



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

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

CL/206/C.1  
Annex 1  
7 September 2020

## Special Rules of Procedure to regulate the conduct of virtual sessions of the Governing Council<sup>1</sup>

*At its meetings of 3 and 16 July 2020, the Working Group tasked with preparing the virtual session of the Governing Council examined the main criteria and modalities for the holding of a virtual session of the Governing Council, including in terms of special rules of procedure. Based on the guidance provided by the Working Group, the IPU Secretariat, in cooperation with the Legal Counsel, prepared a first proposal for Special Rules of Procedure, which the Working Group amended and endorsed at its meeting on 13 August.*

*At its meeting on 31 August 2020, the Executive Committee considered the proposal put forward by the Working Group and further amended the Special Rules of Procedure which will govern the conduct of virtual sessions of the Governing Council (the 206th session of the Governing Council in November 2020 and other possible future virtual sessions of the Council). The Special Rules shall be circulated to all Members together with the Convocation for the extraordinary virtual session of the Governing Council and will be formally adopted at the first sitting of the extraordinary virtual session of the Governing Council in early November.*

### PREAMBLE

The Rules of the Governing Council shall continue to apply in full, except to the extent that they are inconsistent with these Special Rules of Procedure, in which case the decision of the Governing Council to adopt these Special Rules of Procedure shall constitute a decision to suspend the relevant Rules of the Governing Council to the extent necessary in accordance with Rule 45.3 of the Rules of the Governing Council.

The Rules of the Governing Council that shall be suspended are:

Rule 2 with regard to substitute members

Rule 3 with regard to participation by Associate Members

Rule 4 with regard to participation by observers

Rule 7 with regard to the deadline for communication of candidatures for the post of President of the IPU

Rule 13 with regard to requests for supplementary agenda items

Rules 14–20 with regard to the submission of motions, draft resolutions, amendments and sub-amendments

<sup>1</sup> In these Rules, whenever the words "President", "Vice-President", "delegate", "representative", "member" and "observer" are used, they should be construed as referring to both women and men.

Rule 23 with regard to decisions on limiting speaking time  
Rule 28 with regard to substitute members voting  
Rule 29 with regard to voting by show of hands or standing vote  
Rule 32 with regard to requests for division of proposals  
Rule 34 with regard to the establishment of the quorum

## **1. AGENDA**

1.1 The provisional agenda of a virtual session of the Governing Council shall be determined by the Executive Committee and shall be limited to essential items for the governance and programme of work of the Organization.

1.2 It will not be possible for members of the Governing Council to propose supplementary items pursuant to Rule 13 of the Rules of the Governing Council.

## **2. ATTENDANCE**

2.1 Attendance by Members shall be through a secured access to videoconference or other electronic means allowing representatives to hear other participants and to address the meeting remotely as appropriate.

2.2 For the purpose of attendance and voting, the gender inclusiveness of delegations of Members under Rule 1 of the Rules of the Governing Council will be assessed on the basis of the list submitted by each Member for the purpose of registration by the deadline indicated below.

2.3 Participation by IPU Members in the Governing Council is limited to titular members. It will not be possible to appoint substitute members under Rules 2 and 28 of the Rules of the Governing Council 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 through a written communication to the Secretary General.

## **3. REGISTRATION**

3.1 Registration will take place through an online system in accordance with established practice. Each IPU Member participating in the session will communicate the name, gender and contact details of its representatives as well as the scan of an official letter from the Speaker of parliament or the President of the IPU Group.

3.2 The deadline for registration shall be 15 days before the opening of the session. No further changes to the composition of delegations will be possible after that date, subject to Rule 2.3 of these Special Rules of Procedure.

## **4. QUORUM**

The number of registered members of the Governing Council at the registration deadline indicated in Rule 3.2 of these Special Rules of Procedure shall be used to establish the quorum.

## **5. ADDRESSING THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

5.1 Members are invited to submit written statements in either English or French (the official languages of the Organization) with an indication of the agenda item to which they refer, in advance of the opening of the session of the Governing Council. Written statements shall be in lieu of live interventions. These shall be posted on a dedicated web page and shall form part of the official records of the session.

5.2 Members may also submit pre-recorded video statements with an indication of the agenda item to which they refer, in advance of the opening of the session.

5.3 During the virtual session, statements by members shall be limited to two minutes.

5.4 Any member wishing to take the floor should signal their wish to speak. A member wishing to raise a point of order in relation to a statement made during the session should signal their intention to do so. The President will rule on the point of order in accordance with Rule 22 of the Rules of the Governing Council.

## **6. MEETINGS**

All virtual meetings of the Governing Council shall be open only to Member Parliaments of the IPU. All business during a virtual session shall be conducted in plenary meetings.

## **7. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

Motions or draft resolutions may be submitted in accordance with Rule 14 and will be subject to Rule 15 of the Rules of the Governing Council. Members should make every effort to arrive at an agreed proposal through informal consultations. In view of the limitations imposed by a virtual session, Rules 16–20 of the Rules of the Governing Council are suspended.

## **8. DECISION-MAKING**

All decisions of the Governing Council taken in a virtual session shall be, as far as possible, adopted by consensus. In view of the virtual nature of the session and of technical limitations, if a vote is required on matters other than the election of the President and the members of the Executive Committee, it shall be taken by roll call in accordance with normal practice. In the event of a roll-call vote, should any member fail to cast a vote for any reason during the roll call, that member shall be called upon a second time after the conclusion of the initial roll call. Should the member fail to cast a vote on the second roll-call, the member shall be recorded as absent.

## **9. WRITTEN SILENCE PROCEDURE**

9.1 The following written silence procedure will apply in respect of any proposal that the President or Executive Committee determines, following informal consultations, is suitable for adoption without further discussion by the Governing Council but cannot be adopted during the virtual session because of lack of time or for any other reason as determined by the President or Executive Committee.

9.2 At the request of the President or Executive Committee, the Secretary General will transmit to Members any such proposal for consideration under this written silence procedure.

9.3 The communication will contain the text of the proposal(s) to be considered under this written silence procedure and will set a date for the receipt of any objection. Any such objection shall be conveyed in writing, including by email, and addressed to the Secretary General. The objection must have been received within 15 days from the date of dispatch of the communication.

9.4 In the absence of the receipt by the stipulated deadline of 15 days of written objections from one third or more of Members, the proposal concerned will be considered as having been validly adopted by the Governing Council.

9.5 The Secretary General will communicate the outcome of the written silence procedure to all Members as soon as possible after the set deadline referred to above. In the case of a proposal that is adopted pursuant to the written silence procedure, the date of the Secretary General's communication to that effect will be date of adoption of the proposal.

9.6 Without prejudice to the above, a Member may explain its position in respect of a proposal that is subject to the written silence procedure by submitting a written statement relating thereto, for posting on the IPU website. Written statements should be received by the Secretary General by the date set for receipt of objections. Written statements will be made available on the IPU website for information purposes only. They will appear as submitted and in the language(s) of submission. Submission of a written statement in accordance with this paragraph will not be considered as an objection.

## **10. ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT**

10.1 The President of the IPU shall be elected in accordance with Rules 6–8 of the Rules of the Governing Council except as provided in these Special Rules of Procedure. The Secretary General shall announce the quorum before voting begins in accordance with Rule 34 of the Rules of the Governing Council.

10.2 Prior to the start of the voting process, the candidates duly registered for the post of IPU President will be invited to briefly address the Governing Council, to present themselves and their vision for the Organization. Hearings, open to the IPU Members, will also be organized with the candidates in the two weeks leading up to the election.

10.3 The deadline for communication of candidatures for the IPU Presidency shall be 15 days before the opening of the Governing Council session.

10.4 The election shall be conducted by secret ballot using a secure electronic system that has been verified by the Secretary General as ensuring privacy, security and simplicity of use. A secure back-up voting method that respects the secrecy of the ballot will be provided for members who are not able to use the primary voting method.

10.5 The Secretary General shall distribute to members of the Governing Council a ballot with the names of the candidates. The ballot shall only be accessible to members through a personal authentication system following instructions to be provided by the Secretary General. Members shall submit their ballot online or as advised by the Secretary General

10.6 Members shall have 24 hours from the opening of the vote by the President to cast their ballot. The President will remind members of the approaching deadline. The voting period shall not suspend the conduct of the business of the session.

10.7 Once the voting period closes, the results of the votes shall be verified by two tellers appointed by the Governing Council pursuant to Rule 30 of the Rules of the Governing Council, with the assistance of the Secretariat. An independent auditor will provide the tellers with a technical assessment of the voting process and results.

10.8 The President shall announce the result of the secret ballot in a public meeting. He/she will suspend the business of the session for this purpose if necessary. If no candidate receives an absolute majority of the votes cast on the first secret ballot in accordance with Rule 35 of the Rules of the Governing Council, a second secret ballot shall be held between the two candidates having received the highest number of votes in the preceding ballot in accordance with the same procedure as described above. If the two candidates receive the same number of votes, additional ballots shall be held in accordance with the same procedure until a candidate receives an absolute majority.

## **11. ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

11.1 The deadline for communication of candidatures to the Executive Committee shall be 15 days before the opening of the session.

11.2 If there are more candidates than the available posts on the Executive Committee, a secret ballot shall be held following mutatis mutandis the procedure set out above for the election of the President.