



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

206th session of the Governing Council (Extraordinary virtual session) 1–4 November 2020

CL/206/C.1
7 September 2020

Convocation of the 206th session of the Governing Council of the IPU

Dear Madam President,
Dear Mr. President,

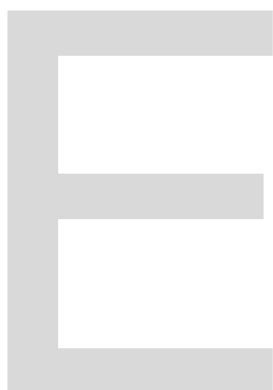
As you are aware, at its meeting of 26 June 2020, the IPU Executive Committee decided that, in light of the impossibility of holding a physical Assembly in 2020, it would instead convene an extraordinary virtual session of the Governing Council from 1 to 4 November 2020, which would be called upon to take decisions on pressing matters pertaining to the functioning of the IPU, including the adoption of the programme of work and budget for 2021, as well as the election of the new President of the Organization and of members of the Executive Committee.

Holding a virtual session of the Governing Council will require special technical arrangements to enable all Members to participate as fully as possible. The Executive Committee has requested that the Secretary General explore available technological platforms that may provide cost-effective and practical solutions to guarantee equitable participation as well as the integrity of the vote in the context of remote elections by secret ballot.

Most importantly, a virtual session will have two main consequences that we are bringing to the attention of the members of the Governing Council together with this convocation.

The first consequence is that the current Rules of the Governing Council, which govern physical meetings held under normal circumstances, will not be entirely appropriate for this unprecedented virtual format. As such, the Executive Committee has prepared, with the support of a working group and a legal counsel, **special rules of procedure** that would apply to the upcoming extraordinary virtual session as well as to possible future virtual sessions of the Governing Council, if the members decide to approve these special rules of procedure at the beginning of the session. The special rules, inspired by similar rules adopted by a number of international organizations in response to the COVID-19 crisis, are attached in [Annex 1](#). These rules will be brought to the consideration of the Governing Council at the opening of its extraordinary virtual session and would then be submitted for formal adoption. However, in view of these exceptional circumstances, Members will be required to provide their support and views in advance of the session.

The second implication of holding a virtual session of the Governing Council, with its related time constraints, is the need for a focused agenda limited to essential items as determined by the Executive Committee under Rule 12 of the Rules of the Governing Council. The **draft agenda** of the extraordinary virtual Governing Council session is enclosed in [Annex 2](#). Proposals for amendments and motions will not be possible in view of the need to keep the agenda to the strict minimum. The conduct of the election of the President and the members of the Executive Committee will be adapted to the available electronic platform. A **note on remote voting** is enclosed in [Annex 3](#).



As you will see from the proposed documents, special emphasis has been placed on ensuring that decision-making processes, and in particular the electoral process for the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, are inclusive, free and fair. Measures have been foreseen to ensure a secret ballot where all members of the Governing Council can take part. A specific page on the IPU website will be created providing information on the implementation of the voting process.

The IPU President and the Executive Committee have furthermore stressed the importance of facilitating dissemination of information regarding candidates for the post of President and providing platforms for exchange with them in the run-up to the election, as per past practice. A number of initiatives will therefore be implemented including virtual hearings with presidential candidates in the two weeks prior to the election; written interviews (members wishing to do so may put written questions to the candidates who will be at liberty to respond, through the Secretariat); the possibility for candidates to post a short video on the IPU website to present their programme etc. Furthermore, each candidate will be given 10 minutes to present their vision for the Organization during the extraordinary virtual session of the Governing Council. All of these various initiatives will be presented on the IPU website, on a dedicated page related to the IPU Presidential elections.

In view of the above, and in order to allow for the timely and orderly preparation of the extraordinary virtual session, a number of procedural changes will have to be introduced even before the opening of the session, for example with regard to the deadlines for the registration of delegations and for the submission of candidatures.

In light of the foregoing, the Executive Committee has decided to seek the concurrence of the Governing Council on the set of proposals listed below, which are submitted as a single package rather than as separate proposals.

Members are requested to notify the Secretary General in writing – including by email – by 14 October 2020 only if they object to the proposals. Unless one third or more of the Members submit an objection by that date, the proposals will be considered adopted as decisions of the Governing Council. They will be recalled for the record at the opening of the Governing Council session.

The Executive Committee proposes the following:

1. The extraordinary virtual session of the Governing Council to be held from **1 to 4 November 2020**, as well as any future virtual session of the Governing Council, will be conducted under the special rules of procedure attached to this convocation.
2. The provisional agenda of the extraordinary virtual session of the Governing Council will be limited to essential governance items as determined by the Executive Committee under Rule 12 of the Rules of the Governing Council.
3. The deadline for registration of delegations and for submission of candidatures for the post of President and to the Executive Committee will be 18 October 2020.
4. Participation in the extraordinary virtual session will be limited to titular members except in case of force majeure preventing a titular member from attending the session. The existence of such a situation must be certified by the Speaker of the Parliament or the President of the IPU Group concerned before the opening of the session through a written communication to the Secretary General.
5. Participation in the extraordinary virtual session will be limited to Member Parliaments of the IPU.

We thank you for your kind understanding and support, and very much hope that you will lead the delegation of your Parliament at this extraordinary virtual session of the Governing Council. Information about online registration is included in Annex 4.

Yours sincerely,



Gabriela CUEVAS BARRON
President



Martin CHUNGONG
Secretary General