



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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CL/210/SR
9 January 2023

Summary records of the Governing Council

210th session

12 and 15 October 2022

Kigali Convention Centre, Kigali, Rwanda

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First sitting

Wednesday, 12 October 2022
(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 09:25 with Mr. D. Pacheco, President of the IPU, in the Chair.

OPENING OF THE SITTING

The President, welcoming participants and paying special tribute to the parliamentary authorities of Rwanda for their display of ambition, professionalism and hospitality in working to host the 145th IPU Assembly, said that the constant readiness of IPU Members to attend such Assemblies around the world testified to their commitment to the IPU as an organization that brought them together to debate and deliver on important issues affecting humankind. As had been recognized at the recent G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit (P20) in Jakarta, Indonesia, stronger parliaments were key to a sustainable economic recovery in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The IPU remained ever relevant in addressing that and many other challenges, including, as always, the fundamental matter of violations of the human rights of parliamentarians.

The Secretary General, similarly welcoming all delegates and expressing thanks to the Rwandan hosts of the Assembly, said that the IPU had a stake in ensuring that the deliberations among participants ran to plan and were crowned with success. He and his colleagues looked forward to working with IPU Members to that end on issues of global importance.

The President said that thanks were also due to the Secretary General and his staff for their essential contribution to the success of IPU Assemblies.

Item 1 of the agenda

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (CL/210/A.1-rev)

The agenda was adopted.

Item 2 of the agenda

APPROVAL OF THE SUMMARY RECORDS OF THE 209TH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL (CL/209/SR)

The summary records of the 209th session of the Governing Council were approved.

Item 3 of the agenda

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE 145TH ASSEMBLY

At the proposal of Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), seconded by Ms. C. Souza (Portugal), Ms. R. Kavakci Kan (Türkiye), Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe), Mr. A. Ruhunda (Uganda), a representative of Somalia, Mr. H. Alziadin (Jordan), Mr. B. Llano (Paraguay), Mr. E. Bustamante (Peru), Mr. A. Touizi (Morocco), Mr. F. Boukoubi (Gabon), Mr. F.H. Naek (Pakistan) and Ms. N. Mapisa-Nqakula (South Africa), Ms. D. Mukabalisa (Rwanda) was elected President of the 145th Assembly by acclamation.

Ms. D. Mukabalisa (Rwanda), thanking the members of the Governing Council for having elected her as President of the Assembly, said that she was pleased to be entrusted with that role and would do her utmost to live up to the expectations placed in her.

Item 4 of the agenda

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

(b) On the activities of the Executive Committee

The President said that, during its sittings held both online and in person since the 144th Assembly, most recently in Kigali, the Executive Committee, in addition to discussing such matters as arrangements for the 145th Assembly, the work of the Secretariat and preparation of the 2023 draft consolidated budget, had addressed a number of important issues on which he wished to brief the Governing Council.

One such issue concerned the possible establishment of IPU regional offices following a request received from the Parliament of Uruguay to host such an office in Montevideo for the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC). The initiative would be aimed at bringing the IPU closer to parliaments — and in turn the people — in the regions represented by the geopolitical groups so as to enhance its understanding of their respective needs and facilitate implementation of the IPU Strategy in direct collaboration with those parliaments.

With that in mind, the Executive Committee had decided, with GRULAC's support, to task the Secretariat with the preparation of terms of reference for the establishment of such an office in Uruguay on a pilot basis, subject to approval by the host country. A proposal to host an IPU regional office in Cairo had also been received from Egypt but would require the support of the Arab Group.

Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, said that the Group supported the Egyptian proposal.

The President, welcoming that confirmation of support, said that a regional office could accordingly be established in Cairo as a second pilot project that would then be evaluated, together with the first project, to determine the merits of decentralizing the IPU through such offices.

Ms. S. Amero (Uganda) said that her delegation objected to the Egyptian proposal, as it raised questions about the representation of parliaments that were members of the African Group.

The President said that the proposed office in Cairo would be for the Arab Group and that a positive evaluation of the two pilot projects by all stakeholders would pave the way for proposals to establish other regional offices, including perhaps a second one on the African continent for the African Group.

Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe), underlining the need for consistency in the IPU's decision-making processes, said that the usual expectation would have been for the Executive Committee to make a recommendation to the Governing Council concerning its decision to approve Uruguay — and, as he recalled, Uruguay alone — as the location for the pilot project. Not only was the Egyptian proposal at odds with that decision, but Egypt was located in the continent of Africa, as indicated by its membership of the African Union. For the purpose at hand, therefore, Egypt must decide on its geopolitical affiliation, as the prospect of its regional office representing two different geopolitical groups created an awkward anomaly. An absence of clarity on the matter could furthermore lead to misunderstandings in countries geographically located in Africa.

Mr. H. Gebaly (Egypt) said that a decision to have an IPU office in Cairo had been taken back in 2014, and that the Egyptian proposal was intended only to revitalize that office. Egypt clearly represented the Arab Group, which had unanimously affirmed as much in its meeting of the previous day.

The President said that the Executive Committee had not yet taken a final decision on the matter, which would rest on the outcome of negotiations with the potential hosts on the related terms of reference, including from the longer-term perspective.

The Secretary General, clarifying the situation as it stood, said that the Executive Committee, after receiving requests from Uruguay and Egypt to host IPU regional offices, had explored the advantages and challenges associated with the establishment of such offices, irrespective of location. Its conclusion had been that their establishment would be desirable as a means of promoting closer relations with the regions represented by the IPU's geopolitical groups. In the light of challenges that it had also identified, however, it had further concluded that no final decision on the matter should be taken until requirements negotiated by him with the host countries had been fulfilled. In that event, the Executive Committee would formally propose the establishment of regional offices in both countries as pilot projects. If, after a two-year period, the projects were evaluated as successful, regional offices could then be opened elsewhere.

It nonetheless remained that IPU Members were entitled to belong to more than one geopolitical group and to enjoy the benefits accruing to them as a result. In exception to that rule, however, they were able to claim membership of only one geopolitical group for election purposes. Egypt belonged to both the Arab Group and the African Group but had formally indicated to the IPU that, for those purposes, it was a member of the Arab Group.

To date, the Executive Committee had not taken any final decision on the matter and was simply recommending that the Governing Council should approve the principle of establishing regional offices, take note of the offers received from Uruguay and Egypt, and request him to pursue consultations as to the related requirements. Only after those requirements had been fulfilled would the Governing Council be requested formally to approve the opening of regional offices.

The President said that his earlier remarks had been intended simply to inform the Governing Council that the Executive Committee was open to the IPU embarking on negotiations that the two countries concerned had been waiting to commence for over 10 years.

Mr. A. Ruhunda (Uganda) said that, thanks to its proposal, Egypt, with which his country had long-standing geographical and other connections, was conveying the unfortunate impression of acting in bad faith and going against the spirit of African unity. To avoid fuelling division among its Members, the IPU must maintain a careful balance in dealing with the matter at stake and remain mindful of its political implications. An alternative proposal would be to link an IPU regional office with existing structures in Africa, such as the headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa. As an institution that urged democratization and respect for the rule of law, the IPU must ensure that its own democratic credentials remained intact.

The President said that all geopolitical groups were proportionately represented on the Executive Committee, which always sought to achieve consensus as far as possible and which had taken a democratic decision to proceed with negotiations on the terms of reference relating to IPU regional offices. The IPU interacted with all those groups and had no intention of fuelling division in any country or continent. All IPU Members exercised freedom of choice, in true democratic fashion, in deciding on which geopolitical group to join.

Mr. F. Shivambu (South Africa) said that proposals to host IPU regional offices were premature. A more logical way forward would be to develop clear guidelines as to the essential features and possible location of such offices, taking into account the fact that some countries belonged to more than one geopolitical group — a situation that might in itself need to be reviewed. Only then should any hosting proposals be entertained.

The President said that answers to many of the questions raised could be found in the minimum legal requirements for opening regional offices as listed in document CL/210/Inf.3 prepared by the Secretariat and approved by the Executive Committee following its agreement in principle to the establishment of IPU regional offices for the geopolitical groups, subject to their support. As already mentioned, the final decision on the proposals would depend on the outcome of the negotiations with the potential hosts concerning such matters as personnel, facilities and financing. His suggestion was that the recommendations should be circulated to the Governing Council for consideration and that further discussion of the matter be deferred until the subsequent sitting.

The Secretary General, thanking the President for his flexibility, said that he similarly expected that, if circulated to the Governing Council, the recommended requirements would clarify the issues raised and serve to guide the further discussion. It would then be for the Governing Council to agree to the establishment of IPU regional offices as a general principle and, in that event, to his pursuit of consultations with Egypt and Uruguay to ascertain whether they met those recommended

requirements. If so, a recommendation would be made to the Executive Committee to open regional offices in those two countries as pilot projects that would be subject to evaluation after two years of operation.

Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe) said that the lack of a written record of the Executive Committee's decision to approve the principle of establishing IPU regional offices was unfortunate, as such a record would have provided the clarification sought. There had been no issues around the Uruguayan proposal, which the Executive Committee had unanimously approved. As to the Egyptian proposal, the fact that Egypt was a member of both the Arab and African Groups had given rise to concerns as to the implications for the members of the African Group should Egypt opt to host an IPU regional office for the Arab Group. Egypt was geographically located in Africa and, together with other similarly located Arabic-speaking countries, had won recognition for its tremendous work in furthering the cause of various African countries for liberation and independence. Whereas the case in favour of the Uruguayan proposal was clear cut, the Egyptian proposal was a different matter and called for separate modalities or criteria that might take more than a few days to elaborate. It was therefore questionable whether the Governing Council would be in a position to agree on the matter at the current session.

Mr. H. Gebaly (Egypt), clarifying the Egyptian standpoint, said that his earlier comment had been made solely in response to a question raised about the geopolitical group to which Egypt's proposal related and that it reflected the consensus agreement reached in the previous day's meeting of the Arab Group. That comment had been misconstrued. Egypt was in no way opposed to the establishment of a regional office in Africa for the African Group and had no intention of usurping the right of any African State or parliament to take such a step. As was enshrined in its Constitution and evidenced by its long history of love and support for African countries in their struggles for independence, Egypt unquestionably belonged to the continent of Africa and was deeply proud of that fact. For the record, it also spanned the continent of Asia.

No parliament had yet proposed to host an IPU regional office for the African Group, and the Egyptian and Uruguayan proposals had been made in compliance with the IPU Statutes and Rules. The notion of an IPU office in Egypt was nothing new, the IPU having decided to create an office there in 2014 — a decision that Egypt's purely voluntary proposal was aimed at revitalizing as part of the quest to further promote the IPU's mission, to which Egypt was firmly attached. To that end, Egypt was ready to discuss appropriate terms of reference as defined by the Executive Committee but would equally applaud any proposal made to establish an IPU regional office elsewhere on the continent. Egypt had the capacity and resources to host a regional office, which, if established, would welcome and endeavour to serve all comers from the region in customary Egyptian fashion, without precluding the right of others on the continent to host a similar office.

Mr. W. Cervini (Uruguay) said that his delegation was thankful, happy and proud that its 10-year-long ambition for Uruguay to host an IPU regional office in Montevideo was poised to become a reality. The Parliament of Uruguay had recently approved a budget of \$2 million for the purpose and would do its utmost to fulfil the Uruguayan commitment to host the pilot project with the aim of achieving GRULAC and IPU objectives alike.

Mr. E. Bustamante (Peru), welcoming the prospect of an IPU regional office for GRULAC, said that the term "geopolitical" was problematic and a misnomer when applied to groups of countries that were bound by common languages and ancestry and desirous of working together for shared goals, irrespective of any political differences. That being so, it was perhaps time to redefine the concept. In the case of Egypt, it was both Arab and African in identity and stood as an important unifier between the League of Arab States and the African Union. Its generous voluntary offer to host a regional office for the Arab Group should be favourably considered, bearing in mind that, if necessary, another regional office could be opened elsewhere in Africa.

Mr. C.A. Bundu (Sierra Leone) said that the IPU should decide on the need for regional offices in principle and on benchmarks for their establishment that could then be used by the geopolitical groups to guide their decision-making around the hosting of such offices.

The President, reiterating that the answers to many of the questions raised could be found in information note CL/210/Inf.3 circulated to the Governing Council, said that a final decision concerning the two proposals on the table must be taken at the current session, even if not by consensus, to avoid prolonging the matter any further.

Mr. M.A. Bouchouit (Algeria), agreeing that the final decision was best left until the Governing Council had all the pertinent information before it, said that Egypt's proposal was a source of pride for his delegation but that all others were free to submit their own proposals.

Ms. Z.D. Mohamud (Somalia) said that a decision was overdue and, in expressing the hope that concerns had been allayed, asked whether a limitation on the number of IPU offices in any one region was envisaged.

The President said that no limitation was envisaged, although the future of the endeavour would depend on the evaluation of the pilot projects, if approved, that would be conducted after their first two years in operation.

Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe), applauding the President's emphasis on expediency and thanking the representative of Egypt for his clarifications, said that the way forward would be determined once the establishment of IPU regional offices had been approved in principle, followed by approval of the two proposed pilot projects, including in the light of guidance provided by Articles 27.1 and 27.2 of the IPU Statutes.

The Secretary General said that formal decisions on all those matters would be taken at the subsequent sitting of the Governing Council on the basis of the information and considerations that would be set out in the forthcoming explanatory note.

Mr. J. Rathgeb (Chile) said that any geographical, religious, ethnic and other criteria applicable to the establishment of regional offices for GRULAC in particular should be clearly spelled out to prevent the potential for conflict at a later stage.

The President, reiterating that the basis for the regional offices would be the IPU's well-established geopolitical groups, said that the current focus was on the establishment of regional offices as pilot projects in countries that were ready to host them and not on criteria such as those mentioned.

Item 6 of the agenda

FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE IPU
(CL/210/6-R.1)

Item 7 of the agenda

CONSOLIDATED BUDGET FOR 2023
(CL/210/7-P.1-rev)

Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden), member of the Executive Committee and Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance, in outlining the financial situation of the IPU at 31 July 2022 set out in document CL/210/6-R.1, said that multilateralism was on fire and that parliamentarians from around the globe were gathered at the Assembly to contribute to solving crises and challenges. With its strong and healthy finances, the IPU was key to that objective and must not be taken for granted. Over the preceding 18 months, the Sub-Committee on Finance had therefore been working with the main IPU structures and with Members on a package for securing the IPU's long-term financial future to ensure the continuity of its activities for the upcoming generation of parliamentarians. Currently, the IPU's income and reserves were on target, its activities were within budget and, in testament to the IPU's continuing relevance and significance, over 90% of its 178 Members had paid their contributions, notwithstanding the financial crises and rising inflation in train worldwide. Voluntary funding had continued to grow and accounted for one quarter of the total budget, representing a desirable balance with assessed contributions that should ideally be maintained. Those contributions had not been increased since 2007, which, as had been indicated at the previous two Assemblies, was unsustainable.

The 2023 draft consolidated budget set out in document CL/210/7-P1-rev was the first to integrate in full the IPU's new strategic objectives, with democracy, peace and security, climate change, gender equality and development as key policy priorities. Having learned from the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, the IPU was investing in digitalization for virtual and hybrid meetings at the same time as continuing to budget for in-person meetings. It was equally continuing to seek efficiency savings and to keep openness, transparency and accountability in the budget process to

the fore. As to the level of assessed contributions, which was based on the United Nations scale, it had remained static since 2010 and actual contributions assessed were now lower than in that year, prompting the need for a review — above all to support the effective implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2022-2026. The Sub-Committee on Finance, which included representatives of all geopolitical groups, had taken all necessary steps in its work throughout the year to ensure that the IPU budget and financial situation remained on track and was grateful to the Secretariat for its exemplary support and assistance in that endeavour. As Chair of the Sub-Committee, she in turn thanked its members for their own exemplary work.

With a view to fulfilment of its long-term commitment to strengthening multilateralism and being part of the solution to global challenges, the IPU proposed to increase assessed contributions by 3% for each remaining year of the 2022-2026 IPU Strategy and by 2% annually thereafter to cover rising inflation and costs. Associate Members and observers would also be required to contribute. Although it would still take 16 years to return to the 2010 level, the resulting increase would enable the IPU to remain relevant, stable, strong and well prepared to tackle future crises from one generation to the next.

On a personal note, she had decided after 30 years of service to the Swedish people to pursue a new life outside parliament and was therefore presenting the budget for the last time. She especially thanked Members for having entrusted her with chairing the Sub-Committee and was pleased in the knowledge that they could continue to count on a financially strong and stable IPU in support of their work as key players for the future.

The President took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the 2023 draft consolidated budget.

It was so decided.

On behalf of all Members, the President presented Ms. Widegren with a certificate of appreciation and a medal in recognition of her service and commitment to the IPU.

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 73 had been established for the current session on the basis of the number of members or substitutes participating in the first meeting, which amounted to 144.

The sitting rose at 11:25.

Second sitting

Saturday, 15 October 2022

(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 09:45, with Mr. D. Pacheco, President of the IPU, in the Chair.

Item 4 of the agenda

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

(continued)

(b) On the activities of the Executive Committee

(continued)

(CL/210/Inf.1, 2 and 3)

The Secretary General, returning to the matter of IPU regional offices discussed at the previous sitting, said that the note since circulated to the Governing Council in document CL/210/Inf.3 explained the rationale for, and advantages of, opening IPU regional offices around the world and also identified possible challenges to be addressed in that context. Having considered all those factors, the Executive Committee had concluded that it would be beneficial for the IPU to decentralize by creating outposts in the regions, provided that the challenges identified were addressed. The proposed offices would not be political organs but administrative units established only with the endorsement of the respective geopolitical groups, with which they would work in cooperation to promote the implementation of the IPU Strategy. Very importantly, moreover, the activities of those offices would be subject to the authority of the Secretary General alone, as mandated by the IPU Statutes and Rules, thereby precluding any positioning on issues by the geopolitical groups, which already had their own coordination mechanisms.

The Governing Council was now invited to endorse the four conclusions of the Executive Committee: 1) agreeing to the principle of opening regional offices, 2) also agreeing to the minimum legal requirements for opening such offices, as detailed in the annex to document CL/210/Inf.3, 3) taking note of the offers from the Parliaments of Uruguay and Egypt, and 4) requesting the Secretary General to undertake consultations with both those parliaments and report on the outcome at the 211th session of the Governing Council. At that juncture, it could be agreed to establish an office in Uruguay and another in Egypt as pilot projects to be evaluated after two years. Depending on the findings of the evaluation, further offices might be opened or the two pilot projects might be closed.

Ms. S. Amero (Uganda) said that, while not objecting to the establishment of an IPU regional office in Egypt, her delegation believed that the office should be for Africa, rather than for the Arab world, as it might later be problematic — if the pilot project was judged successful — to open a second office on the same continent.

Mr. P.H. Katjavivi (Namibia) said that the explanation provided had been enlightening but that more clarity was needed about Egypt's role in relation to the continent of Africa.

The President said that, if the two pilot projects were positively evaluated, the existence of an office in Egypt would not exclude the possibility of establishing a second office in Africa for the African Group.

Mr. H. Gebaly (Egypt) said that his country's offer to host an IPU regional office for the Arab Group in no way signified a divorce from its African identity, which was a constant. Egypt was proud to belong to Africa and had a time-honoured and unwavering commitment to its fellow Africans, whose parliaments it therefore stood ready to support through any IPU regional office that it came to host. It was equally ready, however, to support any African country wishing to host such an office by unanimous agreement of the African Group. By virtue of its geographical location and as affirmed in its Constitution, Egypt was a part of Africa and would continue to seek peace and prosperity for the continent, towards which it had a historical responsibility.

Ms. T. Acksion (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the Group supported the establishment of IPU regional offices, including in Egypt and indeed Uruguay, as a matter of principle and that, while agreeing with the criteria to be met, it believed that geography must be an indispensable part of the equation. It was therefore a matter of concern for the African Group that a country located in Africa was to host an office for the Arab Group. Egypt's stated readiness to support the establishment of a regional office in Africa for the African Group was beside the point, as was the fact that if such an office was later to be established in, for example, Libya for the African Group, there would then be two regional offices in the northern part of the continent. The point was that if Egypt was to host an office it should be for the African Group on the basis of its geographical location. The explanatory note stated that the IPU would be wise to learn from the approaches of other international organizations before embarking on the establishment of any regional office structure. In that context, the African Group was of the view that the criteria for establishing such offices must be made clearer and more robust to avoid any further misunderstanding.

Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, said that IPU regional offices would report to the Secretary General and not to the geopolitical groups, which was an important consideration. The Arab Group supported the African Group's position and was willing for the office in Egypt to represent both groups.

The President said that the rationale and process for the establishment of IPU regional offices had been fully clarified. Recognizing opposition from the delegation for Sweden, he took it that the Governing Council wished first of all to endorse the principle of opening regional offices.

It was so decided.

Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe), noting that approval of the two offers to host pilot projects did not feature among the four conclusions to be endorsed by the Governing Council, asked at what stage would the Governing Council be requested to give that approval.

The Secretary General said in reply that, as stated in the note, the Governing Council would be invited to take a formal decision on the establishment of IPU regional offices based on a review of the effectiveness of the pilot projects after two years. The assumption was that offices in Egypt and Uruguay would be established as pilot projects, subject to agreement by the Governing Council, following the outcome of his consultations with the parliaments of those two countries. Those consultations would take place only if endorsed by the Governing Council and would factor in the views expressed during the current session. At the present stage, however, the focus was on issues of principle and on mandating the Secretariat to proceed with those consultations so as to facilitate clear decision-making in the light of concerns raised during the discussion.

Mr. A. Idris (Nigeria) said that unless the criteria were made more specific, as suggested earlier, there was essentially nothing to endorse at the present time.

The President said that it was a procedural matter of the Governing Council mandating the Secretary General to embark on consultations on the basis of the requirements identified in the explanatory note.

The Secretary General said that, at present, the Governing Council was requested only to take note of the offers from Uruguay and Egypt as a possible basis for negotiations leading to a formal decision in future on whether or not to open offices in those two countries, provided that those offers met the criteria and requirements approved by the Governing Council.

Mr. A. Idris (Nigeria) said that, to avoid any possible manipulation, it would be preferable to lay bare the preliminary minimum requirements so that the Governing Council could subsequently gauge with accuracy whether those requirements had been satisfied.

The President said he took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the requirements for opening regional offices.

It was so decided.

The President said he also took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the offers from Uruguay and Egypt.

It was so decided.

The President said he further took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the request to the Secretary General to undertake consultations with those two countries and to report on the outcome at the next session of the Governing Council.

It was so decided.

Mr. Z. Galadima (Nigeria) said that there was little point in seeking the Governing Council's approval of criteria for which no benchmarks existed, as without benchmarks there was effectively nothing on which to agree other than to give carte blanche for next steps.

Mr. B. Llano (Paraguay) said that it was unfair to postpone for a further six months a decision on the Uruguayan offer of 10 years' standing to host an IPU regional office, which was supported by all GRULAC members and for which Uruguay had already set a budget.

The President said that, in accordance with the decisions taken a few moments earlier, the Secretary General would embark on consultations with the Parliament of Uruguay, which were likely to culminate very quickly in the signing of a host agreement with the IPU as a prerequisite to a formal decision on the matter.

The Secretary General said that the minimum legal requirements for establishing an IPU regional office, as detailed in the annex to document CL/210/Inf.3, constituted benchmarks. The Governing Council had now agreed to those requirements, which would serve as a framework for consultations with Uruguay and Egypt and which must be met if offices were to be opened as pilot projects in the two countries. It was because the offices were a new venture that they would initially operate as pilot projects and it should be apparent from the process described in that document and approved by the Governing Council that neither he nor his colleagues had been given carte blanche in the matter.

The President said that the approved minimum legal requirements were clear and would guarantee transparency of the process.

Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe) said that his suggestion would be to involve the Chairperson of the African Group in the consultations to be conducted by the Secretary General.

The President, after confirming that the suggestion had been duly noted for consideration, drew attention to document CL/210/Inf.1 containing the IPU Personal Data Protection Policy and Procedures, which had been prepared by the Working Group on Transparency, Accountability and Openness, and said that it was crucial for the IPU to establish such a policy in an era characterized by rapid technological change. The policy was furthermore especially relevant to protecting the sensitive political data held by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

He took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the policy, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

The President said that the Executive Committee had similarly recommended for approval the approach recommended by the Gender Partnership Group, as set out in document CL/210/Inf.2, to the development of a policy to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and other IPU events.

The Secretary General said that, with the agreement of the Governing Council and subject to UN approval, the IPU intended to model its anti-harassment policies on the very comprehensive UN Code of Conduct to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment, at UN system events. The Gender Partnership Group would then periodically monitor and report on the implementation of a plan of practical measures developed on that basis.

The President said he took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the approach described in document CL/210/Inf.2, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

Mr. M. Rezakhah (Islamic Republic of Iran) expressed a reservation to any reference to be made in the IPU's anti-harassment policy to gender identity, sexual orientation, and the terms lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer.

(a) On his activities since the 209th session of the Governing Council

The President, accompanying his report with a digital slide presentation, said that in the preceding six months he had continued working to promote IPU values and the 2022-2026 IPU Strategy, achieve universal membership of the IPU and reinforce the IPU's visibility.

In that context, he had conducted 22 visits to countries on all continents and 45 bilateral meetings at Assemblies and other events, reinforcing the IPU's links with numerous parliaments. He had also participated in over 100 online meetings with IPU bodies and in numerous IPU events and specialized meetings. In addition, he had worked to promote the new Cremer-Passy Award, which was to be conferred for the first time in the closing sitting of the current Assembly, and to support the Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine. In all of his statements and interactions, he had consistently advocated in favour of democratic principles, human rights, the rule of law, gender participation, youth empowerment and dialogue.

As part of his work towards the achievement of the universal membership of the IPU through continued engagement with the 15 parliaments that remained outside the membership, he and the Secretary General had met Speakers of Parliament from the Caribbean in Halifax, Canada, and held an online meeting with members of both chambers of the United States Congress to make the case for joining the IPU.

Lastly, he had sought to reinforce the IPU's visibility by highlighting its values, activities and achievements through traditional and social media and in press conferences organized at IPU events and during his visits around the world. He had also visited universities and schools to spread the word among young people and encourage their participation in politics.

The Secretary General said that it was important to recognize that the activities undertaken by the President on behalf of the IPU were inseparable from the IPU's activities as well as fully consistent with the values of the Organization and with the IPU Strategy adopted by Members.

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

Item 5 of the agenda

REPORT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE IPU SINCE THE 209TH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

The Secretary General, accompanying his report with a slide presentation, recalled in providing an overview of progress achieved to date in the implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2022-2026 that the Strategy was designed to promote parliamentary ecosystems for democracy for all through its five objectives. To that end, the four policy goals identified for parliamentary action and impact were in the areas of climate change; democracy, human rights, gender equality and youth participation; peace and security; and sustainable development for all.

Since January 2022, the IPU had been involved in a total of 36 national capacity-building activities in 16 countries, had held 45 regional and global events to mobilize and leverage parliamentary action and facilitate learning, and had produced 10 publications and tools in different languages. Moreover, following the acceleration of the IPU's digital transformation in line with its revamped Communications Strategy aimed at reaching out to all 46,000 parliamentarians worldwide, the IPU's digital platforms in the form of its website, its Parline database and its YouTube channel had spiked in popularity. With the addition of 4,000 new contacts to the database since March 2022, information on IPU activities could now be directly shared with over 16,000 parliamentarians to encourage their greater engagement in those activities. The IPU's influence and visibility was also increasing through social media.

Concerning the first strategic objective of building effective and empowered parliaments, the IPU's role was to ensure that all parliaments, as the centrepiece of democracy, performed their duties in an unimpeded and independent fashion that reflected the expectations of the people. In that context, it was saddening that parliamentarians in too many parts of the world felt, or indeed were, unsafe and unfortunate that the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians was currently examining 731 cases of violations of those rights in 43 countries.

On a related note, the IPU had drawn from its 2021 study on sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Africa to produce guidelines that were already being utilized in many countries in Africa alone. The study's findings had been formally launched and discussed in 12 such countries, including by way of seminars, as in the case of Niger, with Togo the next in line. The IPU was also continuing its institutional capacity-building support, including in legislative drafting, from which 10 parliaments were currently benefiting, and a further eight parliaments were receiving capacity-building support in the policy areas of climate change, gender equality, health, human rights, security sector oversight, and sustainable development. In addition, the IPU was developing standards for parliamentary democracy and was currently testing its recently launched indicators for democratic parliaments, including at the current Assembly, as part of the plan to introduce a fully fledged set of indicators for effective parliaments, in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 16.6 and 16.7, which were, respectively, to develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions and to ensure responsive, inclusive and representative decision-making at all levels.

With respect to the second strategic objective of promoting inclusive and representative parliaments, now that the IPU Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments had been in place for 10 years, it was time to recommit to gender-sensitive parliaments as pillars of gender equality. In addition to working with a number of parliaments, notably those of Belgium, Ireland and Japan, on evaluating their gender-sensitivity and identifying shortcomings to be addressed, the IPU had been supporting women's parliamentary caucuses in several other parliaments. In the key area of youth empowerment, the IPU was pursuing its efforts to raise awareness of the importance of involving youth in parliaments and to support the establishment and functioning of youth caucuses, most recently in South Sudan. The IPU was heartened by the increasing numbers of parliamentarians who were joining its *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign, which was also being firmly championed by the President of Uzbekistan, and encouraged Members while in Kigali to emulate the pledges already made by 937 leaders from around the world to make their parliaments younger.

As to the third strategic objective of supporting resilient and innovative parliaments, the IPU had been pleased to see how parliaments had utilized digital technology to adapt their response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the risks associated with it. It had continued its long-standing work to promote innovation in parliaments with the aim of identifying technologies that would help parliaments to improve their business models. The parliamentary hubs hosted within the IPU Centre for Innovation in Parliament, including, thanks to New Zealand, one for the Pacific countries, were working seamlessly. Having created a new modular learning tool for harnessing digital technology to promote peer-to-peer exchanges among parliaments, the IPU was currently working on modules relating to youth empowerment and the SDGs and intended in future to focus on the budget process and auditing in general.

In implementing the fourth strategic objective of catalysing collective parliamentary action, the IPU had continued to serve as a platform for bringing parliamentarians together to share experiences and learn from one another on important global issues. Recent examples included the 2022 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations in New York, the 14th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and the Parliamentary Conference on Migration in Türkiye.

In connection with the fifth strategic objective of strengthening the IPU's accountability, which the IPU was extremely keen to promote, a new special accountability segment of the General Debate had been introduced for parliaments to report on their implementation of IPU activities and efforts to foster policies in follow-up to IPU decisions. As to the Working Group on Transparency, Accountability and Openness, having completed its work on the new IPU Data Protection Policy and Procedures, it was currently working on a whistle-blower policy to further improve accountability, while for its part, the IPU was working to enhance its monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Lastly, the IPU was continuing its focus on the four policy goals already mentioned. He expressed thanks for all the support provided for the IPU's activities, the results and impact of which he would report on fully at the 211th session of the Governing Council in Bahrain.

The Governing Council took note of the report by the Secretary General.

Item 8 of the agenda

APPOINTMENT OF TWO INTERNAL AUDITORS FOR 2023

(cf. Rule 41 of the Governing Council)

(CL/210/8-P.1)

The President said that candidatures for the two positions of internal auditor for 2023 had been received, from Ms. A. Habibou of Niger and Mr. H. Carneiro of Portugal. He took it that the Governing Council wished to appoint the two candidates as internal auditors for 2023.

It was so decided.

Item 9 of the agenda

THE IPU POLITICAL PROJECT AT THE UNITED NATIONS

(CL/210/9-P.1)

The President drew attention to document CL/210/9-P.1 setting out the implementation roadmap for the IPU political project at the UN to be presented to the Governing Council for approval. The roadmap had been prepared in close consultation with the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs and discussed at length by the Executive Committee.

The Secretary General, introducing the item by citing in extenso a letter in which the Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, a Vienna-based UN agency, expressed deepest gratitude to the IPU for its role in bringing about the final two ratifications of that Treaty by countries in Central Africa, said that the letter amply illustrated the importance of substantive parliamentary engagement with the UN — the prime forum for multilateralism. With the aim of refocusing that engagement so as to further deepen its 20-year relationship with the UN, the IPU had commissioned an assessment of its related political project. Built on the recommendations of the ensuing assessment report, the implementation roadmap described in document CL/210/9-P.1 set out the methodologies for enhancing the effectiveness and benefits of parliamentary involvement in UN processes, with an emphasis on full ownership by IPU Members.

As indicated in the document, the three main areas of proposed action were centred on clarity of purpose through establishing objectives, priorities and targets, on harnessing the IPU's strengths through reforming process and structure, and on measuring impact through coordination, monitoring and maintaining focus. IPU mechanisms dedicated to engagement with the UN, notably the Parliamentary Hearing organized annually in New York in conjunction with the UN, provided vital opportunities for parliamentarians to interact with UN officials on issues of relevance to the UN and forge better understanding of the parliamentary perspective on those issues. As explained in Annex I to the document, the roadmap proposed that ways of reforming the processes and deliberations of the Parliamentary Hearing should be explored with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of the Hearing and its efficiency in delivering on the objectives.

The assessment report had recommended that work with the UN should be mainstreamed into all IPU structures, in particular its Standing Committees, all of which dealt with UN-related issues. In that context and as articulated in Annex II to the document, the roadmap also proposed that the mandate and working methods of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs should be reformed to increase interaction with the UN as an institution. Consultations, including with the Bureau of the Standing Committee, were scheduled in early 2023 with a view to identifying ways of enhancing the Committee's relevance and effectiveness and improving the delivery of its mandate. If endorsed by the Governing Council, the roadmap could be conveniently implemented in alignment with the 2022-2026 IPU Strategy.

Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland), speaking in his capacity as Vice-President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, said that the Bureau of the Committee would indeed convene a special meeting in January 2023 to discuss the sequence of measures to be implemented to strengthen the parliamentary presence and role at the UN and the interaction with IPU structures and relevant committees. The Standing Committee would report to the 146th Assembly in Bahrain on the outcome of that meeting.

Although highlighted in the roadmap as an important measure, the inclusion of parliamentarians in national delegations to major UN meetings was not always as beneficial as thought. Parliamentarians were no longer entitled to speak at such meetings and the separation of executive and legislative powers could be an issue. Such matters must be further considered so that new solutions and ways forward could be fed into the work already carried out towards strengthening the IPU's existing relationship with the UN for the benefit of all. In the coming months, the Bureau would be working hand in hand in with the IPU Secretariat and the Executive Committee to that end.

Mr. A. Al-Salihi (Iraq), noting that respect for the rights of all countries was a well-known principle observed by the UN as a global organization, said that many States — his own among them — were home to a miscellany of ethnic, religious and confessional minorities. Often vulnerable and marginalized, those minorities merited more direct attention from the UN, which should engage with them more closely as part of its political strategy while retaining its neutrality.

The President, acknowledging the importance of neutrality on the part of the UN and the IPU alike, requested clarification as to whether the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs was in agreement with the proposed roadmap, as otherwise its endorsement by the Governing Council would need to be deferred.

Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland), again speaking in his capacity as Vice-President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, said that the Committee agreed with the substance of the roadmap and shared the vision, values and interests embodied therein. It did not necessarily agree, however, with the order of priority given to some of the related measures. In the light of its experience in UN affairs, in a fully transparent and democratic manner and more actively than ever before, the Bureau would formulate specific proposals for prioritizing those measures. It was in no way calling into question the utility of the roadmap or seeking to delay its integration in the IPU Strategy.

The Secretary General said on the basis of that clarification that the Standing Committee's proposed action posed no obstacle to the endorsement of the roadmap, which was designed as a framework for the implementation of the IPU political project at the UN, subject to the outcome of the consultations to be conducted in the first quarter of 2023, including with the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, with a view to maximizing the effectiveness of the IPU's political engagement with the UN. Thereafter, the Governing Council would receive regular progress reports on the implementation of the roadmap.

The President said that no IPU action or strategy could be defined without the involvement of parliamentarians. The fundamental role of the Secretariat notwithstanding, the final say in such endeavours always lay with the IPU Members. The spirit of the IPU as an organization of parliamentarians was reflected in the implementation roadmap set out in document CL/210/9-P.1, which he took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse.

It was so decided.

Item 14 of the agenda

ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES (CL/210/14-P.1)

(c) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (CL/210/14(c)-R.1)

Ms. A.N. Reynoso Sánchez (Mexico), President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, presenting the draft decisions set out in document CL/210/14(c)-R.1, said that, during its session, the Committee had held 11 hearings, in the course of which it had met with authorities, as well as complainants, an independent expert and a United Nations Special Rapporteur. She thanked all of those who had taken the time to respond to the Committee's invitation by videoconference and in person.

In the session, the Committee had examined the situation of 428 parliamentarians, 26% of whom were women, in 17 countries. It had also adopted admissibility decisions in new cases in Myanmar, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Tunisia and Zimbabwe. Some 98% of the cases examined involved opposition parliamentarians. However, the draft decisions that she would present for approval by the Governing Council concerned 413 parliamentarians in 13 countries.

Brazil

The Committee had examined the case of Ms. Talíria Petrone, a Brazilian parliamentarian very committed to the fight against discrimination against minorities and vulnerable groups in her country. The Committee regretted that the Brazilian authorities had not responded to its repeated requests for information and was concerned at the allegations received that Ms. Petrone had been subjected to death threats and harassment because of her involvement in politics as a woman opposition parliamentarian.

The Committee urged the competent authorities to spare no effort in trying to identify the guilty parties and bring them to justice, as that was the only way to prevent the recurrence of such offences, and urged parliament to use its prerogatives to help ensure that effective investigations were carried out into the threats.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of Ms. Talíria Petrone.

Cambodia

The draft decision before the Governing Council concerned the long-standing cases of 57 former parliamentarians, all belonging to the Cambodian National Rescue Party, dissolved by the Supreme Court in 2017. The Committee understood that the invitation extended to it by the Cambodian parliamentary authorities to travel to Cambodia to discuss the concerns in the case was still in place.

The Committee hoped that the mission could take place as soon as possible, given that the national elections in July 2023 would take place soon and offer a good opportunity to ensure that all voices in Cambodian society were represented in the political process.

Indeed, in the Committee's view, the authorities should urgently resume political dialogue with all opposition parties, both in and outside Cambodia. Only then would they be able to build trust and find solutions to the current political situation.

The Secretary General, referring to the proposed mission to Cambodia, said that he had met during the current Assembly with the leader of the Cambodian delegation and received a formal invitation from the Cambodian Parliament for a delegation from the Committee to visit the country for the identified purposes. The suggestion was that the visit should be deferred until after November 2022, as the authorities had existing engagements in the interim. The IPU would respond to the invitation favourably, subject to the Council's support for the mission, which would be organized as soon as feasible. The Committee would subsequently report to the Council on developments.

Mr. T. Sokun (Cambodia) stressing his country's firm position on liberal multiparty democracy as enshrined in the Cambodian Constitution, said that his delegation had no choice but to make a reservation to the draft decision on the cases concerned, as it failed to reflect the true situation in Cambodia, where the only cases involving politicians were against those who had committed crimes in disregard of their obligation to obey the law. In a recent interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Cambodia, the overwhelming majority of attending State delegations had spoken favourably of the progress realized in Cambodia in promoting and protecting human rights on many fronts. They had also urged the Special Rapporteur to adopt balanced and constructive working methods, taking into account the perspective of the Cambodian Government and national circumstances. Anyone keen to learn more about Cambodia and about its conduct of free, fair and transparent elections should visit the country to observe the general elections scheduled for July 2023. Human rights were rarely about perfection, but were rather a marathon of gradual progress, with fair and moderate observers viewing Cambodia as a glass half full.

The Governing Council adopted the draft decision relating to the cases of 57 Cambodian parliamentarians, taking note of the reservation expressed by the delegation of Cambodia.

Côte d'Ivoire

In Côte d'Ivoire, the Committee had examined the cases of 12 Ivorian members of parliament and two senators who had been victims of arbitrary arrest and detention between 2019 and 2020 for *in flagrante delicto* acts of causing public disorder and endangering State security. The Committee had had the opportunity to discuss the matter with the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire, to which it expressed its appreciation for its openness to dialogue and its cooperation.

With the exception of three members of parliament who were in exile, all those involved in this case had been released. The resolution of their cases and their release were the result of a peace and reconciliation policy implemented by the Ivorian authorities, which the Committee had welcomed.

The Committee had therefore decided to close the cases of the parliamentarians mentioned in paragraph 4 of the draft decision, as it considered that they had been satisfactorily resolved given that those individuals had been able to resume their parliamentary work. However, the Committee remained convinced that the parliamentary authorities must ensure that the concept of "*in flagrante delicto*" was not used or invoked to authorize arbitrary prosecutions of members of the National Assembly.

Mr. K.K.P. Kouassi (Côte d'Ivoire), thanking the Committee for its work, said that his delegation was only partially satisfied with the Committee's report, as the cases of Mr. Guillaume Soro, Mr. Mohamed Sess Sekou and Mr. Issiaka Fofana remained open. As those three individuals were considered to be no longer parliamentarians, having lost their seats in the 2021 elections, their cases had been taken up instead by the State and were to be resolved in court. Côte d'Ivoire was a haven of stability and peace in a region plagued with coups d'état and should be encouraged by the IPU to continue along the path of peace and inclusive reconciliation. He requested that the Committee close the three cases mentioned.

The President, emphasizing the important role of the Committee as part of the only international organization to defend the human rights of parliamentarians, said that the Committee, once started on a case, continued to examine it even after the parliamentarian's term of office had ended, regardless of whether they had lost their seat or left office for other reasons.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the cases of 14 Ivorian parliamentarians.

Eritrea

The Committee had examined the case of 11 Eritrean parliamentarians who had been detained in September 2001 for publishing an open letter in support of democracy in their country. There was no information to date on their whereabouts.

The Committee was appalled by the absolute impunity that reigned in the case and the persistent refusal of the authorities to engage with the IPU. The Committee, in light of the information it had before it, considered that the enforced disappearance of those 11 parliamentarians constituted a crime against humanity and therefore called on all IPU Members to urge the authorities of their respective States to exercise their jurisdiction, in accordance with the principles of universal jurisdiction, by prosecuting any individual responsible for this crime if they were present in their territory.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the cases of 11 Eritrean parliamentarians.

Eswatini

In Nusa Dua, the Council had been informed for the first time about the situation of three parliamentarians in Eswatini. Two of them had been held in detention on various charges since July 2021, and the third had fled the country before an arrest warrant could be implemented against him.

The Speaker of the House of Assembly had provided the Committee with valuable information on the situation and indicated that he would welcome a Committee delegation to Eswatini to discuss the concerns and issues that had emerged in the case. The Committee appreciated that offer and therefore hoped that such a mission could take place as soon as possible.

The President said that, as requested by **Mr. P. Mshengu** (Eswatini), paragraph 1 of the draft decision on the three cases should be reworded in line with the representative's explanation that the Speaker of the House of the Assembly had not in fact extended an invitation for the Committee to send a delegation to Eswatini but had rather welcomed the Committee's own proposal to send a delegation.

On that understanding, the Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the cases of three Eswatini parliamentarians.

Gabon

The Committee had again examined the case of Gabonese parliamentarian Mr. Justin Ndoundangoye, who had been held in prison since January 2020. First of all, the Committee wished to thank the Gabonese delegation for the information provided during its hearing with the Committee and for its willingness to work closely with it in the search for satisfactory solutions to the case.

However, the Committee remained deeply concerned about the allegations of threats and acts of torture to which the member of parliament had allegedly been subjected and whose perpetrators had not been brought to justice. It was also deeply concerned about his conditions of detention.

The Committee regretted that its mission to Gabon, mandated by the Council almost a year earlier, had not yet been officially authorized by the Gabonese authorities. It urged the parliamentary authorities to persevere in their efforts to obtain a response from the executive authorities in that regard, and hoped that the mission could take place before the end of 2022.

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

Myanmar

In Myanmar, 63 parliamentarians had been subjected to serious violations following the military coup d'état in February 2021. Their situation was alarming as all visits to the detained parliamentarians and their communication with the outside world had been banned since July 2022. That raised concerns that they could be victims of enforced disappearance.

The Committee reiterated its call for action in solidarity with the colleagues in Myanmar. It requested IPU Members to take action to put an end to impunity in the case.

The President said that the situation in Myanmar was worsening and that, in addition to the cases mentioned, parliamentarians were being executed. It was therefore imperative to take a strong stand against the Myanmar authorities in defence of not only the human rights of parliamentarians but also their lives.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the cases of 63 Myanmar parliamentarians.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The draft decision concerned the new case of Mr. Jean Marc Kabund, an opposition member of parliament in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who had been in prison since 9 August 2022 for having exercised his right to freedom of expression. Mr. Kabund remained in prison despite a decision by the Court of Cassation allowing him to be placed under house arrest.

In view of the nature of the offences with which Mr. Kabund was charged, the Committee wished to send an observer to the trial.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Jean Marc Kabund.

Tunisia

In Tunisia, the Committee remained concerned about the situation of 120 members elected in 2019 to the Assembly of People's Representatives, which had been dissolved by the President of the Republic. They had been charged with conspiracy after taking part in an online plenary session. The Committee called on the Tunisian authorities to drop the charges against those members of parliament, as they should not be subject to criminal proceedings because of that meeting.

The Committee had also examined the case of Ms. Abir Moussi, an opposition member of parliament, elected in 2019, who had been subjected to verbal and physical abuse because of her gender. The Committee regretted not only that her attackers had so far not been held accountable, but that she continued to suffer violations after having openly expressed her opposition to the President of the Republic.

The Committee urged the Tunisian authorities to put an end to impunity and to implement the necessary measures to ensure her safety and that of all Tunisian women politicians.

The request to send a Committee delegation on a mission to the country had regrettably been rejected by the Tunisian authorities on the grounds that they could not respond favourably before the next legislative elections in December 2022. It was the sincere wish of the Committee that the mission would take place in the near future in order to find a satisfactory outcome for all the cases under consideration.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decisions relating to the case of Ms. Abir Moussi and those of 56 other Tunisian parliamentarians.

Türkiye

The Committee remained concerned about the case of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) opposition members of parliament and former members of parliament in Türkiye.

The consistent assertion by the Turkish authorities that the HDP and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), were the same party, or at least worked closely together, was highly problematic. Although those two organizations might rely largely on the same support base and pursue similar objectives, the HDP was a legal political party that did not in any way advocate violence to achieve its goals.

It was in light of the above that the Committee continued to believe that the numerous legal proceedings initiated against HDP members of parliament and former members of parliament, as well as the prospect of the possible dissolution of the HDP, had the effect of criminalizing legitimate political activities.

The Committee was convinced, therefore, of the need for the Turkish authorities to take more decisive action to ensure that national legislation and its application were in line with regional and international standards on freedom of expression, assembly and association. The Committee was also convinced that legal proceedings under way should be reviewed with a critical and fresh eye with that in mind.

The Committee was interested in continuing the exchange with the Turkish authorities in turn on those issues and hoped that they would agree to receive a visit by a Committee delegation for this purpose.

Mr. H. Ozsoy (Türkiye) said that the allegations against HDP deputies had been considered by the European Court of Human Rights, which had concluded that neither the HDP nor Mr. Selahattin Demirtaş were involved in any violence or terrorism. Furthermore, the Turkish Constitutional Court had recently decided on multiple grounds that the rights of Ms. Aysel Tuğluk – imprisoned since 2017 and now diagnosed with severe dementia – had been violated. The Constitutional Court had also found Türkiye guilty in the cases of Ms. Leyla Güven and Ms. Figen Yüksekdağ, yet the two remained in prison.

Apart from those and other cases on which written information had been provided to the Committee, the Turkish chief prosecutor was currently seeking a political ban for 451 individuals, including himself and all but three other HDP members of parliament, as part of an HDP closure case. Only days earlier, moreover, the police had physically assaulted three HDP members, one of whom was being treated in hospital for his injuries. Such was the deplorable situation of parliamentary democracy in Türkiye. He invited the Committee to send a rapporteur to follow criminal proceedings at close hand in Türkiye and see the reality on the ground, rather than relying on reports from the HDP or Turkish delegates attending the Assembly.

The President, noting that the Turkish delegation comprised members from various political parties, said that it was pertinent to hear the views and perspectives of the different sides.

Ms. R. Kavakci Kan (Türkiye) said that efforts were always made to ensure that the Turkish delegation comprised members from all five political parties represented in parliament. The worry was, however, that the Committee's agenda was being hijacked by one of those parties. The Turkish delegation had cooperated fully with the Committee, hosting it on three occasions and providing all requested information, seemingly to no avail. The Turkish IPU Group respected the Committee and its work but wished to express a reservation to the draft decision, believing it to be biased and furthermore disproved by the very presence at the Assembly of a Turkish all-party delegation approved by the Grand National Assembly. As to Ms. Leyla Güven, she was currently under house arrest. Meanwhile, there was concern that other HDP members in prison were on hunger strike.

The Governing Council adopted the draft decision relating to the cases of 67 Turkish parliamentarians, taking note of the reservation expressed by the delegation of Türkiye.

Uganda

Concerning the case of two Ugandan colleagues currently in detention, Mr. Allan Aloizious Ssewanyana and Mr. Muhammad Ssegirinya, the Committee first of all wished to express its sincere thanks to the Ugandan delegation for the information provided at the hearing held during the Assembly, as well as for its willingness to cooperate with the Committee in the search for satisfactory solutions to the case.

The Committee appreciated the continued efforts made by the Ugandan Parliament to monitor the situation of the two parliamentarians, including visiting them in prison, regularly discussing their situation in parliament and asking the Government to report on their situation.

However, the Committee regretted that the mission requested by the Council to visit Uganda had still not received official approval from the Ugandan authorities. It was the Committee's sincere hope that, in light of the renewed assurances of support provided by the Ugandan delegation during the Assembly, the mission would be allowed to take place soon.

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

Venezuela

The Committee had also examined the case of 134 Venezuelan parliamentarians elected in 2015. The Committee was deeply concerned that, in August 2022, Mr. Juan Requesens had been sentenced to eight years in prison, and that an arrest warrant and extradition request had been issued against Mr. Julio Borges, in connection with events that had occurred while they were serving as parliamentarians.

The Committee reaffirmed its long-standing position that the harassment of opposition parliamentarians elected in 2015 was a direct consequence of the role they played as opponents of the Government.

The Committee once again urged the Venezuelan authorities to put an immediate end to all forms of persecution against the opposition parliamentarians elected in 2015.

The Committee expressed its strong hope that the talks between government and opposition representatives would resume as soon as possible.

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

Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe, the first of the two cases concerned Ms. Joanah Mamombe, Zimbabwe's youngest member of parliament. Ms. Mamombe had been detained and subjected to torture and ill-treatment in May 2020 and then released and arrested on several occasions. The complainant alleged that none of the allegations made by Ms. Mamombe had led to an investigation.

The Committee was very pleased to have met during the current session with the Speaker of the National Assembly of Zimbabwe, who had reaffirmed to the Committee that a mission would be welcome in his country in order to meet with all parties and obtain first-hand knowledge regarding the case.

In addition, given the allegations of possible problems of access to a fair trial, the Committee wished to send a trial observer to monitor the judicial proceedings.

The second case concerned Mr. Job Sikhala, an opposition parliamentarian currently in detention. The Committee had received information regarding alleged arbitrary detention, lack of a fair trial and inhumane conditions of detention. Mr. Sikhala had been arrested on 14 June 2022 on charges of incitement to commit public violence following a speech he had made. The Committee called on the authorities to release Mr. Sikhala so that he could return to his parliamentary duties, in addition to guaranteeing his right to a fair trial.

In that case, the Committee wished to send, in addition to the mission, an observer to follow the judicial proceedings.

Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda (Zimbabwe) said that he had presented documentation to the Committee that would help it to better appreciate the court processes relevant to the two Zimbabwean parliamentarians, who – for the record – had lost no privileges, including salary and benefits accruing to them. Neither of the two, furthermore, had availed themselves of their right to seek a remedy before

the Constitutional Court and nor, as far as he was aware, had they been denied that right. Concerning Mr. Sikhala, it was not true that he had been denied medical care. When he had fallen ill, his family had been informed, he had been seen by a doctor and the doctor had prescribed him medication.

In both cases, observers sent by the Committee to follow judicial proceedings would be most welcome. The same applied to the proposed mission, which would be received by the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and be able to determine the facts on the ground. Meanwhile, he would submit for the Committee's perusal further information that he had received that morning.

Ms. A.N. Reynoso Sánchez (Mexico), President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, said that the Committee would make sure to examine the information provided by the Zimbabwean delegation, which it thanked for its willingness to participate in a hearing by the Committee and for its openness to the mission. The aim of sending observers to monitor judicial proceedings was to support the process and ensure that all information provided by complainants and parliaments was taken into account.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decisions relating to the case of Ms. Joanah Mamombe and that of Mr. Job Sikhala.

Ms. A.N. Reynoso Sánchez (Mexico), President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, said in conclusion that the cases presented were only some of the numerous cases before the Committee. In view of the record and growing number of cases, it was evident that the institution of parliament and democracy were today under threat; more than ever before, they must be protected.

Furthermore, the number of cases of women parliamentarians continued to rise, with a record 135 women parliamentarians now victims of various human rights violations, an increase of 400% compared to the beginning of the last decade. Undoubtedly, much remained to be done to continue to combat the scourge of violence against women parliamentarians. All parliamentarians should be part of the solution. That was why she urged them to take concrete action to help threatened colleagues and to ensure the human rights of all parliamentarians.

To find out more about the specific actions they could take to help the Committee, and thus to defend the human rights of parliamentarians, she invited them to visit the parliamentary solidarity stand in the main lobby and to sign up to the contact list so as to stay informed about the Committee's work and take action accordingly.

Mr. E. Blanc (France), speaking as a member of the Committee, said that he applauded the extraordinary work and able leadership of its President and similarly applauded its former President, Mr. Bako Arifari of Benin, for his tremendous dedication to the protection of parliamentary freedoms. At the end of his term the previous day, Mr. Bako Arifari had delivered to the Committee a deep and sincere farewell message befitting of his rich experience. While sadly noting that the number of cases before the Committee had doubled to 700 over recent years, the message was full of hope and included many useful suggestions for future work that should ideally be circulated to all IPU bodies.

The President, in addition to echoing those sentiments entirely, expressed thanks on behalf of all members of the Governing Council to all members of the Committee for their intensive efforts to defend the human rights of all parliamentarians around the world, without exception.

Turning to the election of members to the Committee, he said that there were four vacancies to be filled. It would be necessary to proceed to a vote, however, as more than four candidates had been put forward.

The Secretary General, recalling the Rules and Practices of the Committee, said that the composition of the 10-member Committee should reflect an equitable geographical distribution of seats and that the Committee as a whole should be gender-balanced and in principle comprise five men and five women. Currently, the Asia-Pacific Group was not represented on the Committee and one individual, Mr. D. Jositsch of Switzerland, had gracefully withdrawn his candidature. Should the Governing Council wish to elect unopposed the two women candidates, Ms. M.G. Odhiambo of Kenya and Ms. A. Gerkens of the Netherlands, it would bring the number of women members of the Committee to five. Similarly, should it wish to elect unopposed Mr. M.H. Syed of Pakistan, the Asia-Pacific Group would come to be represented on the Committee. If those three candidates were elected, it would remain for the Governing Council to elect one further member from among the four remaining candidates, namely, Mr. H. Kamboni of Zambia, Mr. M. Karidio of Niger, Mr. H. Traore of Mali and Mr. A. Ruhunda of Uganda. In view of the number of candidates, it was suggested that the voting be conducted by secret ballot.

Mr. F. Shivambu (South Africa), supported by **Mr. P.H. Katjavivi** (Namibia), said that the candidates for the vacancy should be given the opportunity to consider withdrawing from the election so as to leave only one candidate who could then be elected by acclamation instead of by vote.

The President, noting that the four remaining candidates were all from Africa, suggested that the Chairperson of the African Group might wish to consult with members of the Group with a view to agreeing by consensus on one candidate to put forward for the vacancy.

Ms. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking in her capacity as Chairperson of the African Group, said that she would follow that suggestion and report back on the outcome.

Mr. A. Idris (Nigeria) said that one of the candidates for the vacancy was a member of the Malian Transitional National Council, which was not a parliament. The candidate should therefore be automatically disqualified. Military interference in the IPU's democratic processes was not to be encouraged.

The President said that the Malian candidate enjoyed full rights at the Assembly, meaning the right to vote and the right to be elected.

The Secretary General said that the Transitional National Council of Mali was considered to be a legislative body like all others, except that it was temporary and not permanent. The Governing Council had taken its decision to maintain Mali's membership of the IPU, through the Transitional National Council, on the understanding that it would enjoy all rights accruing to Members, which was not always so in other cases. Any member of the Transitional National Council was therefore legally entitled to vie for office within the IPU, in line with procedures, in the same way as all other persons representing Members of the Organization.

Mr. A. Idris (Nigeria) said that parliaments were composed of elected members and that no member of a transitional government could ever be elected to parliament. The IPU's stance not only contradicted that of the Economic Community of West African States, which had suspended Mali from its membership, but was also tantamount to encouraging coups d'états in the region. The IPU should not allow itself to be manipulated into considering members of a military regime as parliamentarians, which was unheard of and legally unacceptable.

Mr. D. Kourouma (Guinea) said that it was for the Malian people alone to choose its parliamentarians and that the IPU followed its own rules and procedures – not those of others. Before rushing to judgment or sanctioning countries in transition, consideration should be given to how those countries had ended up in their situation. Coups d'états could also be civilian, as in Guinea when its democratically elected President had prolonged his time in power by amending the Constitution. Countries in transition should be assisted to make progress, in accordance with the rules of international democracy. No parliamentarian should pronounce on a people's choice of how it wished to be represented on its home soil.

The President said that the list of participants had been distributed at the start of the Assembly, which was the appropriate point at which to raise any issues around the compliance of the composition of delegations with the IPU Statutes and Rules. As it was, the candidate in question could very well be ruled out in the consultations under way among members of the African Group or, if elected to the Committee, might need to be replaced if he lost his seat in parliament, which was the same for all IPU office holders.

Mr. A. Idris (Nigeria) said that the only definition of democracy was government of the people, by the people, for the people, and that words should not be manipulated. The IPU should recognize that it had made a mistake in providing support where none was due and should not be asking Members to abuse the democratic process, which he refused to do, no matter what.

The President said that the Nigerian position had been duly noted.

Ms. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking in her capacity as Chairperson of the African Group, said that, following her consultations, the Group had unanimously agreed that Mr. H. Kamboni of Zambia alone should stand as its candidate for the vacancy on the Committee.

The President, welcoming that outcome, said he therefore took it that the Governing Council wished to elect by acclamation as members of the Committee Ms. A. Gerkens of the Netherlands, Mr. H. Kamboni of Zambia, Ms. M.G. Odhiambo of Kenya and Mr. N.H. Syed of Pakistan.

It was so decided.

The President, congratulating the new members on their election to the Committee, said that the Committee was a truly vital asset for the IPU, which was unique in its defence of the human rights of parliamentarians.

Mr. N.A. Cheema (Pakistan) expressed thanks to the Secretariat for having ensured an amicable and straightforward election process and to the membership for having elected his delegation's candidate to the Committee.

Item 11 of the agenda

REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED MEETINGS

Ms. R. Kavakci Kan (Türkiye), accompanying with a digital slide presentation her report on the first-ever global parliamentary conference on migration, held in Istanbul from 20 to 21 June 2022, said that the widely attended conference had explored ways of strengthening international cooperation on and national implementation of the Global Compacts for Migration and on Refugees, focusing in particular on refugees and responses to forced migration. Throughout its six formal sessions, concerns had been expressed over the huge challenges faced by host countries, with fair and equitable responsibility sharing and enhanced international cooperation emerging as the fundamental message. Measures to tackle the rising xenophobia, intolerance, exclusion and violence directed against refugees and migrants had been identified as an immediate priority for parliamentarians, along with urgent parliamentary engagement and action in such areas as legislation and accountability. Other discussion topics had included migration governance, root causes of forced migration, Türkiye's experience as a major host country, and inclusion, economic development and social cohesion. Among the conclusions drawn was that further international parliamentary dialogue and cooperation on all those matters was urgently needed, as were continued implementation of the Global Compacts and realization of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Mr. R. Lozano (Uruguay), reporting on the regional seminar on climate change for parliaments of Latin America and the Caribbean held in Montevideo from 28 to 30 June 2022, said that the first of the seminar's four sessions had provided an overview of the climate change and environmental context in the countries of the region and discussed examples of policies and measures undertaken in response to climate challenges. The second session had focused on actions that parliamentarians could take in support of efforts to accelerate a clean and just energy transition and enhance climate finance to implement the Paris Agreement. The third session had looked at prioritizing equitable climate action through promoting public participation and social inclusion. The fourth and final session had explored opportunities for strengthening parliamentary action in the area of climate-resilient agriculture and livelihoods to ensure food security and human and environmental health. The seminar had also included a field visit to introduce parliamentarians to environmental projects under way in Uruguay and highlighted the critical importance of regional cooperation to confront the climate crisis, with inter-parliamentary dialogue and the sharing of best practices seen as paramount to effective climate action in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Ms. S. Albazar (Egypt), reporting in a pre-recorded video message on the Eighth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians held in Sharm el-Sheikh from 15 to 16 June 2022, said that young parliamentarians attending the Conference from around the world had united in calling for urgent action on climate change. To achieve climate justice and sustainability, with no one left behind, they had agreed to exercise their legislative and oversight functions in support of climate mitigation and adaptation and transition to a green economy, in line with the Paris Agreement. Having also agreed that the current level of climate financing was inadequate and posed a major obstacle for developing countries, they had undertaken to work together to ensure that governments honoured their commitment to mobilize US\$ 100 billion annually for that purpose. The Conference had been organized in the run-up to the 27th session of the UN Climate Change Conference, to be held in the same city in November 2022, at which young parliamentarians and youth in general would make their voices heard. A better future could be assured through concerted efforts by all to implement the climate change actions identified in the Conference's outcome document.

Ms. P. Bayr (Austria), reporting on the Parliamentary Forum at the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development held in New York on 13 July 2022, said that the meeting had addressed the question of whether partnerships and development cooperation were delivering for the SDGs, with particular reference to SDG 17, concerning partnerships, and three of its targets, focused on domestic revenue mobilization, development assistance and public-private partnerships. Conducted with input from experts, the discussions on how parliamentary oversight could enhance the quality and quantity of SDG finance would contribute to the preparations for the Effective Development Co-operation Summit to be held in Geneva in December 2022. Parliamentarians could make the world a better place by following the three guiding principles underpinning the SDGs, which were to leave no one behind, to break down silos, and to bring about normative shifts. To achieve those aims required true courage and reflections on systemic impediments to sustainable development and a decent life for all.

Ms. M.M. Chinomona (Zimbabwe), reporting on the 14th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament held from 8 to 9 September 2022 in Tashkent, said that the meeting had focused on the role of parliamentary leadership in anticipating risks to better deliver sustainability and prosperity. In reflecting on the experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic, participants had considered the global recovery from the perspective of sustainable development rooted in justice, inclusion and environmental protection. Among other things, they had recognized that a more inclusive green economy was urgently needed, that the digital economy, while not risk-free, was key to economic resilience and recovery, that gender-sensitive parliaments were instrumental in encouraging gender-responsive legislation and supporting the eradication of gender-based violence, and that steps must be taken to address digital divides and protect women's and girls' rights online. In addition to covering all those matters and more, the Tashkent Declaration adopted at the Summit spelled out robust measures for implementing the IPU Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments. Women Speakers of Parliament counted on all IPU Members to join in their efforts to build resilience by prioritizing the protection and advancement of women's rights and empowerment.

Ms. R. Khurshid Alam (Pakistan), reporting in a pre-recorded video message on the Third Regional Seminar for the Parliaments of the Asia-Pacific Region on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, held in Islamabad from 13 to 14 September 2022, said that the first session of the seminar had provided an overview of the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 on the region, with presentations focused on how the pandemic recovery could enhance resilience, adopt an inclusive approach and ensure resources were not diverted from sustainable development. The session had been followed by the regional launch of the Global Parliamentary Report 2022 on public engagement in the work of parliament, after which parallel breakout sessions took place on tackling inequalities through measures to end hunger and malnutrition, promote quality education and decent jobs for youth, and ensure equitable access to health. Three further sessions were held on, respectively, parliamentary mechanisms to institutionalize the SDGs, women at the centre of the development agenda, and building resilience to preserve a common future. Throughout the seminar, inter-parliamentary dialogue and the sharing of practices had been seen as essential to building cooperation, enhancing knowledge and catalysing collective parliamentary action to support the realization of the SDGs in the region.

A video showing highlights from the P20 Summit on stronger parliaments for sustainable recovery, held in Jakarta from 6 to 7 October 2022, was played.

The Governing Council took note of the reports on recent IPU specialized meetings.

The sitting rose at 13:30.

Third sitting
Saturday, 15 October 2022
(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 14:30 with Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), President of the IPU, in the Chair.

Item 13 of the agenda

**REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE IPU TASK FORCE ON THE PEACEFUL
RESOLUTION OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE**
(CL/210/13-R.1)

Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), President of the Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine, referring to the report contained in document CL/210/13-R.1, said that the Task Force had been set up at the 144th IPU Assembly with a mandate to facilitate peace in Ukraine through dialogue and negotiation. Members were committed to peace and would not stop until a solution was found.

Ahead of its mission to Kyiv and Moscow in July 2022, the Task Force had made contact with both sides of the conflict as well as with partners, such as the Parliament of Poland. It was important to engage with both the Russian Federation and Ukraine. He called on delegates to support the Task Force in its work. All parliamentarians had a role to play in ending the conflict.

The President expressed his thanks on behalf of the Governing Council to the President and members of Task Force for their noble efforts to incentivize dialogue and achieve peace between the two parties in the conflict and acknowledged the personal risks they had taken in travelling to the region. He took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the report and invite the Task Force to continue its important work.

It was so decided.

Item 10 of the agenda

QUESTIONS RELATING TO IPU MEMBERSHIP AND OBSERVER STATUS

(a) Situation of IPU membership

**(b) Review of the situation of permanent observers at the IPU
and requests for observer status**
(CL/210/10(b)-R.1 and CL/210/10(b)-P.1)

The President said that the IPU would soon be in a position to grant membership to Belize and the Bahamas. In addition, efforts continued to be made to persuade the United States Congress to re-join. Members were encouraged to engage bilaterally with the United States on the topic of IPU membership.

There were 69 observers to the IPU, some of which did not engage in any form of collaboration. The IPU would follow up with each one as to whether they wished to continue the partnership.

The Executive Committee had expressed its support for starting to charge observers a fee, which it viewed as only fair given how much observers could benefit from a partnership with the IPU. The fee would come into force in 2024 in order to give observers time to review their budgets. The amount due would be reasonable in order not to act as a barrier. It would be tabled for approval at the 146th Assembly.

The Secretary General said that the Executive Committee wished to recommend that two new organizations be granted observer status, namely the Collective Security Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly (CSTO PA) and the UNITE Parliamentarians Network for Global Health.

Ms. H. Baldwin (United Kingdom) said that the observer status of the CSTO PA had lapsed in 2014. The Secretariat should clarify what had happened then and how the situation was different now.

Mr. Z. Galadima (Nigeria) asked whether there was a specific amount of time that observers were required to be in partnership with the IPU.

The President said that all observers were subject to an assessment every four years.

The Secretary General said that observers were admitted to the IPU as permanent observers and should thus engage with the Organization on an ongoing basis, for instance, by participating in IPU meetings or developing cooperation activities. Every four years, the IPU assessed the level of engagement of each observer and decided whether to retain them.

The observer status of the CSTO PA had lapsed because the organization had not been very active at the IPU. However, it had recently become more active and had once again expressed interest in becoming an observer. The Executive Committee had recommended that observer status be granted to the CSTO PA because its objectives aligned with those of the IPU.

Ms. H. Baldwin (United Kingdom) sought confirmation that the observer status of the CSTO PA had indeed lapsed due to inactivity and that it was merely a coincidence that it had occurred in the same year that the Russian Federation had annexed Crimea.

The Secretary General took note of Ms. Baldwin's comments.

Mr. W. William (Seychelles) asked whether sanctions would be imposed on countries that were unable to pay their contributions.

The Secretary General said that the governing bodies had always been flexible with parliaments finding it difficult to pay their contributions. However, their flexibility should not be taken for granted. The overall expectation was that Members would pay their contributions on time.

Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates) took the Chair.

(c) Situation of certain parliaments

The Secretary General, accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that a number of parliaments were being monitored closely by the IPU. They had been divided into four categories: (1) parliaments not functioning, (2) transitional parliaments recently established, (3) parliaments in countries where the political situation was impacting their capacity to function, (4) parliaments in countries where the political situation constituted a potential threat to their capacity to function.

The following countries fell under the first category, namely parliaments not functioning: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Myanmar, Sudan and Tunisia.

The situation in Afghanistan remained the same following the suspension of the Parliament in 2021. The Council had previously decided to grant the suspended Parliament a status under which it could participate in IPU activities in a non-voting capacity and the Executive Committee had recommended maintaining that status.

The Chair took it that the Governing Council wished to maintain the suspended Parliament of Afghanistan's current status at the IPU.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that Burkina Faso had previously experienced a military coup following which the military had dissolved the standing parliament and established a transitional parliament. The Council had subsequently recommended that the Secretariat engage with the transitional parliament with a view to facilitating a speedy return to constitutional rule. However, since then, a second coup had taken place which had led to the dissolution of the transitional parliament. Consultations were currently ongoing to establish new institutions that would drive the transition.

The Executive Committee recommended that the Council note with regret the subversion of the constitutional process, express disapproval at the military takeover and suggest that the Secretary General monitor the situation. If a transitional parliament was indeed established, the IPU should work with that parliament while subjecting it to additional pressure to return to constitutional rule. The Executive Committee did not recommend suspending Burkina Faso until further information was available regarding the transitional parliament.

Mr. Z. Galadima (Nigeria) asked whether the Parliament of Burkina Faso should be elected or appointed according to its Constitution.

The Secretary General said that there was no requirement for IPU Member Parliaments to be elected. The IPU recognized that, in certain circumstances, it was not possible to hold fully fledged elections, such as in times of civil war. The IPU had worked with transitional parliaments in the past helping them return to constitutional rule. He did not recommend expelling a Member completely because they would be left without support and less likely to get back on track.

The Chair took it that the Council wished to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee with regard to Burkina Faso.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that Guinea-Bissau was in the throes of an internal conflict between the Parliament and the Government. The Parliament had been dissolved in view of elections which were expected to take place by December 2022. The Executive Committee recommended that the Council urge the authorities to organize those elections as scheduled.

The Chair took it that the Council wished to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that no positive progress had been made in Myanmar with Members of Parliament continuing to be subjected to persecution, including execution. The Council had previously decided not to recognize the military coup, deeming it a clear suppression of a legitimate democratic process. The Secretariat had been urged to condemn the military authorities and engage with the elected Members of Parliament. The Council had previously decided to grant the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH), the parliament in exile, a status under which it could participate in IPU activities in a non-voting capacity.

The Chair took it that the Governing Council wished to maintain the status of the CRPH as the interlocutor for Myanmar at the IPU, participating in its activities in a non-voting capacity.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that the Parliament of Sudan had been dissolved in 2019 following a military coup. Since then, elections had been promised but with no clear timeline. The Executive Committee recommended that the Council note with regret the ongoing political situation in Sudan and request that the Secretary General monitor the situation.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that the Parliament of Tunisia had been dissolved as a result of a confrontation between the Parliament and the President. The Council had previously expressed displeasure at the suppression of Parliament by the President. Those complaints, however, had gone unheard given the President had recently decided to grant himself more powers, some of which had previously belonged to the Parliament. Elections were expected to take place in December 2022. The Secretary General had been in contact with the President, who welcomed the support of the IPU but only after the elections had taken place. The Executive Committee recommended that the Council take note of the situation and urge the IPU to support the new Parliament, once elected.

The Chair took it that the Council wished to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that the following parliaments fell under the second category, namely transitional parliaments recently established: Chad, Guinea and Mali.

Following the death of the President, Chad had set up a transitional parliament which continued to be a Member of the IPU. The Council had urged the Secretariat to engage with the transitional parliament with a view to a speedy return to constitutional rule. Since then, the Secretariat had put in place a robust programme of cooperation with Chad, including capacity-building efforts with parliamentary staff. Elections were expected to take place in 2024. The Executive Committee recommended that the Council take note of the developments and urge the Secretary General to continue his engagement.

The Chair took it that the Council wished to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that Guinea had experienced a military coup in September 2021. The Parliament had been dissolved and an interim legislative body had been created. The Council had previously decided to maintain Guinea's membership within the IPU and urged the Secretary General to work with the authorities towards a speedy return to constitutional rule. The Secretariat would support Guinea in organizing elections although the dates had not yet been set. The Executive Committee recommended that the Council maintain the same position that it had previously taken.

The Chair took it that the Council wished to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that Mali had experienced two coups since August 2020 and established a transitional parliament. The Council had previously decided to maintain Mali's membership within the IPU and urged the Secretary General to work with the authorities towards a speedy return to constitutional rule. The Speaker of the transitional parliament had confirmed that a constitutional referendum was foreseen for March 2023, while parliamentary and presidential elections would take place in autumn 2023 and February 2024 respectively. The Executive Committee recommended that the Council take note of the positive developments and urge the authorities of Mali to implement the said roadmap.

The Chair took it that the Council wished to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that the following parliaments fell under the third category, namely parliaments in countries where the political situation was impacting their capacity to function: Haiti, Libya, Palestine, South Sudan, Venezuela and Yemen.

Haiti was in the throes of an ongoing political crisis, economic downturn and humanitarian emergency. It had not been able to organize elections for a long time. Its current Parliament only had 10 members, whose mandate was due to expire in January 2023. After that, Haiti would no longer have a parliament. The Secretary General had been in consultations with colleagues from the United Nations, but neither organization had been able to influence political developments. The Executive Committee recommended taking note of the situation and urging the Secretary General to continue monitoring the situation.

The Chair took it that the Council wished to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that Libya currently had two governments and two parliaments. Talks were ongoing with a view to bringing the two sides together but so far little had been resolved. He had been told that elections might take place in March 2023 but were not confirmed. The Council had previously decided that the parliament based in Tobruk was the body that exercised membership within the IPU. The Secretary General would continue nudging the parliament in Tobruk towards finding common ground so that fully fledged elections could be held. The Executive Committee recommended that the Council take note of the developments.

The Chair took it that the Council wished to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that Palestine had not held elections since 2006. Parliamentary and presidential elections had been scheduled to take place in 2021 but had been postponed due to Israel's refusal to permit the inclusion of East Jerusalem in those elections. Palestine's membership within the IPU was exercised by the Palestinian National Council, which represented Palestinians both on Palestinian territory and in the diaspora. The Executive Committee recommended that the Council take note of the situation.

Mr. M.F. Hadid (Palestine) said that the reasons for postponing the elections were twofold. The first was Israel's refusal to allow Palestinians in East Jerusalem to participate in elections. The second was because of divisions among different Palestinian factions. However, those factions had, in the last few days, signed a reconciliation accord agreeing to hold elections. The next step was for Israel to stop interfering in the internal affairs of Palestine and allow for the inclusion of East Jerusalem.

The Chair took it that the Council wished to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that a confrontation had taken place in South Sudan between the governing coalition and the opposition where the latter had boycotted parliamentary proceedings. Those differences, however, had now been resolved. The transitional period had been extended to February 2025 with elections due to take place in 2024. The Secretariat had been engaged with the Parliament with a view to providing support. The Speaker was keen to work with the IPU on establishing a youth caucus and a legislative framework for gender equality. The Executive Committee recommended that the Council take note of the positive developments in South Sudan and encourage the authorities to meet the deadlines proposed.

The Chair took it that the Council wished to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that Venezuela currently had two parliaments – one elected in 2015 whose term had expired in 2020 and another elected in 2021. Both parliaments claimed to be the legitimate Parliament of Venezuela. The Council had decided to recognize neither of the parliaments since neither met the criteria required to be a Member of the IPU. The Council had agreed that the IPU would accommodate a delegation from Venezuela made up of parliamentarians from both parliaments, with the objective of forging common ground between the two sides.

The Chair took it that the Council wished to maintain the same position.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that the Council had recognized the parliament in Seiyun as the legitimate Parliament of Yemen. The Secretariat was currently in discussions with the Yemeni authorities about the type of support that could be provided. Previously, there had been an emphasis on providing humanitarian assistance to the Yemeni people. The Executive Committee recommended that the Council take note of the developments and mandate the Secretary General to continue discussions with the Yemeni authorities.

The Chair took it that the Council wished to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that the following parliaments fell under the fourth category, namely parliaments in countries where the political situation constituted a potential threat to their capacity to function: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Eswatini, Sri Lanka and the Syrian Arab Republic. Bosnia and Herzegovina was experiencing internal strife which could dismantle the fragile unity currently in place. The Executive Committee recommended that the Council take note of the situation.

The Chair took it that the Council wished to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that the Syrian Arab Republic had a fully fledged Parliament, the legitimacy of which was not in question. However, it continued to be under the radar of the IPU due to the ongoing civil war. The IPU was of the view that the Parliament had a strong role to play in fostering reconciliation between the Syrian people. The Executive Committee recommended that the Council take note of the situation and urge the Syrian Parliament to be more robust in its reconciliation efforts.

Ms. N. Durra (Syrian Arab Republic), making a point of order, said that the Syrian Parliament had been fully elected under the supervision of Western and Arab countries. It was therefore a democratic and legitimate body. The Parliament had always been very active within the IPU and would not fall short of its obligations.

The Chair took it that the Council wished to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that Eswatini was facing a political crisis with protests by citizens on account of alleged human rights violations. He had been in touch with the authorities, who welcomed support from the IPU. The Speaker of Parliament had agreed to host an IPU mission that would assess needs and look into cases before the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. The Executive Committee recommended that the Council take note of the developments.

The Chair took it that the Council wished to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that Sri Lanka had experienced protests in May 2022 which had led to the ousting of the President and Prime Minister. Since then, the country had put in place a new administration. The Secretary General had recently visited Sri Lanka with a view to finding out what support the IPU could provide. It had been agreed that the IPU would support the authorities to create a robust parliamentary system, define the role of the Parliament more clearly in the Constitution, and organize capacity-building programmes. The Executive Committee recommended that the Council take note of the developments and encourage the Secretary General to continue supporting ongoing initiatives in Sri Lanka.

The Chair took it that the Council wished to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

Item 12 of the agenda

FUTURE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MEETINGS

(CL/210/12-P.1)

The Secretary General, referring to the list of future parliamentary meetings contained in document CL/210/12-P.1, said that the meetings had been divided into two categories the first of which was Assemblies. The 146th IPU Assembly would take place in Bahrain from 11 to 15 March 2023. In addition, Angola had submitted an offer to host the 147th IPU Assembly in October 2023. Angola's offer had been well received, but some questions remained as to the timing of the Assembly, including whether the 147th Assembly should in fact take place in Geneva as previously approved by the Council. The Executive Committee would make a recommendation before the end of 2022. He took it that the Council wished to take note of those developments.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that the second category of meetings was specialized and other meetings. Those meetings were consistent with the various objectives of the IPU Strategy for 2022–2026 with each being labelled with a specific policy goal. The Council had already approved most of those meetings and was requested to approve the remainder. He assured delegates that funding had been secured for all meetings on the list.

The Chair said that the said meetings should be hosted across all regions of the world so that the IPU could build its presence everywhere. He took it that the Council wished to approve the remaining meetings.

It was so decided.

Item 14 of the agenda

ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES
(CL/210/14-P.1)

(a) Forum of Women Parliamentarians
(CL/210/14(a)-R.1)

Ms. E. Nyirasafari (Rwanda), speaking on behalf of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians and referring to the report contained in document CL/210/14(a)-R.1, said that the Forum had held its 34th session on 11 October 2022 with participation from 139 parliamentarians, including 128 women and 11 men. She urged more men to attend the meetings of the Forum with a view to defending gender equality.

The Forum had discussed, through a gender lens, the resolution on the agenda of the Assembly, namely *Parliamentary impetus to local and regional development of countries with high levels of international migration and to stopping all forms, including state-sponsored, of human-trafficking and human rights abuses*. The Forum had considered the legislative, law enforcement and educational measures that could be taken to combat human trafficking, particularly of women and girls. Participants had agreed on the need to combat the demand for exploitative goods and services and examine the use of technology as a driver of human trafficking. Victims must be treated as victims and given the support they needed regardless of their migration status. The majority of the Forum's amendments had been incorporated into the final text of the resolution.

To mark the ten-year anniversary of the IPU Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments, the Forum had held a debate on the theme, *Gender-sensitive parliaments: Parliaments free from sexism, harassment and violence against women*. Parliamentary institutions must lead by example and eliminate the sexist culture that existed within their ranks. It was crucial to put in place policies and mechanisms for reporting and processing of complaints, set up confidential spaces where victims could receive support and administer sanctions against perpetrators.

A parity debate had also been held on the theme, *Rejuvenating parliaments: Why younger and gender-sensitive parliaments are more effective and efficient institutions*. The debate had placed a particular focus on practical measures and family responsibilities. In addition, participants had discussed how technology could be used to promote parliaments that were younger and more gender-sensitive.

(b) Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU
(CL/210/14(b)-R.1)

Mr. M.A. Rakotomalala (Madagascar), speaking on behalf of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians and referring to the report contained in document CL/210/14(b)-R.1, said that the Forum had met on 12 October 2022 with attendance from 85 parliamentarians. Only 31% of participants had been women compared with 45% at the 144th Assembly.

The Forum had discussed the theme of the General Debate. Members had reiterated that youth and innovation went hand and hand, including when working towards making parliaments more gender-sensitive. Some solutions had been proposed, such as breastfeeding rooms for young mothers. Participants had expressed their opposition to violence and harassment against women in parliament as well as to the consequences of war, which prevented women from exercising their parliamentary mandates. A section of the meeting had also been dedicated to the resolution on migration where participants had called for a human rights-based approach in legislation and policymaking.

Lastly, the Forum had followed up on youth participation initiatives, including the commitments made as part of the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign. Many countries had created youth caucuses, young factions within parties or youth parliaments while others had invited young people to participate in hearings and training sessions. One of Rwanda's best practices was to set aside two seats in parliament for members of its National Youth Council.

Despite progress, more investment, both technical and financial, was needed to meet youth empowerment goals. It was disappointing that many countries had not included members of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians in their delegations to the Assembly. He urged them to prioritize their inclusion in the future. The viewpoint of young people must be incorporated into the two resolutions to be adopted at the 146th IPU Assembly.

The President of the IPU took the Chair.

(d) Committee on Middle East Questions
(CL/210/14(d)-R.1)

Mr. G. Migliore (Italy), President of the Committee on Middle East Questions, referring to the report contained in document CL/210/14(d)-R.1, said that the Committee had met on 28 July and 11 October 2022 and members had agreed on the importance of achieving peace in the Middle East by working together.

During the Assembly, the Committee had heard a report from the Secretariat about relevant activities since the previous Assembly. The Secretariat had worked in collaboration with the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) on developing the IPU Science for Peace Schools. Science was a common language for all parties of a conflict and could therefore help bring them together. The first session would be held in December 2022, focusing on the exploration of new and renewable sources of water.

The Committee had discussed the latest developments in the region, both positive and negative, emphasizing the need to build on the positive. Participants had welcomed recent statements by the Israeli and Palestinian leaders in support of a two-State solution as well as the reconciliation agreement, facilitated by Algeria, which resolved the discord among Palestinian factions. The said agreement would help build real democracy in Palestine. A briefing had been delivered by the Speaker of the Yemeni Parliament, during which the Committee had recommended that Yemen remain on the IPU's agenda. Members had also been briefed by the Deputy Speaker and Secretary General of the Libyan House of Representatives and agreed on the need to support Libya in finding a Libyan-led solution.

The Committee had expressed deep concern regarding the food security crisis in the Middle East caused by the war in Ukraine. A number of solutions had been proposed, including the need to transform the agrifood system through policies and fiscal allocation.

Lastly, following a briefing by a representative of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the Committee had discussed the crucial role of UNRWA in supporting Palestinian refugees and thus preventing them from falling into poverty or radicalization. More resources were needed for UNRWA to fulfil its mandate.

The President said that the Council was called upon to elect five new members to the Committee on Middle East Questions. The following four people had been nominated thus far: Mr. H. Julien-Laferrrière (France), Ms. L. Fehlmann Rielle (Switzerland), Mr. A. Niffouri (Uruguay) and Ms. N. Mohammed (Iraq). The final vacancy would be filled at the 146th IPU Assembly. He took it that the Governing Council wished to elect those four candidates and defer the election of a fifth member until its session in March 2023.

It was so decided.

(e) Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law
(CL/210/14(e)-R.1)

Mr. J. Kiarie (Kenya), President of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, referring to the report contained in document CL/210/14(e)-R.1, said that the Committee had spent some time discussing the humanitarian impact of the war in Ukraine as well as the crises in Afghanistan and Myanmar. The situations in those countries were very dramatic and were only getting worse. Millions of people had fled or were internally displaced. Millions were also in urgent need of humanitarian assistance or facing food insecurity. He reminded delegates that those figures represented real human lives. It was paramount to take urgent political action.

In addition, the Committee had held a panel discussion to discuss good parliamentary practices for the inclusion of refugees, internally displaced people and stateless persons. Numerous countries, such as Türkiye, Djibouti and Rwanda, had taken important measures to include people who had fled their countries in their national systems. With the right legislation, policies and practices, States could ensure a more holistic, effective and coordinated response that would benefit host countries and refugee populations alike.

The President said that the Council was called upon to elect three new members to the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law. The Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) had nominated Mr. A. González (Peru) and Ms. M. Brawer (Argentina) while the Twelve Plus Group had nominated Ms. G. Morawska-Stanecka (Poland).

Mr. B. Llano (Paraguay) said that GRULAC had been required to nominate one man and one woman. However, it had agreed to divide the term of the woman into two. The first half would be completed by a female representative of Chile while the second half would be completed by Ms. Brawer (Argentina).

The Secretary General said that, procedurally, it was not possible to accommodate the said request. The Council was required to approve one candidate per vacancy on the assumption that they would serve the whole term. If, in the future, the person holding the position was unable to complete the term, GRULAC would be able to nominate a new candidate at that point.

Mr. B. Llano (Paraguay) said that Ms. M. Brawer (Argentina) would serve the whole term.

The President asked GRULAC to clarify its nominations.

Mr. E. Bustamante (Peru) confirmed that GRULAC wished to nominate Mr. A. González (Peru) and Ms. M. Brawer (Argentina).

The President took it that the Council wished to elect the following candidates: Mr. A. González (Peru), Ms. M. Brawer (Argentina) and Ms. G. Morawska-Stanecka (Poland).

It was so decided.

(f) Gender Partnership Group
(CL/210/14(f)-R.1)

Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), Chair of the Gender Partnership Group, referring to the report contained in document CL/210/14(f)-R.1, said that the Group had met on 14 October 2022 to examine the composition of delegations at the Assembly and had determined that the level of women's participation stood at 35.4%. The figure was good but not good enough since it fell below the figures registered at the previous two Assemblies (39%). For the first time, the Group had examined trends by geopolitical group and observed great gaps in gender composition. That said, it must be made clear that every geopolitical group contained all-male or all-female delegations. In Kigali, there were 14 delegations composed of only men and 4 delegations composed of only women. It was something that all parliaments must be concerned about. The goal was to achieve a 50-50 balance of men and women at Assemblies. As such, no delegation should have less than 40% men or women. He was happy to report that 36 parliaments had achieved a 40-60 ratio in their delegations (up from 30% at the previous Assembly). The Group had continued its dialogue with countries that had few or no women delegates, such as Nigeria.

To improve women's participation in politics, parliaments must review their constitutions, pass laws, adopt policies and alter mentalities. Political parties must take the lead. It was important not only to look at numbers but also at the roles women played. Women must be seen in leading positions, for instance as chairs of committees.

(g) Advisory Group on Health
(CL/210/14(g)-R.1)

Mr. J.I. Echániz (Spain), President of the Advisory Group on Health, referring to the report contained in document CL/210/14(g)-R.1, said that the Group had met on 12 October 2022 when it had welcomed technical partners from the World Health Organization, the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, UNAIDS and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

The Group had been briefed on the collaboration between the IPU and the Parliament of Rwanda in the area of women's, children's and adolescents' health. It had discussed effective strategies to reach vulnerable and marginalized populations and highlighted the cultural and social barriers limiting access to health information and services. Members had stressed the crucial need to build trust among the population by working with relevant stakeholders, including civil society, youth, and religious leaders. Quality of care and women's empowerment had been identified as important factors for better health outcomes.

The IPU Secretariat had presented its work on health and climate change under the IPU Strategy for 2022-2026. The Group had agreed on the importance of integrating health and climate change efforts, particularly with regard to nutrition, the impact of climate change on health and

climate-induced migration. The Group had also been briefed on the work of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and its collaboration with the IPU to promote parliamentary engagement on immunization and universal health coverage. Lastly, members had decided to conduct a field visit in 2023 to help improve access to health as well as a side event on comprehensive sexuality education at the 146th Assembly.

(h) Group of Facilitators for Cyprus

The President said that the Group of Facilitators for Cyprus had not met during the Assembly but did have two vacancies to fill. The following nominations had been submitted: Mr. S. Cogolati (Belgium) and Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland). He took it that the Council wished to elect those two candidates.

It was so decided.

(i) High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG) (CL/210/14(i)-R.1)

Mr. M. Bouden (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism and referring to the report contained in document CL/210/14(i)-R.1, said that the Group had met on 12 October 2022 in the presence of 13 members and some special guests. The Group had discussed the importance of coming up with a precise definition of terrorism so that IPU Members could pass effective anti-terrorism legislation. It was important to come up with a definition by consensus rather than on the basis of individual political opinions.

The IPU Secretariat had briefed members on the latest updates regarding the *Call of the Sahel* as well as on upcoming meetings. Next, the Executive Secretary of the Interparliamentary Committee of the G5 Sahel had reported on the situation in the Sahel region. Members had agreed that the situation was grave, and that urgent action was needed. An expert from the Institute of Economics and Peace had given a presentation on the Global Terrorism Index 2022, analysing the impact of terrorism on the increasingly deteriorating situation of the Sahel region. A briefing had also been delivered by the President of the Network of African Science Academies on the state of education in the Sahel countries and its relation to the increase in violence and radicalization. Lastly, an IPU consultant had presented a draft conflict context analysis on the Sahel.

Members had agreed that a holistic approach was needed to the Sahel. Education alone would not be enough to eradicate terrorism but the Sahel without education would not be free from terrorism. More committees and experts must take action. More emphasis should also be placed on the inclusion of women in counter-terrorism efforts.

It had been noted that the *Call of the Sahel* was one of the most important projects of the IPU. The tragedies of the war in Ukraine should not overshadow the tragedies in other parts of the world, especially in the Sahel countries. The Speaker of the Algerian Parliament had offered to host the next meeting on the *Call of the Sahel*.

The President said that the Council was called upon to elect seven new members to the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism. Only two nominations had been submitted making it difficult for the Group to continue its work. The nominations were as follows: Ms. S. Ntarakutimana (Burundi) from the African Group and Ms. M. Butina (Russian Federation) from the Eurasia Group. The remaining five vacancies would be filled at the 146th IPU Assembly.

Ms. H. Baldwin (United Kingdom), making a point of order on behalf of the Twelve Plus Group, wished to clarify that the candidate from the Russian Federation, Ms. Butina, was the same individual who had been convicted and imprisoned in the United States of America for espionage. If so, the President should clarify how her election would impact on the campaign to persuade the United States to re-join the IPU.

Mr. C. Law (United Kingdom), making a point of order on behalf of the Twelve Plus Group, said that Ms. Butina had pleaded guilty in 2018 to carrying out espionage activities in the United States and was known to have used honey trap methods in those activities. The President should clarify how the IPU would guarantee the safety and security of its Members should Ms. Butina be elected, including with regards to sexual harassment. The Twelve Plus Group sought assurances that her election would not fundamentally undermine the crucial work of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism.

Ms. F. D'Souza (United Kingdom), making a point of order on behalf of the Twelve Plus Group, said that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe had unanimously voted to declare the Russian regime as a terrorist State. As such, she asked whether it was appropriate for a Member of Parliament from the Russian Federation to be a member of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism.

The President wished to make three points. First, Ms. Butina was indeed the same person who had been convicted for espionage in the United States. Second, the Council had traditionally accepted nominations submitted by the geopolitical groups. Third, the IPU did not follow the decisions of other organizations. He asked the Secretary General to clarify whether the nominations of the geopolitical groups were mandatory.

Ms. H. Baldwin (United Kingdom), making a point of order on behalf of the Twelve Plus Group, requested once again that President clarify how the election of Ms. Butina would affect the campaign to persuade the United States to re-join the IPU and how the IPU would ensure the safety of colleagues at Assemblies.

The Secretary General said that, legally-speaking, the Governing Council had the final say on the membership of the various structures of the IPU. Proposals submitted by the geopolitical groups were just recommendations. The Council was at liberty to endorse or reject those proposals. It could take a decision on the said nomination today or defer it to a later date.

Mr. C. Law (United Kingdom), making a point of order on behalf of the Twelve Plus Group, requested that the decision regarding the said nomination be taken today.

The President said that time was short which might make it difficult to hold a vote today.

Mr. C. Law (United Kingdom) said that the Twelve Plus Group was happy to defer the decision to the next Assembly.

The President thanked the Twelve Plus Group for their cooperation. He would inform the Eurasia Group of the discussions. He took it that the Council wished to elect Ms. S. Ntarakutimana (Burundi) and defer the decision on Ms. Butina's candidature to its next session in March 2023.

It was so decided.

(j) Working Group on Science and Technology
(CL/210/14(j)-R.1)

Ms. A. Attia (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Working Group on Science and Technology and referring to the report contained in document CL/210/14(j)-R.1, said that the Group had met on 13 September 2022 in Viet Nam and on 14 October 2022 in Rwanda. The meeting on 13 September had taken place within the framework of the conference entitled *Science, Ethics and Human Development* organized by the Rencontres du Vietnam association. The conference had been a good opportunity for dialogue between parliamentarians and the scientific community. Members had agreed that the language used at such meetings must be simple and understandable for both communities, allowing for common understanding and mutual benefit.

During the meeting on 14 October, members had agreed that a core element of their work was improving channels of dialogue between science and politics as well as ensuring that science was considered throughout the entire political decision-making process. Scientists must reinterpret scientific results in a way that could be successfully communicated to politicians. A briefing had been delivered by the former President of Science and Technology Australia on the ways in which dialogue between scientists and parliamentarians had been improved and implemented in Australia. There had also been an opportunity to share best practices and experiences.

The Group had concurred that the Charter on the Ethics of Science and Technology could be used as a starting point for countries wishing to establish legislation in the field. The Charter should include more input from key stakeholders, such as social scientists and experts in technology. To that end, stakeholder workshops would be organized in the coming months. The ethical norms outlined in the Charter should be based on the well-being of humanity. Members had agreed that an IPU campaign should be launched to promote the Charter.

Lastly, members had been briefed on the preparations for the IPU Science for Peace Schools and had elected a new Chair, namely Mr. D. Naughten (Ireland).

Item 15 of the agenda

ELECTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The President said that the Council must elect three parliamentarians to replace Mr. Chen Guomin (China), Mr. M. Grujic (Serbia) and Mr. J.P. Letelier (Chile) on the Executive Committee. The nominations submitted were as follows: Mr. F. Marchand (France) from the Twelve Plus Group, Ms. A. Sarangi (India) from the Asia-Pacific Group and Mr. I. Flores (Chile) from GRULAC. He took it that the Governing Council wished to elect those three candidates as members of the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

Item 16 of the agenda

UPDATE ON THE IPU CREMER-PASSY PRIZE

The President said that the winners of the IPU Cremer-Passy Prize had been selected and would be announced during the final sitting of the Assembly.

Item 17 of the agenda

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Secretary General said that the IPU had set a target at the beginning of the Assembly to sign up at least 100 parliamentarians and 10 Speakers of Parliament to the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign. He was pleased to announce that the current figure stood at 100 parliamentarians and 12 Speakers of Parliament.

The IPU had, in recent days, received communications from the Parliaments of Armenia and Azerbaijan regarding clashes between the two countries over disputed territory. The Secretary General and the President had offered to mediate at the parliamentary level with a view to promoting dialogue.

The President took it that the Council wished to approve the Secretary General's offer to mediate the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

It was so decided.

The Secretary General said that the African continent had been experiencing a multiplicity of coups which had caused a tide of instability. He sought the endorsement of the Council to initiate consultations with African institutions, such as the Pan-African Parliament and the Economic Community of West African States, with a view to stemming the instability.

The President took it that the Council wished to approve the proposal of the Secretary General.

It was so decided.

The sitting rose at 16:35.

Governing Council

CL/210/Inf.3
12 October 2022

Regional offices for the IPU

The IPU is a global organization with a broad and ambitious agenda, strongly supported by its Member Parliaments. In carrying out its programme of work, it relies on a small Secretariat of 44 staff members based at IPU Headquarters in Geneva and at its Permanent Observer Offices to the United Nations in New York (three staff members) and Vienna (one staff member seconded by the Austrian Parliament).

For several years, the IPU has been exploring modalities that could facilitate outreach to Members and enhance Member engagement in the work of the Organization – including through the possible establishment of IPU regional offices. This is all the more relevant in the context of the current IPU Strategy, which, among other objectives, aims to raise the visibility of the Organization, enhance the quality of interaction with Members, increase accountability in the implementation of IPU decisions, and step up the positive impact of IPU activities at the national and regional levels.

One possible modality for effective outreach to Members is the establishment of regional offices. This note sets out the rationale for such offices and the possible challenges to be addressed in establishing them. At its meeting on 9 October, the Executive Committee determined that it would be desirable to open such offices, and agreed on the objectives and requirements that would apply to all regional offices (see [Annex 1](#)). The Executive Committee took note of offers to host regional offices received from the Parliaments of Uruguay and Egypt, and mandated the Secretary General to undertake consultations with those two parliaments in order to ascertain whether they would be in a position to meet the expected requirements. The Secretary General agreed to report back on the outcome of his consultations, with a view to the possible establishment of pilot projects in Uruguay and Egypt. The Governing Council would be invited to take a formal decision on the establishment of IPU regional offices based on a review of the effectiveness of the pilot projects after two years.

The Governing Council is called on to consider endorsing the conclusions of the Executive Committee relating to:

- (a) the principle of opening regional offices;**
- (b) the requirements for opening those offices;**
- (c) taking note of the offers from Uruguay and Egypt;**
- (d) the request to the Secretary General to undertake consultations with those two countries and to report on the outcome at the next session of the Governing Council.**

The full membership of the IPU comes together every six months, in the context of the statutory Assemblies. Members also engage with the Organization in a variety of other ways, including through regional conferences, seminars and workshops, webinars, meetings organized in the context of major UN processes (CSW, HLPF, annual COP on Climate Change, etc.), technical assistance and capacity-building programmes. Beyond the meetings and programmes, there is much scope for the IPU to further enhance day-to-day interaction with Members and increase the impact of IPU outcomes at the national and regional levels.

In terms of **advantages**, IPU regional offices have the potential to help bring the Organization closer to the Members:

- Ensuring systematic outreach to the parliaments in the region: encouraging participation in IPU events, mobilizing engagement in IPU campaigns and in the use of IPU tools and publications;
- Engaging with the parliaments in the region with a view to ensuring follow-up to IPU plans of action, resolutions and other decisions;

- Providing support for the organization of the IPU's annual plan of work (seminars, workshops and training for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff);
- Coordinating with the corresponding geopolitical groups and ensuring the dissemination of IPU products in languages other than the two official languages (English and French);
- Helping to provide evidence of the impact of the work of the IPU in the region (monitoring and evaluation).

To a large extent, these are functions that for the past 20 years have been carried out by the Parliament of Uruguay, which has been hosting the Secretariat of GRULAC and has seconded two of their staff members to provide services to the geopolitical group, including translation services.

It is important to note that any regional offices would have a primarily administrative/technical role, functioning under the authority of the Secretary General with a view to supporting the implementation of a clearly-designed programme of work in line with the IPU Strategy. Reporting and accountability would therefore be exercised vis-à-vis the IPU Secretary General. All regional offices would bear similar responsibilities, roles and structure.

When setting up regional offices, **possible challenges** would include the following:

- Medium and long-term financial sustainability of the regional offices, depending on the level of support from the Host Parliament and the appetite for Members to increase their contributions, as no funding can be expected from external donors other than the Host Parliament itself. While donors might agree to fund programmatic costs, they could not be expected to defray the costs of running and administering the offices.
- Legal challenges: a regional office would not be able to function properly without a clear status agreement recognizing the IPU as an international organization and conferring on it a legal personality in the country where the office is established. These two elements would be required so as to allow the office to operate properly, including in terms of hiring staff or entering into contracts. Annex 1 lists the minimum legal requirements for such a status agreement. It is based on general host agreements with international organizations as well as the host country agreement of the IPU with Switzerland. The staff employed in the Regional Office would be seconded to or recruited by the Secretary General, to whom they would be accountable.
- Relations with the related geopolitical group: it would be important for the geopolitical group itself to discuss and define its needs and priorities so as to better coordinate within its region at the political level, and ensure that there is coherence in operations. The regional offices would support the geopolitical groups but operate at arm's length from these groups, following the same model as the general Secretariat of the IPU.
- The Secretary General would have to ascertain the in-house capacity at IPU Headquarters to oversee and coordinate the work of the regional offices. Currently that capacity is limited.

In deciding upon the establishment of IPU regional offices, in addition to the status agreement referred to above, the following **criteria and conditions** would need to be met:

- The Host Parliament would need to commit to provide office space and cover the operating costs of the regional offices (furniture, computers, communications and miscellaneous insurance for property) for a reasonable period of time (ideally at least 10 years).
- The Host Parliament would need to obtain written guarantees from its Government that the IPU is recognized as an international organization, with the extension of the relevant protection, privileges, immunities and tax exemptions (see Annex 1).
- The job description(s) of staff at the regional offices would be developed by the IPU Secretariat, taking into consideration the needs of the respective geopolitical group and national parliaments. The selection of staff would be done by the IPU Secretary General according to the IPU's rules and procedures. The Host Parliament would undertake to guarantee the

independence of such staff, who would be considered part of the complement of IPU personnel and reflected as such in the budget and workplan of the Organization.

- The Host Parliament would need to respect the functional independence of the IPU in carrying out its activities and in assigning to the regional office such IPU personnel as it deems necessary for carrying out the functions assigned to the office.

It must be appreciated that the creation of regional offices is not the only model available to empower and strengthen regional cooperation between national members of a membership organization. For instance, the current state of technological innovation makes it possible to dispense with physical presence regionally in favour of remote working modalities. Many international organizations have grappled with this as one of the most complex structural issues they face and have tried numerous different approaches. The IPU would be wise to learn from these approaches before embarking on establishing any regional office structure. The Executive Committee may therefore deem it necessary to continue its reflection on the matter prior to a decision. In the meantime, it might request the Secretary General to pursue discussions with those parliaments that have made offers to host regional offices (Uruguay and Egypt) in order to ascertain if they are able to comply with the requirements set out in this note and its Annex.

Minimum legal requirements for establishing an IPU regional Office

In order to establish an IPU regional Office, where the Host Parliament is providing means and facilities for the office premises, the Host Parliament as well as the Host Government will have to execute agreements to allow proper functioning of the Office. The key elements of these agreements are listed below:

1) Agreement between the Host Parliament and the IPU

- a) The Host Parliament will provide the Office with its premises, equipment and operating costs (furniture, computers, stationery, other office supplies and communications) free of charge for a minimum period of 10 years.
- b) The Parliament through this agreement will ensure the safety and protection of the Office premises and ensure that the tranquility of the premises is not disturbed by the unauthorized entry of persons or groups from outside or by disturbance in its immediate vicinity.
- c) The Parliament through this agreement shall commit to respect the functional independence of the IPU in carrying out its activities and in assigning to the Office such IPU officials or other IPU personnel as it deems necessary for carrying out the particular functions assigned to the Office.

2) Agreement between the Host Government and the IPU

Art. 1. Jurisdictional Personality

- a) The Government, through the Host Status Agreement, shall recognize the IPU as an international organization, according to the rules of international law. The IPU cannot be sued before the Host Country courts.

Art. 2. Property, Funds and Assets

- a) The premises of the IPU regional office shall be inviolable. The property and assets of the IPU shall be immune from search, requisition, confiscation and any other form of interference, whether by executive, administrative, judicial or legislative action.
- b) The archives of the IPU regional office, and in general all documents belonging to it or held by it in Host Country, shall be inviolable.
- c) Without being restricted by financial controls, regulations or moratoria of any kind,
 - i. the IPU may hold funds or currency of any kind and
 - ii. operate accounts in any currency;
 - iii. the IPU shall be free to transfer its funds or currency to or from the Host Country or within the Host Country and to convert any currency held by it into any other currency.
- d) The IPU regional office, its assets, income, expenditure and other property shall be:
 - i. exempt from all direct and indirect taxes whether federal, cantonal or communal;
 - ii. exempt from all customs duties in respect of articles imported or exported by the IPU for its official use;
 - iii. exempt from all prohibitions and restrictions on imports and exports in respect of articles intended for the official use of the IPU;
 - iv. exempt from all customs duties, prohibitions and restrictions on imports and exports in respect of its publications.

Art. 3. Facilities in respect of Communications

- a) The IPU regional office shall enjoy in respect of its official communications, treatment not less favorable than that accorded by the Host Country to any other Government including its diplomatic missions or to other intergovernmental, international organizations, in the matter of priorities, tariffs and charges on mail, internet services, telephone and all other communications including electronic forms of communications, as well as rates for information to the press and radio. The Government shall secure the inviolability of the official communications and correspondence to and from IPU and shall not apply any censorship to its official communications, correspondence, IPU publications and information materials.

Art. 4. Functional Independence

- a) The Government, through the Host Parliament, shall ensure that the functional independence of the IPU is respected to allow it to carry out its activities and assign to the Regional Office such IPU officials or other IPU personnel as it deems necessary for carrying out the functions assigned to the Office.
- b) The Government, in case of incidents or events resulting in a complete or partial disruption of the Office's telecommunications or utilities services, shall give the Office, for the performance of its functions, the same priority given to essential agencies and organs of the Government.

Art. 5. Social security and pension

IPU officials shall be exempt from mandatory coverage and all compulsory contribution payments to the Social Security system of the Host Country.

Art. 6. Officials of the IPU

- a) Officials of the IPU shall :
 - i. be immune from legal process in respect of words spoken or written and all acts performed by them in their official capacity;
 - ii. be exempt from taxation on the salaries and emoluments paid to them by the IPU;
 - iii. be immune from national service obligations;
 - iv. be immune, together with their spouses and relatives dependent on them, from immigration restriction and alien registration;
 - v. be accorded the same privileges in respect of exchange facilities as are accorded to the officials of comparable ranks forming part of diplomatic missions to the government of the Host Country;
 - vi. be given, together with their spouses and relatives dependent on them, the same repatriation facilities in time of international crisis as diplomatic envoys;
 - vii. have the right to import free of duty their furniture and effects at the time of first taking up their post in Host Country.
- b) The IPU shall co-operate at all times with the appropriate Host Country authorities to facilitate the proper administration of justice, secure the observance of police regulations, and prevent the occurrence of any abuse in connection with the privileges, immunities and facilities mentioned in this Article.

Art. 7. Settlement Of Disputes

- a) Any dispute between the IPU and the Host Government arising of or relating to this agreement shall be settled amicably by negotiation or other agreed mode of settlement, failing which such dispute shall be submitted to arbitration at the request of either party.

* The Host Parliament and Government may opt to execute a single agreement on the above to be signed by an agreed competent authority.