



141st IPU Assembly

Belgrade (Serbia)
13-17 October 2019



Governing Council
Item 9

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19 August 2019

130th anniversary of the IPU

(b) Report on the Quintet Meeting

Geneva (IPU Headquarters), 30 June 2019

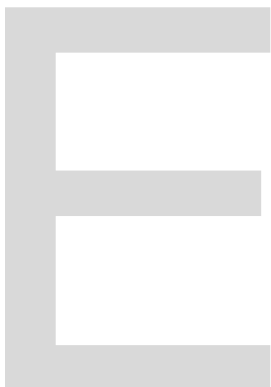
The IPU Quintet met for the first time on 30 June 2019 at IPU Headquarters in Geneva, bringing together the Presidents of the most recent and future IPU Assemblies in order to help take stock of the IPU's results in follow-up to IPU Assemblies and give further direction to the Organization's work. The meeting was attended by Ms. Valentina Matvienko, Chairperson of the Council of the Federation, Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, President of the 137th IPU Assembly (St. Petersburg, October 2017); Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron, IPU President and President of the 138th and 139th Assemblies (Geneva, March and October 2018), Mr. Ahmad Bin Abdulla Bin Zaid Al Mahmoud, Speaker of the Shura Council of Qatar, President of the 140th IPU Assembly (Doha, April 2019); Ms. Maja Gojković, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, President of the 141st IPU Assembly (Belgrade, October 2019); and Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General.

The meeting of 30 June 2019 was convened to mark the 130th anniversary of the IPU, a date that coincided with the International Day of Parliamentarism. Both occasions were a tribute to parliament as an institution and to all generations of parliamentarians who had worked or were working to promote peace and understanding in difficult times. With 180 Member Parliaments by the end of 2019, the IPU membership would inch closer to being universal.

The IPU's founding values and principles were still relevant and persisted in its work to the present day: settling disputes by dialogue and through parliamentary diplomacy, multilateralism as the basis for solving issues, respect for human dignity. It was in this context that the Executive Committee had supported the idea of drafting a Charter of International Parliamentarism that would unite and list those principles. The draft Charter would be submitted to the 141st Assembly in Belgrade.

The IPU's achievements

The IPU had been at the forefront of codifying democracy, establishing the legal framework on criteria for free elections, and gathering data on the functioning of parliaments. The IPU had helped shape the institutions of multilateralism; had promoted and engaged in political dialogue to build confidence and better understanding among nations; had mobilized for the political empowerment of women and young people in public life; and had developed a parliamentary dimension to global governance. It was a one-stop shop for data on parliaments in the world and had developed a unique mechanism to protect and promote the rights of parliamentarians. IPU programmes supported parliaments to act effectively and efficiently at building peace, be platforms for dialogue among parties in conflict, provide political support to the United Nations and ensure accountability in the United Nations decision-making process.



The 138th, 140th and 141st IPU Assemblies

The 137th Assembly held in St. Petersburg had been dedicated to the Global Compacts for Migration and on Refugees and the promotion of a world conference on interfaith and inter-ethnic dialogue. Education had been the theme of the 140th Assembly in Doha, while the 141st Assembly in Belgrade would focus on international law. The newly established Speakers' Dialogue would give Speakers more time to work together.

Present-day challenges and the IPU's response

The world was in crisis. It was characterized by: violations of international law and of human rights and fundamental freedoms; interference in the internal affairs of States; use of force and imposition of sanctions and blockades, all of which were in disregard of United Nations Security Council resolutions. Such actions threatened multilateralism and the rule of law. Parliaments and parliamentary leaders must take bold action to defend multilateralism and to redefine governance. The questions the IPU faced were: what was expected of the IPU, how could the IPU be more effective and hence more relevant, how could parliamentary diplomacy be used more effectively for the wellbeing of the young generation.

The IPU and its Members must be more active politically and more visible. The IPU's geopolitical groups had to be strengthened to work more closely with national parliaments. Financially disadvantaged Members must be supported to be able to attend Assemblies and meetings and host IPU events. In this context, the IPU's Parliamentary Solidarity Fund should be strengthened. Members were required to help the IPU fundraise. The IPU's committees should have more missions to establish dialogue and must be able to meet with dignitaries to gain more relevance. Also, the IPU needed more capacity to address, for example, trade wars and protectionism. It needed a mechanism to give more visibility to IPU cooperation with the United Nations system and needed capacity to cooperate more with the UN system and organizations such as the OSCE and NATO. As parliaments were the gateways for the implementation of global treaties and agreements the IPU must be involved in all issues before the United Nations.

The IPU and its Members must deliver on democracy, the international development agenda and the Paris Agreement, and must be at the forefront of the global effort to combat terrorism. It must be a vanguard in the protection of human rights, must focus on humanitarian issues, and must speak up against sanctions and blockades, trade wars, and violations of international law. If all inter-parliamentary assemblies/organizations were engaged, it might be possible to have a resolution against sanctions which could lead to a UN resolution on prohibiting sanctions and blockades. One of the new issues before the IPU was that of the equality and rights of the other genders recognized by some European countries.

Providing timely responses with one voice on emergencies was another issue. The IPU held only two Assemblies annually when parliamentarians could meet to discuss emergency situations which at times would no longer be an emergency. There must be a mechanism to support the IPU in its role as mediator to allow it to reach out to parties in conflict. Although the IPU did not have the mandate to speak on behalf of its entire membership there should be a mechanism that would allow the IPU to comment on issues in a prompt and timely fashion. It was the responsibility of the Governing Council to review the IPU's mandate on political responses and responsibilities.

Translating decisions into actions, implementation, accountability, transparency, and effectiveness would give the IPU more relevance and visibility. New actors, such as from civil society and the private sector, had to be factored in. In the age of globalization and unprecedented technological advances, the IPU and parliament as an institution had to be reinvented to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The following were the recommendations of the Quintet meeting:

- To establish the Quintet format as a regular meeting.
- To implement a more dynamic format for the Speakers' Dialogue for Belgrade – no papers, more diversified topics.

- Regarding the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament to be held in Vienna in August 2020, to share the discussions of the Quintet with the Preparatory Committee in advance of its next meeting in November.
- To address more issues on the humanitarian agenda; that proposal would be added to the Speakers' Dialogue agenda.
- To strengthen the IPU's capacity for mediation. Attention needed to be paid to avoiding interference.
- To support preparations for the World Conference on Interfaith and Inter-ethnic Dialogue to be convened by the United Nations and the IPU in May 2022.
- To consider the establishment of a working group on political sanctions, and engage with regional parliamentary organizations to adopt a similar approach.
- To have geopolitical groups more involved in the work of the IPU in particular in preparation of and follow-up to IPU Assemblies.
- To strengthen the IPU's solidarity fund.
- To find ways to promptly address major political issues in the world and to have timely and relevant decisions in this context.