



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

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IPU Presidential Elections

Candidate Hearings – 21 October 2020

Virtual Candidate hearings for the position of IPU President were held on 21 October 2020. Written questions received from IPU Members in the event-chat were shared with the candidates. This document shares the questions, and written responses received from each Candidate.

I. Question addressed to all candidates

<i>(1) Do you have any strategic plans to give a win win solution to irregular migration as opposed to the forced deportation? (The Gambia / Mr Billay G. Tunkara)</i>	
Mr. Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani (Pakistan)	<p>I believe there are multiple dynamics behind the phenomenon of irregular migration. Generally, search of employment, better economic and living prospects, and an effort to escape persecution and human rights violations have been the important factor causing irregular immigration from the poor countries, which in itself calls to give ever more attention towards the economic development of such countries. In addition, 'Conflict situations and regions' are also one of the main reasons behind irregular migration. And it is important to note that such immigrants are a "Special Case Study" for their movement has been caused to save their lives; which is their fundamental and highly valued right.</p> <p>If elected IPU president, I envisage a comprehensive plan to be carried out in phased manner on short term, medium term and long term basis to deal with the issue. On the basis of short term, I plan to address the issue of irregular migration by developing consensual guidelines at the forum of IPU for the countries of origin and destination to review, amend and revisit their immigration laws, skilled foreign labor policies and policies to encourage people to adopt legal channels. For those coming from the conflict zones, I plan to channel IPU focus towards ensuring their safe, peaceful and proper settlement on humanitarian grounds. Additionally, I envision increased cooperation between member countries and IPU regional groups to discuss ways and means to increase cooperation between parliaments and the governments and the relevant agencies to chalk out effective legal and policy initiatives to deal with the issue of irregular migration. Besides, I also plan to encourage the member states to engage in early conflict resolution and conflict settlement in order to avoid the situation of irregular migration caused primarily by the conflicts. In addition, as IPU president I envisage to encourage member states to provide free legal assistance to the irregular migrants, to guarantee effective protection of the interest of the individuals and assist them in the ways needed.</p> <p>On medium term basis, I plan to proactively undertake and maximize the international cooperation and governance regarding the international migration and specifically irregular migration. In this phase, I also envisage concentrating IPU activities and deliberative process to create broader understanding and consensus to create conditions for lasting peace in conflict regions so that people don't feel compelled to migration resorting to illegal means.</p> <p>In long term, I plan to work on the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin. The irregular migration can be reduced through minimizing the inclusive economic development that results in collective prosperity for all.</p> <p>I plan to work through the IPU's forum to mainstream the need to adopt solutions to the structural problems that stimulate irregular migration.</p>

	<p>I propose a dedicated unit on migration in the IPU to coordinate, monitor, guide and suggest the host and guest countries to deal with the problem of irregular migration in a way that it is win-win for both migrants and host country.</p>
<p>Mr. Duarte Pacheco (Portugal)</p>	<p>Mr Tunkara,</p> <p>It is essential to ensure peace and development in the places of origin to avoid undesirable migration flows because we all generally prefer to live close to our land, close to our families.</p> <p>The IPU can play an active role in these two fields:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fostering dialogue between parties in conflict and encouraging peaceful solutions;• Inviting international bodies and developed countries to set up investment programmes to promote human and economic development in developing countries. <p>This, of course, coupled with the promotion of good governance programmes to ensure the success of the investment projects which may be set up.</p>
<p>Mr. Akmal Saidov (Uzbekistan)</p>	<p>Dear Mr Billay G. Tunkara,</p> <p>Freedom of movement and choice of place of residence is one of the basic human rights, Which included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948.</p> <p>One of the options to the problem of illegal migration, in contrast to forced deportation, that can be solved in a win-win through readmission.</p> <p>In our difficult time, replete with sudden changes in living conditions due to the political situation, economic restructuring, etc., people are forced to look for ways to improve living conditions by moving to other regions. By contributing to this, a lot of conditions have been created. Readmission has become one of the effective measures for regulation such movements. The mechanism of forcing states to readmission is bilateral and multilateral agreements.</p> <p>The IPU should assist to strengthen cooperation between states, parliaments to solve problems of irregular migration.</p> <p>The IPU should facilitate implementation Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (2018, Marrakech).</p>

<p>Ms. Salma Ataullahjan (Canada)</p>	<p>Thank you for this timely question Mr. Tunkara. I am sorry that we did not have the opportunity to discuss this question in person. With migration increasing around the world and expected to increase as climate change and conflicts continue, this is a very critical issue. I have also followed the difficulties Gambia has faced in repatriating migrants.</p> <p>The most important first step in any solution to the issue of irregular migration and forced deportations is ensuring that governments are treating all migrants with dignity and respect and protecting their rights throughout the process. Emergency shelter should be provided, children should not be detained, and must not be separated from their families. Governments must form their policies on migration by adopting a human lens.</p> <p>On the issue of forced deportation, as an international body we must work to uphold the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits migrants from being returned to a country where there is a risk of persecution, torture, or other serious human rights violations. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (“OHCHR”) Special Rapporteur on the rights of migrants has stated that deportation is in fact more costly and difficult for governments than allowing for the social inclusion of migrants. This means that working to assimilate migrants can be a win-win solution for governments.</p> <p>When Canada faced an increased number of refugees from Syria, I proposed a study on the resettlement of refugees. We travelled across the country meeting and speaking with refugee populations. We found that refugees are better able to adapt to new countries when they have support.</p> <p>Governments and the international community must also prioritize working to address the root causes of irregular migration. Governments must work together and support each other, by creating paths for safer migration.</p>
<p><i>(2) Given the current situation, how can you use technology, and support tech, the youth and start-ups to further support and develop parliamentary work? (United Arab Emirates / Ms Meera Alsuwaidi)</i></p>	
<p>Mr. Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani (Pakistan)</p>	<p>Today’s digital age demands a more coherent and integrated approach to issues that have an impact around the world. Individual parliaments need to be connected to the global network of legislative bodies that are striving to address common issues facing the world.</p> <p>I plan to establish an excellence center within the IPU structure where global IT experts along with Parliamentary staff will come up with innovative tech-based solutions and tools to supplement the work of both parliament and parliamentarians in this digital age. This will include ICT solutions for digitalized parliamentary business. This center will also assist member Parliaments towards developing centralized document management systems for every step of the legislation and oversight functions of Parliaments.</p>

	<p>Bilateral and multilateral cooperation in this regard is very important. If given the chance, I will work towards building synergies between parliaments with strong ICT components and those who have now just begun adopting ICT for their work.</p> <p>We have also ensured a direct link with the youth of our country, through a comprehensive youth inclusivity program which has been immensely successful. This allowed the youth of our country to witness the work of the Parliament. I intend on fully utilizing this experience, and translating it in the form of youth parliamentary exchange programs, whereby youth from the IPU member countries can have a chance to work with both regional parliaments and also IPU Headquarters in Geneva to learn, as prospective leaders of tomorrow, how democracy and parliaments work at both regional and international level and also contribute to the working of the respective and home Parliaments with innovative and fresh ideas.</p> <p>In terms of startups, I propose an IPU-fraternity wide campaign to encourage tech startups that specialize in document management systems and provide support to the functions of parliament and parliamentarians. Parliaments are unique, and therefore supporting such unique startups will definitely improve ICT management in our member Parliaments.</p>
Mr. Duarte Pacheco (Portugal)	<p>Ms Alsuwaidi,</p> <p>It is essential to maintain parliamentary activity and contact with voters in this pandemic situation that we are experiencing.</p> <p>And if face-to-face meetings are not possible, the use of new technologies is essential so that political agents do not withdraw into their shell.</p> <p>Knowing that young people are more aware of these technologies than of traditional ways of doing politics, this is an opportunity to involve them in parliamentary work, disseminating what we do, but also in a desirable interaction with new generations.</p>
Mr. Akmal Saidov (Uzbekistan)	<p>Parliaments around the world are in dire need of fresh blood in their ranks. Currently only 2% of parliamentarians around the world consist of young people. Likewise, interest towards participating in parliamentary decision-making and duty of citizenship is not very high among young people.</p> <p>Improving this situation will diversify the background of parliamentarians from typical collections of career politicians, economists, doctors, lawyers and teachers to young people with more modern professional expertise in the area of high technologies, social networking, non-government organizations and business start-ups. To achieve this young people need to be presented with issues they can help resolve.</p>

	<p>Personally, I pay attention to youth issues, for example at the regional level the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in collaboration with Government of Uzbekistan held the sixth international seminar of the OIC-IPHRC on the theme 'Importance of Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Youth for Building Peaceful Democratic Societies and Sustainable Development' and Samarkand Forum on Human Rights "Youth 2020: Global Solidarity, Sustainable Development and Human Rights" in August 2020.</p> <p>Parliaments need to start collaborating with tertiary educational institutions and youth organizations to reach out towards young people. It is important to carry out this initiative with the mindset that parliaments and the society needs the intellectual and creative potential of young people, as well as their approaches to solving existing problems.</p>
<p>Ms. Salma Ataullahjan (Canada)</p>	<p>Thank you, Ms. Alsuwaidi, I would have liked to have answer this question during our IPU meeting. You raise three very important points of consideration for our future, supporting youth, technology, and start-ups.</p> <p>As I mentioned during our question period, we should be working to encourage and allow for more youth to join parliaments. We need young voices at the table to advise us on the best way to support their cohort. We must also create a positive atmosphere where young people are excited by the possibilities ahead of them.</p> <p>The current climate with COVID-19 has shown us how important it is for governments to be consistently updating and staying abreast of new technology. The pandemic has forced us to quickly adapt to new platforms and technology as online meetings have become a necessity. It took parliaments awhile to adjust to this new reality but now we have seen some of the benefits using modern technology can offer. The IPU should take advantage of new technologies and use them to connect more meaningfully with global communities.</p> <p>In the same way that technology has made it easier to face many of the challenges of our present time, technology has the ability to reduce global inequities and provide solutions to problems such as poverty and climate change. The greater connectivity created by technology also allows for more cross border collaboration. This is something we must encourage and support as parliamentarians. Start-ups are often the ground floor for the greatest technological innovations. We should therefore work to establish grant programs for start-ups that are innovating to solve global crises.</p> <p>We must also acknowledge, however, that access to technology and the internet in particular is not universal and in many places remains a luxury. With large numbers of students no longer in school physically because of COVID restrictions, a lack of access to wifi and technology puts the education of many youth at risk. We must support governments working to increase access to technology, wifi, and opportunities to work in the technology sector in areas where these things remain absent.</p>

<p>(3) <i>What is the vision of the honourable candidates of dealing through the presidency of IPU with:</i></p> <p>(i) <i>The unilateral coercive economic measures that imposed on peoples away from the International Law affecting the people's rights and humanity.</i></p> <p>(ii) <i>Trans border terrorism that is invested in politics.</i> (Syria / no name)</p>	
<p>Mr. Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani (Pakistan)</p>	<p>(a) The unilateral coercive economic measures that imposed on peoples away from the International Law affecting the people's rights and humanity.</p> <p>I firmly believe in the adherence to international laws and norms as the basis for peace and security of our world. We as Parliamentarians are accountable to our people first and it is our utmost obligation to secure and protect their rights. Given an opportunity to serve as President of the IPU, I plan to debate, discuss and work out amicable solutions and plan of actions for Parliaments and member countries to help implement international humanitarian laws as well as protect the individual economic freedoms of Members. We should discourage the use of coercive economic measures as political tool as it has visibly increased the people's suffering and are precursor to full blown humanitarian crises.</p> <p>I will also remind you that we are going through unprecedented times where both the developing and developed economies are struggling due to uncertainty of Covid-19. This situation demands cooperation, understanding and sustainable partnerships for present and future rather than coercive economic measures which will further aggravate the situation in affected countries.</p> <p>I firmly believe that solution lies in multilateralism not unilateral action for this IPU has to play a more prominent role and establish linkages with other international bodies to implement its plan of actions. These linkages will also serve to build more inclusive global economic regime necessary for the achievement of SDGs and safeguard our economic rights which are constrained by economic coercions.</p> <p>Therefore, We Parliamentarians must address these issues as we might end up losing the benefits associated with globalization like increased knowledge flow, goods and services, poverty reduction, technological changes, integration of local economy into wider global economy, FDIs, free movement of people.</p> <p>(b) Trans border terrorism that is invested in politics.</p> <p>Terrorism is the most heinous of crimes in the world we are. Although, there are variety of factors that radicalize people but there is wide consensus on the fact that many terrorism incidents, especially cross-border ones, are heavily motivated by the vested, hegemonistic, expansionist political and economic domination designs whereby terrorism is used as a tool to destabilize nations and regions socio-economically.</p>

	<p>Dissecting the phenomenon of cross-border terrorism reveals that in principle; it is non-adherence to the accepted principles of democracy i.e. respecting the sovereignty of nations and intervention in the internal affairs of the country that underlie beneath the unrest and unfortunately culminating itself into terrorism</p> <p>As a parliamentarian myself and as a candidate of presidency of the world's largest parliamentary forum, the building block of my vision on cross-border terrorism lies in ensuring that democracy, that we all so cherish, be implemented in true letter and spirit. And that includes conducting ourselves in a manner that countries can maintain their sovereignty and solve their internal conflicts internally.</p> <p>It is through acknowledgement that we, as parliamentarians, stand for the safeguarding of the universal human rights; that we realize that our take on policies should principally be guided by the 'human rights' considerations first and foremost. This is likely to set the tone that will usher the world in the arena where the basis of policies would be 'Human rights', which are drastically violated in terrorism, as against narrow and unilateral political and economic designs.</p> <p>IPU is poised to play its role in realizing this objective of changing the very basis of national policies by providing the platform to resolve conflicts with greater and effective parliament-to-parliament engagement.</p>
Mr. Duarte Pacheco (Portugal)	<p>Syria</p> <p>I believe in multilateralism and the United Nations. Therefore, if a state violates the rules of international law, and the UN decides to apply sanctions, they must be respected by UN member states.</p> <p>Naturally, these sanctions should avoid affecting innocent populations in the face of possible errors/decisions by their political leaders.</p>
Mr. Akmal Saidov (Uzbekistan)	<p>1. Coercion in international law is a very sharp and harsh measure taken only by a decision of the UN Security Council in the event of a real threat to international peace and security. It can only be collective, joint actions of international bodies in accordance with the UN Charter on the basis of universally recognized norms and principles of international law.</p> <p>Unfortunately, in the modern world we see examples of the use of various types of coercion: economic and military, without decisions of the UN Security Council, which leads to violations of human rights, to the suffering of millions of people, to grave consequences.</p> <p>The IPU needs to raise its voice in defence of peace and security and human rights in all regions of the world.</p> <p>2. Any terrorism used by politicians and for political purposes is a crime and, most often in the modern world, an international crime. The international community has adopted many conventions on countering terrorism.</p>

	<p>However, the problem lies in the impossibility of applying them due to the policy of double standards. International terrorism must be condemned at all levels: international, regional and national.</p> <p>The IPU should actively promote its counter-terrorism stance in defence of peace and international security.</p>
<p>Ms. Salma Ataullahjan (Canada)</p>	<p>Thank you, Syria, for your questions that I wish we could have discussed in person on the 21st.</p> <p>1- The use of sanctions or other unilateral similar economic measures against a country can often have the exact opposite of their intended effect. These measures can violate human rights by reducing a population's ability to access resources, which can lead to economic and humanitarian disasters that are felt most strongly by a country's citizens rather than its government. These unilateral measures must be used only when their potentially disastrous results have been considered. This is especially important when the country enacting measures has a larger economy placing it in a financial position of power. Creating an economic crisis and undermining human rights is contrary to international law and threatens global peace and stability.</p> <p>2- I condemn terrorism in all forms whether it is state sponsored or not. That being said, countries cannot accuse other states of sponsoring or supporting terrorism without clear evidence. Trans border terrorism is something countries can and must work together to address.</p>
<p>(4) <i>Should we break the current rotation period, which grouping will be next eligible?</i> (Guyana / Mr. Manzoor Nadir)</p>	
<p>Mr. Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani (Pakistan)</p>	<p>Article 19(2) of the Statute of the Inter-Parliamentary Union provides that <i>"An endeavour will be made to ensure a regular rotation between the different geopolitical groups."</i> Given the vision and objectives of IPU, <i>prime facie</i>, the rationale of this provision is fair representation of all geo-political groups. However, it is noted with concern that out of twenty nine times, sixteen times the Office of the President has been held by one group only and resultantly, during the Presidential hearing held on 21st October, 2020, a candidate belonging to the said group used the terms "strong geo-political groups" and weak geo-political groups". There are no strong and week geopolitical groups, there may be developed, developing and struggling economies, however, IPU should give voice to all. Arrangements made behind the closed doors by few regarding so-called rotation, has affected the very structure of IPU. The current rotation arrangements are not based on democracy, fairness and openness. So under the principles of propriety and natural justice all geopolitical groups should be given a fair chance to compete so as to enable IPU to be led by the best and most abled candidate. Moreover if we want to deliberate on a new rotation policy then it is my firm belief that those geopolitical groups who have been given fewer opportunities to serve IPU as its President should be given a priority.</p>

Mr. Duarte Pacheco (Portugal)	Nadir, I am clearly in favour of preserving the principle of rotation in the presidency of the IPU, which has been respected for so many years, and, above all, protects the rights and opportunities of geopolitical groups with fewer votes in our IPU.
Mr. Akmal Saidov (Uzbekistan)	Dear Manzoor Nadir, We cannot support such a proposal, as it does not comply with the Article 19 of the IPU Statutes and Rules where clearly states that when electing the President of the IPU “ An endeavour will be made to ensure a regular rotation between the different geopolitical groups ”. Fair geographical representation is the recognized principle of international organizations in the formation of their system of permanent bodies. For example, the equitable geographical distribution of members and the representation of different forms of civilization and major legal systems are taken into account in elections to the statutory and treaty bodies of the UN and other authoritative international organizations.
Ms. Salma Ataullahjan (Canada)	Thank you, Mr. Nadir, for this question, I believe we should respect unwritten rules and should not break with the current rotation period. If we follow the current rotation, it should be the turn of the African Group next.

II. Questions addressed to Specific candidates

Question addressed to Mr. Akmal Saidov (Uzbekistan)

- Sir you have been a member of IPU's Executive Committee during the drafting and formulation process of rules relating to Virtual Voting. How have you been able to ensure transparency and avoid conflict of interest while being cognizant of the fact that these rules will regulate you own candidature for presidency of the IPU ?
(Pakistan / Mr Muhammad Ali Khan Saif)*

Dear Mr. Muhammad Ali Khan Saif,

As you know, the IPU has decided that in the current context of COVID-19 infections, it is necessary to hold a virtual session of the Governing Council in order to take decisions that are essential for the functioning of the IPU.

The Special Rules of Procedure was prepared by the Working Group, which received legal support from the IPU's Legal Counsel and Secretariat as well as the Centre for Innovation in Parliament in consultation with parliaments, other international organizations, and suppliers of online elections services.

Besides, the Executive Committee considered the Special Rules of Procedure in its meetings in July and August.

We can considered that the special rules, inspired by similar rules adopted by a number of international organizations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Special Rules of Procedure special emphasis has been placed on ensuring that the electoral process for the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union are inclusive, free and fair by a secret ballot, and where all members of the Governing Council can take part.

My candidature for the post of President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union was submitted by Parliament of Uzbekistan to the IPU Secretariat on September.

Question addressed to Mr. Duarte Pacheco (Portugal)

- *Sir, you have mentioned in your comments that you support strong political groups in IPU. Don't you think that the world has enough of regionalism and strong political groups exercising influence over weaker groups and; that it is high time that instead of promoting hegemonic behavior, try to inculcate a political culture based on pluralism and universalism at least in the IPU?*
(Pakistan / Mr Muhammad Ali Khan Saif)

Dear Mr Saif,

What I stated was that the rotation system between geopolitical groups favours smaller groups (with fewer member countries).

Without this principle, geopolitical groups with more votes would be more likely to lead our Organisation continuously.

In my opinion, this is not desirable. A global organisation should be organised in such a way as to ensure that everyone gets the same opportunities, thereby safeguarding the pluralism and universality of the IPU.

That is why, when the presidency of the IPU, according to the principle of rotation, should be held by another geopolitical group, the Twelve Plus Group has never put forward a candidate.

On the contrary, Pakistan submitted its candidacy now, even though Bangladesh, which belongs to the same group, left the presidency only one term ago.

Question addressed to Mr. Duarte Pacheco (Portugal)

- *Parliaments are often perceived as protecting interests of status quo. How would you protect the IPU values of peace, democracy, human rights and gender equality in the wake of growing political blocks emerging within various regional groups of the IPU?
(Pakistan / Mr Sher Ali Arbab)*

Dear Mr Arbab,

The President of the IPU is the voice of the Organisation and leads the Executive Committee, the body that makes practical decisions concerning the fate of the organisation, where all geopolitical groups are represented.

However, in setting priorities and speaking, the President has the ability to give more visibility to certain matters.

My record as a democrat and an advocate for human rights and gender participation is the guarantee that these issues will be highlighted every day within the IPU.

I come from a small country and one of the least developed countries in Europe - Portugal, so I understand and recognise the need to be the voice of small countries, which have concrete problems and often find it difficult to make themselves heard in the international sphere.