising at least two members was similar to that in recent years. Less positively, the number of gender-balanced delegations was 10 fewer than the record high of 49 achieved at the 150th Assembly. As to the IPU's anti-harassment policy, its visibility had increased and participants in the Assembly were eligible for related training, which the IPU could also help Member Parliaments to carry out. Since the policy's adoption in 2023, 11 reported incidents of harassment had been addressed within its framework in the manner described in the report. Lastly, the Group had engaged in dialogue with the delegations from the Gambia and Nigeria, where women parliamentarians amounted to under 10% of the total, and indicated the IPU's readiness to support the efforts of both to redress that situation.

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

It was so decided.

The Vice-President said that the Executive Committee had been pleased to endorse the nomination of Mr. M.A. Sera of Indonesia as a new member of the Gender Partnership Group.

The sitting rose at 13:10.

Third sitting

Thursday, 23 October 2025 (Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 14:45, with Ms. G. Morawska-Stanecka (Poland), Vice-President of the IPU, in the Chair.

Item 15 of the agenda (continued)

(i) **Working Group on Science and Technology** (CL/216/15(i)-R.1)

Ms. M. Cederfelt (Sweden), Chairperson of the Working Group on Science and Technology, presenting the report of the Group's online and in-person sittings held respectively on 16 June 2025 and 21 October 2025, as contained in document CL/216/15(i)-R.1, said that, at its June sitting, the Group had considered how the principles of the IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology could best be applied within parliaments, particularly in regard to AI, and integrated into legislation to ensure oversight and inclusion. Following the enriching expert input and good practice examples provided at its October sitting, the Group had decided to develop an annex to the Charter, on AI ethics. It had stressed the importance of evidence-based policymaking and scientific literacy in a whole-of-society approach to a digital transformation guided by ethics, inclusiveness and human rights, recognizing too that the IPU offered the best format for taking the dialogue forward. The Group had also heard a presentation on global water challenges and the critical role of science and technology in helping to address them. Parliamentarians had a crucial part to play through cooperation in all those spheres.

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

It was so decided.

The Vice-President said that the Governing Council was to elect six members to the Working Group for a four-year term ending in October 2029 and that four nominations had been received. Those nominated were: from the Arab Group, Ms. M. Aljaghoub of Jordan; from the Asia-Pacific Group, Ms. S. Kiran of Fiji; from the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, Ms. B. Rodríguez of Uruguay; and from the Twelve Plus Group, Mr. B. Akburak of Türkiye. Two vacancies remained for the Eurasia Group.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to elect those four nominated individuals as members of the Group.

It was so decided.

(j) **High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG)** (CL/216/15(j)-R.1)

Ms. M. Guerra Castillo (Mexico), Chairperson of the HLAG, presenting the report of the Group's recent activities, as contained in document CL/216/15(j)-R.1, said that, on 21 August 2025, the Group had organized a webinar on education for prevention, reconciliation and empowerment to mark the International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism. At its 19th meeting on 19 October 2025, it had held an expert hearing on climate change, resource scarcity and their connection with violent extremism, especially in sub-Saharan and North Africa. With regard to the *Call of the Sahel* initiative, HLAG members had agreed to undertake parliamentary visits to Sahel countries as a means of practical field-based collaboration aimed at reinforcing peace, development and resilience in the region. On 20 October 2025, the HLAG had also held a panel discussion on the complex intersection of migration, terrorism and transnational organized crime, a global challenge mostly involving the criminal exploitation of displaced persons, notably unaccompanied children. Full details of those activities and their outcomes were set out in the report.

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

It was so decided.

The Vice-President said that the Governing Council was to elect four members to the HLAG for a four-year term ending in October 2029 and that two nominations had been received. Those nominated were: from the African Group, Mr. K. Kabre of Burkina Faso; and from the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, Mr. A. Gadajien of Suriname. Two vacancies for the Eurasia Group remained.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to elect the two nominated individuals as HLAG members.

It was so decided.

Item 16 of the agenda

REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED MEETINGS
(CL/216/16-R.1)

The Vice-President said that participants would hear in-person or video reports on the IPU specialized meetings listed in document CL/216/16-R.1, which also contained links to more detailed information available on each meeting via the IPU website.

A video report showing highlights from the Second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue: Strengthening trust and embracing hope for our common future, held in Rome from 19 to 21 June 2025, was screened.

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

It was so decided.

A video report showing highlights from the IPU Parliamentary Forum at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, held in New York on 22 July 2025, was screened.

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

It was so decided.

Mr. Xuejun Tian (China), reporting on the 2025 Interregional Seminar on the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals for Parliaments from Developing Countries, held in Beijing from 28 August to 6 September 2025, said that the event had covered four topics: the 80th anniversary of the United Nations; inclusive AI governance; the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; and the implementation of the SDGs on the basis of inclusivity and adaptation to national contexts. Field trips had also been organized to observe local projects centred on high-quality economic development, ecological protection and AI. Now in its seventh iteration, the Seminar was a key platform for parliaments from developing countries to share experiences and achievements, contributing positively to sustainable development, democracy and legal frameworks. It was also an opportunity to work with those parliaments and the IPU to further energize strong legislative cooperation for the greater well-being of all peoples through sustainable development. With accelerated multipolarity and economic globalization disrupting the world order in a complex and volatile international landscape, it was vital to uphold genuine multilateralism and promote coordinated development.

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

It was so decided.

Mr. W. Soto Palacios (Peru), reporting on the 11th IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians held in Lima from 11 to 13 September 2025 around the theme of uniting generations for gender equality, said that the historic achievement of gender parity at the Conference showed that change was possible with commitment. The slowdown – if not reversal – of progress towards gender equality in parliamentary decision-making was nonetheless worrying and called for bold countermeasures, including legislative reform to set quotas for young women parliamentarians in particular. To attract more young people and above all women into politics demanded exemplary institutions with inclusive practices, zero tolerance of harassment and gender-based violence, and flexible working conditions compatible with a family life. Gender equality would only be achieved, however, through close cooperation with more senior parliamentarians and civil society. The loud message from young parliamentarians following the Conference was that symbolic gestures must end and be replaced with action. In that regard, the Conference's outcome document gave a very clear sense of how to make gender equality a reality.

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

It was so decided.

Mr. S.S.K. Njie (The Gambia), reporting on the Parliamentary Meeting held in New York on 24 September 2025 on the occasion of the UN General Assembly, said that, under its theme of Beijing+30, the event had focused on gender equality and women's empowerment, with participants taking stock of progress and setbacks recorded along the journey started 30 years previously towards women's greater involvement in politics, including in leadership positions. Progress in that domain was dependent on strategies developed by leaders seeking to build momentum and refusing to accept that inequality was inevitable. Indeed, silence in the face of gender-based discrimination and violence was complicity. Women's and girls' rights were moreover intrinsic to their humanity. The struggle for gender equality could not, however, be won without men's support as champions who used their voices and votes to protect the most vulnerable. It was time for parliaments to translate the Beijing Declaration into action and reaffirm that gender equality was not a privilege but a guaranteed right to be protected, promoted and practised across society.

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

It was so decided.

Mr. J. Fakhro (Bahrain), reporting on a side event, *No women left behind: Dialogue on the representation of women in all the diversity in politics*, held in New York on 25 September 2025 in parallel with the Parliamentary Meeting, said that the event had been organized under the Women and Youth Democratic Engagement (WYDE) Women Leadership initiative, a new strategic project focused on supporting women's participation and leadership in parliament and on combating negative social norms and gender-based violence. Funded by the European Union and implemented by the IPU in partnership with UN Women, International IDEA, and United Cities and Local Governments, the two-year initiative, ending in late 2026, would promote the expansion of partnerships and enhance the leadership of parliamentarians in advancing its aims. Thanks to the useful intergenerational dialogues conducted among stakeholders participating in the event, including women parliamentarians specifically, critical issues had been unpacked and synergies built around the WYDE initiative's areas of focus. Guidance and training materials were among the practical tools being produced for action in those areas. The IPU must continue championing that landmark initiative as a vital investment in democracy for all.

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

It was so decided.

A video report showing highlights from the 11th G20 Speakers' Summit (P20), held in Cape Town, South Africa, from 1 to 2 October 2025, was screened.

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

It was so decided.

Item 17 of the agenda

OTHER BUSINESS

The Vice-President said that the draft IPU Sustainability Policy endorsed by the Executive Committee would be communicated in due course to members of the Governing Council with a view to its formal approval at the 217th session in Istanbul.

The Secretary General said on another note that the annual Cremer-Passy Prize awarded to a parliamentarian in recognition of their contribution to critical IPU work had not featured on the agenda of the 216th session because, for reasons beyond its control, the Selection Board had been unable to complete all the necessary stages of its work. The Board would continue to work through those stages and provide a progress report accordingly.

The Vice-President, following the customary exchange of courtesies, declared the 216th session of the Governing Council closed.

The sitting rose at 15:45.