



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

CL/208/SR
19 January 2022

Summary records of the Governing Council

208th session

27 and 30 November 2021

IFEMA Palacio Municipal
Madrid, Spain

Agenda

	<u>Page(s)</u>
1. Adoption of the agenda (CL/208/A.1-rev.1)	4
2. Approval of the summary records of the 207th session of the Governing Council (CL/207/SR)	4
3. Election of the President of the 143rd Assembly	4
4. Report of the President	
(a) On his activities since the 207th session of the Governing Council	4
(b) On the activities of the Executive Committee	5
5. Interim report by the Secretary General on the activities of the IPU since the 207th session of the Governing Council	9
6. Adoption of the new IPU strategy 2022-2026	5, 11
7. Financial situation of the IPU (CL/208/7-R.1)	5
8. Consolidated budget for 2022 (CL/208/8-P.1)	5, 11
9. Questions relating to IPU membership and observer status	
(a) Situation of IPU membership and requests for observer status (CL/208/9(a)-P.1)	7
(b) Situation of certain parliaments	12
10. Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (5WCSP) and related meetings	15
11. Reports on recent IPU specialized meetings	16
12. Future inter-parliamentary meetings (CL/208/12-P.1 and CL/208/12-P.2)	18
13. Reporting by Members on IPU-related activities (CL/208/13-R.1)	19
14. Activities of committees and other bodies	
(a) Forum of Women Parliamentarians	20
(b) Forum of Young Parliamentarians	21
(c) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians	22
(d) Committee on Middle East Questions	21
(e) Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law	27
(f) Gender Partnership Group	28
(g) Advisory Group on Health	28
(h) Group of Facilitators for Cyprus	
(i) High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism	28
(j) Working Group on Science and Technology	29
15. Appointment of two internal auditors for 2022	29
16. Elections to the Executive Committee	29
17. Appointment of a Secretary General for a period of four years (1 July 2022 – 30 June 2026)	30
18. The IPU Cremer-Passy Prize (CL/208/18-P.1)	31
19. Other business	31

First sitting

Saturday, 27 November 2021
(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 09:40, with Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), President of the IPU, in the Chair.

OPENING OF THE SITTING

The President said that it was his great pleasure to welcome Members to the 208th session of the Governing Council – the first such session to be held in person since 2019 – and expressed immense gratitude to the authorities of Spain and to its Congress of Deputies in particular for their commitment to organizing the 143rd IPU Assembly and applying all appropriate health protection measures to ensure the safety of participants. The readiness of so many parliamentarians to travel to Madrid was not only gratifying but also confirmed to the world at large that they and the IPU remained intent on pursuing their activities, despite the difficulties imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and on achieving significant outcomes to mark what would surely be a historic and memorable Assembly. The session also provided the opportunity to pay tribute to the memory of the 5 million around the globe, including parliamentarians, who had lost their lives to the pandemic.

At the invitation of the President, the Governing Council observed a minute of silence.

The President recalled that, owing to the pandemic context, his predecessor, Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron, had handed over the presidency of the IPU to him remotely. He was delighted that Ms. Cuevas Barron had accepted the invitation for her to attend the present Assembly as a special guest so that he and the IPU membership could thank her in person for the exemplary energetic commitment to the IPU that she had demonstrated throughout her term of office.

Ms. G. Cuevas Barron (Mexico), Honorary IPU President, thanking the membership for having entrusted her with what had been the biggest challenge of her life, said that, in her former role as IPU President, she had worked with Members to further democratize the IPU by widening their involvement in its decision-making processes. She had also been fully committed to strengthening the IPU's transparency, accountability and efficiency, and – as only the second woman and youngest-ever parliamentarian to have served as its President – to enhancing inclusivity by increasing the participation of women and youth in national parliaments and within the IPU so as ultimately to reflect the global percentages for both groups.

As part of the efforts under her presidency to build the IPU's relevance as a dynamic and innovative organization, the Organization had, among other things, actively engaged in important multilateral processes at the United Nations and elsewhere, widely celebrated the IPU's 130th anniversary, and organized a plethora of activities and events. It had also strived to translate international commitments into local solutions for the people represented by its Members. For her part, she had conducted many meetings with heads of State and Government, as well as with Speakers, parliamentarians, UN representatives and members of civil society, overseen the creation of mechanisms in support of, for instance, women parliamentarians and young parliamentarians, and established closer ties and cooperation with regional parliamentary organizations.

She expressed gratitude to her country and to the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) for their support to her presidency in the face of challenges; to the other geopolitical groups for their vital input on matters of concern; to the Executive Committee, in particular Vice-Presidents Mr. Chen and Mr. Kosachev for their solidarity and sound advice; to all IPU committees, groups and forums for their tireless work on behalf of the Organization; to those countries that had so graciously hosted her visits; and to the staff of the IPU Secretariat for their dedication and commitment, without which none of the achievements under her presidency would have been realized.

On behalf of all Members, the President presented Ms. Cuevas Barron with a certificate of appreciation for her service to the IPU.

Item 1 of the agenda

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA
(CL/208/A.1-rev.1)

The agenda was adopted.

Item 2 of the agenda

**APPROVAL OF THE SUMMARY RECORDS OF THE 207TH SESSION
OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL**
(CL/207/SR)

The summary records of the 207th session of the Governing Council were approved.

Item 3 of the agenda

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE 143RD ASSEMBLY

At the proposal of Mr. R. Talbi El Alami (Morocco), seconded by Mr. G. Coutinho (Uruguay), Ms. M. Batet Lamaña (Spain), was elected President of the 143rd Assembly by acclamation.

Ms. M. Batet Lamaña (Spain) said that she was truly honoured to have been elected as President of the 143rd IPU Assembly and expressed thanks to Members for having entrusted her with the task, which she hoped to fulfil successfully.

The President said that Ms. Batet Lamaña's presidency of the Assembly was an honour for the IPU and a mark of its appreciation to the authorities and Parliament of Spain for their organization of the Assembly.

Item 4 of the agenda

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

(a) On his activities since the 207th session of the Governing Council

The President, accompanying his report with a digital slide presentation, said that, in the preceding six months, he had engaged in 81 virtual or in-person meetings and 14 official visits aimed at addressing and resolving important issues. Examples had included the organization of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament as an in-person event, socioeconomic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change mitigation, and the encouragement of dialogue to reconcile matters in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and to promote peace between Israel and Palestine. As part of his constant efforts in defence of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, he had also issued numerous statements of solidarity with parliamentarians around the world who were under attack. He was furthermore continuing to pursue the important goal of universality by seeking to attract into the IPU membership the remaining 14 Member States of the United Nations that had not yet joined.

A film showing highlights of the activities of the President since the 207th session of the Governing Council was projected.

(b) On the activities of the Executive Committee

The President said that, in the course of its meetings over the previous six months, the Executive Committee had examined and endorsed a number of new initiatives, notably the draft IPU Strategy for 2022–2026; the road map for the annual award of an IPU Cremer-Passy prize to a parliamentarian in recognition of his or her work in defence of democracy; and the terms of reference for the establishment of a working group to implement recommendations from the IPU Transparency Report. It had furthermore issued a statement strongly condemning the recent bomb attack close to the Ugandan Parliament.

The Executive Committee had additionally decided to recommend that the incumbent Secretary General be reappointed for a further term of office and that delegations to IPU Assemblies make sure to include parliamentarians from the country concerned who had been elected as IPU office-holders. He took it that the Governing Council wished to approve those recommendations.

It was so decided.

Item 6 of the agenda

ADOPTION OF THE NEW IPU STRATEGY FOR 2022–2026

The President recalled that the new IPU Strategy for 2022–2026 had been drafted through a broad, consultative and inclusive process involving all stakeholders, whose inputs were reflected in the final draft endorsed by the Executive Committee, which had an in-built flexibility to allow for appropriate responses to evolving circumstances over the coming five years. He invited the lead consultant of the expert team that had supported the preparation of the Strategy to provide an overview of the preparation process.

Ms. F. Martonffy (consultant), accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that the process had begun one year earlier with an assessment of the impact of the IPU Strategy for 2017–2021, followed by an extensive and inclusive consultation, which had involved over 900 MPs, experts and partners from over 100 countries. Incorporating the resulting feedback and further refined by the Executive Committee, the current draft covered five strategic objectives: building effective and empowered parliaments; promoting inclusion and representative parliaments; supporting resilient and innovative parliaments; catalysing collective parliamentary action; and strengthening the IPU's accountability. The IPU's impact and action in those areas would lead to parliamentary ecosystems for democracy and for everyone, signalling a move away from looking at parliaments in isolation towards a more integrated systems-level view and leading in turn to parliamentary action and impact focused on four priority areas: climate change; democracy, human rights and gender equality; peace and security; and sustainable development for all. Those four policy priorities marked a change from the current Strategy, as did the new focus on marginalized groups and on resilience and strengthened accountability; on more integration and the ecosystem approach; on youth as a cross-cutting driver of change; and on the increased role of communications.

The President suggested that the adoption of the new IPU strategy should be deferred until the next sitting to allow time for members to examine and reflect on its content.

It was so decided.

Items 7 and 8 of the agenda

FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE IPU

(CL/208/7-R.1)

CONSOLIDATED BUDGET FOR 2022

(CL/208/8-P.1)

The Secretary General, outlining the financial situation of the IPU at 30 September 2021, as set out in document CL/208/7-R.1, said that the budget for 2021 continued to be implemented as planned and that the IPU's financial situation remained sound, with no problems anticipated in the final months of the budget year. A matter of concern discussed at length by the Executive Committee

related to the number of unpaid contributions listed in Annex II of the document, bearing in mind that timely payment was essential to the funding of activities from the core budget. Overdue contributions since received from the Central African Republic and South Sudan were therefore welcome, as was the expected imminent settlement of the arrears of the Comoros. With the assistance of the geopolitical groups, the Secretariat continued its efforts to identify the reasons for arrears and find ways for facilitating payment. In addition to its healthy financial situation, the IPU remained well placed to meet all pension liabilities of its legacy pension fund.

Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden), member of the Executive Committee and Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance, introducing the 2022 draft consolidated budget set out in document CL/208/8-P.1 and noting that the implementation of the new IPU Strategy was dependent on those healthy financial resources, thanked her fellow Sub-Committee members and all those, in particular the staff of the IPU Secretariat, who had worked to ensure that the IPU's finances were used as efficiently as possible. Despite the pandemic crisis, the payment of assessed contributions had fortunately continued at the usual level, with no increase, furthermore, in their amount, which had remained static since 2007. Such an increase would soon be needed, however, to support the growth in activities as the IPU transitioned towards implementing its new strategy. The holding of various in-person meetings, including the coming two Assemblies in Indonesia and Rwanda, would also be prioritized alongside a continued focus on stepping up investment in digital communications. Welcome voluntary contributions had been made by, among others, Canada, China, the European Union, Qatar, Sweden and the United Arab Emirates, in support of IPU activities in specific areas, including climate change and the promotion of democracy and gender equality.

She was pleased to present to the Governing Council for consideration and possible adoption at its next sitting the draft consolidated budget prepared over the preceding year by the Sub-Committee on Finance.

Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates) announced that, in the spirit of supporting parliaments as advocated in the new IPU strategy, his country's Federal National Council had come forward to settle in full the assessed contributions owed by the Parliament of the Comoros.

The President thanked the Federal National Council for its initiative, which he said exemplified the notion of parliamentary solidarity and would preclude the suspension of the Parliament of Comoros from the IPU membership for non-payment of its arrears.

The Secretary General, expressing similar appreciation to the Federal National Council, said that the Executive Committee had discussed such assistance as a modality that parliaments with the available means could use to demonstrate solidarity with less well-resourced parliaments. Voluntary contributions to be acknowledged in addition to those mentioned by the Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance had been made by Angola in support of activities to promote maternal, newborn and child health, by Bangladesh and Benin in support of the IPU's counter-terrorism programme, and by the Federated States of Micronesia in support of activities in the areas of governance and peace and security as well as migration. Such contributions from parliaments with few resources to spare testified to their great dedication to the work of the IPU.

In-kind contributions continued from the Parliament of Republic of Korea, which had been seconding senior staff to the IPU Secretariat for over a decade. The Austrian Parliament had also recently begun seconding senior staff, including one at ambassadorial level, to the Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations and other international organizations in Vienna. In addition, it had provided a staff member to assist with communications at the current Assembly with the aim of raising the IPU's profile. In sum, the IPU received support from a broad base of donors.

The President said that thanks were due to the Chair and members of the Sub-Committee on Finance, as well as to the staff of the Secretariat, for their commitment to preparing the 2022 draft consolidated budget with the new IPU Strategy foremost in mind. The fact that assessed contributions had remained unchanged since 2007 was a demonstration of the efficiency with which the IPU's activities were conducted. It would, however, be necessary to review those contributions in future in order to maintain that same level of activity. He suggested that further consideration of the draft budget should be deferred until the next sitting to allow time for members to examine and reflect on its content.

It was so decided.

Item 9 of the agenda

QUESTIONS RELATING TO IPU MEMBERSHIP AND OBSERVER STATUS

(a) Situation of IPU membership and observer status
(CL/208/9(a)-P.1)

The Secretary General, introducing the item, said that a request for associate membership had been received from the Pan-African Parliament.

The President said he took it that the Council wished to approve that request, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that requests for permanent observer status had been received from several organizations. The Executive Committee had examined the requests and recommended that the status be extended to the G5 Sahel Inter-Parliamentary Committee, the International Parliamentary Network for Education, the Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and the Sovereign Order of Malta.

Mr. C. Lacroix (Belgium) said that, as a religious order, the Sovereign Order of Malta did not fall into any of the categories of bodies that could be granted observer status. Under the Statutes and Rules of the IPU, it qualified for that status only by virtue of the permanent observer status granted to it by the UN General Assembly on the basis of its humanitarian assistance activity. It was nonetheless neither automatically entitled as a result to observe IPU meetings nor justified in its request to do so. Observer status at the IPU should be granted only to organizations that shared the IPU's goals and was principally intended to apply to regional parliamentary unions and non-governmental organizations working in the field of human rights. The traditionally military nature of the Sovereign Order of Malta was incompatible with participation in the work of a parliamentary union founded on democracy. The Order's request for observer status should be rejected.

Mr. P. Casini (Italy) said that the Sovereign Order of Malta was a charitable organization that had received many awards for its activities, which stemmed from moral values that were not exclusive to any particular religion. Its permanent observer status at the United Nations was a sufficient qualification for that same status at the IPU.

Mr. A. Farrugia (Malta), agreeing with that view, added that the Sovereign Order of Malta had diplomatic relations with over 90 countries embracing various faiths. Religion was a factor of no relevance to the request.

Mr. C. Lacroix (Belgium) reiterated that the Sovereign Order of Malta espoused values not shared by his country, including in the area of women's rights. There were also suggestions, furthermore, that the Order had been involved in corruption with parliamentarians.

Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe), while sympathizing with the Belgian position, said that the decision on the request must be guided by the practical modalities of the rights and responsibilities of observers at IPU meetings, as amended in April 2018. Paragraph 1 of those modalities clearly stated that international organizations that could be invited as observers to IPU meetings were understood to include organizations holding permanent observer status with the UN General Assembly.

The President said he took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the four requests for permanent observer status, as recommended by the Executive Committee, with a reservation entered by Belgium in the case of the Sovereign Order of Malta.

It was so decided.

The President, with reference to the membership of certain parliaments, said that, with the aim of keeping the possibility of dialogue alive, the Executive Committee had recommended that a delegation from the Afghan Parliament, which was no longer functioning, would be permitted to

observe the proceedings of the current Assembly if it so wished. In the case of Myanmar, the Executive Committee had recommended that, subject to further review, the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw should continue to be recognized as the legitimate interlocutor of the IPU.

As to Venezuela, in August 2021, at the invitation of the Venezuelan authorities, which he thanked for their cooperation and hospitality, he had led a joint mission of the Executive Committee and the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians to the country. One of the mission's key objectives had been to gather information that would enable the Executive Committee to make a recommendation to the Governing Council concerning the Venezuelan representation at the IPU in the light of Article 3 of the IPU Statutes. After discussing the mission's findings, the Executive Committee had concluded that neither of the country's two National Assemblies, established respectively in 2015 and 2020, was a national legislative body "constituted in conformity with the laws of a sovereign State", as required under Article 3.1 of the Statutes for requesting affiliation to the IPU. The Executive Committee had therefore recommended that a decision on the status of Venezuelan membership of the IPU should be deferred pending further consultations and that, in the interim, a Venezuelan delegation would be permitted to observe proceedings with the understanding that it should comprise members from the two opposing parties in Venezuela. The Executive Committee had also recommended that efforts to promote inclusive dialogue between those two parties should continue.

He took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the recommendations of the Executive Committee relating to the membership of the parliaments of Afghanistan, Myanmar and Venezuela.

It was so decided.

Announcement of the quorum for the session

The Secretary General announced that, in conformity with Rule 34.2 of the Rules of the Governing Council, a quorum of 79 had been established for the current session on the basis of the number of members or substitutes participating in the first meeting, which stood at 156.

The sitting rose at 11:30.

Second sitting

Tuesday, 30 November 2021
(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 09:55, with Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), President of the IPU, in the Chair.

Item 5 of the agenda

INTERIM REPORT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE IPU SINCE THE 207TH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

The Secretary General, accompanying his report with a digital slide presentation, said that, in conjunction with those of the President, the activities conducted by the IPU since May 2021 should provide ample reassurance to all that the IPU had continued to put the IPU Strategy 2017-2021 into action during and despite the ongoing global health crisis.

In seeking to implement objective 1, which was to build strong, democratic parliaments, the IPU had organized, in June 2021, the virtual World e-Parliament Conference, which had made recommendations as to how parliaments could harness digital technology to pursue their functions and enhance engagement with citizens. The accompanying *World e-Parliament Report 2020* presented lessons learned from the pandemic and included recommendations for improving parliamentary resilience. The Parliaments of Chad, Djibouti, Sierra Leone and Vanuatu were among those that had benefited from the IPU's capacity-building programmes, which newly incorporated a modular training facility soon to be accessible to all parliaments as an online learning platform that would help them to better implement their mandate in a democratic environment.

Concerning objective 2, which was to advance gender equality and respect for women's rights, the IPU continued to encourage women's political participation, including through such events as the recent 13th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament, and increasingly sought to promote and protect the rights of women as human beings. It had worked with the Parliament of Nigeria on strengthening women's representation therein and with the Parliament of Sierra Leone on combating female genital mutilation. It had also published a handbook on gender-responsive law-making and launched at the current Assembly a regional study on sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Africa as a gauge of potential factors to be addressed in resolving what was a global issue.

In respect of objective 3, which was to protect and promote human rights, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians had continued to discharge its unique mandate by robustly examining the increasing number of cases of parliamentarians subjected to abuse. It had also been part of the important mission led by the IPU President to assess the political situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and look into alleged violations of the human rights of Venezuelan parliamentarians.

As to objective 4, which was to contribute to peacebuilding, conflict prevention and security, the IPU had co-organized the First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism, in September 2021, as part of its efforts to strengthen parliamentary engagement in the prevention of terrorism and factors conducive to terrorism, such as hate speech and violent extremism. It had also actively engaged in Geneva Peace Week, which had taken place online in early November 2021.

In terms of objective 5, which was to promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation, four organizations had been added at the first sitting to the list of organizations with permanent observer status at the IPU. Despite the pandemic, the IPU had remained open for business, identifying and implementing innovative solutions to bring together the global parliamentary community, albeit remotely, as had been the case in May 2021 with the first-ever virtual IPU Assembly.

With regard to objective 6, which was youth empowerment, the IPU's *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign, launched in spring 2021 to redress the gross under-representation of youth in parliaments, had prompted over 20 parliaments to start their own national campaigns. The hope was that other parliaments would follow suit and that leaders would emulate the example of the President of Uzbekistan, who had promoted the campaign in his message delivered on International Youth Day in August 2021.

In connection with objective 7, which was to mobilize parliaments around the global development agenda, the IPU had worked with the Indonesian Parliament to organize the First Global Parliamentary Meeting on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS), in September 2021, as well as with the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction to produce a new disaster risk reduction toolkit. Continuing its strong focus on parliamentary action to protect health, the IPU had followed up on the resolution adopted at the 141st Assembly in Belgrade on achieving universal health coverage by 2030, organizing parliamentary events to coincide with such processes as the UN High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS, in June 2021, and the UN Food Systems Summit in September 2021. The IPU had also worked to build national capacities in Uganda for improving maternal, newborn and child health and in Seychelles and Zimbabwe for promoting green growth.

Lastly, with reference to objective 8, which was to bridge the democracy gap in international relations, the IPU had sought to ensure a parliamentary presence at global processes, including the 26th session of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in November 2021, the G20 summit in October 2021, and the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July 2021. In the context of the 12th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which had since been postponed indefinitely, parliaments had engaged with senior WTO officials on ways of enhancing their contribution to the development of a rules-based trade system that was more accessible and accountable to the people. At the 144th Assembly in March 2022, he would deliver an all-encompassing report that would fully reflect the activities carried out over the entire year with the available resources.

The President, noting that the reports on the IPU's activities were an essential part of its accountability for the deployment of those resources on behalf of the membership, thanked the Secretary General and the Secretariat for their effectiveness in achieving more outcomes with the same amount of resources as in 2007.

Mr. W. William (Seychelles), supported by **Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté** (Senegal) and **Mr. C. Mvourandjiami** (Gabon), commended the valuable reporting by the Secretary General on the IPU's activities and thanked him and his team for their remarkable efficiency.

Ms. R. Kavakci Kan (Turkey), commenting that the IPU's organization of virtual meetings and webinars during the pandemic counted among its great successes, said that her country's Grand National Assembly was promoting the IPU's important *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign. Her part in bringing about the constitutional change needed in Turkey to lower the age of candidacy for parliament from 25 to 18 years of age had been one of her most exciting accomplishments as a young parliamentarian. Young people from all parties should be represented in parliament.

Ms. A. Gerkens (Netherlands) said that the IPU had demonstrated true resilience during the pandemic, shifting to online activities as necessary and setting an example in the process. It should continue in that same vein to further strengthen its impact.

Mr. B. Llano (Paraguay), also praising the IPU's shift to online activities as a means of overcoming the obstacles created by the pandemic, said that he had taken steps to promote the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign in his country and had furthermore proposed a bill to reduce the age of candidacy for parliament to 18 years.

Mr. B. Mahtab (India) thanked the IPU for its continued support to parliaments in the face of challenges posed by the pandemic and for its role in strengthening parliamentary democracy and adding value to the lives of constituents. In India, an online platform established in response to the pandemic had enabled the country's parliament and state legislatures to continue functioning for the benefit of the Indian people. As the world's largest democracy and with one of its youngest populations, India was committed to democratic development, an onerous responsibility that it looked forward to discharging in close collaboration with the IPU.

Mr. V. Tsvangirai (Zimbabwe), thanking the Secretary General for his exceptional work that brought pride to fellow Africans, said that he was also proud to have been part of the successful call in his country for the creation of 10 seats in parliament for young Zimbabweans such as himself. It was especially important for the IPU to continue working for youth participation in the parliaments of Africa, the world's youngest continent in terms of population. On a separate note, he suggested that the IPU might wish to consider adding sign language interpretation to its processes to ensure that no one was left behind.

A representative of Saudi Arabia, expressing gratitude to the Secretary General for his constructive efforts to facilitate IPU activities during the pandemic, said that his country's Shura Council had continued to work online and without interruption throughout. One half of his delegation's Shura Council members were women, both of whom had actively participated at the current Assembly in the work of the Standing Committees.

Ms. J. Mijatovic (Serbia), commending the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign, said that over 30 per cent of seats in her country's National Assembly were held by young parliamentarians and over 40 per cent by women. As a young parliamentarian herself, she looked forward to participating in further meetings of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians and indeed other IPU events, all of which would hopefully continue to be held in person.

The President noted that parliaments – and the IPU – had demonstrated through their solutions for continuing to function during the pandemic that there had been no suspension of democracy.

The Secretary General, expressing appreciation for the kind and motivating words of support, said that the IPU's activities were on track in responding, as ever, to the expectations of Members, whose views were well noted and also taken firmly into account in the new IPU Strategy. The IPU would keenly welcome the opportunity to continue its collaboration with the Parliament of India, which ran innovative capacity-building programmes for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff that could be replicated elsewhere. He encouraged other parliaments to offer similar assistance in kind.

The President said he took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the interim report by the Secretary General.

It was so decided.

Item 6 of the agenda

ADOPTION OF THE NEW IPU STRATEGY 2022–2026
(continued)

The President said he took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the new IPU Strategy for 2022–2026, as amended in the light of comments received following its presentation to the Council at its first sitting.

It was so decided.

Item 8 of the agenda

CONSOLIDATED BUDGET FOR 2022
(continued)
(CL/208/8-P.1)

The President said he took it that the Governing Council wished to adopt the 2022 draft consolidated budget, as set out in document CL/208/8-P.1 and presented to it at its first sitting.

It was so decided.

The President thanked the Sub-Committee on Finance and the IPU's financial team for their work in preparing the budget, which stood as their contribution to enhancing the activities of the IPU with the available resources.

Item 9 of the agenda

QUESTIONS RELATING TO IPU MEMBERSHIP AND OBSERVER STATUS

(continued)

(b) Situation of certain parliaments

The Secretary General, accompanying his overview of the situation of certain parliaments with a digital slide presentation, said with reference to Afghanistan that the Executive Committee had taken note of developments since the Taliban takeover of that country and recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation until the status of the country's parliament became clearer.

Ms. N. Mapisa-Nqakula (South Africa) said that the situation in Afghanistan would be best ascertained through a mission to the country, which should focus in particular on violations of the human rights of women and girls.

The President said that the IPU would take on board that suggestion and was presently doing its utmost to find countries of refuge for Afghans, including parliamentarians, who sought to flee persecution in Afghanistan. In raising human rights issues in its talks with the new authorities, the IPU would seek assurances concerning the protection of women and girls. It also hoped to find ways of helping to avert the humanitarian crisis that loomed large in Afghanistan with the onset of winter.

Ms. L. Quartapelle Procopio (Italy), thanking the representative of South Africa for having raised the important issue of women and girls in Afghanistan, said that the IPU also could and should do more to protect Afghan parliamentarians – many tens of them women – and bring them and their families to safety. One option to that end would be for each parliament to take care of one such parliamentarian. She appealed to the IPU to consider an initiative of that nature, noting that Afghans in need of international protection were arriving in her country through humanitarian corridors.

The Secretary General said that the concerns expressed were well appreciated and that the IPU had been far from silent on Afghanistan. It had strongly condemned the Taliban takeover, expressed deep concern over the fate of women and girls, and engaged with the leadership of the suspended Afghan Parliament at the recent Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, which had been briefed on the plight of Afghan women and girls by Ms. Fawzia Koofi, a prominent former Afghan parliamentarian who had escaped the country. Many parliaments had also responded to the IPU's campaign for them to impress upon governments the need to provide refuge for Afghans whose lives were in danger. In that context, the IPU had worked with parliaments to establish a mechanism for gathering information on the situation and whereabouts of Afghan parliamentarians, especially women, and would continue to be robust in looking into the plight of Afghan women and girls in particular.

Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe) said that, as suggested by the representative of South Africa, the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan called for more than an arms-length response and should be assessed on the ground, as should the issue of those reportedly being prevented by the Afghan authorities from leaving the country.

The President said that the IPU attached importance to all Afghan people but that, as a parliamentary organization, it would devote particular attention to Afghan parliamentarians, especially women, who were more vulnerable to persecution by the Taliban regime.

A representative of Nigeria suggested that the IPU should dispatch an ad hoc fact-finding committee to Afghanistan.

The President said that the suggestion would be considered by the Executive Committee but noted that, for logistical and security reasons, IPU missions were essentially subject to the agreement of national authorities.

Mr. B. Mahtab (India) said that, in a bid to alleviate the human tragedy unfolding daily across Afghanistan, his country was donating food supplies to help trapped Afghan citizens. He urged all countries neighbouring Afghanistan to provide similar support.

The President agreed that every effort must be made to help the Afghan people survive the winter.

The Secretary General said that the IPU would follow up on the proposals made, including by seeking to identify humanitarian assistance that could be extended to the Afghan people. The possibility of an IPU mission to Afghanistan – in which the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians would also hope to participate – was already under discussion. It was important to be realistic, however, given the fluidity of the situation in Afghanistan and the fact that positive responses to IPU mission requests were not always immediately forthcoming. Moreover, there were no Afghan diplomatic representatives or clearly identifiable interlocutors in Geneva with whom he might normally engage on such matters. The Executive Committee therefore recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation in Afghanistan as best it could in the circumstances so that it could be further reviewed.

The President said he took it that the Council wished to endorse the Executive Committee's recommendation concerning Afghanistan.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General, turning to the case of Myanmar, recalled that the Council had previously decided to show solidarity with the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH), which was the interim parliament in exile from a country where democratic processes had been subverted and free and fair elections annulled by the military authorities. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation in Myanmar, with the CRPH continuing as the interlocutor with the IPU until further review.

The President said he took it that the Council wished to endorse the Executive Committee's recommendation concerning Myanmar.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General, referring to the situation in Guinea, said that the country's parliament had recently been dissolved following a military coup and that a transitional parliament was being planned. The Executive Committee had taken note of that development and recommended that the IPU should seek to work with the transitional parliament, once established, with a view to facilitating a return to normalcy and constitutional rule in Guinea, in line with its approach in Mali.

The President said he took it that the Council wished to endorse the Executive Committee's recommendation concerning Guinea.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that, in Haiti, there was currently no functioning parliament but that elections were envisaged in the near future. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should encourage the conduct of those elections in the hope of welcoming a full-fledged parliament into its membership.

The President said he took it that the Council wished to endorse the Executive Committee's recommendation concerning Haiti.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General, continuing his remarks with an update on his monitoring of the situation of certain other parliaments, recalled that the Parliament of the Sudan was no longer functioning and had consequently been suspended from the IPU membership. There was no indication of when any transitional parliament might be established and, with coups and counter-coups taking place, the situation remained very fluid. Elections were foreseen in 2022, however, and a full-fledged parliament, once established, would be welcomed back into the IPU fold. In the case of Libya, presidential and parliamentary elections were due to take place in January 2022 and the IPU

was considering a request for it to resume technical cooperation with the country's parliament. In Mali, the IPU was continuing to work with the transitional authorities and to encourage a speedy return to constitutional rule in the wake of elections scheduled for 2022.

In the face of the worrying situation in Tunisia, where the parliament had been suspended by the country's President, the IPU had publicly underlined the need to defend the parliament's integrity and had worked to engage it in cases of Tunisian parliamentarians whose human rights had been abused. At the current Assembly, he and the IPU President had met with representatives of the suspended parliament, whose message had been that the vital gains achieved in the Arab Spring must not be lost. In continuing to monitor the situation, the IPU would reach out to the leadership of the suspended parliament and to the Tunisian President with the aim of fostering dialogue between the two sides.

The Executive Committee had taken note of the ongoing humanitarian tragedy in Yemen and would also continue to monitor the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where there were warning signs of a potential crisis should the Dayton Agreement signed in 1995 unravel. In the case of Chad, the Executive Committee had taken note of the establishment of a transitional parliament and of the elections planned for 2022. In Eswatini, following the death of activists in recent protests calling for greater freedoms, the authorities had accepted the need to engage in a national dialogue to resolve the issues at stake. In Guinea-Bissau, the IPU was working to end the stand-off between the country's President and parliament so as to preserve national stability. The IPU was also working with the newly-established transitional legislature in South Sudan to promote the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign.

Concerning the matter of Members in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the Organization, he confirmed that the Central African Republic had made a partial payment towards the amount owing and that the United Arab Emirates had undertaken to pay in full the unpaid contributions of the Comoros, which was consequently no longer liable to suspension of its membership rights in application of Article 5.3 of the IPU Statutes. Members currently liable to such suspension were the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Saint Lucia, the Sudan and Venezuela, together with Associate Members the Inter-parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union and the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States. Members currently subject to attendance and/or voting sanctions in application of Article 5.2 of the Statutes were Equatorial Guinea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Tuvalu, together with Associate Members the Andean Parliament and the Parliament of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community. All were urged to pay their contributions to promote the IPU's success in carrying out its activities.

The President said that the IPU wished to be part of the solution in facilitating a return to constitutional order in some of the countries mentioned by the Secretary General. The IPU would never interfere in internal affairs but would always defend constitutional order and parliamentarians in any country. As to the payment of contributions, it was a vital commitment without which the IPU would be unable to fulfil its assigned mandate. Lastly, the Executive Committee fully supported the Secretary General's initiatives to resolve the situation in the countries mentioned by helping them return to constitutional order and strengthen their parliamentary systems.

A representative of Tunisia, thanking the IPU for its efforts to contribute towards the restoration of democracy in his country, said that such efforts must be relentlessly pursued until that goal was achieved.

Mr. W. William (Seychelles) thanked the United Arab Emirates for its action to ensure that the Comoros continued to participate in the IPU membership and asked whether the Secretariat took steps to ascertain the reasons for any non-payment of contributions and to find ways of assisting the Members concerned.

The Secretary General said that it was an important part of the IPU's work to engage constantly with such Members to understand and help to resolve their difficulties, such as by finding alternative methods of payment in cases where international banking transactions were not an option. The IPU also enlisted the help of the geopolitical groups in identifying problems and was furthermore exploring other modalities for assisting Members in arrears in the payment of their contributions.

Ms. R. Kavakci Kan (Turkey) stressed that the situation in Tunisia must remain high on the IPU's agenda, noting that the country's parliament had been suspended for a period beyond that permitted under the Tunisian Constitution and that the Speaker was confined to his home.

The President agreed that the situation in Tunisia was of great concern, adding that parliamentarians were unable to enter parliament and were not in receipt of their salaries.

The Secretary General said that the IPU was urgently working to mediate between the two sides. In addition to meeting the Tunisian delegation at the current Assembly, he had recently communicated with the parliamentary authorities in Tunisia and had also been briefed on the situation by the Tunisian ambassador to Switzerland.

The President said he took it that the Council wished to take note of the update provided by the Secretary General concerning his monitoring of the situation of certain parliaments.

It was so decided.

Item 10 of the agenda

FIFTH WORLD CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENT AND RELATED MEETINGS

Ms. P. Maharani (Indonesia), reporting on the 13th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament, said that the in-person segment of the Summit, organized by the IPU in conjunction with the Parliament of Austria and the United Nations, had taken place on 6 September 2021, in Vienna, on the eve of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament. The 26 women Speakers of Parliament attending the Summit had participated in interactive debates, focused in the first main session on paying tribute to women as everyday heroes in the pandemic, the conclusion being that women's representation in all public and private spheres of leadership, including parliament, must be urgently encouraged and supported. In the second main session, the debate had focused on preserving achievements and furthering progress in the post-pandemic recovery in the areas of gender parity, women's economic empowerment and the eradication of gender-based violence. Participants had strongly agreed that social protection policies must be amended to better support women and that Speakers must step up their efforts to end such violence by addressing its root causes.

The outcome of the Summit confirmed that women Speakers were eager to lead the way in using the opportunity provided by the COVID-19 crisis to effect socioeconomic transformation through a gender perspective, which should feed into deliberations at the current Assembly and beyond, with all parliamentarians working to fulfil their duty to ensure the just allocation of resources and equal opportunities.

In the absence of Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), Ms. A. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal), Vice-President of the Executive Committee, took the Chair.

Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe), reporting on the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, said that the virtual segment of the Conference, held in August 2020 in preparation for the in-person segment in Vienna from 6 to 8 September 2021, had resulted in a commitment to strengthen international solidarity and multilateralism so as to lead the world out of crisis while also transforming it for the better and for the resilient prosperity of humankind. The much-welcomed in-person Conference, for which the Parliament of Austria was to be highly commended, had featured an engaging general debate, robust panel discussions, and fruitful exchanges, including bilaterally. It had also stood as testimony to the significant progress achieved through the collective efforts to face the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, notably in relation to the development and delivery of life-saving vaccines, although participants had bemoaned the inhumane inequality on that score – exemplified above all in Africa – as a grave and lamentable indictment of developed countries.

Over 900 delegates had shared experiences and lessons learned from the exigencies of the pandemic as part of a shared commitment to build back, and forward, better through parliamentary processes. Delegates had noted the need for recovery efforts to take into account the negative impact of the pandemic on vulnerable groups and to uphold the rule of law, democratic principles and universal human rights, in addition to the need for recovery objectives to be inclusive and sustainable,

embrace the green system and incorporate innovative solutions to the climate crisis. A renewed commitment by all parliamentarians to meaningful and effective multilateralism and to a culture of tolerance and acceptance of the other was accepted as critical to the envisaged recovery. The historic Conference had adopted a high-level declaration on parliamentary leadership for more effective multilateralism that delivered peace and sustainable development for the people and the planet.

Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal) resumed the Chair.

The President expressed gratitude to the Parliament of Austria for its hosting of the two events.

A film showing highlights of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament was projected.

Item 11 of the agenda

REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED MEETINGS

Ms. A. Gerkens (Netherlands), speaking in her capacity as a former Vice-President of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, said in her report on the virtual World e-Parliament Conference, held from 16 to 18 June 2021, that the event had attracted a record number of participants keen to share the latest ideas on parliamentary modernization and the role of digital tools in the legislative process and in public engagement. It had also served as a platform for the launch of the *World e-Parliament Report 2020*, itself a timely contribution towards lessons learned from the pandemic, which had rapidly driven parliaments to innovate and modernize. Visibly demonstrating the critical part played by digitization in the mission of parliaments, the e-conference had featured panel discussions and presentations on, among others, cloud computing, artificial intelligence and social media. It had furthermore uniquely enabled parliaments to take stock of progress achieved since the pandemic outbreak and, as always, to exchange information and good practices. In addition, the IPU Centre for Innovation in Parliament had since generated a series of follow-up events on the basis of ideas that had emanated from the e-conference.

Ms. J. Oduol (Kenya), Vice-Chairperson of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, reporting on the First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism held on 9 September 2021 in Vienna, said that the goal of the Summit had been to identify appropriate and impactful measures for advancing peace and sustainable development in regions such as the Sahel, where terrorist groups had exploited the pandemic and remained a significant threat to international peace and security. Following keynote addresses delivered at the summit's high-level opening session, the first of three thematic interactive sessions had covered the parliamentary response to addressing the rights and needs, including reintegration, of terrorism victims, two of whom were among the panellists for the session. Work done by the IPU in partnership with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime and the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism on developing model legislative provisions for victims of terrorism was presented.

At the second interactive session, covering the role of parliaments in the prevention of terrorism, radicalization and hate speech, participants had agreed that parliamentarians must step up their work with key regional and community actors – especially women, youth and other local stakeholders – to address the root causes and underlying conditions that might lead individuals to join terrorist or extremist groups. The importance of strengthening government institutions through more community engagement was also recognized. At the third interactive session, on the Call of the Sahel initiative, participants had concluded that concerted efforts by the governments and parliaments of the Sahel region were urgently needed, together with the support of other regions, to tackle through effective multidimensional counter-terrorism measures the challenges created by the increasing violence and deteriorating security situation.

At the closure of the Summit, the IPU, the Arab Parliament, the Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the G5 Sahel and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean had issued a joint declaration, entitled the *Call of the Sahel*, creating a parliamentary bloc to assist and support the Sahel countries through holistic approaches.

Ms. P. Maharani (Indonesia), reporting on the First Global Parliamentary Meeting on Achieving the SDGs jointly hosted by the IPU and her country's House of Representatives as a virtual event from 28 to 30 September 2021, said that the three main topics of discussion at the event had focused on the contribution of parliaments to the realization of the SDGs during the COVID-19 pandemic, on the promise to leave no one behind, and on the prioritization of investment in universal health coverage and health emergency preparedness. With existing challenges further complicated and exacerbated by climate-related issues, participants had recognized that the role of parliaments was more critical than ever in four areas identified as important drivers of the SDGs: acceleration of the pandemic recovery; economic and fiscal policy coordination; coordinated assistance to developing countries; and continuation of the global commitments to tackle climate change. To that end, participants had concluded that parliaments must strengthen awareness of the SDGs among their members, formalize SDG-specific parliamentary bodies with a stronger legal basis, and establish a comprehensive parliamentary legal framework that enabled parliamentarians to address all aspects of the SDGs.

The President, in his report on the P20 Speakers' Summit organized in Rome on 7 and 8 October 2021 by the Italian Parliament on the occasion of Italy's Presidency of the G20, said that the summit had centred on the subject of parliaments for people, planet and prosperity. P20 Speakers in attendance had included Ms. Nancy Pelosi of the United States House of Representatives, with whom he and the Secretary General had discussed the strengthening of links between her country's parliament and the IPU. Warmly welcomed by President Casellati of the Italian Senate, Speaker Fico of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, and IPU Honorary President Casini, he and the Secretary General had been impressed by the personal leadership and strong support displayed by each of the three for parliamentary diplomacy with the IPU at its core. That same message had been clearly echoed in the introductory remarks delivered by Italian Prime Minister Draghi, reflecting the special role of the IPU in the multilateral system and as the global organization of parliaments. The final outcome document had been shared with the G20 Heads of State and Government and embodied the resolve to work together multilaterally for a safer and more prosperous planet.

Ms. L. Quartapelle Procopio (Italy), reporting on the Pre-COP26 Parliamentary Meeting held in Rome on 8 and 9 October 2021, said that the event had provided a platform for parliamentarians from around the world, especially those affiliated with climate and environment-related committees, to explore ways of advancing national, regional and international action on climate change to meet the objectives of the Paris Agreement. Experts, professors and ministers had briefed participants in the four meeting sessions and, in a special audience, Pope Francis had encouraged national delegations to work for the common good and the future of the coming generations. Participants had communicated their vision of a greener and more equal world in the outcome document approved by the meeting, which charted a course for increased parliamentary action on climate change and was to be presented for adoption at the Parliamentary Meeting to be held subsequently on the occasion of the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP26).

A film highlighting the key points in the outcome document was projected.

Ms. H. Baldwin (United Kingdom), Chair of the British Group IPU, in her report on the Parliamentary Meeting held on 7 November 2021 on the occasion of COP26, said that participants had unanimously adopted that outcome document in the knowledge that parliaments must act together to combat climate change, including by vitally holding governments to account on their commitments made at COP26 in the form of Nationally Determined Contributions. Roundly applauded by many other bodies, the outcome document demanded that governments not shirk their responsibility to adhere to climate change objectives – specifically net zero emissions by 2050 – under the Paris Agreement; that responsible stewardship of the planet and the well-being of humanity be at the heart of political ambition and activity; and that developed countries meet their existing climate commitments, in particular to provide and maintain a minimum of US\$ 100 billion in climate financing annually over the coming five years, which was to go hand in hand with a massive commitment of US\$ 130 trillion from global financial institutions. Parliamentarians must scrutinize the challenges posed by the transition to net zero, which had profound implications for all. The hope of recovery nonetheless remained, despite disappointments at COP26, such as the watering-down of language. Until COP27 in Egypt, which would be an opportunity to exert further pressure for even better results and action, parliamentarians must work urgently to propel the collective policy measures needed to address the climate change crisis.

The President said that the outcome document was very impressive and that parliaments had no more time to wait before using the power in their hands to drive action on climate change.

A representative of Saudi Arabia said by way of information that, in October 2021, his country had hosted the Middle East Green Initiative Summit as a catalyst for collective action to combat climate change in the region and beyond. As part of its own bid to combat climate change effects and protect the environment, Saudi Arabia had launched a programme for planting billions of trees over the coming decades. He looked forward to a successful COP27 in 2022.

Ms. R. Kavakci Kan (Turkey), after thanking the respective hosts for their excellent organization of the events described, said that she was delighted to report that her country had recently ratified the Paris Agreement, which it had signed in 2016.

The President, echoing the thanks expressed, said that the successful organization of those virtual and in-person events was a mark of what could be achieved in cooperation with the IPU.

Item 12 of the agenda

FUTURE PARLIAMENTARY MEETINGS
(CL/208/12-P.1 and P.2)

The Secretary General, drawing attention to the list of future inter-parliamentary meetings set out in document CL/208/12-P.1, said that the Governing Council had already approved some of the meetings listed but that others required its approval. Various meetings would be held in virtual format, in line with the IPU's ongoing digital transformation strategy, the aim being to strike a judicious balance with in-person meetings, which many Members favoured as a means of interacting and sharing experiences. Funding from the regular budget or external sources had been identified for the meetings listed, all of which were consistent with the IPU's current and future strategic objectives. With respect to the in-person meetings for which no host had yet been identified, the geopolitical groups had been encouraged to come forward with offers.

The President said he took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the list of future inter-parliamentary meetings.

It was so decided.

The President, thanking all those parliaments that had offered to host meetings, said that the IPU intended to hold as many in-person meetings as possible in the year ahead. The Executive Committee had welcomed the invitation received from the Parliament of Uruguay to host one of its sessions in Montevideo to coincide with an IPU regional event in the country, in June 2022, and had also been apprised of the Fifth UN Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDC5 Conference), to be held in Qatar from 23 to 27 January 2022. As part of the efforts to bring a parliamentary perspective to major UN processes, the IPU and the Shura Council of Qatar would hold a Parliamentary Forum on the eve of that Conference, on 22 January 2022. The IPU would furthermore present to the Conference a formal parliamentary message drawn from agreed positions of the IPU over the years, which had been prepared with the input of a core group of parliamentarians from developed and developing countries. He took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the draft message, which had been reviewed and refined by the Executive Committee and was set out in document CL/208/12-P.2.

It was so decided.

Mr. C. Rattray (High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), speaking in a pre-recorded video message in his capacity as Secretary-General of the LDC5 Conference, said that the Conference would be a once-in-a-decade opportunity to set the world's most vulnerable countries on a path to irreversible sustainable development, with no one left behind. Comprising generations of potential awaiting opportunities and investment, least developed countries were the greatest untapped

resource on the planet. They were nevertheless inhabited by over one half of the world's poor and their share in global gross domestic product (GDP) and trade was abysmally low. One third were expected to take a minimum of five years to recover to their pre-crisis level of GDP per capita and some were already in, or at risk of, debt distress.

Currently in its final stages of preparation, the Doha programme of action to be adopted at the Conference would serve as a road map to the better, fairer and more prosperous future that least developed countries deserved. The programme of action was designed to leverage the power of science, technology and innovation towards, among other things, fighting multidimensional vulnerabilities, supporting structural transformation, and building resilience, with an important emphasis on follow-up and follow-through. To achieve such a degree of commitment, the highest level of participation in Doha, including by all IPU Members, was critical. Parliamentarians had a fundamental role to play in overseeing not only the mainstreaming of actions into national development strategies, sectoral plans and the UN Development Assistance Framework but also the subsequent implementation and reporting. Ownership of the Doha programme of action by parliamentarians from least developed countries would promote its success, as would their active role in its implementation, review and evaluation, which other parliaments could support through resource mobilization. He looked forward to the participation of IPU Members in the Parliamentary Forum to be held on the eve of the Conference and counted on their involvement in making the ambition of the LDC5 Conference a reality.

The President, agreeing on the need for concerted action to ensure that no one was left behind, said that Members were encouraged to attend the two upcoming events in Doha.

In the absence of Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal), Vice-President of the Executive Committee, took the Chair.

Item 13 of the agenda

REPORTING BY MEMBERS ON IPU-RELATED ACTIVITIES (CL/208/13-R.1)

Ms. A. Filip (IPU Director for Member Parliaments and External Relations), accompanying her remarks with a slide presentation, said that the information set out in the report on the subject of reporting by Members on IPU-related activities, as contained in document CL/208/13-R.1, was based on input provided by Members in 2020 and 2021, in line with their statutory duty. Twenty responses had been received from among the 41 selected parliaments for 2020, together with a further 28 from among the 45 selected for 2021. Those response figures were perhaps attributable to conditions created by the pandemic, during which time the IPU had launched an online initiative for assembling information on the functioning of parliaments and the implementation of emergency health measures in such conditions. The substantial amount of information assembled in that manner was available on the IPU website.

Examples of best practices identified from the responses to the questionnaire sent to the selected parliaments were set out in the annex to the report, together with the names of the parliaments concerned. In the case of a first general question, which related to follow-up of the outcomes of the 141st and 142nd Assemblies, including the communication of those outcomes to parliaments and parliamentary committees and the organization of follow-up discussions or briefings, the actions taken in Estonia, Malaysia and Nicaragua were worth highlighting. Concerning a second question on follow-up to the resolution adopted in Belgrade on universal health coverage, action had improved substantially in 2021 compared to 2020, with Algeria, the Federated States of Micronesia and Switzerland serving as positive examples. As to a third question about the IPU's influence on the work of parliaments, 90 per cent of respondents had participated in IPU activities. More specific percentage figures were set out on page 5 of the report and best practices were illustrated by actions taken in Mongolia, New Zealand, Suriname and the United Kingdom.

Responses to a fourth question on IPU capacity-building activities and advisory services showed that respondents benefiting from such services, including Costa Rica – and, by extension, all members of the Latin American and Caribbean Group – Pakistan and Ukraine, had amounted to 15 per cent in 2020 and 25 per cent in 2021. Concerning a fifth question on parliamentary interaction with the United Nations, such as reported by Croatia, Qatar and the Russian Federation, the percentages remained modest, as indicated on page 6 of the report. Through successive resolutions

of the UN General Assembly, Heads of State and Government had in fact recognized the importance of including parliamentarians in national delegations to major UN conferences and events and of ensuring subsequent opportunities for them to work collectively to implement international commitments.

In respect of a further question about the contribution of parliaments to meeting human rights commitments, the figures for engagement in the Universal Periodic Review process conducted by the UN Human Rights Council had improved in 2021, as could be seen on pages 6 and 7 of the report, and over 90 per cent of respondents had taken steps to ensure that government action to address the pandemic took into account relevant human rights standards and obligations. Notable responses to the question had been provided by the Parliaments of the Gambia, Monaco and Slovakia. It was vital for governments to share national human rights reports and related recommendations with parliaments for debate and follow-up, especially as a substantial proportion of such recommendations had legislative implications.

Concerning parliamentary work in follow-up to UN agreements in the area of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, interesting practices included those followed in Benin, Ireland and the Netherlands, while in the area of youth participation in politics, very good examples of the work under way were evident in Mexico, Montenegro and Norway. Scope remained, however, for parliaments to do much more, both collectively and individually, to promote youth participation in the political process. Relatively good responses had been received to a further question on actions taken to enhance women's political participation, in which connection the Parliaments of Canada, Thailand and South Africa could serve as inspiring examples for parliaments not yet fully engaged on the issue. Concerning a last question, which related to measures taken to implement the Hanoi Declaration adopted in 2015 on the SDGs, the Canadian Parliament served as another good example of turning words into action, as did the Parliaments of Turkmenistan and the United Arab Emirates.

It was important for members of delegations to circulate a report on any IPU Assembly that they had attended to all of their colleagues in parliament and to raise awareness of the IPU and its activities in plenary sittings and in select committees. It was equally important for them to transmit details of all outcomes from IPU Assemblies to their governments and relevant national agencies and invite them to take appropriate action and report on progress made. It was always useful in addition to address questions to governments on topics discussed, recommendations made and resolutions adopted at IPU Assemblies, all of which should guide the drafting and amendment of related legislation. Outreach work, such as quoting IPU resolutions in communications, press releases, press conferences, social media messages and interviews, was also important. Members were furthermore encouraged to submit information on a voluntary basis in years when they were not under review, which, in combination with the new IPU Strategy, would contribute significantly towards increasing the IPU's relevance and visibility in national parliaments as well as in the wider international community.

The President said that the Executive Committee had noted with satisfaction the follow-up provided by Members and thanked them for their efforts, which demonstrated their support for the IPU. The Executive Committee believed that the implementation of IPU resolutions and recommendations not only strengthened national parliaments but also gave visibility to the IPU and consolidated its position in the international arena. It therefore appealed to Members for a more systematic implementation of those resolutions, recommending to that end that they should broadly share each IPU Assembly report within parliament and hold appropriate follow-up debates. It also recommended the outreach measures as presented in the report.

She took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the report on reporting by Members on IPU-related activities and approve the related recommendations of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

Item 14 of the agenda

ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES

(CL/208/14-R.1)

(a) Forum of Women Parliamentarians

(CL/208/14(a)-R.1)

Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, introducing the report contained in document CL/2014(a)-R.1 on the 32nd session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, held on 26 November 2021, said that the Forum had considered from a gender

perspective the draft resolution entitled *Legislation worldwide to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse*, which had been subsequently amended to incorporate the resulting suggestions for ensuring that the text was gender-responsive, survivor-centred and empowering. The Forum had also held a panel discussion on strategies for gender-responsive law-making, followed by an inspiring parity debate on how to better engage and work in partnership with men to promote gender equality. Lastly, the Forum had elected a new Second Vice-President of the Bureau, as well as a new member, and expressed support for the reappointment of the Secretary General for a further term of office.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

(b) Forum of Young Parliamentarians at the IPU
(CL/208/14(b)-R.1)

Mr. U. Lechte (Germany), member of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, presenting the report set out in document CL/208/14(b)-R.1 on the Forum's meeting of 27 November 2021, said that more inclusive and youth-friendly parliaments were key to the rejuvenation and strengthening of democracy and young parliamentarians key to building intergenerational understanding and cooperation. In addition to exchanging information on youth participation in their respective countries, participants in the meeting had explored interesting initiatives, such as youth quotas in parliament, and shared lessons learned in creating forums and networks of young parliamentarians. They had also agreed to focus on youth for climate action at the IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in 2022.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

(d) Committee on Middle East Questions
(CL/208/14(d)-R.1-rev)

Ms. F. Benbadis (Algeria), member of the Committee on Middle East Questions, introducing the report set out in document CL/208/14(d)-R.1 on the Committee's meeting of 29 November 2021, said that the Committee had pledged its support for efforts to end the humanitarian disaster in Yemen described to it by the country's Deputy Speaker. The IPU President had briefed the Committee on his visit to Israel and Palestine in November 2021, saying that the two sides appeared to be committed to a two-State solution for peace, and she had stated her own country's position in support of the Palestinian cause. The Committee had agreed to undertake its own visit to the region, COVID-19 circumstances permitting. To ensure a gender balance in its composition, the Committee had also agreed to a proposed amendment to its Rules, which would be presented to the Governing Council for approval at its session in March 2022.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

The Secretary General said that the Governing Council was called upon to elect five members – three women and two men – to the Committee. Four candidates had been nominated, namely: Mr. Karim Darwish of Egypt; Ms. Nadia Essayan of France; Mr. Mardani Ali Serah of Indonesia; and Ms. Shaikah Obaid Al-Taneiji of the United Arab Emirates. The election of a third woman should be deferred until the Council's 209th session in March 2022.

The President said she took it that the Governing Council wished to elect those four candidates and to defer the election of a third woman member until its session in March 2022.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 13:30.

Third sitting

Tuesday, 30 November 2021
(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 15:05, with Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal), Vice-President of the Executive Committee, in the Chair.

Item 14 of the agenda

ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES

(continued)
(CL/208/14-R.1)

(c) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (CL/208/14(c)-R.1)

Mr. N. Bako-Arifari (Benin), President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, accompanying his report on the Committee's 166th session in Madrid with a digital slide presentation, said that the Committee had held seven hearings during that session, in the course of which it had met with authorities as well as complainants. He thanked all those who had taken the time to respond to the Committee's invitation by videoconference and in person.

At the session, the Committee had examined the situation of 297 parliamentarians – 25 per cent of them women – in 13 countries. It had also adopted admissibility decisions in new cases concerning 41 parliamentarians in Colombia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Tunisia. Set out in document CL/208/14(c)-R.1, the draft decisions that he would present, in alphabetical order, to the Governing Council for adoption concerned, however, 289 parliamentarians in 12 countries.

Brazil

The Committee had again considered the case of two Brazilian members of parliament who had faced continuous threats, which remained unpunished and had forced Mr. Jean Wyllys to give up his seat in parliament. The Committee had been dismayed by reports that the member of parliament who had taken his place, Mr. David Miranda, was no longer receiving the limited security protection provided by Congress even though he faced the same threats that had forced his former colleague into exile. The Committee regretted that the Brazilian delegation had not been able to join it for a hearing and hoped that the Brazilian authorities would respond to its concerns.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the cases of Mr. Jean Wyllys and Mr. David Miranda.

Cambodia

The draft decision before the Council concerned the long-standing case of 57 former parliamentarians, all belonging to the Cambodian National Rescue Party, which had been dissolved by the Supreme Court in 2017. The Committee had had a very constructive discussion in Madrid with the leader of the Cambodian delegation. He had invited the Committee to come to Cambodia and the Committee had fully embraced that idea. Indeed, a mission would be a useful opportunity to learn about political developments in Cambodia and to discuss the prospects for the speedy resolution of the Committee's human rights concerns, all of which revolved around the exercise of the parliamentary mandate without fear of reprisals.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the cases of 57 parliamentarians in Cambodia.

Mr. S. Yang (Cambodia) said that the Cambodian Parliament would work with the IPU and the Committee with updates on those cases and would be pleased to welcome an IPU delegation to the country.

Chile

The Committee had examined the case of Mr. Jaime Guzmán Errázuriz, a Chilean senator who had been assassinated in his home country in April 1991. The Committee had noted with satisfaction that significant progress had been made in recent years in the quest for justice.

Nevertheless, the Committee remained concerned by the fact that, in 2021, the thirtieth anniversary year of the senator's death, several of the perpetrators still went unpunished. For example, Mr. Galvarino Sergio Apablaza was currently living in Argentina where he regularly appeared in public, even though the Chilean courts had issued an international arrest warrant against him and the Argentine Supreme Court had upheld his extradition to Chile. The Committee regretted that the Argentine parliamentary authorities had not responded to its repeated requests for information and observations about Mr. Apablaza's situation, and hoped that the Chile–Argentina Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group would soon take a keen interest in this matter. The Committee wished to be kept informed on the matter and to receive official information from the Argentine authorities on the current legal status of Mr. Apablaza in Argentina.

The Committee also called on all IPU Member Parliaments to take action to help ensure that justice was done in the case in clear accordance with democratic values and human rights.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Jaime Guzmán Errázuriz.

Mr. J.A. Coloma (Chile), expressing thanks to the Committee for its important work on the case, called on his Argentine colleagues to help hasten the extradition of Mr. Apablaza. He also thanked the Brazilian and Mexican authorities for their support in the efforts to end the many years of impunity from which no one should be allowed to benefit, least of all those responsible for the assassination of politicians who had given their lives to their country.

Colombia

A new case in Colombia concerned nine opposition parliamentarians. As reported in the news, social protests had rocked Colombia since April 2021 as demands for a more equal, inclusive and peaceful society had intensified. The Committee was deeply concerned about the serious allegations that the nine members of parliament were being subjected to acts of persecution for supporting the demands of the protestors and for their opposition to the Colombian President. In light of the serious issues in the case, the Committee believed that a mission to Colombia would offer a useful opportunity to raise these matters with all relevant parties. It therefore hoped that the authorities would accept the proposal for a mission.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the cases of nine parliamentarians in Colombia.

Gabon

The Committee had examined the case of the Gabonese member of parliament, Justin Ndoundangoye, who had been held in pretrial detention since 9 January 2020. The Committee wished to thank the Gabonese delegation for the information provided at the hearing with the Committee in Madrid, and noted with satisfaction that the National Assembly was ready to cooperate with the IPU so as to reach a satisfactory settlement of the case. The Committee also noted with interest the initiative of some members of parliament to visit Mr. Ndoundangoye in prison, even though that was unlikely to have led to success.

The Committee remained deeply concerned about the member of parliament's continued detention in view of the allegations about his conditions of detention, and urged the competent national authorities to ensure that he could fully enjoy his rights. The Committee was also very concerned about the serious and detailed allegations of threats, acts of torture and other ill-treatment against the member of parliament and about the fact that, according to the complainant, the perpetrators had still not as yet been identified and prosecuted. The Committee urged the parliamentary authorities to provide detailed information and copies of documents with the conclusions of the investigations reportedly carried out and thanked the Gabonese delegation for the commitment it had made at the Committee hearing to provide its support on the issue.

In light of those concerns and the seriousness of the allegations received, the Committee wished to send a delegation to Gabon and to visit Mr. Ndoundangoye in prison. The Committee hoped that the national authorities would cooperate fully and that the mission would help to promptly reach a satisfactory solution to this case.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Justin Ndoundangoye.

Iraq

The Committee had also examined the case of Mr. Ahmed Al-Alwani, a former member of the Iraqi Parliament. Mr. Al-Alwani had been detained since 2013 and was facing the death penalty and life imprisonment following the conclusion of flawed and unfair judicial proceedings. Furthermore, the allegations of torture and mistreatment early in his detention had never been addressed. The Committee called on the authorities to promptly release Mr. Al-Alwani and grant him appropriate compensation. Provided that the overall security situation in Iraq allowed for a visit, the Committee would like to visit Mr. Al-Alwani in detention and to meet with the relevant Iraqi authorities, to help achieve progress in his case.

A film in which Mr. Adel Al-Alwani's brother Adel appealed to the IPU for assistance was projected.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Ahmed Jamil Salman Al-Alwani.

Libya

The Committee had adopted a new decision in the case of Ms. Seham Sergiwa, a Libyan parliamentarian, who had been brutally abducted from her home two years earlier. The Committee would have wished to have positive news to report on the case, but despite its repeated requests to the authorities, they had failed to provide concrete information on the status of the investigation into her disappearance. More worrying, the recent findings of the United Nations Independent Fact-finding Mission indicated that the authorities had failed to provide effective protection for Ms. Sergiwa, whose life was at risk due to her profile.

The Committee therefore renewed its calls on the Libyan authorities to hold accountable those responsible for her abduction and to ensure justice for Ms. Sergiwa and her family.

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

The Secretary General, responding to a question from **Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda** (Zimbabwe), said that, of the two parliaments in Libya, the IPU recognized and maintained contact with the Tobruk-based House of Representatives, which it therefore considered responsible for all follow-up action on Libyan human rights cases taken up by the Committee.

Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), President of the IPU, took the Chair.

Myanmar

The draft decision before the Council concerned 55 parliamentarians elected in November 2020 before the forceful takeover of power by the military. Some 24 of them were being held incommunicado in dangerous detention conditions. At least three were women parliamentarians and the Committee was particularly concerned about their treatment. Other parliamentarians had been forced into hiding by the military, who had subjected their relatives to torture and even murder. In the face of mounting repression, 20 members of parliament had decided to carry on the work that the elected parliament had been mandated to perform by the people. If given the opportunity, the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw had vowed to steer the country towards a federal democracy that would guarantee citizenship rights and autonomy to the Rohingya and other ethnic groups. The Committee called on all IPU Members to take concrete action for the release of their

imprisoned members of parliament and the restoration of democracy. The Committee also invited the Council to show solidarity with their colleagues by supporting the International Parliamentarians Alliance for Myanmar.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the cases of 55 parliamentarians in Myanmar.

Pakistan

The draft decision before the Council concerned the situation of Mr. Ali Wazir, an independent member of parliament and prominent defender of Pashtun rights. The Committee had received written information from the executive authorities and had had the opportunity to discuss his situation with the Pakistani delegation, and for that it was grateful. That said, the Committee had some concerns regarding the situation of Mr. Ali Wazir, who had been detained on remand without bail by an anti-terrorist court since December 2020. He was accused of giving a speech that contained threatening remarks against Pakistan's institutions. The Committee wished to obtain concrete information on the legal and factual basis for his imprisonment, his conditions of detention and his state of health.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Muhammad Ali Wazir.

Sri Lanka

The first of two new cases in Sri Lanka concerned Mr. Bathiudeen, a leading Muslim opposition leader. The Committee was concerned that he had been arrested without warrant and detained without charge in April 2021 under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Mr. Bathiudeen had been released on bail after six months but remained a suspect. The Committee was also concerned that it had not been informed of any serious and credible evidence against him. It therefore called on the authorities to either charge him, if such evidence existed, or to abandon the case against him. The Committee also asked the Sri Lankan Parliament to repeal or amend the Prevention of Terrorism Act and bring it into line with international human rights standards.

The second new case concerned Mr. Ramanayake. He was serving a four-year prison sentence for contempt of court after having stated in an interview that almost all judges and lawyers in Sri Lanka were corrupt. As a result of his sentence and conviction, which Mr. Ramanayake could not appeal, his parliamentary mandate had been terminated in April 2021. The Committee was deeply concerned about Mr. Ramanayake's conviction and sentence and called on the President of Sri Lanka to pardon him so that he could regain his freedom and political rights.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decisions relating to the cases of Mr. Risha Bathiudeen and Mr. Ranjan Ramanayake.

Mr. V. Tsvangirai (Zimbabwe) suggested that the IPU might wish to enter into dialogue with the Sri Lankan authorities with a view to negotiating Mr. Ramanayake's release. To arrest and convict someone for having uttered a simple statement was unwarranted and the start of a slippery slope.

Tunisia

The first of two new cases in Tunisia related to the situation of Ms. Abir Moussi, who had been subjected to sexist verbal and physical abuse in parliament. It was unacceptable for a woman parliamentarian to be unable to discharge her duties in a respectful environment where her rights could be properly and seriously defended. The Committee condemned those acts of violence and called on the Tunisian authorities to hold the perpetrators accountable.

The second case from Tunisia related to the situation of several Tunisian members of parliament from the *Ennahda* and *Al Karama* political groups who had appealed to the Committee after the Tunisian Parliament had been suspended on 25 July 2021. The parliamentarians, similarly to other members of the Tunisian Parliament, had been subjected to a sustained campaign of defamation and demonization designed to tarnish their image. The members of parliament had also been stripped of their right to discharge their parliamentary mandates, and some of them had undergone legal proceedings administered under the court martial system. The Committee called on

the competent authorities to ensure that the members of parliament could have access to a fair trial in accordance with the international standards to which Tunisia had committed itself.

Regarding the situation in Tunisia, the Committee expressed its concern at the indefinite suspension of the Tunisian Parliament and at its impact on the individual rights of parliamentarians as well as on the Tunisian people, who currently had no political representation. It was essential to preserve the achievements of the young Tunisian democracy that had emerged from the Arab Spring. The Committee looked forward to the work of the Tunisian Parliament resuming and remained at the disposal of the Tunisian authorities, with the support of the IPU, to help them re-establish and strengthen the institution of parliament.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decisions relating to the case of Ms. Abir Moussi and the cases of 24 parliamentarians in Tunisia.

The President said that the cases of the Tunisian parliamentarians and the worrying situation of the Tunisian Parliament, as discussed at the previous sitting, were linked.

Ms. H. Baldwin (United Kingdom), noting that the Tunisian Parliament had already been in suspension for four months, said that it was right to draw attention to that link and expressed solidarity with Tunisian parliamentarians in the face of such a serious situation. The British Group IPU had met earlier in the day with members of the Tunisian delegation, who had confirmed that they and their colleagues were barred from entering the parliamentary premises.

Mr. V. Tsvangirai (Zimbabwe) said that the suspension of the Tunisian Parliament violated the rights of the Tunisian people in addition to those of Tunisian parliamentarians, with whom he too expressed solidarity.

A representative of Tunisia said that the Committee's report gave hope to the country in its current difficulties. The Tunisian President was gradually dismantling democracy and aimed to dissolve the main parties in parliament at the earliest opportunity as a means of paving the way for the dissolution of parliament itself. He urged all Members to stand with the Tunisian Parliament and with Tunisian democracy to prevent that occurrence.

The President said that the views expressed were duly noted and that a return to constitutional order was vital in Tunisia and indeed in all other countries undergoing similar situations.

Venezuela

The Committee had also examined the case of 134 Venezuelan parliamentarians elected in 2015. In light of the conclusions of the joint mission of the Executive Committee and the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, which had visited Venezuela in August 2021, the Committee reiterated its concerns about the widespread repression of opposition parliamentarians that the authorities and their supporters had resorted to in recent years. The Committee strongly denounced the many measures that the executive and judicial authorities had taken during the 2016-2021 legislature to undermine the integrity and independence of the National Assembly. The Committee once again urged the authorities to immediately end all forms of persecution of the opposition members of parliament elected in 2015, and reaffirmed its view that the issues at stake were part of the broader political crisis in Venezuela, which could be resolved only through political dialogue and by the Venezuelans themselves. The Committee nonetheless took note of the measures taken to release two parliamentarians around the time of its visit.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the cases of 134 parliamentarians in Venezuela.

Mr. B. Llano (Paraguay), expressing appreciation for the Committee's work on the cases mentioned, said that many Venezuelan parliamentarians were subject to persecution by the regime, including representatives whose absence from the current Assembly was deeply regrettable.

Mr. J.I. Echániz (Spain) expressed the hope that Venezuelan representatives would be in a position to attend the 144th Assembly and engage in the open discussion to which all parliamentarians were entitled along with other rights.

The President recalled that neither of the two Venezuelan Parliaments was currently recognized by the IPU and that, in the hope of further promoting the dialogue under way in Mexico between the Venezuelan Government and opposition, the IPU had issued an invitation for a Venezuelan delegation to observe the proceedings of the current Assembly, provided that the delegation comprised members of the two opposing parties. No such delegation was at the Assembly, however.

Mr. N. Bako-Arifari (Benin), President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, said that the Committee was aware that members of the IPU took the defence of parliamentarians' rights very seriously and that the Committee's work delivered parliamentary solidarity through concrete action.

In that regard, with respect to the situation of parliamentarians in Afghanistan, it was essential to acknowledge that, since Kabul had fallen to the Taliban on 15 August 2021, Afghanistan's 316 members of parliament, as well as hundreds of members of the Parliament's secretariat, had found themselves in a catastrophic situation. The 86 women parliamentarians and numerous former members of parliament had been particularly exposed to insecurity, threats and abuse. The Committee wished to put on record its deep gratitude to all members of parliament who had been involved in helping to evacuate and host members of parliament who were at risk. Among others, that had enabled Fawzia and Maryam Koofi to be kept safe; their case was still pending before the Committee. Once again, the Committee called on the solidarity of the entire parliamentary community to protect and support at-risk members of parliament and parliamentary staff. More than 75 of them had still not been able to leave the country and were facing great difficulties, while many others were in third countries from where it had proved impossible to reach their final destination.

Lastly, the Committee welcomed the unwavering support of Members for the cause of defending the human rights of parliamentarians as a fundamental part of the IPU's work to promote democratic values the world over.

The President, noting that an attack on one parliamentarian was an attack on all parliamentarians, thanked the Committee for its work and its commitment to that cause in the true IPU spirit.

(e) Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law
(CL/208/14(e)-R.1)

Ms. A. Vadai (Hungary), President of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, introducing the report contained in document CL/208/14(e)-R.1 on the Committee's meeting of 27 November 2021, said that the Committee remained loyal to the goal of ending statelessness by 2024 and called on all IPU Members to implement the relevant conventions. It had agreed to focus in its future work on addressing gender discrimination in nationality law, building the knowledge and capacity of parliamentarians in the area of statelessness, and supporting follow-up in the 32 priority countries identified by the #IBelong campaign to end statelessness. Following a rich open session on ways of supporting a mine-free world and the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Committee had concluded that parliamentary engagement in the matter must be strengthened, with a focus on the actions listed in the report, and agreed to pursue its work on anti-personnel mines in the years to come.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

The President said that three members were to be elected to the Committee for a four-year term, ending in November 2025, and that those nominated as candidates were, for the African Group, Ms. Francine Muyumba Furaha of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and for the Eurasia Group, Ms. Elena Afanasieva of the Russian Federation and Mr. Eugeniu Sinchevici of the Republic of Moldova. He took it that the Governing Council wished to elect those candidates.

It was so decided.

(f) Gender Partnership Group
(CL/208/14(f)-R.1)

Mr. A.R Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), member of the Gender Partnership Group, presenting the report contained in document CL/208/14(f)-R.1 on the Group's meeting of 29 November 2021, said that the Group was committed to building on its success towards ensuring the IPU's status as a model of gender equality. The Group had ascertained from its review that the percentage of women attending the 143rd Assembly was at its highest ever and commended the presence of gender-balanced delegations. Listed in annex to the report were the one third of delegations composed of over 40 per cent of women. Delegations comprising few or no women, which amounted to some 10 per cent of the total, would be encouraged by the Group to increase women's participation, both in parliament and at the IPU. The Group also called on all parliamentarians to address the scourge of sexism, harassment and violence affecting women in parliaments around the globe. It counted on them, as well as on IPU bodies and other stakeholders, to provide input to the Group's newly-agreed initiative to develop a road map for that purpose.

The President, noting the requests made by some delegations for corrections to figures and percentages set out in the annexes to the report, said that the document would be amended to incorporate those corrections.

On that understanding, the Governing Council took note of the report.

(g) Advisory Group on Health
(CL/208/14(g)-R.1)

Ms. G. Katuta (Zambia), President of the Advisory Group on Health, said in delivering the report on the meeting held by the Advisory Group on Health on 27 November 2021, as contained in document CL/208/14(g)-R.1, that the meeting had discussed the implementation of the new IPU Strategy for 2022–2026 and exchanged experiences on improving access to health-care services for vulnerable and marginalized populations. It had noted with concern such matters as the disparities in access to COVID-19 vaccines and the impact of the pandemic on sexual and reproductive health and violence against women. The Group encouraged parliamentarians to engage further in sensitizing communities to the importance of COVID-19 measures and the benefits of vaccinations, enhance preparedness for future emergencies and pandemics, and promote efforts to increase vaccine equity. The IPU should play a role in those preparedness efforts and in building resilience in health and related sectors.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

A representative of South Africa said that the report highlighted the importance of the resolution adopted on the emergency item, *Harnessing global parliamentary support for vaccine equity in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic*, which had been proposed by the African Group. The resolution would contribute to saving millions of lives and strengthen the resolve to fight the pandemic on an even basis, irrespective of economic status. He commended the African Group for having raised such a pertinent issue and thanked IPU Members profusely for their overwhelming support in the matter.

(i) High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism
(CL/208/14(i)-R.1)

Ms. J. Oduol (Kenya), Vice-Chairperson of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, presenting the report set out in document CL/208/14(i)-R.1 on the Group's virtual meeting of 17 May 2021 and its in-person meetings of 9 September and 26 November 2021, said that the Group had reviewed progress in the IPU's counter-terrorism activities and emphasized the importance of addressing the situation in the Sahel region as a priority; supporting victims of terrorism; and addressing hate speech. It had heard a presentation on the impact of terrorism, together with conclusions and recommendations for systemic and all-encompassing solutions, including with the Call of the Sahel initiative in mind. The Group had also heard a summary of the proceedings of the First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism, held in Vienna in September 2021, which were as she had described earlier under item 11 of the Council's agenda. In addition, the Group had been updated on the IPU's development of three

information, communication and technology tools for counter-terrorism purposes as well as its development of model legislative provisions, in conjunction with relevant UN bodies, to protect victims of terrorism. Special guests had also shared their views on counter-terrorism activities.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

The President said that seven members were to be elected to the Committee for a four-year term, ending in November 2025. Six nominations had been received, as follows: for the African Group, Mr. Monder Bouden of Algeria and Mr. Mahamadou Karidio of Niger; for the Asia-Pacific Group, Ms. Eva Abdulla of Maldives; for the Eurasia Group, Mr. Sergei Rachkov of Belarus; for the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC), Ms. Alina González of Panama; and for the Twelve Plus Group, Mr. Avi Dichter of Israel. He took it that the Governing Council wished to elect those candidates.

It was so decided.

(j) Working Group on Science and Technology
(CL/208/14(j)-R.1)

Mr. M. Larive (France), Chairperson of the Working Group on Science and Technology, presenting the report contained in document CL/208/14(j)-R.1, said that, during the course of its three sittings held on 13 July, 18 November and 28 November 2021, the Working Group had discussed its mandate, urged the inclusion of science and technology in the draft IPU Strategy for 2022–2026, and adopted the work plan detailed in the report. It had also started drafting an international charter on technoscience ethics intended for use as a basis for legislation in that sphere, which would be presented for adoption at the 144th Assembly and subsequently, in September 2022, at an international conference in Viet Nam on science, ethics and human development. As part of its focus on the role of science and technology in advancing attainment of the SDGs, it had furthermore agreed to build relevant partnerships and cooperate with other IPU bodies with the ultimate goal of strengthening links between policymakers and science to improve the human condition.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

The President said that one member was to be elected to the Committee for a four-year term, ending in November 2025, and that the Eurasia Group had nominated as a candidate Mr. Victor Spînu of the Republic of Moldova. He took it that the Governing Council wished to elect that candidate.

It was so decided.

Item 15 of the agenda

APPOINTMENT OF TWO INTERNAL AUDITORS FOR 2022
(CL/208/15-R.1)

The President said that two internal auditors were to be appointed for the 2022 fiscal year and that two candidatures had been received, namely those of Mr. Andries Gryffroy of Belgium and Ms. Heli Järvinen of Finland. He took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the appointment of both candidates.

It was so decided.

Item 16 of the agenda

ELECTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The President said that three new members were to be elected to the Executive Committee to replace Mr. David McGuinty of Canada and Ms. Laurence Fehlmann Rielle of Switzerland, whose terms were coming to end, and Mr. G. Gali Ngothé of Chad, who was no longer a parliamentarian. He extended heartfelt thanks to the three outgoing members for their much-appreciated contribution to the Committee's work.

The candidatures received for full mandates running from November 2021 to November 2025 were, from the Twelve Plus Group, those of Mr. José Ignacio Echániz of Spain and Ms. Olga Kefalogianni of Greece; and from the African Group, that of Mr. Ahmed Kharchi of Algeria. Those candidatures, along with accompanying letters and curricula vitae, had been shared with the full membership. He took it that the Governing Council wished to elect the three candidates as members of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

Item 17 of the agenda

APPOINTMENT OF A SECRETARY GENERAL FOR A PERIOD OF FOUR YEARS

The President recalled that, in July 2021, the Executive Committee had decided unanimously to recommend that the incumbent Secretary General be reappointed for a further four-year term of office from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2026. He took it that the Governing Council wished to approve that recommendation.

It was so decided.

The President, congratulating the Secretary General on his reappointment, said that he wished him every success in his future endeavours in the service of the IPU.

Representatives of the Netherlands on behalf of the Twelve Plus Group, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, the United Republic of Tanzania, Saudi Arabia, Paraguay on behalf of GRULAC, Portugal, Benin, South Sudan, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Turkey, Seychelles, Egypt and Sao Tome and Principe took the floor to congratulate the Secretary General on his reappointment.

Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe), speaking on a point of order, suggested that the best way for Members to acclaim the Secretary General would be to respond without fail to communications received from him on any critical issue raised before the Executive Committee.

The Secretary General said that he was deeply humbled by the overwhelming trust renewed in him and thanked every single Member from the bottom of his heart for their ongoing support. He would continue to serve with unswerving determination and loyalty the global organization of parliaments with which he had a love story that, by reappointing him as its Secretary General, the membership was allowing him to continue. He had always replied to anyone who asked that what made him tick in that position was the knowledge that there were 179 Members backing him, the IPU and its foundational values. At the present Assembly, he had seen evidence of the immense commitment of Members to those values and, very importantly, of their commitment to deliver to the people whom they represented. It was that commitment that motivated and energized him to serve the international parliamentary community, an opportunity for which he thanked Members. At the 144th Assembly, he would report on the many successes achieved with the support of Members over his years as Secretary General.

He also thanked his family, who had borne the brunt of his frustrations as well as shared his satisfactions in his role as Secretary General, with special gratitude to his wife, whom he invited to join him on the podium. His children had also been very supportive of him from the very first day, as had his mother, whom he was fortunate to still have alive. Having renewed its confidence in him, the membership had given him the marching orders to steer the implementation of the new IPU Strategy for which, by the same token, it had given him the budget. He assured Members that he and his colleagues would work with transparency and accountability in making best use of the confidence placed in him. He was extremely lucky to work with a small team of individuals who devoted their lives to serving the IPU and the global parliamentary community. His acceptance of the responsibility entrusted to him was in the full knowledge that he would not be working alone to implement the Strategy and could rely on the strong shoulders of the IPU Secretariat to support him in that endeavour.

He reiterated his commitment to striving with Members to make democracy work for all, including by rejuvenating it and its processes through youth empowerment, which they had identified as one of several priorities. Those would be his daily guiding light in continuing the excellent work

initiated during the term of the current IPU President, with whom he would work as a team for the institution both were proud to represent and serve. He expressed thanks to the Spanish hosts of the Assembly in Madrid, which he would forever remember as the place where Members had reaffirmed their confidence in him. The memory and that confidence would serve him well in working to fulfil his mandate. As his sister had said in her message to him that morning, the key to happiness was to be able to change pain into pleasure, darkness into light and sorrow into joy. That would occur, however, only through the will to change. The new IPU Strategy compelled change and he was not afraid to effect that change with the help of his family and the IPU President.

Item 18 of the agenda

THE IPU CREMER-PASSY PRIZE
(CL/208/18-P.1)

The President recalled that the Governing Council had approved the establishment of an annual IPU Cremer-Passy prize, named after the IPU's two founding fathers, which was to be awarded to a parliamentarian for his or her dedication to defending democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Nominations for the award would be invited from the geopolitical groups for presentation to a selection board composed of former IPU Presidents. The award would be presented on 30 June of each year, starting in 2022, to coincide with the International Day of Parliamentarism and the anniversary of the IPU. He took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the proposed road map for the IPU Cremer-Passy Prize, as set out in document CL/208/18-P.1

It was so decided.

A film about the IPU Cremer-Passy Prize was projected.

Item 19 of the agenda

OTHER BUSINESS

The President, expressing his gratitude to all IPU staff and Members for their contribution to a successful session of the Governing Council, said that the IPU represented 46,000 parliamentarians, many of whom had offered their time, experience and knowledge for its benefit. One such special individual, a true democrat who had dedicated several decades of his life to the IPU in a wide variety of positions, was Mr. Robert del Picchia of France, to whom an abundance of thanks were due.

Mr. R. del Picchia (former Senator of France), special guest, said that he had looked upon his association with the IPU, which had lasted 24 and a half years, as a mission. It had been a very happy time during which he had got along well with his fellow parliamentarians, despite occasional problems in making his delegation's voice heard. He was delighted to see that, even with bumps along the way, the IPU remained on track in working for the well-being of parliaments and citizens towards creating a safer, wiser and better world. The IPU staff deserved a special mention for their sterling work behind the scenes, which was not always fully recognized. Over the years, he had often told the current IPU President that, with his demeanour and calm, he was an ideal candidate for the job. He would follow his work, together with that of the Secretary General, from his place of retirement in Vienna. He thanked all IPU Members for the honour bestowed on him, noting that their role was more important than ever before, given the rising profile of parliamentarism and the need to tackle global issues and further strengthen democracy around the world. He continued to have faith in the IPU and would long champion its work, without which the world would be a worse place.

On behalf of all Members, the President presented a certificate of appreciation to Mr. del Picchia for his contribution to the work of the IPU.

The President said that he and the Secretary General always strived to do their best but that it could not be done without IPU staff members such as Ms. Susanna Ortiz, the Organization's long-standing receptionist to whom Members had often spoken but never seen and who was soon to retire. He declared the 208th session of the Governing Council closed.

The sitting rose at 17:30.