



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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Governing Council
Item 10

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Election of the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

At its meeting of 26 June 2020, the IPU Executive Committee decided that, in light of the impossibility of holding a physical Assembly in 2020, it would instead convene a **virtual session of the Governing Council from 1 to 4 November 2020**. That session would be called on to take decisions on pressing matters pertaining to the functioning of the IPU, including the election of a new President for the Organization.

The Executive Committee has established a working group (Sub-Committee of the Executive Committee), composed of one representative from each Geopolitical Group and from the Forum of Women Parliamentarians. The working group is tasked with examining the various aspects of such a virtual meeting: agenda, modalities of work, special rules of procedure, and remote elections – including the election of the new IPU President.

This note sets out information, including as contained in the Statutes and Rules of the IPU, on the nature and process for the election of the President. It will be complemented by the relevant decisions of the Executive Committee.

The President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union is the political head of the organization. The President chairs the Governing Council and the Executive Committee, which in turn guide and monitor all aspects of IPU work. The President chairs IPU statutory meetings and represents the organization at global events.

The Council elects the IPU President for a term of three years. According to the IPU Statutes and Rules, *“the retiring President shall not be eligible for re-election for three years and shall be replaced by a person belonging to another Parliament. An endeavour will be made to ensure a regular rotation between the different geopolitical groups”*.

The provisions relating to the President are contained in Article 19 of the IPU Statutes and Rules 6 to 11 of the Governing Council Rules. They are supplemented by practice as it has evolved over the years. The IPU President must be a sitting member of parliament for the duration of his or her term in office.

The principle of regional rotation is generally observed. Over the past twenty years, the Presidency of the IPU has been exercised by prominent MPs from Egypt (Arab Group, 1994–1997), Spain (Twelve Plus Group, 1997–1999), India (Asia-Pacific Group, 1999–2002), Chile (Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2002–2005), Italy (Twelve Plus Group, 2005–2008), Namibia (African Group, 2008–2011), Morocco (Arab Group, 2011–2014), Bangladesh (Asia-Pacific Group, 2014–2017), and Mexico (Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2017–2020).¹

¹ The full list of IPU Presidents can be found at <https://www.ipu.org/about-ipu/structure-and-governance/president>.

There are no formal requirements for candidates for the IPU President, other than the fact that he/she is a sitting member of parliament (MP) expecting to remain an MP for the duration of the term of IPU President (in this case, 2020–2023). Historically, IPU Presidents have been outstanding political leaders, well respected nationally and internationally, firmly committed to the core IPU values and principles – in particular the promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law – and able to invest significant time and energy in effectively carrying out the high office of IPU President.

As the IPU is playing an increasingly important role in political dialogue and understanding within and among nations, the IPU President is expected to be a mediator and bridge-builder, exercising tact, credibility and respect for the IPU membership in all its diversity. He/she is called upon to regularly interact with Heads of State and Government, Speakers of parliament, the UN Secretary-General and other high-level officials. He/she should ideally have a good command of at least one of the official languages of the IPU: English or French. As a gender-sensitive organization, the IPU also attaches great importance to gender equality and the political empowerment of women at all levels.

Candidates are expected to express their interest in running for the position of IPU President through a formal letter addressed to the IPU Secretary General. The letter should underscore the key skills and competencies of the candidate and their vision for promoting the strategic plan of the IPU, and it should be accompanied by a brief CV. Candidatures may be submitted by the candidate directly, by a Member Parliament or group of parliaments, or by one or more geopolitical groups.

Candidatures for the post of President of the IPU shall be communicated in writing to the Secretary General at least 24 hours before the opening of the meeting during which the election is to take place (Rule 7 of the Governing Council).

While not a formal requirement, in practice it is expected that the candidates for the post of President can count upon the financial and material support of their respective Parliament in the exercise of the IPU Presidency.

Practical modalities and the date for voting will be communicated at a later stage, based on the recommendations of the Executive Committee. Three delegates from each Member Parliament can cast a vote, provided that both genders are represented among them; if not, only one delegate can vote.

The candidate who obtains an absolute majority of the votes cast shall be elected President. If no candidate obtains this majority during the first round of voting, the candidate who has received the least number of votes will be eliminated and additional rounds will take place until one of the candidates obtains an absolute majority (Rule 8 of the Governing Council).