



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

CL/205/SR.1
15 January 2020

Summary records of the Governing Council

205th session

14 and 17 October 2019

Sava Centre
Belgrade (Serbia)

AGENDA

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First sitting

Monday, 14 October 2019

The meeting was called to order at 9.30 a.m., with Ms. G. Cuevas Barron (Mexico), President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), in the Chair.

Item 1 of the agenda

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

(CL/205/A.1.rev)

The revised provisional agenda (CL/205/A.1.rev) was adopted.

Item 2 of the agenda

APPROVAL OF THE SUMMARY RECORDS OF THE 204th SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

(CL/204/SR.1)

The summary records of the 204th session of the Governing Council (CL/204/SR.1) were approved.

Item 3 of the agenda

PROPOSALS FOR THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE 141st ASSEMBLY

At the proposal of Mr. K. Lusaka (Kenya), seconded by Ms. R. Kavakci Kan (Turkey) and Mr. D. Židan (Slovenia), Ms. M. Gojković (Serbia) was elected by acclamation to serve as President of the 141st IPU Assembly.

Ms. M. Gojković (Serbia) thanked all those who had proposed, seconded or supported her election as President of the 141st IPU Assembly, which was taking place in Belgrade 56 years after the city had first hosted an IPU Assembly in 1963.

Item 4 of the agenda

FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE IPU

(CL/205/4-R.1)

Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland), *President of the Sub-Committee on Finance and member of the Executive Committee*, presenting the report on the financial situation of the IPU at 30 June 2019 (CL/205/4-R.1), said that the report had been updated to include, in Annex II, details of unpaid contributions as at 12 October 2019. She appealed to those listed in the annex to settle their arrears without further delay and thanked Members who had paid their dues on time. As indicated in the report, the IPU was in a sound financial situation and its Legacy Staff Pension Fund was moreover performing well above target. Unfortunately, however, the IPU had had no option but to suspend the rights of three Members – Honduras, Mauritania and Papua New Guinea – for persistent non-payment of their contributions, despite an extension of the final deadline. Four other Members - Comoros, Dominican Republic, Libya and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) – had accumulated two years of arrears and would therefore, in accordance with Article 5.2 of the IPU Statutes, have no votes in the statutory bodies of the IPU. For the same reason, two Associate Members, the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Andean Parliament, would not be represented by more than one delegate at meetings convened by the IPU.

In calling on the geopolitical groups to encourage parliaments in their regions to settle any arrears, where applicable, she suggested that some Members might wish to consider assisting Members in a less fortunate financial position so as to preclude the imposition of sanctions for non-payment of assessed contributions. She added that, as recommended by the Sub-Committee on Finance, the Executive Committee had approved an application from the Parliament of the Solomon Islands for a grant from the Parliamentary Solidarity Fund to enable its participation in IPU meetings

with a view to membership. The Committee had also decided to recommend simplification of the application procedure for those eligible to receive such grants. The Parliaments of Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Kiribati, Nauru, and St. Kitts and Nevis were currently eligible.

The Governing Council took note of the report on the financial situation of the IPU.

Item 5 of the agenda

2020 DRAFT CONSOLIDATED BUDGET
(CL/205/5-P.1)

Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland), *President of the Sub-Committee on Finance and member of the Executive Committee*, presenting the 2020 draft consolidated budget (CL/205/5-P.1), said that, as recommended by the Sub-Committee on Finance, the Executive Committee, having examined the annual budget estimates prepared for 2020 in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the IPU, had unanimously decided to recommend their approval by the Governing Council. The proposed budget was aligned with the objectives of the IPU Strategy for 2017–2021 and, in the case of assessed contributions, with the most recent United Nations scale of assessments, which was based on elements and criteria such as the debt-burden approach, a low per capita income adjustment and, where necessary, price-adjusted rates of exchange or other appropriate conversion rates. The assessed contributions had in some cases consequently increased and in others fallen. In furtherance of the IPU's ambitious strategic programme activities, Members in the latter category might wish to consider making a voluntary contribution equivalent to the amount of reduction in their assessed contributions for 2020. Otherwise, as explained in section 2.1 of the document, the total amount of assessed contributions in 2020 would remain well below that in 2007.

The Governing Council approved the 2020 consolidated budget.

Item 6 of the agenda

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

(a) On her activities since the 204th session of the Governing Council
(CL/205/6(a)-R.1)

The President, in reporting on the activities she had conducted over the previous six months, said that the IPU continued to work for ever-more ambitious goals rooted in the foundational values that had given rise to its establishment in 1889. In so doing, it must redouble its efforts to strengthen the presence of women and youth in parliaments so as accurately to reflect public concerns in its decisions. Conscious of the need to ensure that laws and budgets supported the most vulnerable, the IPU attached great importance to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to enhancing the parliamentary response to modern-day challenges. As its President, she was required to demonstrate accountability for the outcomes of the special agenda she had presented two years previously.

After outlining with the aid of a slide presentation the activities described in document CL/205/6(a)-R.1, among them her participation in numerous international forums, regional seminars, events in celebration of the IPU's 130th anniversary, bilateral meetings and visits to parliaments, she said that the IPU had grown into a highly inclusive platform for multilateral dialogue and that its potential reach and impact were therefore enormous. She aimed to continue building closer ties with its Members, including with a view to garnering their support for the organization of more country missions by IPU bodies, and to pursue her efforts to raise the IPU's visibility, a vital goal towards which parliamentarians must also strive by participating more widely in United Nations activities and other key events. Strong guidance and support from Members were similarly essential to benefiting the IPU's agenda in such areas as health, economic matters, women's empowerment and youth, as well as the IPU's mission to further enhance its openness and transparency.

With multilateralism currently under siege, parliamentary engagement was more crucial than ever to creating legislation and securing the budgetary commitments needed to change realities through, inter alia, combating discrimination and promoting inclusiveness. The Assembly provided an excellent opportunity for Members to learn about best practices that could be adapted to their own environments for improving the lives of their constituents. Describing the past six months as fruitful and productive, she said that she was honoured to represent Members and to work with them hand in hand for a better planet.

The Governing Council took note of the report of the President on her activities.

(b) On the activities of the Executive Committee

The President said that the Executive Committee had had two days of intense and productive discussions so far in Belgrade and that most of the subjects discussed would be covered under the relevant items of the Council's agenda. In the interim, she wished to inform the Council that the Executive Committee had approved a memorandum of understanding on cooperation with the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement with a view to securing support and technical expertise for the IPU's activities on climate change. It had also approved a memorandum of understanding on cooperation with the Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie, an organization that worked to promote the French language and democracy in the Francophone sphere through a variety of initiatives. She took it that the Council wished to endorse the Committee's approval of those two memoranda of understanding.

It was so decided.

The Executive Committee had also recommended endorsement of its decision in favour of requests for Observer status received from the MERCOSUR Parliament and the International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace, as well as of its decision to upgrade the status of the Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie from Observer to Associate Member. She took it that the Council wished to endorse those decisions.

It was so decided.

The Executive Committee had confirmed that, in examining requests for Observer or Associate Member status, the general rule was to give priority to parliamentary and inter-parliamentary organizations and political organizations and to consider others on a case-by-case basis. The rationale for this was that the IPU should develop a strong basis of cooperation with organizations before accepting them as Members in order to establish a long-term relationship.

The Executive Committee had also recommended that the IPU should partner with the UHC2030, a movement working for progress towards universal health coverage, on which subject a draft resolution was to be submitted for possible adoption by the Assembly at its current session. She took it that the Council wished to endorse the recommendation, in which case the Secretary General would take the necessary steps to implement it.

It was so decided.

The Executive Committee had furthermore discussed ways of scaling up IPU participation in United Nations forums in order to strengthen the parliamentary dimension of political processes and initiatives at the United Nations. Suggestions included closer interaction between Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York and the IPU; the active participation of a full IPU delegation in United Nations events; and representation of the IPU by the geopolitical groups at regional meetings. To those ends, the IPU Secretariat would be preparing a calendar of regular United Nations events one year in advance. It would also welcome other suggestions from Members for raising the IPU profile.

Following her meetings in Washington DC and the events organized by the IPU at the United States Congress in September 2019, she had sought clarity from the Executive Committee as to the best way forward towards strengthening interaction with the Congress. The Committee had agreed that the IPU should remain in regular contact with the Congress for the purposes of information exchange and awareness-raising of the IPU's work.

Mindful of the approaching 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2020, which the IPU would actively engage in celebrating, the Executive Committee had discussed whether the choice of the term "gender equality" over "equality between men and women" might be detrimental to the fight for women's rights and empowerment. It had concluded that the issue merited further discussion within the IPU.

The Executive Committee had also heard an interim report from an independent consultant commissioned to assess the accountability, transparency and openness of the IPU by mapping its practices and standards, benchmarking against other organizations, and interviewing stakeholders. After meeting in Belgrade with the presidents of the geopolitical groups and standing committees and

with as many parliamentarians as possible, the consultant would analyse the information gathered, identify potential gaps and make recommendations for the development of a comprehensive transparency, accountability and openness strategy, as decided at the 140th Assembly.

Given the success of such recent innovations at IPU Assemblies as workshops and implementation follow-up, the Executive Committee favoured the idea of reviewing the system for the selection of panellists with a view to bringing in more expertise and optimizing panel discussions. It might therefore request the Sub-Committee on Finance to explore the possibility of introducing a dedicated budget for that purpose.

Concerning the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Executive Committee had recommended that the related self-assessment toolkit produced for parliaments in 2016 should be updated in the light of the experience since accumulated on the subject by the IPU. The level of engagement in regional forums on sustainable development had also highlighted the need to promote exchange and cooperation between the Twelve Plus countries and other regions. Parliamentarians should furthermore strengthen their communication with Permanent Missions to the United Nations in New York in order to raise the profile of parliaments and ensure that their role was recognized in United Nations processes and documents, such as those pertaining to the SDGs.

Regarding the use of sanctions, about which the IPU had raised concerns in the past, the Executive Committee had recommended that the IPU continue to urge Member Parliaments to ensure that all elected MPs in their countries were able to fully exercise their parliamentary functions, and to speak out against individual sanctions that obstructed that right.

Having reviewed the draft Declaration on Parliamentary Diplomacy, the Executive Committee had decided to launch an inclusive consultative process involving all national parliaments, which would be requested to submit their comments on the draft by early 2020. On the basis of those comments, the IPU Secretariat would prepare a consolidated draft for consideration and possible adoption at the next Assembly in April 2020.

Lastly, with a view to enhancing efficiency in the organization of regional IPU events in cooperation with Members, the Executive Committee had recommended a review of agreements between hosts and the IPU in which it was stipulated that neither party was authorized to issue unilateral invitations.

She took it that the Council wished to endorse the recommendations of the Executive Committee on those matters.

It was so decided.

She would report at the next sitting of the Council on the final meeting that the Executive Committee would be holding in Belgrade in order to complete its work.

The Governing Council took note of the report of the President on the activities of the Executive Committee.

Item 7 of the agenda

INTERIM REPORT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE IPU SINCE THE 204th SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

(b) Overview of the status of the strategic partnership between the IPU and the United Nations
(CL/205/7(b)-R.1)

The Secretary General, providing an overview of the status of the strategic partnership between the IPU and the United Nations, as detailed in his note on the subject (CL/205/7(b)-R.1), said that the programmatic and operational dimensions of the IPU's cooperation with the United Nations had essentially developed and expanded as envisaged. More challenging was the political dimension of that cooperation, with mixed results achieved concerning the extent to which United Nations decisions were genuinely informed by the public voice articulated through the IPU. It was therefore proposed that a comprehensive independent assessment be conducted of the IPU's political project at the United Nations for consideration at the next IPU Assembly and the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament with a view to determining the best way forward.

Ms. M.N. Mensah-Williams (Namibia) suggested that it would be more expedient and cost-effective for such an assessment to be led by politicians, in particular those already involved in official discussions about United Nations reform.

The President said that any consultant engaged to conduct the proposed assessment would work in close cooperation with the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs. Agreeing that the IPU's relationship with the United Nations should be led by politicians, she called on parliamentarians to ensure that they were represented in their national delegations to the United Nations.

The Secretary General added for clarification that neither the proposed independent consultant nor the IPU Secretariat would be involved in any decision-making on the matter. The consultant would simply present to the relevant IPU structures the findings of the assessment reflecting the views of the IPU membership. A major role in the process was also envisaged for the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs.

Mr. W. William (Seychelles) suggested that, in order to facilitate matters, the IPU might wish to communicate formally to governments its recommendation concerning the inclusion of parliamentarians in national delegations to the United Nations.

The President agreed with that suggestion and said that any further input from Members on the subject would always be welcome.

Ms. L.A. Rojas Hernandez (Mexico), underlining the role of the IPU as an organization of parliamentarians for parliamentarians, said that coordination and understanding should be improved to prevent any recurrence of a recent situation in which no women parliamentarians had been present at a meeting of the Secretary General with the Executive Director of UN Women.

The President noted that comment and said she took it that the Governing Council wished to approve a mandate for the IPU Secretariat to launch a tendering process for a consultant to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the strategic partnership between the IPU and the United Nations.

It was so decided.

The Governing Council took note of the interim report by the Secretary General on the activities of the IPU.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

The Secretary General announced that, in accordance with Rule 34.2 of the Rules of the Governing Council, the quorum of 82 was established for the 205th session on the basis of the participation of 161 Members or substitutes in the current first meeting of the Council.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.

Second sitting

Thursday, 17 October

The meeting was called to order at 9.45 a.m., with Ms. G. Cuevas Barron (Mexico), President of the IPU, in the Chair.

Item 6 of the agenda
(continued)

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

(b) On the activities of the Executive Committee

The President said that most of the subjects addressed by the Executive Committee at its third sitting held the previous day would be reported on under the relevant items of the Council's agenda. Those subjects apart, the Executive Committee had been reminded of the key objectives and components of the IPU's three-year Communications Strategy endorsed by the Governing Council at its previous session, which were: to position the IPU as a global resource, both for and about parliamentarians; and to serve Member Parliaments and reach the audience of 46,000 parliamentarians worldwide. Over the past year, the main investment had been channelled towards the launch of New Parline in 2018 and, in September 2019, of the new IPU website, which was optimized for mobile devices and would be further developed in 2020. An IPU Instagram account had also been launched, contributing towards the significant increase in the IPU's presence and engagement on social media platforms. The 130th anniversary of the IPU had offered an unequalled opportunity to interact with parliamentarians and give renewed impetus to communications efforts. She invited Members to transmit to the IPU Secretariat their suggestions for further enhancement of the Communications Strategy.

In other matters, the Chairperson of the Working Group on Syria had briefed the Committee on the difficulties faced by the Group in fulfilling its mandate in the current climate and on his discussion with the Syrian delegation during the current Assembly to ascertain its views on the subject. In the light of the information provided, the general consensus within the Committee was that the Working Group should be dissolved.

The President of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP) had also briefed the Executive Committee on ASGP cooperation with the IPU, highlighting in particular the strong support of the ASGP for initiatives such as the Common Principles for Support to Parliaments; the active engagement of ASGP members in the highly relevant work of the Centre for Innovation in Parliament; and their desire for involvement in implementing the forthcoming *Guidelines for the elimination of sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament*. He had vigorously encouraged further ASGP-IPU cooperation, especially in the preparation of the Third Global Parliamentary Report. The Executive Committee had taken note of his report and expressed its commitment to such ongoing cooperation.

Lastly, the Executive Committee had been briefed on staff movements and approved an amendment to the Staff Regulations relating to the age of retirement to bring them in line with the relevant provisions of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, to which the IPU belonged.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the recommendations emanating from the discussions of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

The Governing Council took note of the report of the President on the activities of the Executive Committee.

Item 7 of the agenda
(continued)

**INTERIM REPORT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE IPU
SINCE THE 204th SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**

(a) Update on the implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2017-2021
(CL/205/7(a)-R.1)

The Secretary General, in providing with the aid of a slide presentation an overview of the activities undertaken since March 2019 to implement the IPU Strategy, as detailed in document CL/205/7(a)-R.1, said that those activities were as broad as they were rich. He highlighted some of the key activities carried out under each of the Strategy's eight objectives and drew attention to the checklist of activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system, as set out in Annex I to the document, in furtherance of the common agenda shared by the IPU and the United Nations. Pledging to continue discharging in conjunction with the IPU Secretariat the responsibilities entrusted to him, he said that he remained fully committed to serving the IPU and its Members to the utmost of his ability.

Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland), Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada), Mr. G. Chen (China), Ms. F. Benbadis (Algeria), Ms. E. Iboudou-Thiombiano (Burkina Faso), Ms. S. Khuon (Cambodia), Mr. S. Ouattara (Côte d'Ivoire), Mr. B. Mbuku Laka (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Mr. A. Abdel Aal (Egypt on behalf of the Arab Group), Mr. M. Timbine (Mali), Mr. S. Iro (Niger), Ms. S. Marri (Pakistan), Mr. A. Alahmad (Palestine), Mr. A. Al Mahmoud (Qatar), Ms. R. Kavakci Kan (Turkey), Mr. H. Gadiaga (Senegal), Mr. M.L.D. Ntombela (South Africa), Mr. N Anzour (Syrian Arab Republic), a delegate from the United Arab Emirates, and Mr. S. Al-Barkani (Yemen) joined in commending the excellent work and positive initiatives undertaken by the Secretary General, assisted by the IPU Secretariat; in thanking him for his strong commitment to the IPU, the efficient support provided to parliaments and the efforts to strengthen the IPU's institutional relationships, in particular with the United Nations; and in confidently looking forward to further activities aimed at promoting, inter alia, democracy, human rights, development, peace and international security, and women's and youth representation in parliaments.

Ms. R.A. Kadaga (Uganda) said that she echoed those sentiments of support for the Secretary General and also wished to request that young parliamentarians be given priority in future over Observers in the order of speakers during general debates.

Mr. S. Tharoor (India) said that he was likewise keen to add the voice of the world's largest parliamentary democracy to the expressions of support for the inspiring work undertaken by the IPU. He had conveyed some thoughts to the Secretary General and the IPU President, however, on possible measures for ensuring that the welcome platform provided by the IPU for exchanges of views on current issues was always used constructively.

The Governing Council took note of the interim report by the Secretary General on the activities of the IPU.

The President, recalling that the principle of respect for human rights was core to the IPU's mandate, said that the IPU enjoyed long-standing cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO), with which it had recently worked to produce a new handbook for parliamentarians on eliminating forced labour. The handbook additionally addressed the issue of violence against women at work. The IPU had conducted a groundbreaking parliamentary survey that had yielded data on and evidence of the prevalence of sexism and violence against women parliamentarians and parliamentary staff. The IPU had been pleased to contribute to the ILO's efforts for adoption of the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention by seizing the opportunity for parliaments to be fully recognized as workplaces in their own right. As such, parliaments needed to do more and better to change the culture of silence and impunity around harassment and violence in their own settings. Mr. Guy Ryder, Director-General of the ILO, was unfortunately unable to attend the current session but had sent a video message.

Mr. G. Ryder, Director-General of the ILO, speaking by video message, said that parliamentarians were uniquely placed to promote decent work and social justice. The many areas covered in the ambitious agenda of the Assembly reflected the breadth of their responsibilities, as well as the complementarity and interdependence between their role and the ILO mandate, with concerns intersecting on such matters as decent work and the elimination of violence and harassment in the

workplace. Leading by example, parliaments could make a real difference and were in fact natural partners of the ILO. Indeed, their support had been instrumental to the success of the current ILO Centenary Ratification Campaign.

It was therefore fitting, in the ILO Centenary year, to reaffirm the ILO's important relationship with the IPU and to call on IPU Members to resolutely combat the crime of forced labour. Affecting millions of victims, including children, that crime was a violation of human rights and a universal scourge often associated with severe psychological, physical or sexual violence. His hope was that the new handbook on eliminating forced labour would be useful to and be used by parliamentarians, who could also make a difference through ratification and implementation of the Protocol to the ILO Convention concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour. Action to eradicate forced labour, slavery, human trafficking and child labour would furthermore be a step towards the achievement of target 8.7 of the SDGs.

The President said that IPU handbooks for parliamentarians provided excellent guidelines for the implementation of commitments and that the handbook on eliminating forced labour was no exception. She urged parliamentarians to engage actively in efforts to end the practice.

The Governing Council took note of the launch of the Handbook for Parliamentarians No. 30 entitled *Eliminating Forced Labour*.

Item 8 of the agenda

QUESTIONS RELATING TO IPU MEMBERSHIP AND OBSERVER STATUS

(b) Situation of certain parliaments

The Secretary General, reporting on the situation of certain parliaments and additionally communicating the related courses of action recommended by the Executive Committee for approval by the Governing Council, said that the Executive Committee had first reviewed the situation in Eritrea, which it had continued to monitor, albeit that the Eritrean Parliament was not an IPU Member, on account of the violations of the human rights of Eritrean parliamentarians. It had also attempted, without success, to ascertain the whereabouts of Eritrean parliamentarians who had disappeared. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation and bring any further developments to the Committee's attention; that the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians should pursue its efforts to shed light on events; and that Members should be encouraged to raise the case at the bilateral level.

In Sudan, the Parliament had been dissolved following a military coup. Discussions were now under way, however, with a view to normalizing the situation and establishing a transitional parliament. In the light of those developments, the Executive Committee recommended that the Sudanese Parliament should be permitted to retain its IPU membership and that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation, provide support during the transitional period towards the organization of free and fair elections, and encourage the Sudanese authorities to expedite the return to constitutional normalcy.

Concerning Guinea-Bissau, where the Parliament was functioning but engaged in a dispute with the incumbent President over elections, the Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation, bring any further developments to the attention of the Executive Committee, and encourage ongoing democratization by supporting the country's elected Parliament.

With regard to Libya, a faction of the Tobruk-based House of Representatives elected in 2014 and internationally recognized as the legitimate representative of the people had recently held sessions in Tripoli. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation while also actively pursuing its efforts, including through the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, to shed light on the apparent abduction of a Libyan parliamentarian.

In the case of Thailand, there had been positive progress towards restoration of the constitutional normalcy consistently encouraged by the IPU. The results of the most recent elections had been confirmed and a bicameral parliament with more women and youth members was now in place. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation, bring any further developments to the attention of the Executive Committee, work to consolidate the democratic process in Thailand through continuing engagement with the Parliament, and pursue its efforts through the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians to resolve outstanding human rights cases in Thailand.

As to Yemen, parliamentarians elected in 2003 continued in office as legitimate members of parliament until whenever elections were next held. The Parliament was split, however, into two factions, one based in Houthi-controlled Sana'a and the other in Seiyun, where it had met in April 2019 to elect a new speaker. The IPU had sought clarity on the situation from both factions and the Executive Committee had had a hearing with the Yemeni delegation to the current Assembly, which had agreed that the parliamentary authorities should continue working for a unified stance in support of efforts to resolve the conflict in Yemen. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation with a view to promoting those efforts and that the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians should pursue the Yemeni human rights cases under its consideration, with IPU Members taking the opportunity to raise those cases and the overall political situation in their contacts with Yemeni and other authorities. It further recommended that the IPU should regularly communicate with all concerned parties with a view to satisfactory resolution of the situation, that the IPU President should engage in a video conversation with the former Speaker of the House of Representatives, and that the IPU should pursue cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in organizing a mission of the Executive Committee and the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law to Yemen with the aim of clarifying the humanitarian situation.

Mr. S. Al-Barkani (Yemen) said that his national authorities had dealt with the parliamentary situation in Yemen in accordance with the Constitution, the law and the regulations governing the House of Representatives. The new Speaker had been legitimately elected in Seiyun and was attending the Assembly as part of the delegation representing the Yemeni Parliament. Both sides should not be considered equal; rebels should not be treated equally as those internationally recognized by the United Nations Security Council and others as the legitimate representatives of Yemen. The Secretary General had rightly affirmed that the elected parliament represented Yemen.

Mr. S. Alkhathlan (Saudi Arabia) said that, while it was right for the IPU to continue monitoring the situation in Yemen, the issue of which parliamentary faction was the IPU Member had already been decided at the 138th Assembly. IPU membership applied to the faction internationally recognized as legitimate, a fact that must be clearly spelled out in IPU decisions on Yemen in order to prevent ambiguity. Any human rights issues were a separate matter.

Ms. S.F. Hosseini (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that she welcomed the IPU approach to such membership issues, which demonstrated its rightful concern to ensure that all groups were represented and all voices heard at the IPU, without discrimination.

Mr. A. Abdel Aal (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group and supported by **Ms. F. Zainal (Bahrain)**, **Mr. A. Alahmad (Palestine)** and **Mr. A.A. Jama (Somalia)**, said that, as concluded by the Executive Committee after lengthy discussion at previous sessions, there was a single legitimate parliament in Yemen, convened in Seiyun but open to all members of parliament, whether in Sana'a or elsewhere. That parliament must be supported and respected, including by the Islamic Republic of Iran. There must be no interference in Yemeni affairs and the IPU must uphold international law and show solidarity with the one and only parliament internationally recognized as the legitimate representative of the entire Yemeni people. The IPU should recognize and communicate with all members of parliament in Yemen. The Yemeni delegation reflected the full spectrum of Yemen's diversity.

Mr. Ali Jasim (United Arab Emirates), agreeing with that view, added that the Islamic Republic of Iran, with its flagrant intervention in the region, bore partial responsibility for the conflict in Yemen. Arab countries and the IPU must seek to uphold legitimacy in Yemen and support international and Arab efforts aimed at achieving peace and stability in the country.

Mr. S. Al-Barkani (Yemen) said that the Islamic Republic of Iran was the main actor responsible for the conflict and resulting civilian deaths in Yemen. The IPU should not put itself in a difficult and biased position by giving credence to a parliament that had no legitimacy and was associated with rebels. The parliament was relocated, by presidential decree, from Sana'a to the interim capital of Aden. The Yemeni Constitution granted the Head of State the right to relocate, when necessary, the meeting venue of the Parliament. There was no longer a parliament in Sana'a, only members of parliament. All parliamentarians around the world should seek redress for the 51 parliamentarians who were being tried, 35 of whom had been sentenced to capital punishment. Except for the Islamic Republic of Iran, all countries around the world had recognized the constitutional legitimacy of Yemen, the legitimacy of the Parliament and the Government of Yemen led by President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi and the right of Yemenis to end the insurgency and *coup d'état*.

Ms. S.F. Hosseini (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that her country rejected all allegations of Iranian intervention in Yemen. It was Iranian efforts and support for constructive inter-Yemeni talks that had laid the ground for the Stockholm peace process and its follow-up under United Nations auspices. The international community must likewise do its utmost through diplomacy to find a viable and peaceful solution to the Yemeni crisis and a means for ending the humanitarian disaster in Yemen.

Mr. A. Abdel Aal (Egypt) said that the Arab Group attached the utmost importance to the safety, stability, unity and territorial integrity of Yemen. It rejected any interventions that increased the fratricidal dispute in Yemen. The report presented to the Governing Council differed from what had been agreed upon during the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee had concluded that the present Yemeni delegation would attend meetings and that any other Yemeni could join the delegation irrespective of race, religion or belief. There could not be two forms of legitimacy: one international legitimacy and another within the IPU.

The President said that, after discussing the Yemeni issue at length during its session in Belgrade, the Executive Committee had concluded that the IPU must set aside political considerations and provide a neutral platform for dialogue by allowing Yemeni parliamentarians elected in 2003 to include representatives of the different factions in the Yemeni delegation to the IPU. She requested a vote by roll call on the matter.

Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada) said that the IPU was bound to respect all parliamentarians equally and that it had consequently afforded to Yemeni parliamentarians the due courtesy of a listening ear, without preference to either faction. The conflict in Yemen must be peacefully resolved to stop the tragic deaths of Yemeni women and children.

Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal) said that the different positions on the matter were now abundantly clear and that, in view of time constraints, the Governing Council should proceed to vote on the matter without further delay.

The Secretary General, explaining that the roll-call vote would be taken in accordance with Rule 29 of the Rules of the Governing Council, reiterated the recommendations of the Executive Committee concerning follow-up action on Yemen.

At the request of the IPU President, a vote by roll call was taken.

The follow-up action on Yemen recommended by the Executive Committee was approved by 104 votes to 24, with 39 abstentions.

Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada), speaking in her capacity as President of the Committee on Middle East Questions and supported by **Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland)**, said that the Committee recognized all elected Yemeni parliamentarians, including those attending the Assembly, as legitimate representatives of the Yemeni people.

The Secretary General, resuming his report on the situation of certain parliaments, said with respect to Algeria that the country had been functioning normally since the resignation of President Bouteflika. The Executive Committee nonetheless recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation.

In the case of Burundi, the IPU had continued to urge the authorities to put in place a road map for peaceful and inclusive elections in 2020, for which many exiled opposition leaders were already returning in order to participate. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation and offer assistance for enabling the Parliament to play its full role in the delivery of an inclusive electoral process and in matters relating to the SDGs and the promotion of gender equality. It also recommended that the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians should continue its consideration of the human rights cases in Burundi, with Members raising those cases and the situation in general in their bilateral contacts.

With regard to Cambodia, the promised assurances concerning an IPU mission to the country had failed to materialize. The IPU remained open to the prospect of a mission, however, provided that it received permission for its delegation to meet all parties, including Mr. Kem Sokha, the opposition leader currently under house arrest. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation and that the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians should pursue its efforts concerning the human rights cases under consideration in Cambodia.

In positive developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a bicameral parliament had been established following elections, although the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians had received a complaint that the mandate of certain parliamentarians had been invalidated owing to a dispute over the results. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation, offer its services for assisting the Parliament to develop an inclusive decision-making process, pursue its efforts through the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians concerning the human rights cases in Burundi, and urge parliamentarians to raise those cases in their bilateral contacts.

There had also been positive developments in Maldives, where legislative and presidential elections had taken place and a fully fledged parliament was functioning normally. Space for opposition parties to contribute constructively to debate had opened up, yet the number of women parliamentarians remained small. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation, bring any further developments to the Committee's attention, and engage with the Maldivian Parliament with a view to improving its gender balance and providing additional capacity-building assistance.

In Nicaragua, where there had been anti-Government street protests, the IPU had received no response from the parliamentary authorities to its offer of mediation in the current crisis. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation and reiterate its offer of mediation to help in resolving the situation through dialogue.

Ms. M. Espinales (Nicaragua) said that the situation was now calmer and more stable. Dialogue with the opposition was under way, as were electoral and social reform efforts. Thousands of reconciliation, justice and peace commissions had also been established countrywide. Nicaragua refused to bow to outside pressures, rejecting all interference in its domestic affairs and the imposition of economic sanctions.

The Secretary General said with respect to Palestine that its Legislative Council had been dissolved, that elections were planned and that numerous Palestinian parliamentarians remained in Israeli administrative detention. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation, bring any further developments to the Committee's attention and encourage legislative elections as soon as possible.

Concerning South Sudan, the IPU had remained seized of the efforts under way, including at the parliamentary level, to resolve the conflict in that country through dialogue. The Executive Committee had also discussed an offer by UNHCR to support a joint mission to the country by the Executive Committee and the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law in order to assess the situation and determine how the IPU could best support relief efforts. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation and bring any further developments to the Committee's attention.

In Sri Lanka, there had been positive developments. The crisis provoked by the sacking of the country's Prime Minister and the attempt to dissolve parliament had been resolved, normalcy restored and dates set for parliamentary and presidential elections. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation.

As to the Syrian Arab Republic, where recent developments had included progress towards the drafting of a new constitution, the Executive Committee had concluded after a review that the IPU Working Group on Syria had been superseded in usefulness by events and should be dissolved. It had noted the standing invitation from the Speaker of Parliament for the Secretary General to conduct a second mission to the country. A formal invitation was awaited. UNHCR had also offered to assist in organizing a joint mission to the country with the Executive Committee and the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law with a view to assessing the situation and identifying possible action to improve it. The Executive Committee meanwhile recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation.

With respect to Turkey, a report on the recent IPU mission to the country would be delivered under a different agenda item. The recommendation of the Executive Committee was that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation, pursue its efforts through the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians to resolve the human rights cases under consideration in Turkey, and encourage Members to raise those cases and the overall situation in their bilateral contacts with the Turkish authorities.

In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the long-standing crisis continued. The National Assembly was dominated by an opposition at loggerheads with the ruling authorities, and opposition parliamentarians in particular were subjected to various forms of harassment, which had prompted the

IPU to issue statements in defence of the Parliament's integrity. The Executive Committee had taken note of the conditional release of the Deputy Speaker and recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation and to pursue authorization of the promised IPU mission to the country under optimal conditions. Concerning complaints received about a lack of political balance in the Venezuelan delegation to the IPU, the Executive Committee recommended that the Secretary General should communicate in writing with the Venezuelan Speaker to underline the importance of an inclusive delegation in fostering dialogue aimed at resolving the Venezuelan crisis.

Ms. D. Solórzano (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), stressing that the IPU clearly recognized the legitimacy of the National Assembly as the country's Parliament, said that, owing to financial constraints, her delegation comprised only two members but was inclusive in that they each represented different political parties.

The President confirmed that the Venezuelan National Assembly was indeed the only Venezuelan parliament recognized by the IPU.

The Secretary General, reaffirming that fact, said that the IPU had corresponded exclusively with the Speaker of the National Assembly to encourage political inclusiveness in Venezuelan delegations to IPU Assemblies.

Ms. R. Kavakci Kan (Turkey) said that the Venezuelan people alone must decide the country's future, without any external interference or bias towards one side.

The President, emphasizing that the IPU took no sides in any of its decisions, said that the IPU worked on the basis of parliamentary solidarity to defend the human rights of parliamentarians but was politically impartial. Its six years of efforts to organize a mission to the country, at the invitation of the National Assembly, had come to nothing owing to the failure of the Venezuelan Government to respond.

Ms. D. Solórzano (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that she acknowledged those efforts and that the Venezuelan authorities wished to prevent the IPU from seeing the reality on the ground. Her delegation was restricted to two members, in accordance with the Statutes of the IPU, for arrears in the payment of financial contributions to the Organization. While the delegation could not therefore possibly include all parties represented in the Venezuelan Parliament, its two members nonetheless represented two thirds of those parties.

The Governing Council took note of the information communicated to it in respect of the situation of the parliaments mentioned and approved the recommendations of the Executive Committee relating thereto.

Ms. K.J. Beteta Rubin (Peru) urged the IPU to monitor the situation in her country, where the Parliament had been dissolved, leaving the Peruvian people stranded without democratic representation.

The President said that the IPU had received numerous complaints about the situation in Peru and intended to issue a statement on the matter. It also intended to follow up on those complaints, as well as on others received pertaining to Ecuador and El Salvador, at the 142nd Assembly in April 2020.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.

Third sitting

Thursday, 17 October

The sitting was called to order at 2.50 p.m., with Ms. G. Cuevas Barron (Mexico), President of the IPU, in the Chair.

The President proposed a change to the Governing Council's order of work to take account of the lack of time remaining. The Council would first be called on to consider agenda items that required action, after which the remaining items would be taken up. Item 12 of the agenda, reporting by Members on IPU-related activities, would be addressed only if sufficient time remained. Under that item, the reports on action taken by Members to follow up on IPU resolutions, Assemblies and other initiatives and on engagement of parliaments with the United Nations could be found in documents CL/205/12-R.1 and R.2 respectively.

It was so agreed.

Ms. R.A. Kadaga (Uganda) said that at the time of the 125th anniversary of the IPU, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians had resolved that a photograph of German MP Ms. Antonie Pfülf, the first woman to speak at an IPU conference, should be hung at IPU Headquarters alongside the photographs of other eminent figures in the history of the IPU. She asked whether the necessary action had been taken.

The Secretary General gave assurances that the photograph of Ms. Pfülf as the founding mother of the IPU had now been displayed prominently at the Organization's Headquarters.

Item 10 of the agenda

STRENGTHENING THE WORK OF THE IPU

(a) Proposed changes to the mandate and functioning of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade
(CL/205/10(a)-P.1)

The President informed the Council that, following its discussions at the 140th Assembly, regarding how the IPU could increase its engagement on economic issues, the Executive Committee had reviewed the mandate and name of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade and recommended that the Standing Committee's name should be changed to Standing Committee on Sustainable Development. The IPU's existing trade-related body, the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO and its Steering Committee, was well positioned to address the trade issues in which the IPU engaged. The name change would take effect immediately. The bureaux of all of the standing committees would continue to be made up of 18 members (three per geopolitical group), with the addition of ex officio members, namely the President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and the President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

The Governing Council endorsed the recommendations of the Executive Committee.

(b) Proposal to establish a Working Group on Science and Technology
(CL/205/10(b)-P.1)

The President said that in the light of the increasing importance of science and technology both in general and in parliamentary life, the Executive Committee had welcomed the proposal to establish a Working Group on Science and Technology and had requested that working arrangements and activities for the Group should be discussed and presented for formal consideration at the 142nd Assembly.

It was so agreed.

(c) Proposal to establish a Working Group on Political Sanctions
(CL/205/10(c)-P.1)

The President said that, in the light of the IPU's past statements against political sanctions and visa restrictions imposed on parliamentarians, the Executive Committee had been largely in favour of setting up a working group to explore that matter under the principle of parliamentary solidarity. Over the coming months, the modalities, terms of reference and composition of the working group would be finalized and subsequently submitted to the Governing Council for approval.

Mr. J. Whittingdale (United Kingdom), supported by **Ms. R. Saint-Germain (Canada)**, expressed his delegation's significant concerns and said that sanctions were an essential and legitimate aspect of the United Kingdom's foreign policy, which were imposed against violators of human rights. The Magnitsky List, naming such individuals, had been adopted by the United Kingdom, and endorsed by several other parliaments, with the European Parliament calling on European Union member States to follow suit. Parliamentarians should not be exempt from sanctions; in countries where parliamentarians were immune from prosecution that exemption could be abused to place individuals in parliament with the intention of circumventing the justice system. Such sanctions were not in breach of the Charter of the United Nations or of international law. The proposal to establish such a working group had been presented at short notice. While he would not be averse to discussing the matter further, a clear mandate should be presented before the group was established, and a draft resolution on the matter should be debated.

Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland), supported by **Ms. R.A. Kadaga (Uganda)**, said that she was very firmly in favour of the recommendation by the Executive Committee. The proposal had been sent to the Secretariat on 18 September 2019. The proposed mandate and composition of the working group would be considered by the Secretariat and submitted to the Governing Council for discussion at the 142nd Assembly. As a young human rights lawyer in the early 1980s, she had visited parliamentarians in South-East Asia who had been restricted by unjustified sanctions. The legislation of one country, while being that country's prerogative, should not victimize parliamentarians around the world. The establishment of the working group would be an act of solidarity between the world's parliamentarians. While particular individuals who were known to have committed crimes should not enjoy impunity, the general suspicion that parliamentarians could be used as government accomplices was not sufficient grounds on which to impose severely restrictive sanctions. Parliamentarians could not fulfil their oversight role effectively when under sanction. Their freedom of movement and expression must be preserved.

Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), supported by **Ms. D. O'Neill (Australia)**, said that the IPU should be able to discuss all issues, with all parliamentary colleagues able to participate. A working group could not, however, be established without reworking and clarifying its mandate and terms of reference. He recalled the similar discussion that had taken place surrounding the establishment of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism. Consideration must be given to the potential mandate and objectives of the group, and its composition and methods of appointment of its membership.

The President clarified that for the time being the Council was only being asked to take note of the recommendation made by the Executive Committee to establish a working group. A formal decision on whether to establish the group would be taken once more information on its mandate, terms of reference and modalities was available. In the absence of any further comments or objections, she would take it that the Council wished to take note of the Executive Committee's recommendation.

It was so agreed.

Item 11 of the agenda

AMENDMENTS TO THE IPU STATUTES AND RULES
(CL/205/11-P.1 and P.2)

The President said that the Executive Committee had examined three proposed amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules submitted by the Gender Partnership Group, as contained in document CL/205/11-P.1, by which the sanctions against single-sex delegations would be strengthened and incentives offered to gender-balanced delegations.

The Council approved the proposed amendments as submitted by the Gender Partnership Group.

Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the Twelve Plus group, said that he wished to register the Twelve Plus group's lack of support for the amendment to Rule 1.2 that further restricted the number of representatives for single-gender delegations from three to one members, which it considered too severe.

The President informed the Council that the Executive Committee had also considered an amendment proposed by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (CL/205/11-P.2), concerning the quorum for voting in the Committee. The Executive Committee had not recommended that amendment for adoption.

Item 14 of the agenda

ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES

(b) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians
(CL/205/14(b)-R.1 to R.3 and P.1)

Ms. A. Jerkov (Serbia), *President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians*, presented the reports on the work of the Committee, which during its recent session had considered 305 cases of alleged human rights violations against parliamentarians. Of those cases, 56 per cent were presented for the first time. The decisions currently before the Governing Council pertained to 229 current and former parliamentarians in six countries. Of those 229 parliamentarians, 96 were from Venezuela, 69 from Yemen and 57 from Turkey. The Committee noted with deep regret the continuous rise in the number of parliamentary colleagues facing repression.

AFRICA

Uganda

On 14 August 2018, five members of the Ugandan parliament had been violently arrested, in the district of Arua after President Yoweri Museveni's convoy had reportedly been pelted with stones. According to credible reports, two of the parliamentarians had been tortured and two others ill-treated by the security forces. All five had been charged with treason, which carried the death penalty. Despite the swift action of the Parliament of Uganda and its Speaker to establish the facts, condemn the violations of the rights of the members of parliament, and demand immediate accountability, no one had been held to account. Furthermore, the five members of parliament were facing additional charges. The Committee was particularly concerned about the situation of Mr. Kyagulanyi, who was also a well-known singer. The prohibition of his performances and other restrictions placed on him violated his rights to freedom of expression and assembly. The Committee urged the Ugandan authorities to lift those prohibitions immediately. The long-overdue dispatch of a Committee delegation to Uganda was ever more urgent. The Committee was pleased to be able to count on the support of the Speaker of Parliament and hoped that the other relevant authorities in Uganda would also approve the mission.

Ms. R.A. Kadaga (Uganda) said that her delegation objected to paragraph 5 of the draft decision, which stated that the Committee's request for a mission had not received endorsement. She had written to the Committee to extend an invitation, which had received no response. She reiterated the invitation to the Committee. She would endeavour to arrange any meetings that the Committee requested. She had made every effort to defend the parliamentarians in question. The draft decision presupposed that the Ugandan authorities had been heard by the Committee, which they had not. The Committee must cease making excuses and take the next steps to make the relevant arrangements for its mission.

Ms. A. Jerkov (Serbia), *President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians*, said that the Committee would forward a list of requested meetings, including with representatives of the police and judicial authorities, and would count on Ms. Kadaga's support in arranging those meetings so that the Committee's mission could go ahead.

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

AMERICAS

Brazil

The Committee had considered for the first time the case of Mr. Jean Wyllys de Matos Santos, a member of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies since 2010. He was the first openly gay Brazilian parliamentarian and a well-known and active supporter of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community's efforts to fight discrimination.

In a video message transmitted to the Governing Council, Mr. Wyllys described how death threats and a hate campaign against him had led him to decide against serving his third term as a member of parliament, for which he had been democratically elected. The Brazilian authorities had failed to acknowledge his reports of the threats against him, and had ignored precautionary measures to protect him that had been ordered by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. He had therefore been forced to go into exile in Europe where he currently lived and observed Brazilian politics.

The Committee was deeply concerned about the threats and intimidation against Mr. Wyllys on account of his political views and sexual orientation, and called on the Brazilian authorities to do everything possible to hold those responsible to account. The Brazilian Parliament should have a particular interest in the case and should use its oversight function to ensure that justice was done.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Jean Wyllys de Matos Santos.

Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Since the 140th Assembly, the Committee had received numerous and extensive new reports of acts of intimidation against members of the Venezuelan National Assembly. Thus far, 96 parliamentarians from the opposition had faced reprisals for their work. Harassment was taking place with impunity and at times seemed to be inspired or instigated by high-ranking officials from the governing party. The Committee called for an end to the harassment and in particular for the release of Mr. Juan Requesens, who had been detained since August 2018 in appalling conditions and without any due process. Given that the governing parties had returned to the National Assembly to occupy their seats, the Committee hoped that the National Assembly would be allowed to discharge its functions fully. An IPU mission to Venezuela would be necessary to address the Committee's human rights concerns. The Committee had yet to receive assurances in writing from the Venezuelan Government that such a mission could take place.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to 96 Venezuelan parliamentarians.

ASIA

Mongolia

In April 2019, significant developments had taken place in Mongolia with regard to the case of Mr. Zorig Sanjasuuren. A video had been released showing the torture of the two individuals convicted of Mr. Zorig's assassination, and the Mongolian authorities had publicly acknowledged that deficiencies had occurred in the judicial process. A new parliamentary ad hoc committee had been set up to review the case, and the two convicts had been transferred to a prison hospital. The Committee had undertaken its fourth mission to Mongolia in June. The Committee was grateful to the Speaker and his Deputy for having facilitated the smooth conduct of the mission, including meetings with the three convicts in prison. Unfortunately, little progress had been made in identifying the true perpetrators of the crime. The Committee's mission report, contained in document CL/205/14(b)-R.1, called for the immediate release of the two tortured convicts, and for greater transparency in the case.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Zorig Sanjasuuren.

EUROPE

Turkey

The Committee was grateful to the Turkish parliamentary authorities for having received, in June 2019, a delegation of members of the IPU Executive Committee and the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. The mission's purpose had been to obtain first-hand information

about the cases of the 57 current and former Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) parliamentarians and the political and security situation in Turkey. The mission report and extensive comments provided by the Turkish authorities were presented in document CL/205/14(b)-R.2. The Committee's primary concern was the systematic affirmation by the Turkish authorities that the HDP, a legally authorized political party in Turkey, and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) were working in close collaboration. Multiple legal proceedings had been brought against current and former HDP parliamentarians on the basis of that assertion, which were effectively criminalizing legitimate political activities and constituted a violation of the rights to freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association. Several current and former HDP parliamentarians had also been prosecuted or sentenced to prison terms for insulting the President, the Government or the Turkish State.

Ms. R. Kavakci Kan (Turkey) said that the Turkish Parliament had been happy to host the IPU delegation. The mission report had been made available to the Council at short notice; it did not seem fair for members of the Governing Council to adopt a decision with whose details they were unfamiliar. The report did not give a balanced view from all sides of the situation; the Turkish authorities had provided information and yet were continually being asked for more. According to the Rules and Practices of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (Annex IV, article 1, paragraph 12) a mission in no way led, "either directly or indirectly, to the expression of any value judgment whatsoever of a situation in general or political regime", and yet several value judgments had been made with regard to the situation in Turkey. When invited to observe a trial, the IPU had deemed that the executive was interfering with the judiciary.

The report did not mention the mothers holding a sit-in protest outside the HDP headquarters for their disappeared sons who had been kidnapped by the PKK. Members of the HDP did not have their political activities curtailed; in fact, there were members of the HDP in the Turkish delegation to the present IPU Assembly.

Mr. H. Ozsoy (Turkey), a member of the HDP, said that his party had appreciated the IPU mission to Turkey, where parliamentary democracy was facing severe challenges. Since the mission, the situation had worsened. Several Kurdish mayors had been suspended from office and replaced by Government-appointed governors. Such appointments were unconstitutional. The refusal of President Erdoğan to allow the release of Mr. Selahattin Demirtaş, former co-Chair of the HDP who had been imprisoned since 2016, constituted a clear case of presidential interference in the work of the judiciary. Members of parliament in Turkey were regularly beaten up by the police; seven had been hospitalized in the previous two months. He therefore called on the IPU to talk to the Speaker of the Turkish Parliament specifically about police hostility. The HDP was opposed to the Turkish incursion in north-east Syria and had a right to protest about the matter. Its members, however, were not free to go about their political business. As deputy President of the party, he was unable to hold a press conference in his hometown; he had been unlawfully prevented from entering his hometown for five hours on the day the mayor had been suspended from office; having voted in favour of the emergency item proposed by France during the present IPU Assembly, the Speaker of the Turkish Parliament had held a press conference condemning him, and a smear campaign was under way in the Turkish media, calling into question his loyalty to the country. He sincerely hoped that those challenges would be overcome and that parliamentary democracy would be restored to Turkey.

The President thanked the Parliament of Turkey for having openly received the IPU delegation and facilitated meetings with all political parties. She welcomed the fact that Turkey had sent a plural delegation to the IPU Assembly.

Ms. A. Jerkov (Serbia), *President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians*, said that the mission, and thus the mission report, had reflected the nature of the work of the joint delegation, which had included members of the Executive Committee, and was therefore broader in scope than a mission relating only to the work of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. The fact that she and the President of the IPU had been present underscored how important the IPU considered the cases in Turkey, and was testament to the IPU's dedication to democracy in Turkey. The Committee was grateful for the information provided by the Turkish authorities. That notwithstanding, further information on the substance of the cases would be useful, particularly since the complainants claimed to be being prosecuted for their political beliefs or ethnicity.

Ms. R. Kavakci Kan (Turkey) said that there was clearly a close relationship between the HDP and the PKK. Turkey was protecting its borders from within the Syrian Arab Republic, with concerns about the Syrian branch of the PKK. On police brutality, HDP members of parliament had shown violence towards police officers. In a crowd, they might not be recognized by police as being

parliamentarians and might be pushed around. Parliamentarians in such situations must declare clearly their status as members of parliament. If a police officer wilfully caused harm in full knowledge that an individual was a parliamentarian, that would indeed be problematic. Lastly, regarding media attacks and threats against Mr. Ozsoy, many people with strong political views faced such attacks and threats; she had also been the victim of such things. While immediate threats of course needed to be taken seriously, receiving negative commentary was an inevitable part of the life of a politician.

Mr. B. Merjaneh (Syrian Arab Republic) said that Turkish forces had not entered the Syrian Arab Republic to protect Turkish borders or fight terrorism. On the contrary, Turkey had invaded the Syrian Arab Republic and had armed Kurdish groups to fight the Syrian State.

The Governing Council adopted the draft decision relating to the cases of 57 Turkish parliamentarians.

Mr. W. William (Seychelles) said that the fact that Turkey had sent a plural delegation, and that the members of that delegation, despite their differences, were sitting together and delivering statements, was a clear example of a functioning platform for dialogue. That spirit of cooperation should be commended and encouraged.

MIDDLE EAST

Libya

The Committee had before it a new case of a Libyan parliamentarian, Ms. Seham Sergiwa, who had been abducted from her home on 17 July 2019. The Committee was extremely worried about her fate and was concerned that her abduction had been in response to her political stance against the military operations in Tripoli. The Committee's hearing with the Libyan delegation had yielded no information on the status of the investigation or the likely identity of the perpetrators. The Committee urged the Libyan authorities to do everything possible to find Ms. Sergiwa and ensure that the attack against her did not go unpunished.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of Ms. Seham Sergiwa.

Yemen

The Committee had reviewed the case of 69 Yemeni members of parliament, which it had discussed with the Yemeni delegation. The Committee was concerned about the large number of parliamentarians who, since 2014, had been subjected to several violations, including attempted murder, abduction, and arbitrary arrest and detention. The Committee called on the authorities to do everything possible to hold the culprits to account and prevent the recurrence of such human rights abuses. The Committee was also concerned about the cases of several parliamentarians whose immunity had been lifted by the Sana'a-based House of Representatives, thereby facilitating their prosecution on charges of treason, which was punishable by death. The Committee urged the judicial authorities to refrain from prosecuting the parliamentarians and to drop the charges against them. During its recent session, the Committee had received a complaint from the parliamentary authorities based in Sana'a, regarding alleged violations committed by forces and militias loyal to the internationally recognized government against parliamentarians who supported the Sana'a based House of Representatives. The Committee would examine that complaint and report back to the Governing Council in due time.

Mr. S. Al-Barkani (Yemen) said that he was one of 35 parliamentarians whose property had been confiscated. The culprits were rebel groups, not "the authorities". The parliament in Sana'a was not legitimate. Parliamentarians were being threatened with death; the IPU had a responsibility to exert pressure on anyone threatening the lives of parliamentarians and should therefore condemn the actions of the rebel groups. The Islamic Republic of Iran was behind the rebel groups and therefore had the power to bring an end to the situation. He therefore hoped that the IPU President would use her good offices to discuss the matter with the Iranian delegation. The IPU must take strong and decisive action to ensure that the lives and property of those parliamentarians were protected. The IPU should take care when referring to "authorities" not to endorse rebel groups that were responsible for grave violations of human rights in Yemen. The draft decision should be revised accordingly. The so-called parliament in Sana'a was not a parliament and should not be referred to as such.

Mr. A. Abdel Aal (Egypt) said that the IPU should recognize the Yemeni authorities recognized as legitimate by the United Nations. Rebel groups might act as if they were governing the country but they should not be acknowledged or endorsed as such by the international community. The atrocities against parliamentary colleagues should be condemned and the draft decision should use the same terminology as accepted under international law.

Ms. A. Jerkov (Serbia), *President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians*, said that the Committee's mandate was to look into violations of the human rights of parliamentarians and former parliamentarians; it did not have the authority to deem a government or a parliament legitimate or illegitimate. The Committee had received the cases of the Sana'a-based parliamentarians, which it had deemed admissible and would consider in due course.

Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland), member of the Executive Committee, took the Chair.

Ms. W. Bani Mustafa (Jordan) requested a reading of the draft decision, which was available in English and French only, for the purposes of an interpretation into the other working languages of the meeting, to allow all delegations the possibility to understand it fully.

Ms. A. Jerkov (Serbia), *President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians*, read out the draft decision on the situation of parliamentarians in Yemen, as contained in document CL/205/14(b)-R.3. The decision, which had been drafted in line with the mandate and scope of work of the Committee, referred to a new case that the Committee had deemed admissible. It was unlikely that the case would be resolved quickly; the decision was therefore likely to be the first of several. The Committee would examine new information and evidence closely, as and when it became available, and, pursuant to its mandate, would submit new decisions to the Governing Council for adoption.

The Chairperson asked whether the Governing Council was willing to adopt the draft decision, subject to the comments and concerns expressed by the delegation of Yemen.

The Governing Council adopted the draft decision relating to the cases of 69 Yemeni parliamentarians.

Mr. A. Alahmad (Palestine) expressed his delegation's surprise that the report of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians had not contained decisions relating to any cases in Palestine. The cases of Palestinian parliamentarians who had been persecuted and imprisoned following the Israeli occupation of Palestine had been taken up by the Committee several times in the past, and the Committee had tried, unsuccessfully owing to lack of Israeli cooperation, to send a mission to look more closely into the situation of those parliamentarians. Those cases had not been resolved and must therefore remain on the Committee's agenda.

The Chairperson gave assurances that the cases pertaining to Palestine were still on the Committee's agenda and were being followed up. Draft decisions on those cases would be presented to the Governing Council at its next session.

Ms. A. Jerkov (Serbia), *President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians*, said that on 10 December, Human Rights Day, the IPU would issue a world map with statistics and information on the human rights violations that the Committee had examined over the course of the year. The Committee urged all IPU Member Parliaments to use that material to draw attention to colleagues at risk. The solidarity of colleagues would boost the Committee's positive impact on individual cases and could contribute to consolidating the institution of parliament.

Ms. G. Cuevas Barron (Mexico), President of the IPU, resumed the Chair.

The President announced that the Governing Council would be required to elect one member of the Bureau of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. The Secretariat had received the candidature of Ms. A. Reynoso (Mexico).

The Governing Council approved the candidature of Ms. A. Reynoso (Mexico).

(a) Forum of Women Parliamentarians
(CL/205/14(a)-R.1)

Ms. G. Čomić (Serbia), *President of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians*, presented the report, as contained in document CL/205/14(a)-R.1. The Forum had been attended by 72 women and 12 men. The involvement of men in the Forum's work was particularly important and should be

encouraged. The Forum had discussed the importance of ensuring equality in law and had emphasized the need for all States to step up their implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Parliaments should take part in State-party periodic reporting on the implementation of the Convention. Enhancing women's participation in parliament was key to eliminating discrimination in law, which persisted on matters such as land ownership, employment, nationality and citizenship. The situation of women with unequal legal status, such as refugees and stateless women, must be addressed. Steps must also be taken to tackle gender-based violence in society as a whole and in politics in particular. With that in mind, a gender parity debate had been organized on preventing sexism, violence and harassment against women in parliament. Participants had called for studies to be conducted at the national and regional levels, and for wide dissemination of the IPU guidelines on eliminating sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments and their application by all parliaments. Lastly, the Forum had been briefed on the work of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, and had reviewed the draft resolution to be adopted by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, and had submitted proposed amendments thereto, all of which had been accepted by the Standing Committee.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

(c) Committee on Middle East Questions
(CL/205/14(c)-R.1 and P.1 to P.3)

Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada), *President of the Committee on Middle East Questions*, presented the report contained in document CL/205/14(c)-R.1. The Committee had not been quorate, but had decided to continue its work, on the understanding that any decisions it took would not be binding. The Committee had examined the situation in Israel, Palestine, Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. The Committee had heard a presentation from the Yemeni delegation. Members of the Committee had recognized that there was only one parliament in Yemen, working in line with the Constitution, and had applauded the initiative and commitment of the leader of the delegation to use the IPU as a platform for dialogue. The Committee had also been briefed by the head of the Libyan delegation: despite division in Libya, the House of Representatives was making every effort to hold parliamentary sessions. The Committee had expressed its dismay regarding recent developments in the Syrian Arab Republic and discussed the possibility of undertaking a mission to gain a better understanding of the situation on the ground. The Committee had regretted the absence of an Israeli delegation from its proceedings.

Lastly, the Committee had agreed to hold a round table to discuss its role and mandate, and had reiterated its wish to undertake a visit to the region soon, preferably after the convening of the 21st Knesset.

Ms. W. Bani Mustafa (Jordan) said that Israel had arrested two young Jordanians who were being held in administrative detention without charge, one of whom had recently gone on hunger strike. She requested that their situation should be added to the agenda of the Committee on Middle East Questions and looked into as soon as possible.

The President said that note had been taken of that request. She announced that the Governing Council was called on to elect three female members of the Committee. Candidatures had been received from Ms. F. Benbadis (Algeria), Ms. I. Al Madhy (Iraq) and Ms. H. Martins (Portugal).

The Governing Council took note of the report and approved the three candidatures.

(d) Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law
(CL/205/14(d)-R.1 and P.1 to P.4)

Ms. A. Vadai (Hungary), *President of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law*, presented the report of the Committee, as contained in document CL/205/14(d)-R.1. The Committee's discussions had focused on strengthening parliamentary engagement in implementing international humanitarian law and cooperating with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The Committee had recommended that the IPU and the ICRC should consider organizing regional workshops on international humanitarian law and collect information on good practices. The Committee had also discussed follow-up to the emergency item resolution adopted at the 137th IPU Assembly in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, on the Rohingya crisis, and had recommended holding a workshop in Myanmar on the role of parliament in

peacebuilding. Refugee protection had also been on the agenda, including discussions on refugee-related crises where the Committee's engagement could contribute to overall efforts, and the IPU's contribution to the Global Compact on Refugees. The Committee had drafted two pledges, which it hoped the Governing Council would approve for transmission to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The President informed the Council that it would be required to elect four members of the Committee. Candidatures had been received from Ms. J. Salma (Bahrain), Mr. C. Lacroix (Belgium), Ms. S. Patra (India) and Ms. M. Ndiaye (Senegal).

The Governing Council took note of the report, approved the two pledges and approved the four candidatures.

(e) Gender Partnership Group
(CL/205/14(e)-R.1)

Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal), *Rapporteur for the Gender Partnership Group*, presented the report contained in document CL/205/14(e)-R.1. The Group had examined the composition of delegations at the 141st IPU Assembly and had found that women had accounted for 30.6 per cent of delegates. Thirty delegations present were gender balanced; 17 delegations comprised men only. The Group had proposed three amendments to the Statutes and Rules of the IPU, which would strengthen sanctions against single-sex delegations, the adoption of which by the Governing Council was particularly welcome. The Group had agreed to launch a process against sexism and sexual harassment at IPU Assemblies and other meetings, and had noted with satisfaction the launch of the *IPU guidelines on eliminating sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments*. The Group had held constructive dialogues with delegations from parliaments where women were seriously underrepresented, such as Maldives and Oman, and had noted the efforts under way and the progress being made. Her own parliament had achieved parity, despite cultural obstacles, which should be a sign that parity was possible in all parliaments.

The meeting was suspended at 5 p.m. and resumed at 6.55 p.m.

(f) Advisory Group on Health
(CL/205/14(f)-R.1)

Ms. G. Katuta (Zambia), *President of the Advisory Group on Health*, read out the report contained in document CL/205/14(f)-R.1. The Advisory Group had discussed the findings of its field visit to examine the health situation of young people in Serbia and look into the national HIV response. While it had welcomed the provision of free health care to students and commended the good cooperation among stakeholders, it had also noted with concern the knowledge gaps on sexual and reproductive health that persisted among young people, in particular ethnic minorities. The Group had also expressed concern regarding the negative impacts of legislation criminalizing sex workers and their clients, which had led to discrimination and barriers to health. The Group had discussed follow-up to the IPU resolution on universal health coverage to be adopted at the 141st IPU Assembly and had asked the Secretariat to explore the possibility of a side event on health at the 142nd Assembly, and to organize a visit to the World Health Organization headquarters.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

(g) Group of Facilitators for Cyprus
(CL/205/14(g)-R.1 and P.1)

Mr. M. Mijatović (Serbia), *Rapporteur for the Group of Facilitators for Cyprus*, presented the report contained in document CL/205/14(g)-R.1 and said that the Group of Facilitators had met with representatives of the delegation of Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot political party. They had expressed their desire to continue negotiating and seek a solution to the situation in Cyprus in line with the values and principles of the European Union. The people of Cyprus would all benefit from a sustainable and just solution.

The President announced that the Governing Council was required to appoint two new facilitators. Thus far only one candidature had been received, which was that of Mr. M. Mijatović (Serbia).

The Governing Council took note of the report and approved the appointment of Mr. M. Mijatović.

(h) Forum of Young Parliamentarians
(CL/205/14(h)-R.1)

Mr. M. Bouva (Suriname), *President of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians*, presented the report on the work of the Forum, as contained in document CL/205/14(h)-R.1. The Forum had reviewed the participation of young parliamentarians in the 141st Assembly and had concluded that more young parliamentarians were needed in all delegations to reach the target of 25 per cent. Members of the Forum had reported on positive developments in their countries with regard to youth participation in politics. The Forum had not only discussed how to attract more young people to parliament but also how to increase the sphere of influence of those already in office. The training hubs and mentorship café that had been set up during the Sixth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians had been particularly welcome and such initiatives should continue. The Forum had also held a special session on what constituted good youth policies. The 141st Assembly had been his first as President of the Forum; he had been particularly heartened that the leadership of the IPU believed, as he did, in the movement for youth participation, which had been under way for 10 years. In that time, much had been done, but still only 2 per cent of the world's parliamentarians were under 30 years of age. The celebration of 10 years of the IPU youth movement should not be marked only with words of encouragement, but should be marked by action and the strong involvement of young people.

The President announced that there was one vacancy on the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians. The candidature of Ms. R. Nikhil Khadse (India) had been received.

The Governing Council took note of the report and approved the appointment of Ms. R. Nikhil Khadse.

(i) High-level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG)
(CL/205/14(i)-R.1 and P.1 to P.4)

Ms. J. Oduol (Kenya), *Vice-Chairperson of the High-level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism*, presented the report on the work of the High-level Advisory Group as contained in document CL/205/14(i)-R.1. The Advisory Group had been addressed by the Secretary General, who had presented the trilateral agreement concluded between the IPU, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT). The Group had also been briefed on the outcomes of the joint IPU-United Nations regional conferences on counter-terrorism. A report had also been presented on the financial situation of the IPU-United Nations Joint Programme on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism. The contribution from UNOCT of US\$ 2.1 million for the first two years of the Programme was particularly welcome, and the contributions made by the Parliaments of Bangladesh, Benin, China and the United Arab Emirates had been applauded. Lastly, the Group had been presented with a road map of future activities, which it had welcomed.

The President announced that the Governing Council was required to elect four members of the High-level Advisory Group. Candidatures had been received from Mr. S. Chiheb (Algeria) for the African Group, Ms. A. Karapetyan (Armenia) and Mr. K. Kosachev (Russian Federation) for the Eurasia Group and Ms. A. Vadai (Hungary) for the Twelve Plus Group.

The Governing Council noted the report and approved the four candidatures.

Item 13 of the agenda

REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED MEETINGS
(CL/205/13-R.1)

The President asked whether the Governing Council would agree to post online the video clips showing highlights of several of the specialized meetings for Members to view at their leisure.

It was so agreed.

Interregional Seminar on Parliamentary Capacity-Building and the Further Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

Mr. Chen Fuli (China) said that the Interregional Seminar had been hosted jointly by the People's Congress of China and the IPU. It had been attended by 34 parliamentarians from eight parliaments from three regions: Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Discussions had focused on: the role of legislation; developing effective, sustainable, participatory and environmentally friendly agriculture; building cooperation models; empowerment of rural women; and encouraging youth participation in politics. Participants had shared their aspirations for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and had agreed that everyone could benefit from sharing their development experiences. China had also hosted recent seminars for the Parliament of Myanmar and for the French-speaking African countries, through which legislative collaboration and exchanges of experiences in governance had been enhanced.

Item 15 of the agenda

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY (GENEVA, 16-20 APRIL 2020)

The President informed the Governing Council that, as previously agreed, the next IPU Assembly would take place in Geneva, Switzerland, from 16 to 20 April 2020. The Executive Committee would meet on 14 and 15 April, and the Governing Council would meet on 17 and 20 April.

It was so agreed.

Item 16 of the agenda

FUTURE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MEETINGS

(CL/205/16-P.1)

The Secretary General presented the list of forthcoming meetings, contained in document CL/205/16-P.1. The 143rd and 144th IPU assemblies would be held in Kigali, Rwanda, on 11-14 October 2020, and Nairobi, Kenya, in March 2021, respectively. In follow-up to the resolution on universal health coverage, discussions were under way with the Director-General of the World Health Organization regarding the possibility of a meeting for the chairs of health and budget committees, to take place during the 73rd World Health Assembly to mobilize support for universal health coverage.

Several of the meetings listed required the Governing Council's approval. Only meetings for which funding had been secured, either from voluntary sources or from the IPU's regular budget, were included on the list. Several of the events still required a venue; he called on Members to be forthcoming with hosting invitations. The World Conference on Inter-faith and Interethnic Dialogue, already approved by the Governing Council, had not previously been included on the list as it would take place in 2022. The Conference had already been approved by the Governing Council at its 204th session in Doha, Qatar, and preparations were under way.

The Governing Council approved the list of future inter-parliamentary meetings.

Item 17 of the agenda

APPOINTMENT OF TWO INTERNAL AUDITORS FOR 2020

(cf. Rule 41 of the Rules of the Governing Council)

(CL/205/17-P.1)

The President informed the Governing Council that it would be required to appoint two internal auditors for the 2020 fiscal year. Thus far, only one candidature had been received, that of Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium).

The Governing Council agreed to appoint Mr. A. Gryffroy as internal auditor.

Item 18 of the agenda

ELECTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(cf. Article 21(k) of the Statutes and Rules 37, 38 and 39 of the Rules of the Governing Council)
(CL/205/18-P.1 to P.7)

The President said that the Governing Council was required to elect seven members of the Executive Committee. Candidatures had been received from: Mr. J. Mudenda (Zimbabwe) and Ms. E. Anyakun (Uganda), submitted by the African Group; Ms. P. Krairiksh (Thailand) and Mr. R. Rabbani (Pakistan), submitted by the Asia-Pacific Group; Mr. A. Saidov (Uzbekistan), submitted by the Eurasia Group; Mr. J.P. Letelier (Chile), submitted by the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean; and Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden), submitted by the Twelve Plus Group. The Executive Committee had elected Mr. G. Chen (China) as its new Vice-President.

The Governing Council agreed to elect the seven candidates for membership of the Executive Committee and approved the election of Mr. G. Chen as Vice-President.

Item 19 of the agenda

OTHER BUSINESS

**Preparatory Committee for the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament
(Vienna, 17–21 August 2020)**

The President informed the Governing Council that it was called on to approve the nominations received from the geopolitical groups for eight vacancies on the Preparatory Committee for the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament. Nominations had been received from: Mr. S. Chenine (Algeria), submitted by the African Group; Ms. Z. Greceanii (Republic of Moldova), submitted by the Eurasia Group; and Ms. L. Rojas (Mexico), Mr. B. Llano (Paraguay) and Mr. C. Litardo (Ecuador) submitted by the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The Governing Council approved the five candidatures.

The President suggested that the remaining three seats should be filled by the following members of the Executive Committee: Mr. J. Mudenda (Zimbabwe), Mr. J.P. Letelier (Chile) and Ms. P. Krairiksh (Thailand), to ensure equitable geographic representation.

It was so agreed.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

The President thanked all participants for their contributions to the work of the 205th session of the Governing Council, which she thereby declared closed.

The sitting rose at 7.40 p.m.