



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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CL/217/SR-rev
24 September 2026

Summary records of the Governing Council

217th session

16 and 19 April 2026

Istanbul, Türkiye

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First sitting

Thursday, 16 April 2026
(Morning)

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

OPENING OF THE SITTING

The President welcomed delegates to the Assembly and thanked the Parliament of Türkiye for its hospitality. The Assembly was taking place amid a grave international political situation, particularly the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, the repercussions of which extended beyond the region, causing tragic loss of life and affecting economies, supply chains and societal stability. In that context, the Assembly in Istanbul was symbolic of delegates' dedication to dialogue, multilateralism and service to the people. Parliamentarians were not merely witnesses to history but active contributors responsible for promoting peace, dialogue, international law and inclusive solutions. A greater focus on human, social and democratic considerations was required.

She underscored the importance of the IPU as a space for respectful dialogue and problem-solving, expressing hope that its deliberations would help bridge differences and promote peace. Lasting peace depended on strong institutions, respect for human rights and trust among peoples. Delegates were urged to transcend divisions and forge common positions.

Turning to the agenda, she described the election of the next IPU Secretary General as a strategic choice of great importance. The next IPU Secretary General would be responsible for guiding the Organization in an increasingly complex international environment fraught with major challenges. The role demanded vision, the ability to bring people together and a deep commitment to the Organization's core values, namely dialogue, cooperation, democracy and peace. Delegates were urged to approach the election responsibly, with openness, fairness and transparency, bearing in mind the best interest of the IPU. Lastly, she thanked the outgoing Secretary General for his service.

The Secretary General welcomed delegates to the Assembly, inviting them to examine the issues on its agenda with clarity, taking account of the uncertain global context. He would continue to provide support to the work of the Organization until the expiry of his term.

Item 1 of the agenda

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (CL/217/A.1-rev)

The agenda was adopted.

Item 2 of the agenda

APPROVAL OF THE SUMMARY RECORDS OF THE 216TH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL (CL/216/SR)

The summary records of the 216th session of the Governing Council were approved.

Item 3 of the agenda

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE 152ND ASSEMBLY

At the proposal of Ms. T. Narbaeva (Uzbekistan), seconded by Ms. S. Gafarova (Azerbaijan), Mr. N. Kurtulmuş, Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, was elected President of the 152nd IPU Assembly by acclamation.

Mr. N. Kurtulmuş (Türkiye) thanked delegates for electing him and wished them every success in their deliberations. In a world marked by turbulence, he emphasized the need to pursue solutions that advanced peace and justice.

Item 4 of the agenda

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

(a) On her activities since the 216th session of the Governing Council

The President, accompanying her report with a digital slide presentation, reported on several activities in which she had participated since the 216th session of the Governing Council. Those included the 296th session of the Executive Committee held in January 2026 in Doha, Qatar, the annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations (UN) held in February 2026 in New York, and the IPU-UN Women Parliamentary Meeting at the 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women held in March 2026 in New York. She had also attended the Summit of Speakers of Parliament of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean held in Cairo, Egypt in November 2025, the Fourth Parliamentary Summit of the Crimea Platform held in Stockholm, Sweden in November 2025, the Second Session of the Women Parliamentary Forum of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates in January 2026, the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth held in New Delhi, India in January 2026, and the 13th Global Baku Forum held in March 2026 in Baku, Azerbaijan. At those meetings, she had promoted the core values of the IPU, discussed important issues such as the war in Ukraine and gender equality, and presented some of the IPU's resolutions.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to approve part (a) of her report.

It was so decided.

(b) On the activities of the Executive Committee

(CL/217/4(b)-P.1)

The President provided a detailed overview of the Executive Committee's work since the previous Assembly, noting that it had met multiple times, namely in Doha, online and in Istanbul, with many of its discussions feeding directly into items on the Governing Council agenda.

Having previously discussed the proposed IPU Sustainability Policy, the Executive Committee now wished to recommend it to the Governing Council for adoption. The policy was a key initiative underpinning the Organization's strategic commitment to sustainable development, forming part of its climate action goals, and aimed to integrate sustainability considerations across all IPU activities.

In line with the 2025 resolution entitled *The role of parliaments in advancing a two-State solution in Palestine*, the Executive Committee had considered amendments to the Rules of the Committee on Middle East Questions. The objective of the amendments was to make the Committee more effective, representative and action-oriented, with a core mandate focused on the Israel-Palestine situation and a secondary focus on other Middle East issues. Key amendments included restructuring of the Committee's membership to ensure better geopolitical balance, with two members per geopolitical group, alongside the standing members from Israel and Palestine, and representatives from both the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and the Bureau of Young Parliamentarians.

Improving the emergency item process was a priority for the Executive Committee in light of ongoing challenges such as polarization among Member Parliaments, difficulties in reaching the two-thirds majority required for adoption of a proposal, and the proposal of topics not aligned with a recent major situation of international concern on which urgent action was required. The Executive Committee had taken note of some improvements already introduced, including the addition of an extra 24-hour window before the vote to allow the merging of proposals, the development of guidelines for submissions to improve quality and relevance, a stronger role for the Assembly Steering Committee in reviewing proposals and efforts to improve communication between geopolitical groups. It had also pleaded in favour of further reforms, such as formalizing the 48-hour deadline for submitting proposals, keeping the two-thirds majority to ensure broad support, improving consensus-building mechanisms and promoting greater inclusion of smaller countries' voices. Additional proposals still under consideration included the possibility of introducing a second emergency item so as to reduce competition, better reflect multiple priorities and increase inclusivity.

In addition, the Executive Committee had been closely monitoring the geopolitical situation in the Middle East and had prepared contingency plans for the current Assembly, including hybrid and remote formats or even postponement in case of disruption, though those had not been needed given strong in-person participation.

With a view to ensuring institutional richness and drawing on past experiences, the Executive Committee supported the participation of former IPU Presidents and Secretaries General in IPU events, on a case-by-case basis. The cost of such participation should not fall to the IPU unless tied to a specific role in the meeting in question.

The Executive Committee had had fruitful exchanges with relevant IPU bodies, including with the President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, who had reported on the Committee's caseload, noting that a record 1,027 individual cases from 58 countries had been under examination in 2025. Most cases were under 5 years old, with an average duration of 1.7 years, covering 401 Members of Parliament across 27 countries, and 96% of the cases closed in 2025 had been resolved successfully due to constructive cooperation from national authorities. A small number – 31 cases in nine countries – had been under examination for over 20 years. Many of those cases concerned parliamentarians who had been assassinated. Those cases needed to remain open until the truth was established and justice was achieved. While some progress had been made over the years, further cooperation from the relevant authorities was crucial. Commending the Committee for its perseverance and effective reporting, the Executive Committee recommended balancing public pressure with discreet diplomacy to avoid jeopardizing outcomes, while urging continued support from the parliamentary community to help resolve cases.

The Executive Committee was also briefed on the work of the IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine by its President, and noted the global impact of the conflict, including on food security, and the focus on achieving quick humanitarian outcomes, notably for Ukrainian children. It expressed support for the Task Force, recognizing its slow but real progress and the willingness of both parties to engage. The spokesperson of the Group of Facilitators for Cyprus had also provided an update on the persistent long-running division on the island, despite occasional progress. The Executive Committee encouraged the continuation of dialogue on the issue.

Additional parliamentary diplomacy initiatives considered by the Executive Committee included the IPU's engagement in Armenia and Azerbaijan, a possible visit by the Secretary General to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea before the end of his mandate, and activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, where progress towards peace had recently stalled. Overall, the Executive Committee commended the efforts of the Secretary General to support parliamentary peace initiatives.

The Executive Committee had addressed several other matters, including preparations for the 2026 Cremer-Passy Prize, which would be awarded at the 153rd Assembly to an MP with an outstanding record on human rights, and internal decisions such as the election of Mr. M. Dick (Australia) as a new Executive Committee Vice-President and the appointment of Ms. N. Mutti (Zambia) and Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium) to the Gender Partnership Group. The Committee had also renewed the mandates of the other five Executive Committee Vice-Presidents.

Ms. K. Bradley (United Kingdom) asked for confirmation that adoption of the report on the activities of the Executive Committee would not lead to any changes to the IPU Statutes and Rules.

The President confirmed that adoption of the report would not lead to any changes to the IPU Statutes and Rules. Adoption of amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules would take place at the Assembly.

Ms. M. Rempel Garner (Canada) said that, under Rule 39 of the Assembly, amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules could not be made or even discussed without giving due notice to the Assembly. Due notice had not been given for some of the proposed amendments.

The President said that the matter would be dealt with under the appropriate item at the Assembly.

Ms. M. Rempel Garner (Canada) said that, without the necessary notice, including amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules on the agenda of the Assembly at all was out of order.

The President clarified that the current item was purely a report on the activities of the Executive Committee, one of which had been a discussion on the amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules. It was not an item about the amendments themselves. Concerns about notice or procedure should be raised at the Assembly under the relevant item.

Ms. M. Rempel Garner (Canada) said that the issue of the amendments should not be raised at all because the procedure was incorrect.

The President said that it had to be raised as part of the report because the matter had indeed been discussed by the Executive Committee.

The Secretary General, supporting the position of the IPU President, explained that two sets of amendments were being considered: one, regarding formalization of the deadline for submission of emergency item proposals, which had already completed the formal notification process and was ready to be considered for adoption by the Assembly, and another, regarding a potential second emergency item, recently proposed by the Executive Committee, which would, in due course, follow the same formal notification process for potential adoption at a later Assembly.

Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe) said that the Governing Council had the responsibility of not only adopting but also proposing amendments to the Statutes and Rules. Any implications of such proposals should be debated first, after which a formal process of notification would follow.

Ms. K. Daugaard (Denmark) agreed with the delegate from Canada that the procedure was incorrect. It would therefore be difficult to adopt the report.

Ms. M. Rempel Garner (Canada) said that, based on the clarification made by the Secretary General, she had understood that the set of amendments proposed by the Executive Committee would be considered for amendment at a future Assembly through due process. If that was the case, she had no objection.

Ms. K. Daugaard (Denmark) confirmed that the matter was now clear.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to approve part (b) of the report, including accepting the Executive Committee's recommendation to adopt the IPU Sustainability Policy.

It was so decided.

Item 5 of the agenda

PRESENTATION BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE IPU IMPACT REPORT FOR 2025

The Secretary General, accompanying his report with a digital slide presentation, presented the IPU Impact Report for 2025, which contained key data on the breadth and scope of the IPU's work. He underscored the efforts made to better integrate the IPU President's Report into the Impact Report. The IPU currently had 183 Member Parliaments, and 15 Associate Members. A total of 159 national parliaments had now adopted the IPU Common Principles for Support to Parliaments, and good levels of representation had been recorded at IPU Assemblies, with women accounting for 37.2% of delegates and young parliamentarians representing 14.1% – the latter being well above the global average. The visibility of the Organization had grown, with approximately 30,000 mentions in different media. The Organization's operational output also remained strong, with around 80 events having been held, including two Assemblies, and some 40 capacity-building programmes having been delivered worldwide.

Every activity carried out by the IPU was consistent with its Strategic Objectives. Regarding Strategic Objective 1 on building effective and empowered parliaments, he drew attention to the work of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. While the number of cases before the Committee continued to rise, reflecting a concerning global trend, tangible results had been achieved, including the successful resolution of many cases and the release of detained parliamentarians in countries such as Iraq and Eswatini. The IPU had continued to develop tools and research to address challenges affecting parliamentarians, including a further study on sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians in the Asia-Pacific region. As part of its capacity-building efforts, the IPU had worked with 18 parliaments, many undergoing political transitions, on issues such as human rights, climate change and health. Progress had been reported in countries such as Gabon and Chad, which were no longer under monitoring having returned to constitutional order, while continued assistance was being provided to Burkina Faso, Guinea and Niger. The work was supported by practical tools, including a toolkit for parliamentarians on SDG-informed legislative scrutiny and another on good practices for onboarding and offboarding members of parliament.

Regarding Strategic Objective 2 on promoting inclusive and representative parliaments, the IPU had held a Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians in Mexico City, and another was now scheduled to take place in Belgrade, Serbia in June 2026. A landmark policy document, the *Plan of action for gender parity in parliaments* had been adopted at the Mexico Conference, which would help to enshrine gender parity as the norm at the IPU. He noted some global progress on the matter, with a small number of parliaments reaching parity, but also warned of growing pushback against gender equality. At the same time, progress in youth participation had stalled globally, underscoring the need for renewed efforts.

Regarding Strategic Objective 3 on supporting resilient and innovative parliaments, the IPU had demonstrated leadership in advancing the use of new technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, both within the Organization and in national parliaments, through the Centre for Innovation in Parliament and the Working Group on Science and Technology.

Regarding Strategic Objective 4 on catalysing collective parliamentary action, he noted the significance of the 150th IPU Assembly in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, which had marked a major expansion of IPU engagement in the Eurasian region, as well as the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in Geneva, which had provided a platform for high-level political dialogue and renewed commitment to global challenges.

Lastly, regarding Strategic Objective 5 on strengthening the IPU's accountability, he welcomed the growing interest of Member Parliaments in reporting on the implementation of IPU outcomes, which would be further encouraged during the special accountability segment during the Assembly.

Overall, the IPU remained on track, delivering concrete results across its Strategic Objectives. He expressed confidence that the Organization was well-positioned to build on those achievements over its next strategic cycle.

Mr. K.K.P. Kouassi (Côte d'Ivoire) paid tribute to the Secretary General for his accomplishments over the course of his three terms, commending his inspiring leadership and strong legacy.

Mr. M.R. Onanga Ndiaye (Gabon), commending the quality of both reports, paid tribute to the Secretary General for his long-standing contribution to the Organization. It was his hope that former Secretaries General would be invited to participate regularly at IPU events to ensure continuity of work.

He thanked the IPU and its governing bodies for their solidarity and support to Gabon during a difficult period of transition and was encouraged to see Gabon's removal from the list of countries under monitoring.

Ms. H.B.H. Al-Sulaiti (Qatar) thanked the Secretary General for his contributions throughout his terms in office, noting his positive impact on parliamentary work worldwide and the improvements he had supported across the Organization's administrative, financial and diplomatic functions. Qatar had worked closely with the Secretary General, notably in organizing events, concluding capacity-building agreements and developing educational projects, and wished him every success in the future.

Mr. M.D. Laouhingamaye (Chad) congratulated the Secretary General and his team for their work, noting that, during a difficult time following the death of his country's President, the IPU had provided crucial on-the-ground support, including capacity-building and assistance with meetings; that support had contributed to the country's return to constitutional order. He reaffirmed his country's commitment to the ideals of the IPU.

Mr. B. Balbone (Burkina Faso) congratulated the Secretary General on the excellent work done throughout his terms, appreciating, in particular, the support provided to Burkina Faso during its transition and expressing the hope that it would continue.

The President said that the Executive Committee had welcomed the Impact Report for 2025, congratulated the Secretary General on the substantive achievements made, and also made several recommendations to strengthen those achievements. Those included developing further tools and strategies focused on digital transformation and artificial intelligence, and improving ways to measure the qualitative impact of women's and youth representation beyond numeric participation.

She took it that the Council wished to take note of the report and approve the Executive Committee's recommendations.

It was so decided.

Item 6 of the agenda

FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR 2025 AND FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE IPU
(CL/217/6-R.1, R.2 and R.3)

Mr. M. Dick (Australia), President of the Sub-Committee on Finance, expressed appreciation to the outgoing Secretary General for his leadership, mentorship and financial stewardship.

Regarding the IPU's financial situation, the Sub-Committee on Finance had met on 8 March 2026 to review the financial report and audited financial statements for 2025, following an external audit conducted by the Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia. Two recommendations had been issued by the External Auditor, which would be duly implemented by the IPU, in line with its consistent track record of acting on audit findings.

The IPU budget comprised two sources of funding: (1) assessed contributions accounting for approximately 75% of the budget, and (2) voluntary contributions accounting for the remaining 25%. The Governing Council had approved a 3% increase in assessed contributions for 2026, restoring contribution levels to those of sixteen years ago. As of early 2026, Member contributions received totalled CHF 11.3 million, representing 92% of assessed contributions – a strong start to the year.

Arrears from previous years had decreased to CHF 2.18 million, down from CHF 2.54 million at the same time the previous year, reflecting improved payment compliance by several Member Parliaments.

Voluntary contributions amounted to CHF 5.4 million, with support from a range of partners, including grants from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Shura Council of Qatar and Irish Aid. He also wished to recognize China, which had backed a joint programme on countering terrorism, as well as work on the SDGs, the Federated States of Micronesia for its support of IPU governance and peace work, and the Global Methane Hub for funding awareness efforts on climate change and methane reduction.

Overall, the IPU's finances remained healthy and stable, with budget performance on track. The budget belonged to the Member Parliaments, who had a collective responsibility to ensure effective use of resources and value for money. In conclusion, the Executive Committee recommended that the Governing Council approve the Secretary General's financial administration and the financial results for 2025.

Mr. L. Bugli (San Marino), Internal Auditor, said that, having reviewed the Financial report and audited financial statements, he wished to confirm that, in line with the opinion of the External Auditors, they presented a fair and accurate view of the Organization's financial position and performance, in accordance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), with the IPU's financial position remaining sound. The External Auditors had made two recommendations: (1) to conduct a comprehensive review of the Statement of Investment Policy Goals and Guidelines, and (2) to clarify the balance of the building fund bank account and update the policy on depreciation charged to reserves. IPU management had welcomed those recommendations, which would be implemented over the course of 2026.

Mr. M. Nadir (Guyana), Internal Auditor, said that the External Auditors had observed that almost all previous audit recommendations had been fully implemented, with only one recommendation from 2024 partially implemented and still under review, relating to financial management software and analytics.

An independent actuarial appraisal of the IPU's closed Pension Fund had been carried out in conformity with IPSAS and had been considered valid by the External Auditors.

Although net assets had decreased by an operating deficit of CHF 0.3 million – largely linked to the statutory write-off of arrears of three Member Parliaments and two Associate Members, the related increase in the provision for future credit losses and the recognition of IPSAS 43 (Leases) implementation costs – the IPU's financial position remained strong, with working capital at 88% of the targeted level, equivalent to approximately 8 months of operational coverage.

The Internal Auditors concluded that the financial statements accurately reflected the Organization's position and performance as at 31 December 2025 and were in full compliance with the relevant accounting standards. They therefore recommended that the Governing Council approve the Secretary General's financial administration of the IPU and the 2025 financial results.

The Secretary General thanked the Sub-Committee on Finance and the Internal Auditors for their work in ensuring transparency and sound financial oversight, as well as the IPU's donors for their continued support. He acknowledged financial contributions from a range of partners, including the

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Shura Council of Qatar, Irish Aid, the World Health Organization (WHO), China, the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), the United Arab Emirates, the Federated States of Micronesia, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Bahrain and private foundations such as the Julie Ann Wrigley Foundation. There had also been in-kind support through staff secondments from Austria and the Republic of Korea. He encouraged continued and expanded donor engagement given the IPU's growing mandate and resource needs.

The President said that, after considering the financial results for 2025, the Executive Committee had deemed the IPU's financial situation to be healthy, with proper financial management confirmed by both the Internal and External Auditors. Equally, the Executive Committee welcomed assurances that the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund, in which IPU staff participated, was managed independently and unaffected by broader UN issues, meaning that staff retirement benefits remained secure.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the 2025 financial results and the Secretary General's financial administration of the IPU.

It was so decided.

Item 7 of the agenda

IPU STRATEGY FOR 2027–2031

(CL/217/7-P.1)

The President said that, in anticipation of the conclusion of the IPU Strategy for 2022–2026, work on a new Strategy had been under way over the past six months. Following extensive consultations with Member Parliaments, a new draft IPU Strategy for 2027–2031 had been prepared, and she thanked all those who had contributed.

The Secretary General said that the new draft Strategy was the result of broad consultations involving around 1,000 individuals across 111 countries and confidently reflected the views and priorities of the membership. The Executive Committee had been fully briefed on the various components of the Strategy, which built on the successes and challenges of the previous Strategy, positioning the IPU to address future priorities.

The President said that the Executive Committee had been kept informed on the preparation of the forthcoming IPU Strategy for 2027–2031 alongside the review of the current Strategy for 2022–2026. That process had been informed by extensive consultations, including a record number of surveys and focus groups, involving a wide range of stakeholders – parliamentarians, partners, donors, civil society organizations and Secretariat staff. Respondents had expressed a desire for more IPU activities and events, strengthened capacity-building, improved monitoring and evaluation, greater inclusion, enhanced digital engagement, and improvements in IPU visibility and outreach. The Executive Committee had commended the thorough and consultative approach, emphasizing the need for the Strategy to remain agile and flexible. It had endorsed the draft IPU Strategy for 2027–2031 and recommended it to the Governing Council for adoption.

Mr. S. Schubert (Chile) asked whether the previous Strategy had accomplished its goals and sought clarification on the main goals of the new Strategy.

The Secretary General said that the new Strategy was based on an assessment of the current one, which had achieved several successes. Those included strong support provided to national parliaments, promotion of multilateralism and parliamentary cooperation, progress in gender equality and youth participation, and effective work by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. Further achievements included expansion of partnerships through an “ecosystem” approach, progress in the use of digital technologies, and strengthened parliamentary oversight of international agreements. He reassured Mr. Schubert that the new Strategy would build on those successes while addressing identified challenges.

The President took it that the Council wished to adopt the IPU Strategy for 2027–2031.

It was so decided.

Item 8 of the agenda

QUESTIONS RELATING TO IPU MEMBERSHIP AND OBSERVER STATUS

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

The Secretary General said that no new applications for IPU membership had been received but noted that efforts to mobilize new Members would continue.

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

The Secretary General reported that several Member Parliaments were in arrears of their financial contributions, a trend that had raised concern among both other Members and the External Auditors. In response, the Executive Committee had agreed to recommend that the Governing Council suspend the membership rights of several Member Parliaments due to prolonged non-payment. The decision had been intended to avoid overburdening those Member Parliaments with unsustainable debt, while preserving the possibility of future reintegration. Other countries remained under review.

The President said that the Executive Committee had reviewed the situation of Members in arrears and non-active Members under the relevant statutory provisions, noting with concern that nine Members had accumulated more than three years of unpaid contributions. In line with recommendations from the External Auditors, to prevent arrears from becoming unmanageable, the Executive Committee had decided to recommend suspending the membership rights of Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Vanuatu and El Salvador: the last of those having expressed its unwillingness to meet its financial obligations.

At the same time, the Executive Committee had stressed the importance of maintaining support for those parliaments, particularly the small island developing States, including by providing financial support via the Parliamentary Solidarity Fund, encouraging participation in IPU bodies as well as submissions of agenda item proposals, and holding informal meetings at Assemblies. Equally, it encouraged the Secretariat to draw on best practices from other organizations and acknowledged efforts by countries such as Australia, Fiji and New Zealand to broaden the membership and encourage participation, particularly in the Pacific region.

Decisions on other cases, including Guinea, Liberia, Marshall Islands and Tuvalu, had been deferred pending further consultations, while the situation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which had accumulated over 11 years of arrears, would be reviewed separately in light of its complexity.

The Executive Committee had commended ongoing efforts to remain engaged with non-active Members and encouraged continued support for their participation in IPU activities.

Mr. R.T. Parmessar (Suriname) expressed concern over the lack of solidarity with small island developing States, arguing that suspending their membership rights undermined their ability to remain active despite facing significant challenges. He called for greater inclusion and financial support and urged the IPU to take their situation more seriously.

The President explained that suspending the membership rights of Members in arrears was not a punitive measure but a safeguard intended to prevent debts from becoming unsustainable, as had been the case with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The approach allowed arrears to stop accumulating while preserving the possibility of reintegration once countries were able to return. However, she acknowledged the concerns raised and reaffirmed the IPU's commitment to continued engagement and solidarity with those countries.

Mr. M. Nadir (Guyana) argued against suspending the membership rights of the Member Parliaments in question, urging continued engagement instead. Suspension could undermine efforts to strengthen cooperation with the Caribbean.

The President acknowledged the proposal not to suspend the membership rights of the Member Parliaments in question but noted that the decision had already been deferred multiple times and that the recommendations by both the Internal and External Auditors required action. While further deferral remained an option, it would only prolong the issue and lead to ongoing build-up of arrears.

The Secretary General reassured delegates that, although certain Member Parliaments' membership rights would be suspended, they would continue to receive IPU assistance, including through the Parliamentary Solidarity Fund. Suspension affected only their ability to exercise their membership rights, such as voting, and not their access to capacity-building support.

Mr. M. Nadir (Guyana) asked to defer the decision on suspension to the 153rd IPU Assembly.

The President reiterated that the Executive Committee had stressed the importance of maintaining support for suspended parliaments, particularly small island developing States, as described above. In so doing, the IPU was demonstrating its solidarity, while recognizing that allowing debt to accumulate would be detrimental to those countries.

Mr. R.T. Parmessar (Suriname) wished to object to the suspension of the membership rights of the Members concerned and complained about the lack of opportunity to voice his concerns.

The President took it that the Council wished to approve the recommendation to suspend the membership rights of El Salvador, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Vanuatu, and to take note of the feedback of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that, in accordance with Rule 33.2, the quorum had been established at the start of the sitting based on attendance, with 142 Council Members present, setting the quorum at 72 members.

The President requested that the Secretary General provide the delegate from Suriname with a further explanation regarding the decision on suspension, so as to clarify its implications and reassure him that it was in the best interest of the Member Parliaments concerned.

Mr. R.T. Parmessar (Suriname) said that action, not explanations, were needed.

The sitting rose at 11:20.

Second sitting

Sunday, 19 April 2026
(Morning)

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

Item 13 of the agenda

ELECTION OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL (CL/217/13-Inf.1-rev)

The President explained the process for electing the Secretary General, which had begun approximately one year earlier. The vacancy had been opened in April 2025, with applications closing in August 2025. From more than 50 applicants, the President and Vice-President had drawn up an initial shortlist of 20 candidates, before the Executive Committee had further narrowed it to five. Following background checks, verification of credentials and assessment of language proficiency, the Executive Committee had conducted interviews with the shortlisted candidates in Istanbul (Türkiye). The five shortlisted candidates were as follows: Ms. Dionysia-Theodora Avgerinopoulou (Greece), Ms. Anda Filip (Romania), Mr. Sangsoo Jun (Republic of Korea), Ms. Fatou Dieng Thiam (Senegal) and Ms. Cecilia Widegren (Sweden). However, Mr. Sangsoo Jun had experienced a sudden health emergency during his interview and was no longer able to participate. The shortlist had therefore been reduced to the remaining four candidates, whose names were now formally submitted to the Governing Council for election. The Executive Committee wished to confirm that confidentiality, transparency and equal opportunities had been maintained throughout the process.

In accordance with Rule 29.2 of the Governing Council, the results of the election should be ascertained by two tellers appointed by the Council and drawn from the geopolitical groups not represented among the candidates. The two tellers nominated for the current election were Ms. F. Sauda (Maldives) representing the Asia-Pacific Group and Mr. M. Nadir (Guyana) representing the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC). She took it that the Council wished to approve the nominations.

It was so decided.

Candidates would also have the opportunity to appoint an observer to be in the room for the vote count. She invited each of the four candidates to deliver a short statement in alphabetical order, with no questions permitted, as questioning had already taken place in various other sessions during the Assembly.

Ms. D.-T. Avgerinopoulou (Greece) said that, at a time of global uncertainty, the IPU's core values, such as parliamentary diplomacy, cooperation, inclusivity, solidarity and respect, were more important than ever, as was the role of parliamentarians. With the election of the new Secretary General, which was critical to the future direction and effectiveness of the IPU, the Organization must rise to its historic responsibility in defending democracy, human rights and peace.

The IPU must remain strong, relevant, responsive and representative to all its Members. To that end, a renewed and modernized Organization was needed, one positioned at the centre of global governance and capable of enhancing the visibility and influence of parliamentary work. In its work, the IPU must enhance the voice of parliamentarians, invest in parliamentary diplomacy and preventative action, and be decisive in de-escalating tensions and promoting peaceful resolution of disputes. It must expand capacity-building, promote greater use of digital tools, and ensure continued leadership on climate action, human rights, gender equality and youth participation. Equally, it must stand in solidarity with developing countries, small island developing States and vulnerable populations, with a view to advancing well-being and prosperity for all.

The role of the Secretary General was to translate the above vision into action, ensuring the Organization was fit for purpose and fully equipped to deliver on its objectives. Having already served within the IPU, including as Vice-President of the Executive Committee, as an elected Member of Parliament and as an administrator in other international organizations, the leadership she offered combined stability and continuity with expert knowledge. She pledged to strengthen the impact of the

Organization and raise its visibility, while upholding accountability, good governance, transparency and sound financial management. A strong commitment to inclusivity and closer alignment with Members' priorities was also needed. She concluded by committing to foster dialogue and unity among Members, promising to serve with dedication, efficiency and respect, thereby reinforcing the IPU's role as a pillar of international parliamentary cooperation.

Ms. A. Filip (Romania) said that the IPU Secretary General should be a non-partisan steward with a realistic vision, a strong understanding of the pressures facing parliaments, deep institutional knowledge and the skills to build consensus across regions and political divides. Having served in the role of Permanent Observer of the IPU to the UN and Director of the Division of Member Parliaments and External Relations, she was well-placed to fill the role, having already delivered results with neutrality and institutional acumen.

Her vision was for an IPU that was as good as it could be and fully relevant at a time when multilateralism was under strain. She outlined three main priorities: (1) strengthening the role of parliaments and parliamentarians as peacebuilders by placing greater attention on prevention and early warning; (2) increasing the measurable impact of the IPU on global challenges through practical guidance and peer learning; and (3) promoting more inclusive societies by advancing gender parity, combating violence against women, increasing youth participation, and ensuring the safety and freedom of parliamentarians. She stressed the importance of strengthening delivery, rather than simply making plans, which would require prioritization and partnerships that were fit for purpose. Accelerating the modernization of the IPU, and of parliaments through the Centre for Innovation in Parliament, was also important to ensure that technology enhanced outreach, inclusion and effectiveness.

In conclusion, she expressed her readiness to serve, calling for steady and accountable leadership focused on delivery, respectful of the Organization's mandate and rules, and deeply attentive to Members' needs. It was vital to defend the IPU's foundational values and to build a global order founded on the rule of law and with a people-centred approach. The current period of crisis could become an opportunity if seized effectively.

Ms. F.D. Thiam (Senegal) said that the IPU must be the catalyst for stronger and more resilient democracies by promoting parliaments that were more proactive, inclusive, interconnected and accountable, and by advancing action in favour of peace, security, human rights and sustainable development. With 30 years of experience at the UN, working in the fields of peace and security, human rights and gender equality, she had led multicultural teams through very complex crises, negotiated solutions when dialogue seemed impossible and built strong and effective partnerships. Dialogue, collaboration and inclusivity – the latter extending beyond gender and youth to include marginalized groups, persons with disabilities and linguistic diversity, among other things – were essential to building a fairer world where no one was left behind.

As Secretary General, she would build an IPU that sought to listen, act and protect – one that strengthened parliamentary diplomacy, anticipated crises before they erupted, practised rather than merely talked about inclusivity, and embraced the digital revolution while safeguarding ethics and rights. Underscoring her neutrality and non-partisan approach, she pledged to lead with efficiency, accountability, responsiveness and strategic clarity while building trust and ensuring transparency. Members were invited to place their confidence in her to lead the IPU towards greater relevance, impact and transformation.

Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden) pledged to work alongside the Members, who formed the heart of the IPU, and use her extensive experience of parliamentarism in their service. In the face of growing instability, with conflicts and crises on the rise, parliamentarians were bearing increasing responsibilities, and the IPU should serve as a force to assist them. The Organization must be attractive to all parliamentarians and respond to their call for more action, impact and relevance. As Secretary General, she would strengthen the role of parliamentarians and ensure their voices were a priority, building trust through listening.

The new IPU Strategy 2027–2031 must be translated into concrete action and to do so Members must work together. Indeed, teamwork was essential to making anything grow and prosper. Her country, Sweden, was a strong example of a team player, consistently partnering with other countries, sharing tools and expertise, and acting as a humanitarian force, including in the Global South. It was that same foundation that she would bring to Members. In particular, it was her hope that, by drawing on the world-class mediation and negotiation skills of its parliamentarians, the IPU could work together to build on its remarkable legacy of eight Nobel Peace Prizes.

Lastly, she pointed to some of her past efforts to strengthen the IPU's financial foundation and to promote accountability, transparency and openness, urging Members to work together to unlock the Organization's full potential.

The Secretary General reminded delegates that, as previously announced, at the start of the first sitting, 142 Members were present, establishing a quorum of 72 Members. The quorum remained valid for the duration of the current Governing Council session.

He explained the voting procedure for the election of the IPU Secretary General, indicating that the vote would take place by secret ballot, as per the IPU Statutes and Rules. An absolute majority of the votes was required for election (50% plus one vote). If no candidate obtained the required majority in the first round, the candidate with the fewest votes would be eliminated and further rounds of voting would be held until one candidate secured the absolute majority required.

A vote was taken by secret ballot, with Ms. F. Sauda (Maldives) and Mr. M. Nadir (Guyana) acting as tellers.

Number of ballot papers: 321

Invalid ballots: 2

Number of valid ballots: 319

Required majority: 160

Number of votes obtained:

Ms. D.-T. Avgerinopoulou: 47

Ms. A. Filip: 229

Ms. F.D. Thiam: 14

Ms. C. Widegren: 29

Having obtained the required majority and the largest number of votes, Ms. A. Filip was elected to serve as Secretary General of the IPU for a four-year term, from July 2026 to June 2030.

Ms. A. Filip (Secretary General-elect) expressed profound gratitude for the confidence placed in her and pledged to serve with dedication. She underscored her commitment to listening, understanding and working closely with Members in the service of parliaments and citizens.

Reflecting on her campaign, she noted the valuable exchanges she had had with Members and was convinced that, together, they could further strengthen the IPU's relevance. She also paid tribute to the other candidates and thanked her many supporters within the IPU community and in her home country of Romania, including parliamentary leaders, government officials, former IPU Presidents and Secretaries General as well as Secretariat staff, acknowledging their inspiration, mentorship and dedication. She also conveyed her heartfelt gratitude to her family for their unwavering support.

It was a source of great pride to be the first woman and first Eastern European to hold the position of IPU Secretary General, and she looked forward to continued collaboration.

The President congratulated Ms. Filip on her election and wished her all the best in the job.

Item 9 of the agenda

IPU PRIORITY THEME FOR 2026 – RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (CL/217/9-P.1)

The President said that, during the 216th session of the Governing Council, it had been decided to dedicate the year 2026 to the priority theme of respect for human rights. Since then, several related activities had been organized, both at the global and national levels.

The Secretary General said that 2026 had been designated as a year for human rights at the IPU, marking several key milestones including the 50th anniversary of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, the 20th anniversary of the UN Human Rights Council and the 60th anniversary of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In that context, the priority theme aimed to strengthen parliamentary engagement, accountability and the implementation of international human rights commitments. A global campaign, *Bring human rights into focus: The future of rights is written in*

parliament, had been launched by the IPU to mobilize parliaments, promote institutional reforms, strengthen solidarity with at-risk parliamentarians and reinforce leadership in defending human rights. Planned activities for 2026 included exchanges on key human rights challenges, parliamentary human rights audits and a major global conference later in the year. Particular attention would be given to protecting the rights of parliamentarians.

He stressed that human rights could not advance on their own, with progress requiring commitment, leadership and sustained engagement. The year was an opportunity to both celebrate achievements and renew efforts to advance human rights worldwide.

The President said that the Executive Committee had reviewed the 2026 priority theme on human rights and expressed its support for the planned activities. It recommended scaling up on-site fact-finding missions and enhancing the transparency of reporting. The Executive Committee also called for wider domestic dissemination of the *Human Rights: Handbook for Parliamentarians*, and encouraged the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights to take a leading role in implementing the 2026 activities.

She took it that the Council wished to approve both the Secretary General's update and the Executive Committee's feedback.

It was so decided.

Item 10 of the agenda

FUTURE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MEETINGS

(CL/217/10-P.1)

The Secretary General presented the schedule of future IPU meetings for 2026 and 2027, all of which aligned with the IPU's current Strategic Objectives, adding that only those meetings which had secured funding had been included. Key events included the 153rd IPU Assembly in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania (5–9 October 2026) and the 154th Assembly in Geneva (17-21 May 2027), although alternative hosting offers for 2027 Assemblies would be considered. He also highlighted the need for host countries to come forward for 2028, as the Geneva International Conference Centre would be unavailable due to renovations.

The President said that the Executive Committee had reviewed the schedule of future IPU meetings and received an update on preparations for the 153rd Assembly in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, acknowledging the venue's technical suitability and the country's readiness to host. As a Tanzanian herself, she warmly invited Members to attend the Assembly, which would also mark the end of her term as IPU President. The Executive Committee had also taken note of ongoing efforts to secure hosts for Assemblies in 2027 and beyond, encouraging Member Parliaments to submit offers. She took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the schedule of future IPU meeting and the recommendations of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

The President reminded Members that registration for the Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians, to be held in Belgrade, Serbia (2–4 June 2026) was open but was currently low. Both men and women parliamentarians were encouraged to participate.

A video about the Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians was played.

Item 8 of the agenda

QUESTIONS RELATING TO IPU MEMBERSHIP AND OBSERVER STATUS

(continued)

(b) Situation of certain parliaments

The President said that the Executive Committee had reviewed the situation of certain parliaments and made a number of recommendations for consideration by the Governing Council.

The Secretary General reported on the political developments affecting certain parliaments, as part of the IPU's mandate to monitor any impediments to parliamentary functioning. His report would focus on exceptional cases, including non-functioning and transitional parliaments, as well as those operating under difficult political conditions. Such situations existed across all regions, with the Middle East and North Africa accounting for the highest number of non-functioning parliaments, and Sub-Saharan Africa having the largest share of transitional parliaments. While overall trends remained relatively stable, some countries had recently transitioned out of those categories, including Gabon and Chad. Issues related to the human rights of parliamentarians would be addressed separately in a dedicated report. He proceeded to address each relevant country in turn, starting with the first category, namely non-functioning parliaments.

Afghanistan had had no functioning parliament since the Taliban had taken over in 2021; however, the IPU continued to engage with the previously recognized Parliament as a non-voting observer, with no significant developments reported since the previous review. The Executive Committee had recommended maintaining the same position until the situation normalized.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General drew attention to **Bangladesh** as a case of positive progress. Following the 2024 protests that had led to the ousting of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and a period of transitional governance, elections had been held and a new Parliament had been convened in March 2026, with its governing structures now in place. A delegation from the newly elected Parliament was attending the Assembly. The Executive Committee welcomed those developments, recommending continued engagement and support, particularly given the large number of first-time parliamentarians, to help strengthen the newly elected Parliament's effective functioning.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that little progress had been observed in **Eritrea**, which had no functioning parliament and had seen no recent political developments. Efforts to engage the authorities had not yielded results, and there was little expectation of elections in the near future. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU continue to monitor the situation, including cases involving the human rights of disappeared parliamentarians, while seeking opportunities for constructive engagement.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that **Haiti**, which had had its membership rights suspended, had no functioning parliament at present, although recent efforts had been made to create conditions for parliamentary elections, with some positive developments observed in recent months. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU continue to closely monitor the situation and offer assistance where needed to support the holding of elections and the establishment of a new parliament.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that the Parliament of **Kuwait** had been dissolved in 2023, with the Emir set to exercise legislative powers until 2027 in conformity with the country's Constitution. The IPU had continued to engage with the relevant authorities, and Kuwait remained in good financial standing with the Organization. The Executive Committee recommended that the same approach be maintained, urging continued monitoring and looked forward to the return of a fully functioning parliament.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that, in **Myanmar**, the democratic process had been disrupted in 2021 following the military's deposition of the democratically elected Parliament. The IPU had continued to engage with the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, which it recognized as the legitimate representative body of the Myanmar people. Although elections had taken place in early 2026, they had not been widely recognized, including by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU continue its engagement with the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and monitor any further developments.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that **Sudan** currently had no functioning parliament following the dissolution of the 2019 Parliament. Efforts to organize new elections had been hindered by the outbreak of civil war in 2023. The IPU continued to monitor the situation and explore avenues for engagement with the Sudanese authorities to support a return to constitutional order. Recent contacts with Sudanese officials might provide opportunities for more constructive engagement in the future. The Executive Committee recommended that the situation continue to be monitored.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that the situation in the **Syrian Arab Republic** had seen some progress following the ousting of Bashar al-Assad and the emergence of new legislative institutions after years of conflict. The IPU had continued to engage with the relevant authorities but had encountered difficulties given the complexities of the post-conflict context. The Executive Committee recommended continued engagement, including support for the emerging institutions, with a view to helping restore constitutional order in the country.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General, moving to the second category of parliaments, namely transitional parliaments, drew attention to positive developments in **Gabon**, which had now graduated from said category and returned to full constitutional order with both parliamentary chambers established and an elected Head of State in place. The IPU had supported the transition and continued to assist the country to ensure that progress was sustained. Gabon was being presented as an example of good practice, with further engagement planned, including an upcoming meeting of speakers from transitional parliaments in West and Central Africa to share experiences.

Positive developments had also been observed in **Chad**, which had graduated from the category of transitional parliaments, having put in place a fully-fledged parliament in 2025. The IPU would continue to support the newly established Parliament.

The President congratulated Gabon and Chad on completing their transitions.

The Secretary General said that **Burkina Faso**, though it remained a transitional parliament, had also been functioning in many respects as a fully fledged parliament. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU continue to engage with the authorities, with the hope of accelerating the transition process towards a return to full constitutional order.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that significant progress had been made in **Guinea**, including through the holding of presidential elections, the adoption of a new constitution and the development of new organic laws supported by the IPU. Elections for the National Assembly were expected in

May 2026, followed by Senate elections, with the process potentially concluding later that year. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU continue engagement with the Guinean authorities to support the restoration of full democratic and constitutional order.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that, in 2023, the Parliament of **Guinea-Bissau** had been unconstitutionally dissolved by the country's President, but the IPU had continued to recognize it and engage with its elected members regardless. Since then, the situation had evolved with contentious elections having taken place that excluded major opposition leaders, followed by a military coup that had led to the installation of a military junta. A transitional legislative body had been established but was not widely recognized. Recent engagements with representatives of the 2023 Parliament indicated a willingness by the opposition to pursue dialogue with the junta. In that context, the Executive Committee recommended continued IPU engagement, including cooperation with regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union, to support dialogue and a return to normal constitutional order.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that **Mali** faced circumstances similar to Burkina Faso, with the Executive Committee recommending that the IPU continue to monitor the situation and engage with authorities with a view to a speedy return to constitutional rule.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that **Niger** had been previously suspended from the IPU due to the absence of a functioning parliament but had been recently readmitted after establishing a transitional parliament. It was now participating as a full IPU Member. The IPU had been supporting the transitional parliament through training and other assistance. The Executive Committee recommended continued monitoring and support.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that **South Sudan** had been in transition since 2016, with a functioning but challenged parliament. Planned elections had been repeatedly delayed. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU continue to monitor the situation and provide technical assistance, while strongly encouraging the holding of elections as soon as possible to enable the establishment of a fully functioning parliament.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General, turning to the third category of parliaments, namely those whose capacity to function was affected by the political situation in their countries, said that the Parliament of **Madagascar** remained in place and operational but continued to face challenges linked to political instability. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU continue to monitor the situation and be ready to respond should tensions escalate.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that, following political upheaval in **Nepal** in 2025, the IPU had previously advocated for planned elections to be held as soon as possible. Elections had since taken place and a Parliament was now in place and functioning, though under fragile conditions. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU engage with the new authorities to strengthen the capacities of the new Parliament.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that **Palestine** had been unable to hold elections for a long time due to ongoing obstacles. However, elections to the Palestinian National Council, which represented Palestine in the IPU, were now scheduled for November 2026 – a welcome development. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU continue to monitor the situation, and expressed hope that the elections would proceed as planned to ensure a fully functioning representative body.

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

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** remained under discussion within the Executive Committee; however, the Committee was not yet in a position to make a recommendation on its status at the IPU. He noted that a Parliament elected in May 2025 had recently been sworn in.

The President said that, in light of the Secretary General's remarks, there was no recommendation to approve in relation to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The Secretary General said that no notable developments had taken place in **Yemen**. The recognized Parliament remained active within the IPU but was not functioning on Yemeni territory due to the ongoing conflict, with elections not currently feasible. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU continue to monitor the situation and advise accordingly.

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

It was so decided.

Mr. M. Mottaki (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Secretary General's report on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had failed to mention an important development concerning the capture of President Maduro and his wife.

The President took note of the matter, adding that it would be addressed during the report of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

Mr. R.T. Parmessar (Suriname) said that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela should be fully represented within the IPU, either through the old Parliament or the newly elected one. Regarding Haiti, he expressed concern about the lack of a functioning parliament and urged stronger efforts by the Secretary General to help support progress there.

Mr. D. Diallo (Burkina Faso) wished to clarify that the dissolution of the Independent National Electoral Commission in Burkina Faso had not removed its functions but rather transferred them to the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Mobility, meaning preparations for elections were continuing under a different structure. In addition, the report overstated the extent to which the security and humanitarian situation had deteriorated in the country. Indeed, there had been several positive developments, with the number of internally displaced persons having decreased, some displaced families having returned to previously insecure areas, and the State taking over the humanitarian role previously fulfilled by non-governmental organizations that had now left the country. Legal and civic processes were also under way at appropriate national institutions. Overall, he urged a more balanced interpretation of developments in the country.

Mr. M.H. Djingarey (Niger) objected to the recent interference of the European Parliament in the internal affairs of Niger, particularly in relation to the former President Bazoum, and reaffirmed Niger's sovereignty.

The President, responding to Mr. Parmessar, said that the issue of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would be further examined by the Executive Committee in June 2026, with a possible decision by the Governing Council at the 153rd Assembly. Regarding Haiti, the IPU would continue monitoring the situation and consider how best to support progress through dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy. She acknowledged Burkina Faso's clarifications, indicating that the IPU was still monitoring the situation and would update the report where appropriate. Regarding Niger, she noted the concerns raised but indicated that they related to a matter in which the IPU was not involved.

Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, paid tribute to the outgoing Secretary General, expressing appreciation for his long service and legacy, particularly his efforts to support youth and women. She invited delegates to the Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians in Serbia in June 2026, encouraging participation by both men and women.

Mr. M.A.O. Ba Sarra (Yemen) said that his Parliament had been unable to function due to ongoing security challenges and restrictions preventing it from meeting. He expressed hope that the IPU's continued monitoring would help identify a path and timeline for the Parliament to resume its normal work.

The President said that, while no timeline could be set, the IPU would use parliamentary diplomacy to engage both parliamentary and government actors in an effort to help resolve the current impasse in Yemen.

Item 11 of the agenda

ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES

(CL/217/11-P.1)

(a) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

(CL/217/11(a)-R.1)

Ms. N. Odsuren (Mongolia), President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, said that, before moving to the draft decisions concerning the human rights of parliamentarians around the world, she wished to draw attention to two significant developments in the cases of parliamentarians from Eswatini and the United Republic of Tanzania.

In Eswatini, former parliamentarian Mr. Mthandeni Dube had been pardoned and released from detention following engagement by the IPU, with ongoing efforts under way to secure the release of another detainee, Mr. Mduduzi Bacede Mabuza. She expressed the Committee's appreciation for the personal engagement of the Secretary General in advancing those cases towards a satisfactory resolution. In the United Republic of Tanzania, a recent Committee mission had improved understanding of the investigation into the 2017 attack on Mr. Tundu Lissu and revealed the importance of hearing from him directly. As such, further efforts were being made in consultation with the Tanzanian authorities to gain access to him in detention.

Turning to the draft decisions, she gave the floor to Mr. Kamboni, Vice-President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, to present the decision pertaining to her own country, Mongolia.

Mr. H.K. Kamboni (Zambia), Vice-President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, presented the case pertaining to Mongolia.

Mongolia

The Committee had examined a new complaint regarding Ms. Bulgantuya Khurelbaatar, a Member of the State Great Hural of Mongolia. Ms. Bulgantuya Khurelbaatar had been accused of the unlawful seizure of power of the Parliament after chairing a parliamentary session aiming to dismiss the then Prime Minister. She had been the Deputy Speaker of Parliament and the acting Speaker at the time of the events. As a result of the criminal proceedings initiated against her, Ms. Bulgantuya Khurelbaatar had been stripped of her position as Deputy Speaker following a parliamentary decision.

After examining all the evidence and documentation at its disposal, the Committee had decided to declare the complaint admissible. It also expressed its deep concern about the disproportionate criminal proceedings initiated against Ms. Bulgantuya Khurelbaatar in violation of her parliamentary immunity. Lastly, the Committee took note of the Right to Recall draft bill currently under review by the Parliament and called on the parliamentary authorities to ensure that the draft bill was in line with the Mongolian Constitution and established international human rights standards.

The Governing Council adopted the draft decision relating to the case of Ms. Bulgantuya Khurelbaatar.

Ms. N. Odsuren (Mongolia), President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, continued the presentation of the cases.

Algeria

The Committee had examined the case of Mr. Abdelkader Djedei, a former Member of the Council of the Nation, and thanked the President of the Council for the information provided in his letter dated 14 April 2026. Since Mr. Djedei's in-absentia conviction for the legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression, he had found refuge in Spain but had recently faced an extradition request from the Algerian authorities. The Committee was pleased to report that Mr. Djedei had not been extradited.

Given the disproportionate conviction of Mr. Djedei and the intimidation he faced in Spain, and in light of the Committee's findings, the Committee called on the Algerian authorities to drop the proceedings against him, reconsider their position vis-à-vis his rights, and strengthen the protection of the right to freedom of expression for all members of the Council of the Nation.

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

Mr. M.A. Bouchouit (Algeria) said that the individual concerned had been sentenced for criminal offences, not for his parliamentary activity, and stressed the need to distinguish between the two.

The President said that the case against the individual concerned had begun when he had been a member of parliament, which was why the case was before the Committee. The case would be further reviewed as and when additional information became available.

Bangladesh

The Committee had examined six individual situations, including those of Mr. Saber Chowdhury, Honorary President of the IPU, and Mr. Fazle Chowdhury, former President of the Committee. It noted with interest the Bangladeshi delegation's statement that the newly established national authorities had, in those cases, been conducting accountability proceedings in accordance with due process of law. The Committee had also met with one of the complainants, which had helped in gathering updated information. The delegation's assurances of support and cooperation were welcomed, and it was hoped that, with a new Parliament now in place, the long-requested Committee mission to Bangladesh could take place soon.

Mr. M.N. Zamir (Bangladesh) rejected the allegations against the newly established national authorities, arguing that the individuals concerned had not been democratically elected in any meaningful sense due to boycotted or rigged elections in 2014, 2018 and 2024, and were, in fact, associated with a political system that systematically dismantled electoral integrity, suppressed opposition and committed human rights abuses, such as forced disappearance and murder. The current proceedings against them were lawful accountability measures rather than political persecution, with the individuals having access to legal representation and medical care, and some released on bail. The IPU must not mischaracterize the situation or allow human rights mechanisms to be used to protect those responsible for past abuses. He requested that his protest be included in the report.

The President took note of the reservations but indicated that the Committee remained competent to consider the cases in question, noting that it would hear from all sides.

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

Belarus

The Committee had been pursuing a resolution in the case of the disappearance in 1999 of Mr. Victor Gonchar in Belarus for half of its existence. It had accumulated ample evidence establishing the State's responsibility in the case, including by holding a hearing with an accomplice to Mr. Gonchar's enforced disappearance, yet Belarusian authorities had suspended the investigation and had stopped responding to queries.

The Committee welcomed the resumption of the trial before the Swiss courts to establish accountability in a historical universal jurisdiction process and offered its support to the Swiss judicial authorities to ensure that justice was done at last.

The Governing Council adopted the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Victor Gonchar.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Committee had examined the case of Mr. Jean-Marc Kabund, who had been sentenced to seven years in prison for exercising his legitimate right to freedom of expression. In February 2025, Mr. Kabund had been released before the end of his prison sentence after receiving a pardon. Since his release, Mr. Kabund had been able to freely express his political opinions and exercise his political rights.

The Committee therefore proposed to close his case, considering that a satisfactory solution has been found. It nevertheless called on the Congolese authorities to better protect the right to freedom of expression and opinion of Members of Parliament to ensure the non-recurrence of such cases.

The Governing Council adopted the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Jean-Marc Kabund.

Ecuador

The Committee had declared admissible a new case concerning Ms. Esther Cuesta Santana, who was subject to criminal proceedings allegedly arising directly from the exercise of her parliamentary mandate. The Committee had invited the National Assembly of Ecuador to provide the requested information and to engage in a constructive dialogue with a view to reaching a satisfactory resolution of the case.

The Governing Council adopted the draft decision relating to the case of Ms. Esther Cuesta Santana.

Gabon

The Committee proposed to close the case of Mr. Justin Ndoundangoye from Gabon, considering that a satisfactory solution had been found. After nearly three years in detention, he had been released, had run in the recent elections and had been elected as a national Senator. The Committee thanked the transitional authorities for their cooperation in resolving the case.

The Governing Council adopted the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Justin Ndoundangoye.

Kyrgyzstan

A year previously, the Council had adopted a decision in the case of Mr. Adakhan Madumarov, a parliamentarian who had been arbitrarily detained for six months and deprived of his mandate in an unfair trial over a matter that far exceeded the statute of limitations. The Committee deplored that Mr. Madumarov had not been allowed to take part in the November 2025 elections and called on the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan to carry out the necessary reforms to prevent such situations from recurring, including by ensuring that the principle of a free representational mandate was firmly protected in law.

The Governing Council adopted the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Adakhan Madumarov.

Madagascar

The Committee had examined the case of Mr. Fetra Razafitsimalona, a member of the National Assembly of Madagascar. In 2023, Mr. Razafitsimalona had been briefly detained for participating in an unauthorized demonstration and later given a one-year suspended prison sentence. Mr. Razafitsimalona had now resumed his political activities as a parliamentarian and had been elected Vice-President of the National Assembly. The parliamentary authorities of Madagascar had played an instrumental role in ensuring the protection of Mr. Razafitsimalona's parliamentary rights.

The Committee wished to thank the authorities for the diligence they had demonstrated in the case and had decided to close his case, considering that a satisfactory solution had been found.

The Governing Council adopted the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Fetra Razafitsimalona.

Nicaragua

Regarding the collective case in Nicaragua, the Committee remained deeply concerned by the fate of Mr. Brooklyn Rivera Bryan, who had been detained by State agents in September 2023. He was reported to suffer from serious health conditions requiring specialized care. The lack of official information on his whereabouts, health and legal status was highly alarming, and the Committee regretted the lack of response to its reiterated requests for information.

Regarding Ms. Nancy Henríquez James, the Committee had noted with satisfaction her release on health grounds. It remained concerned, however, about the loss of her parliamentary mandate and the conduct of the proceedings that had led to her conviction and eight-year sentence.

The Committee reiterated its call to the National Assembly of Nicaragua to facilitate, without delay, the pending visit of the Committee with a view to engaging in constructive dialogue and working towards a satisfactory resolution of both cases, in line with the State's international obligations.

The Governing Council adopted the draft decision relating to the cases of Mr. Brooklyn Rivera Bryan and Ms. Nancy Henríquez James.

Pakistan

The Committee thanked the delegation of Pakistan, in particular the Minister for Law and Justice, for the answers to its questions on the detention conditions of Mr. Imran Khan and other former parliamentarians from the PTI party. However, the Committee remained concerned by the numerous allegations in the case, which included ill treatment, arbitrary detention and multiple violations of due process. It looked forward to receiving a definitive answer to its long-standing request to carry out a mission in Pakistan, which it saw as an essential step to resolve the serious case.

The Governing Council adopted the draft decision relating to the cases of Mr. Imran Khan and others.

Palestine

The Committee had examined the cases of several former Palestinian parliamentarians, including Mr. Marwan Barghouti, Mr. Ahmed Sa'adat and several others who remained in detention in Israel. It deplored that Mr. Barghouti and Mr. Sa'adat, two emblematic figures of the Palestinian political landscape, continued to languish in Israeli prisons in the most inhumane and degrading conditions, on the basis of charges that had never been substantiated.

The Committee was also extremely concerned by the alarming number of Palestinians detained in Israel, including several former members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, who were being held in administrative detention, putting them at risk of arbitrary proceedings.

Lastly, the Committee was also deeply concerned about the adoption of the Death Penalty for Terrorists Law by the Knesset, which in and of itself was discriminatory as it targeted Palestinians only.

The Governing Council adopted the draft decision relating to the cases of Mr. Barghouti, Mr. Sa'adat and others.

Thailand

The Committee regretted that the Thai delegation had not been able to meet to discuss the case of 47 opposition parliamentarians in Thailand. Their party had been dissolved by the Constitutional Court for supporting an amendment to a Criminal Code provision which imposed excessively heavy prison sentences for the crime of lèse-majesté.

The Committee looked forward to receiving more information on the upcoming constitutional drafting process and encouraged the Thai parliamentary authorities to use the opportunity to bring its constitutional framework in line with its obligations under international human rights law.

The Committee was particularly concerned by another legal process which could lead to the suspension of 10 parliamentarians over their parliamentary work and possibly to the deprivation of the political rights of a total of 44 parliamentarians for life. Such a punishment would constitute an extremely serious violation, and the Committee urged the Thai Parliament to do everything to protect their rights.

Mr. N. In-Na (Thailand) clarified that the case concerning the 44 parliamentarians was under the jurisdiction of independent constitutional bodies, including the Constitutional Court. In line with the principle of the separation of powers between the legislative, executive and judicial branches, Parliament had no authority to intervene in those proceedings. The matter was a constitutional process and not the responsibility of Parliament.

The President took note of the reservation.

The Governing Council adopted the draft decision relating to the cases of Thai parliamentarians.

Türkiye

There were two draft decisions for Türkiye, relating to two collective cases examined by the Committee. A key development since the previous report was the on-site mission carried out by the Committee to Türkiye in December 2025. The mission allowed for substantive and constructive exchanges with a wide range of interlocutors, including a meeting with Mr. Selahattin Demirtaş in detention.

The Committee sincerely hoped that its ongoing dialogue with the Turkish authorities would help address its lingering concern about the impact of criminal proceedings and detention on the effective and legitimate exercise of political rights in Türkiye. It also welcomed the report adopted in February 2026 by the Turkish Parliament's Committee on National Solidarity, Sisterhood/Brotherhood and Democracy, trusting that its implementation would contribute to meaningful improvements in strengthening democratic governance and the protection of the rights of parliamentarians in Türkiye.

Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium) welcomed the Committee's efforts and its ongoing dialogue with the Turkish Parliament, noting the value of recent missions, particularly in light of the Assembly being held in Istanbul. While acknowledging progress, he expressed concern that no concrete results had yet been achieved in the numerous pending cases and urged continued engagement with a view to delivering tangible outcomes in the near future.

The Governing Council adopted the draft decision relating to the cases of Turkish parliamentarians.

Ukraine

The Committee thanked the Ukrainian delegation for the information provided and for the welcome extended to the Committee to visit Ukraine to seek a resolution to the case of Mr. Artem Dmytruk, a member of the Verkhovna Rada who had sought asylum in the United Kingdom due to mounting death threats.

The Committee fully appreciated that the ongoing armed conflict created exceptional challenges for the Ukrainian authorities. However, it was convinced that the Parliament of Ukraine was under a duty to make every reasonable effort to defend, protect and fulfil the rights of Mr. Dmytruk, including his right to an effective remedy for the public threats made against him. In addition, the Committee looked forward to the conclusion of the trial on accusations of bodily harm that had been raised by the authorities and himself, as soon as circumstances allowed it.

The Committee thanked the judicial authorities of the United Kingdom for the access provided to the IPU trial observer who had witnessed Mr. Dmytruk's extradition trial in London and took note with interest of her report on the trial. It looked forward to the possibility of travelling to Ukraine to meet with relevant stakeholders and gain a better understanding of the legal and factual circumstances raised in the case.

The Governing Council adopted the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Artem Dmytruk.

Zambia

The Committee proposed to close the case of Ms. Given Katuta Mwelwa, following a satisfactory resolution of the situation. Ms. Katuta Mwelwa had been temporarily suspended from Parliament, arrested on two occasions, and subjected to criminal proceedings. In December 2025, she had been acquitted of all charges. She was now free and had resumed her parliamentary duties.

The Governing Council adopted the draft decision relating to the case of Ms. Given Katuta Mwelwa.

Ms. N. Odsuren (Mongolia), President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, said that the above cases were only some of the many before the Committee. While decisions had not been submitted on the other cases at the present session, the Committee was continuing to examine them, closely monitoring the situation of 841 parliamentarians in 48 countries.

As the Committee marked its 50th anniversary, she called on parliamentarians to bring human rights into focus and mobilize a spirit of parliamentary solidarity in favour of those who were imprisoned, threatened or missing.

The sitting rose at 13:00.

Third sitting

Sunday, 19 April 2026
(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 14:30 with Dr. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania), President of the IPU, in the Chair.

Item 11 of the agenda

ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES (continued)

(a) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (continued) (CL/217/11(a)-R.1)

The Secretary General announced that five vacancies were to be filled on the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians: one each for the Arab Group, Asia-Pacific Group and Eurasia Group, and two for the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean. Members were reminded that candidates served in their individual capacity and that gender balance requirements meant that the five elected members must include two women and three men. As the only female candidate and sole nominee from the Eurasia Group, Ms. U. Shapak (Kazakhstan) would be automatically declared elected to the Eurasia Group seat.

The candidature of Ms. U. Shapak (Kazakhstan) was approved.

The Secretary General said that the remaining six candidates were all male, meaning that, to comply with gender requirements, only three additional vacancies could be filled at present. One seat would therefore remain vacant.

The President announced the following nominations for the remaining seats: Mr. M. Mottaki (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. S.A. Zafar (Pakistan), Mr. D. Caggiani (Uruguay), Mr. M. Mutlag (Iraq), Mr. C. Supphaiboonlerd (Thailand) and Mr. C.A. Rendón García (Mexico). The candidates were invited to address the Governing Council.

Mr. S.A. Zafar (Pakistan), speaking in a pre-recorded video message, introduced himself as a Senator of Pakistan, a practising Advocate of the Supreme Court and Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting. He outlined his commitment to constitutionalism, the rule of law and human rights, aligning himself with the vision of Pakistan's founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, on equality, dignity, non-discrimination and freedom of religion. With 40 years of experience in the field, he expressed hope that he could contribute meaningfully to the Committee if elected.

Mr. D. Caggiani (Uruguay) expressed his dedication to the protection and promotion of the human rights of parliamentarians, recognizing the Committee's global importance in that area. Highlighting Uruguay's strong democratic tradition and foreign policy commitment to international law, human rights and peaceful conflict resolution, he drew attention to the country's upcoming leadership roles in international and regional bodies, including the G77+, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), MERCOSUR Parliament and the UN Human Rights Council, as evidence of its active role in promoting democracy. In light of the guarantees afforded by his country's democratic system, he felt obliged to support parliamentarians facing difficulties worldwide by contributing to the Committee's work.

Mr. M. Mutlag (Iraq) introduced himself as a member of the Council of Representatives of Iraq, with a doctorate in political science and experience as a researcher in legal and political studies. He also highlighted his work as an activist on migrant issues and his engagement with UN initiatives on the protection of women and minorities. Safeguarding freedom of expression and opinion was, in his view, essential to effective parliamentary work.

Mr. C. Supphaiboonlerd (Thailand) said that parliamentarians, as representatives of the people, must be able to speak freely without fear of intimidation or violence, noting that their safety was fundamental to democracy. Yet, statistics showed a rise in reprisals against parliamentarians in recent years. He outlined his background as a human rights lawyer and former programme director with ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights, where he had worked on monitoring and advocating for parliamentarians at risk. If elected, he pledged to defend parliamentarians worldwide so that they never had to choose between public service and personal safety.

Mr. C.A. Rendón García (Mexico), speaking in a pre-recorded video message, highlighted his parliamentary experience and exposure to cases of discrimination and repression affecting individuals across different regions. Recognizing that democracy was in danger if parliamentarians were in danger, he expressed his readiness to contribute to the Committee's work with discretion and good judgment.

Mr. A. Golrou (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking on behalf of Mr. M. Mottaki, said that Mr. Mottaki had already served on the Committee in 2003, taking part in successful missions to Indonesia, Malaysia and the Maldives. He had also been the Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Minister from 2005 to 2010 and currently chaired the parliamentary committee on economic diplomacy. It was his hope to receive the full support of the Council.

Mr. R. Huizenga (IPU Secretariat) explained the voting procedure, indicating that the vote would be taken by show of hands.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

Number of votes obtained:

Mr. M. Mutlag: 59

Mr. M. Mottaki: 6

Mr. S.A. Zafar: 16

Mr. C. Supphaiboonlerd: 82

Mr. D. Caggiani: 69

Mr. C.A. Rendón García: 73

Having obtained the highest number of votes, Mr. C. Supphaiboonlerd, Mr. D. Caggiani and Mr. C.A. Rendón García were elected to the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

The President raised concerns that the current rules on geopolitical representation and gender balance were in conflict, resulting in some groups being underrepresented on the Committee. It was suggested that the implementation of the recently revised Rules be reviewed to address those inconsistencies and ensure fair representation.

(b) Forum of Women Parliamentarians (CL/217/11(b)-R.1)

Ms. F. Öncü (Türkiye), Second Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, reported on the 41st session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians held on 15 April 2026, with 307 participants, including 156 parliamentarians from 62 countries, among them 92 women and 64 men. Participants had reflected on the Forum's long-standing contribution to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, while also paying tribute to the outgoing IPU Secretary General for his strong support of those goals.

The Forum had reviewed, through a gender perspective, the two draft resolutions up for adoption at the current Assembly. On the draft resolution entitled *The role of parliaments in establishing robust post-conflict management mechanisms and restoring a just and lasting peace*, it urged parliaments to ensure women's full and meaningful participation in post-conflict processes, improve access to justice, ensure accountability and provide comprehensive support to survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. On the draft resolution entitled *Building a fair and sustainable global economy: The role of parliaments in combating protectionism, reducing tariffs and preventing corporate tax avoidance*, the Forum had noted that current trade and taxation systems were deepening gender inequalities, and identified concrete actions to bring about change. Gender-sensitive amendments had been successfully incorporated into both resolutions.

The Forum had also held a panel discussion entitled *Conflicts on the rise, women's and girls' rights on the decline*, during which it had addressed the disproportionate impact of conflicts on women and girls. The discussions had reaffirmed that women must play a full, equal and meaningful role in peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Women were not only victims of conflict but leaders, peacebuilders and agents of change, and they must be recognized and fully supported as such.

Lastly, the candidates for the position of IPU Secretary General had presented their visions for advancing gender equality, and two new members, namely Ms. D. Wangmo (Bhutan) and Ms. Y.A. Asseke (Côte d'Ivoire), had been elected to the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians.

The report was approved.

The President took it that the Council wished to approve the election of Ms. Asseke and Ms. Wangmo to the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians.

It was so decided.

(c) Forum of Young Parliamentarians
(CL/217/11(c)-R.1)

Ms. N. Abu Ghosh (Jordan), President of the Bureau of Young Parliamentarians, reported on the meeting of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians held on 16 April 2026, which had brought together 61 young parliamentarians from 41 countries, 34% of whom were women. She expressed concern that only about 13% of delegates at the Assembly were young parliamentarians and urged all delegations to include at least one parliamentarian under 40 at future Assemblies.

The Forum had reviewed the IPU report, *Youth participation in national parliaments: 2025*, which had revealed worrying trends: young parliamentarians under 30 remained stuck at 2.8% of parliamentarians globally while the participation of young women in politics had declined. More resolute action was needed to improve youth participation. Good practices by parliaments around the world included lowering the age of eligibility to stand in elections, introducing youth quotas, considering term limits, and increasing support for young people and women within political parties.

The Forum had also discussed the severe impact of conflicts on young people, particularly in terms of disruption to education, employment and mental well-being. Young people must play an active role in building and sustaining peace. Having met with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the Bureau wished to reaffirm the role of young parliamentarians in supporting refugees, not only as victims of conflict but valuable contributors to society.

The Forum had welcomed the inclusion of youth-related amendments in the Assembly resolutions and had appointed Mr. Abderamane Koko (Chad) as youth rapporteur for the upcoming resolution entitled *Inclusive social development for all: Parliamentary strategies to promote the rights and empowerment of people living with disabilities*. It had also engaged in dialogue with the candidates for the position of IPU Secretary General, while paying tribute to the outgoing Secretary General for his 30 years of support for young parliamentarians. The next Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians was set to take place in Uzbekistan from 4–6 September 2026.

The report was approved.

(d) Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine
(CL/217/11(d)-R.1)

Mr. A. Farrugia (Malta), member of the Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine, said that, since its establishment in March 2022, the Task Force had worked to encourage political dialogue, peacebuilding and humanitarian action in response to the war in Ukraine. While it remained deeply concerned by the ongoing hostilities, which continued to cause loss of life and damage to infrastructure, it had welcomed recent steps taken to negotiate solutions, including trilateral meetings in Abu Dhabi and Geneva involving Ukraine, the Russian Federation and the United States of America, as well as progress on humanitarian issues, in particular recent prison exchanges. It was, however, concerning that negotiations had recently slowed.

Discussions had continued on the issue of children separated from their families, following the submissions of additional cases by the Ukrainian delegation. The Task Force had welcomed the constructive tone of those exchanges and reaffirmed its commitment to supporting information sharing and family reunification. The issue of prisoners had also been discussed, with both parties signalling their readiness to engage further.

Lastly, members explored the possibility of expanding discussions to broader humanitarian concerns, including food security and the protection of cultural heritage. In that regard, he recalled the important role played by Türkiye in facilitating the Black Sea Grain Initiative in 2022. The Task Force had agreed to continue its work between Assemblies and to remain in close contact with both delegations.

The report was approved.

(e) Committee on Middle East Questions
(CL/217/11(e)-P.1 and CL/217/11(e)-R.1)

Mr. H.-J. Talsma (Netherlands), outgoing President of the Committee on Middle East Questions, said that, in its meetings, the Committee had focused on the continuing crises across the Middle East, particularly the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and the occupied Palestinian territories. Members had reaffirmed their conviction that lasting peace in the region depended on a just resolution of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict based on the two-State solution.

Referring to a briefing by the Diakonia International Humanitarian Law Centre, he stressed the responsibility of all States to uphold international humanitarian law and recalled the July 2024 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which affirmed that the prolonged occupation of Palestinian territories violated the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. Parliaments had a responsibility to uphold that right, including by holding governments to account through oversight of budgets, arms transfers and treaty ratification, while defending the human rights of both Israelis and Palestinians and opposing all forms of discrimination, including anti-Semitism.

The Committee had also agreed on amendments to its Rules, which were now tabled before the Governing Council for approval. The new Rules would strengthen the Committee's work, which would henceforth have a dual focus: maintaining the Israeli–Palestinian conflict as its standing priority while addressing one additional regional crisis at each Assembly. The Committee was committed to enhancing its effectiveness through field missions, closer cooperation with other IPU bodies and the UN, and greater engagement with civil society and parliamentarians from the region. As part of its ongoing work, the Committee would examine settlements in the West Bank through the lens of international humanitarian law and planned to undertake a field mission to assess developments on the ground. From now until the 153rd Assembly, the Committee would focus on the role of parliamentary and inter-parliamentary mediation in implementing UN resolutions in close coordination with the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs.

Ms. A. Erdoğan (Türkiye), incoming President of the Committee on Middle East Questions, stressed that all States had a duty under the Geneva Conventions to ensure respect for international humanitarian law. In that regard, it was vital to resist the acquisition of territory by force and prolonged occupation. The situation in the Palestinian territories was a broader test of the international rules designed to protect humanity. She called on parliaments to support the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) so that Palestinian children could access education, food and healthcare, thereby preserving hope for peace in the region.

The Committee had raised concerns over legislation adopted in the Knesset establishing a death penalty applied on discriminatory grounds. The international community must defend, without exception, the equal protection of every human being before the law. Peace and justice could only be secured through true respect of the law.

The task of parliamentarians was not to observe but to act. The Committee would continue to stand firmly on the side of the rule of law, human dignity and the protection of future generations.

The report and the revised Rules and Practices of the Committee on Middle East Questions were approved.

The President said that two vacancies were to be filled on the Committee but would remain open since no candidatures had been received. As part of the revised Rules and Practices, the Committee should be composed of one woman and one man from each geopolitical group. Based on the current composition, the said vacancies should ideally be filled by a man or woman from the Eurasia Group, the African Group, the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean or the Asia-Pacific Group. The transition towards full compliance with the new Rules would continue as and when further vacancies arose.

(f) Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law
(CL/217/11(f)-R.1)

Mr. A. Farrugia (Malta), President of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, said that the Committee had examined a range of issues relating to international humanitarian law, disarmament and refugee protection during its session. Particular attention had been given to the worsening humanitarian situation in the Middle East, particularly in Lebanon. Members had expressed deep concern over the escalation of hostilities since March 2026, which had compounded years of crisis, causing widespread displacement, civilian casualties and severe damage to infrastructure and essential services, disproportionately affecting women, children and the elderly. Hundreds of thousands of people had been internally displaced. The Committee called for an urgent de-escalation of violence, greater respect for international humanitarian law by all parties and stronger parliamentary action to protect displaced persons and civilians. More must be done to respect and ensure respect for international law.

The Committee had also discussed the promotion of respect for international humanitarian law as a pathway to peace and refugee protection. In that regard, it had urged two key actions: (1) to build on the outcome declaration of the 151st IPU Assembly in Geneva, *Upholding humanitarian norms and supporting humanitarian action in times of crisis*, by taking concrete measures to promote and ensure respect for international humanitarian law, and (2) to mark the 75th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention, with a view to advancing its universalization and implementation.

He paid tribute to the outgoing IPU Secretary General for his long-standing support for the Committee's work, particularly his commitment to vulnerable populations and efforts to end statelessness.

The report was approved.

The President said that the Council was invited to elect four members to the Committee to replace departing members, namely one for the African Group, one for the Asia-Pacific Group and two for the Eurasia Group. The following nominations had been received: Ms. C. Mzumara (Malawi), Mr. A.A. Bagherzadeh (Islamic Republic of Iran) and Ms. I. Svyatenko (Russian Federation), leaving one vacancy for the Eurasia Group.

The nominations were approved.

(g) Gender Partnership Group
(CL/217/11(g)-R.1)

Ms. N.B.K. Mutti (Zambia), member of the Gender Partnership Group, said that the role of the Group, which was composed of two men and two women members of the Executive Committee, was to promote gender equality within the IPU and national parliaments, while ensuring a safe and respectful environment for all participants. It had just welcomed two new members, namely Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium) and herself, while Ms. S. Mikayilova (Azerbaijan) had been elected as its new Chair.

The Group expressed concern that women represented only 36.1% of delegates at the Assembly in Istanbul, marking a decline compared to the previous three Assemblies. It had also observed an increase in all-male delegations from 9 to 10 and a decrease in gender-balanced delegations, with only 37 out of 133 meeting the standard. Stressing that gender parity remained a core objective of the IPU, the Group called for stronger efforts in that regard, including greater engagement within the geopolitical groups.

The Group welcomed ongoing efforts to strengthen awareness of the IPU's *Policy to prevent and address harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and other IPU events*, noting positively that more people were coming forward to report incidents. It emphasized the importance of continued action and monitoring to ensure that the IPU remained a safe and respectful space for all.

Discussions had also covered women's political participation in national parliaments, including a fruitful dialogue with the delegation of Samoa. While acknowledging that Samoa had made progress, for instance, through reserved parliamentary seats for women and the election of the country's first woman Prime Minister in 2021, the delegation highlighted continuing barriers to women's participation in the country. Those included cultural norms suggesting women did not belong in politics and restrictions linked to the Matai system under which only family chiefs could stand in elections despite relatively few women holding such titles. The Samoan delegation had outlined its

efforts to encourage more women family chiefs to run for parliament, shift public perceptions and engage male parliamentarians as gender champions. The Group pledged to support the Parliament of Samoa ahead of the 2030 elections.

The report was approved.

(h) Committee on Health
(CL/217/11(h)-R.1)

Ms. L. Clifford Lee (Ireland), member of the Committee on Health, said that the Committee had met on 15 April 2026. At a time when global health challenges were intensifying, a clear message had emerged from the meeting that health was not merely a policy issue but a human rights issue that remained unevenly realized across societies. Members had shared national experiences, highlighting both progress and persistent gaps, particularly in relation to health equity, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and the needs of adolescents, who were often overlooked in policymaking. The discussions had underscored the importance of political will in turning commitments into concrete action.

The Committee had received a briefing on the work of the Lancet Commission on 21st Century Global Health Threats, which had highlighted the growing complexity, interconnectedness and fragility of the global health landscape, including threats such as pandemics, climate-related health risks and antimicrobial resistance. Members had considered whether parliaments were adequately prepared for those challenges, concluding that, while preparedness remained insufficient, it could be strengthened.

In an exchange with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Committee had examined the ongoing negotiations on the WHO Pandemic Agreement, noting that the process was not only technical but also political. Members had highlighted the decisive role of parliaments in that context in combating misinformation, fostering informed public debate and ensuring that international commitments were translated into national action.

Attention had then turned to future challenges, with concerns expressed over declining international health funding, particularly for HIV programmes, and the need for stronger parliamentary oversight to ensure preparedness and long-term resilience. Additional topics of discussion included the spread of new tobacco and vaping products and the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance affecting both humans and animals. Members had deemed multilateral cooperation essential in responding to global health challenges and noted the upcoming Global Parliamentary Forum at the World Health Assembly as a critical opportunity for parliamentarians to engage directly with global health priorities, exchange expertise and strengthen collective responses.

Lastly, the Committee had participated in other events at the 152nd IPU Assembly, including a high-level symposium on accelerating action for the health of women, children and adolescents in times of crisis, convened by the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), as well as a WHO workshop on sustainable health financing and health taxes. During a visit to a refugee centre, members had witnessed first-hand the importance of mental health support, basic services and community outreach in helping displaced individuals and their families rebuild their lives.

The report was approved.

Dr. T. A. Ghebreyesus (Director-General of the WHO), addressing the Council in a pre-recorded video message, said that, at a time of profound global challenges, multilateral cooperation and parliamentary leadership were essential for peace, equity, development and health. Parliamentarians played a critical role in translating global commitments, including the WHO Pandemic Agreement and on sustainable health financing, into national action.

The WHO and the IPU were working together to strengthen the link between global health governance and national parliaments. In that context, a dedicated space for parliamentarians had been created within the World Health Assembly in the form of the Global Parliamentary Forum, to be held on 20 May 2026 in Geneva. Parliamentarians were encouraged to attend and to take an active role in the Forum.

The President said that the Committee on Health consisted of 15 members elected by the Governing Council for a term of four years, serving in their individual capacities on the basis of their expertise, interest and availability to participate in all sessions. Under the Committee's rules, no more than eight members could be of the same sex, while broad geopolitical representation was also required. In view of the current composition, applications from men and from underrepresented geopolitical groups, particularly the Arab Group, had been encouraged. One vacancy on the Committee was to be filled, with two candidatures received, namely from Mr. A. Hatem (Egypt) and Mr. A.W.W. Chishti (Pakistan). Each candidate was invited to address the Council.

Mr. A. Hatem (Egypt) introduced himself as a professor of pulmonary medicine at Cairo University and a practising chest physician, with over 40 years of experience in every aspect of healthcare, including policymaking, education and administration. He highlighted his previous roles as Director-General of Cairo University Hospitals, former Minister of Health and Populations of Egypt, former Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Universities, and Chair of the Egyptian Parliament's health committee.

He outlined recent health reforms in Egypt, including the implementation of universal health coverage and the establishment of regulatory bodies, as well as achievements in disease eradication and control, notably regarding smallpox, polio, hepatitis C, malaria, trachoma and tuberculosis.

If elected to the Committee on Health, he would promote the sharing of lessons learned among members and strengthen cooperation with organizations such as the WHO and UNDP. His focus would be on advancing universal health coverage, establishing strong regulatory bodies for medicines and medical equipment, and addressing brain drain of healthcare workers.

Mr. A.A. Niazi Khan (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of Mr. A.W.W. Chishti said that Mr. Chishti was a public health expert whose personal initiatives had supported a network of free healthcare facilities for vulnerable and disadvantaged communities in Pakistan, including specialized support for children with disabilities. As Chair of the Senate Standing Committee on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, he was also actively engaged in improving healthcare services in areas affected by terrorism.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

Number of votes obtained:

Mr. A. Hatem: 77

Mr. A.W.W. Chishti: 23

Having obtained the highest number of votes, Mr. A. Hatem (Egypt) was elected to the Committee on Health.

(i) High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism
(CL/217/11(i)-R.1)

Ms. M. Guerra Castillo (Mexico), Chair of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, presented the outcomes of the 20th meeting of the Group, held on 15 April 2026. Against the backdrop of increasing global instability and conflict, where terrorism and violent extremism continued to be a real concern, the Group had examined the risks associated with post-conflict situations, emphasizing that the end of conflict did not necessarily mean the end of violence. Weak institutions, inequality and lack of opportunities created conditions for extremist groups to expand, while inclusive policies, stronger institutions and development opportunities helped prevent their resurgence. The Group had also discussed online radicalization, highlighting the role of digital technologies in spreading extremist ideologies, particularly among young people.

A key outcome of the meeting was the presentation of a proposed definition of terrorism, developed at the request of members following discussions at the 145th IPU Assembly in Kigali. While not legally binding, the proposed definition was an important starting point grounded in international law and human rights, aimed at addressing legal uncertainty in parliamentary work. Members had welcomed the document and called for its prompt publication.

The situation in the Sahel remained a major priority for the Group. Members had discussed the combined challenges of insecurity, terrorism, poverty, climate change and fragile institutions in the region, and highlighted efforts to strengthen partnerships and mobilize resources for development. Particular attention had been given to the Sudano-Sahelian Initiative, which promoted an integrated approach linking environmental protection, sustainable development and security to strengthen resilience and livelihoods in the region. Members had also been informed of plans for a parliamentary visit to the Sahel in May 2026.

Overall, countering terrorism required not only security measures but a human-centred approach addressing its root causes. She concluded by paying tribute to the outgoing Secretary General for having launched the Group in 2018 and for his commitment to supporting victims of terrorism.

The report was approved.

The President said that the Council was invited to elect four members to the HLAG to fill vacancies across three geopolitical groups: one for the African Group, two for the Eurasia Group, and one for the Twelve Plus Group. No candidature had been received for the African Group. For the other positions, the candidates nominated were Mr. T.T. Nabizoda (Tajikistan) and Mr. R. Fogiel (Poland) for the Eurasia and Twelve Plus Groups respectively.

The nominations were approved.

(j) Working Group on Science and Technology
(CL/217/11(j)-R.1)

Ms. M. Cederfelt (Sweden), Chair of the Working Group on Science and Technology, said that the Group's discussions had reflected the accelerating pace of technological change and raised a central question for parliaments: whether they were sufficiently equipped to keep up with developments that were increasingly shaping societies. Members had reviewed how parliaments were engaging with science and technology. While approaches differed, there was a shared effort to better integrate scientific evidence into policymaking and legislation, including through advisory bodies, expert hearings, specialized committees and partnerships with academia. However, the Group had also identified common challenges, including the spread of misinformation, persistent digital exclusion and the concentration of technological power in the hands of a few actors.

The Group underlined the growing importance of science diplomacy as a means of supporting dialogue in a context of geopolitical tension, stressing that science could serve as a shared language to address global challenges such as climate change and technological disruption. Members had discussed artificial intelligence, highlighting both its opportunities and risks, particularly for democratic processes, accountability and security. They also considered the implications of quantum computing, especially in relation to cybersecurity and encryption.

The Group's core message was that governance must keep pace with innovation by becoming more anticipatory and proactive, rather than reactive. Parliamentarians played a key role in driving that shift. In that context, parliaments must have access to expert advice, so as to pass adequate legislation, while also strengthening their oversight functions.

A major element of the Group's work was the development of an annex on artificial intelligence ethics to the IPU Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology. The draft annex, currently being developed for possible adoption at the 153rd IPU Assembly in October 2026, was based on key principles such as human rights, transparency, accountability and inclusivity. Members stressed that artificial intelligence must be governed by robust ethical and legal frameworks to ensure it benefited, rather than harmed, societies. Given the cross-border nature of artificial intelligence, the Group emphasized the need for international coordination and highlighted the role of the IPU as a platform for dialogue and exchange of best practices.

Lastly, the Group had agreed on its workplan for 2026 and confirmed the renewal of its leadership, with both the Chair and Vice-Chair continuing in their roles.

The report was approved.

The President said that the Council was called upon to elect three members to the Group: two vacancies for the Eurasia Group and one vacancy for the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean. No candidate had been received for the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, while the Eurasia Group had nominated Ms. D. Saidi (Tajikistan).

The nomination was approved.

(k) Group of Facilitators for Cyprus
(CL/217/11(k)-R.1)

Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland), representing the Group of Facilitators for Cyprus, said that the Group had not held a session during the Assembly due to upcoming parliamentary elections in Cyprus and the country's commitments linked to its Presidency of the Council of the European Union, which had prevented the full Cyprus delegation to the IPU from attending. That said, the Facilitators had met to continue discussions on the Group's priorities, which would be presented to the participants at the next session of the Group in October 2026. The Facilitators had agreed to seek a meeting with the Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on Cyprus to explore how parliamentary diplomacy

could support the UN Mission of Good Offices. The Group had discussed how to ensure continuity of its work between Assemblies and briefed the Executive Committee on its activities. He recalled that the Cyprus problem had remained unresolved since 1974 and expressed hope for progress towards a sustainable peace.

Item 12 of the agenda

REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED MEETINGS

(CL/217/12-R.1)

The President said that several brief reports would now be delivered on meetings approved by the Council at previous sessions.

Ms. H.B.H. Al-Sulaiti (Qatar) said that the Parliamentary Forum at the Second World Summit for Social Development had been held on 4 November 2025 in Doha, Qatar on the theme, *Investing in people and institutions: The role of parliamentarians in social development*. The Forum had provided a platform for parliamentarians to exchange views on how parliamentary engagement could drive sustainable development and social justice. During the discussions, the Speaker of the Shura Council of Qatar had outlined the legislative tools used in his country to enhance youth and women's participation through a human-centred approach, while the Secretary General of the IPU had commended the Shura Council's efforts to strengthen parliamentary democracy and cooperation with the IPU.

The Forum had featured contributions from a range of international participants, including members of the European Parliament and experts from the UN Development Programme, with discussions covering issues such as reducing inequality, promoting equal opportunities, strengthening education for marginalized groups, combating unemployment and creating decent jobs for young people as essential components of sustainable development. Participants had stressed the importance of parliamentary cooperation and exchange of experiences in advancing those objectives.

Discussions had further noted the humanitarian role of parliaments in supporting populations affected by conflict, particularly the Palestinian people, stressing that investment in people and institutions was not optional but essential to ensuring social stability and cohesion. Parliaments had a responsibility not only to legislate but also to use their resources wisely, including by prioritizing sustainable development programmes.

Support had been expressed for the Tashkent Declaration, which had called for investment in people and institutions in support of social justice, including for women, young people and other vulnerable groups. Lastly, the Doha Policy Declaration had been adopted, which reflected the outcomes of the Summit and would serve as a benchmark for future parliamentary dialogue and action on sustainable development.

Mr. C. Cajado Sampaio (Brazil) said that, to accelerate parliamentary action on climate change, the IPU and the Parliament of Brazil had co-organized a Parliamentary Meeting at the 30th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP30), held on 14 November 2025 in Belém, Brazil.

The meeting had brought together nearly 150 participants from around 30 countries who had recognized the urgency of addressing the climate crisis. Participants had reaffirmed the role of parliaments in shaping, implementing and overseeing climate action nationally and globally, including under the Paris Agreement, and highlighted the importance of continued IPU engagement in the COP process, both at the Conference itself but also in the preparatory and follow-up processes.

During the discussions, parliamentarians had described climate change as an existential threat, with impacts on food, water and energy security, public health and economic stability. They had also focused on climate finance, highlighting major funding gaps for developing countries and calling for increased financial support, technology transfer and capacity-building, particularly for vulnerable countries, such as small island developing States.

The meeting had concluded with the adoption of an outcome document that highlighted the need to bridge the climate finance gap, accelerate the transition to renewable energy, reduce emissions, including methane, and support a just transition away from fossil fuels. It had further called on parliaments to strengthen legislation, improve oversight of climate commitments, enhance transparency in climate-related budgeting and increase public engagement in climate decision-making. Inclusive climate action was also stressed, in light of the disproportionate impacts of the climate crisis on women, youth, indigenous peoples and other vulnerable groups. Overall, the

document was closely aligned with the main outcomes of COP30, including with the indicators for the global goal on adaptation, commitments to triple adaptation finance and plans to strengthen nationally determined contributions. He concluded by encouraging IPU Member Parliaments to implement the roadmap set out in the outcome document in the lead-up to the next parliamentary meeting at COP31.

Ms. M. Cederfelt (Sweden) presented the outcomes of the Conference *on The Role of Parliament in Shaping the Future of Responsible Artificial Intelligence*, held from 28 to 30 November 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, and its main outcome document, the Kuala Lumpur Declaration. The Conference, attended by over 200 parliamentarians from 65 countries, had built on the 2024 IPU resolution entitled *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*.

The Declaration affirmed that decisions on artificial intelligence were political choices made by parliaments. It stressed both ethical and human rights considerations, and emphasized that the goal was not to halt technological development, but to ensure artificial intelligence was governed responsibly and used in the public interest. It set out 13 recommendations for parliaments, covering legislation, oversight, organization of work and inter-parliamentary cooperation, and established a follow-up mechanism, requesting parliaments to provide progress updates by 1 June 2026. Those updates would then be compiled into an IPU status report to be published in August 2026.

Parliamentarians were encouraged to use the Declaration as a practical guide for strengthening national governance on artificial intelligence, noting that artificial intelligence was a fast-moving issue affecting all policy areas and requiring urgent parliamentary attention.

A video about the 2026 IPU Hearing at the UN was played.

Mr. G. Stojović (Montenegro), recognizing the urgency of climate change, said that the Parliament of Montenegro had co-organized with the IPU a Regional Seminar for Parliamentarians of the Western Balkans on climate change, held on 23 and 24 February 2026 in Podgorica, Montenegro. The event had brought together parliamentarians from across the region, as well as representatives of the European Parliament, governments, academia and international organizations, and served as a platform for dialogue and action. Participants had also undertaken a field visit to Lake Skadar to observe efforts to protect the region's biodiversity.

Scientific evidence presented at the seminar confirmed that the Western Balkans was among the fastest-warming regions globally, with rising temperatures, reduced rainfall and more frequent extreme weather events already affecting livelihoods, public health and economic productivity. The discussions had highlighted the green transition as both a necessity and a strategic opportunity, with potential to support sustainable growth, job creation and energy independence, particularly through increased investment in renewable energy. Alignment of national policies with the climate and energy framework of the European Union had been widely recognized as important for long-term sustainable development.

The seminar had also addressed challenges, including public scepticism, misinformation and concerns about the economic costs of climate policies. Participants had stressed the importance of clear, evidence-based climate communication linked to citizens' everyday priorities, such as jobs, health and economic security.

A strong call had been made for enhanced regional cooperation, noting that climate change transcended national borders. Participants had emphasized the importance of strengthening inter-parliamentary collaboration, including through the IPU, and of supporting European Union accession processes. Continued engagement through regional seminars was seen as an important avenue for enhancing peer learning and sharing of best practices.

The seminar reaffirmed that climate change was not only an environmental issue, but a social and economic issue. Addressing it would require sustainable political commitment, strong partnerships between governments and communities, and coordinated regional action.

A video about the Annual IPU-UN Women Parliamentary Meeting at the 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women was played.

A video about the Yaoundé Session of the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization was played.

Item 14 of the agenda

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. S. Barekzai (Afghanistan) drew attention to the difficult situation facing Afghanistan over the past five years, highlighting the severe social, economic and humanitarian challenges affecting the population. She noted declining employment opportunities, infrastructure problems and restrictions on the rights of women and girls, particularly in terms of access to education and universities. Given the central role of women in society and in raising future generations, depriving women and girls of education endangered the future of the country.

Drawing on her experience as a member of the ousted Afghan Parliament, she urged more consultations on Afghanistan and called on countries engaging with the Taliban authorities to press for the restoration of women's right to education. She also objected to remarks by a delegate from Pakistan in the General Debate describing Afghanistan as a terrorist State, asserting that many terrorist groups operating in Afghanistan were based in Pakistan. Overall, greater attention should be given by the international community to the situation of the Afghan people.

Mr. R.T. Parmessar (Suriname) requested that the programme for the 153rd IPU Assembly in the United Republic of Tanzania include a visit to some relevant institutions.

The President said that specific requests about the 153rd IPU Assembly would be taken into account, and participants were encouraged to reach out directly with any particular concerns or institutional contacts they wished to pursue.

In closing the 217th session of the Governing Council, she described the session as a landmark moment in the history of the IPU, noting the adoption of a new Strategy and the election of the IPU's first female Secretary General, whose election reflected her strong capabilities. She expressed appreciation to all participants for their contributions to the Council's deliberations and discussions and invited delegates to attend the 218th session of the Governing Council to be held in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania in October 2026.

The sitting rose at 17:15.