

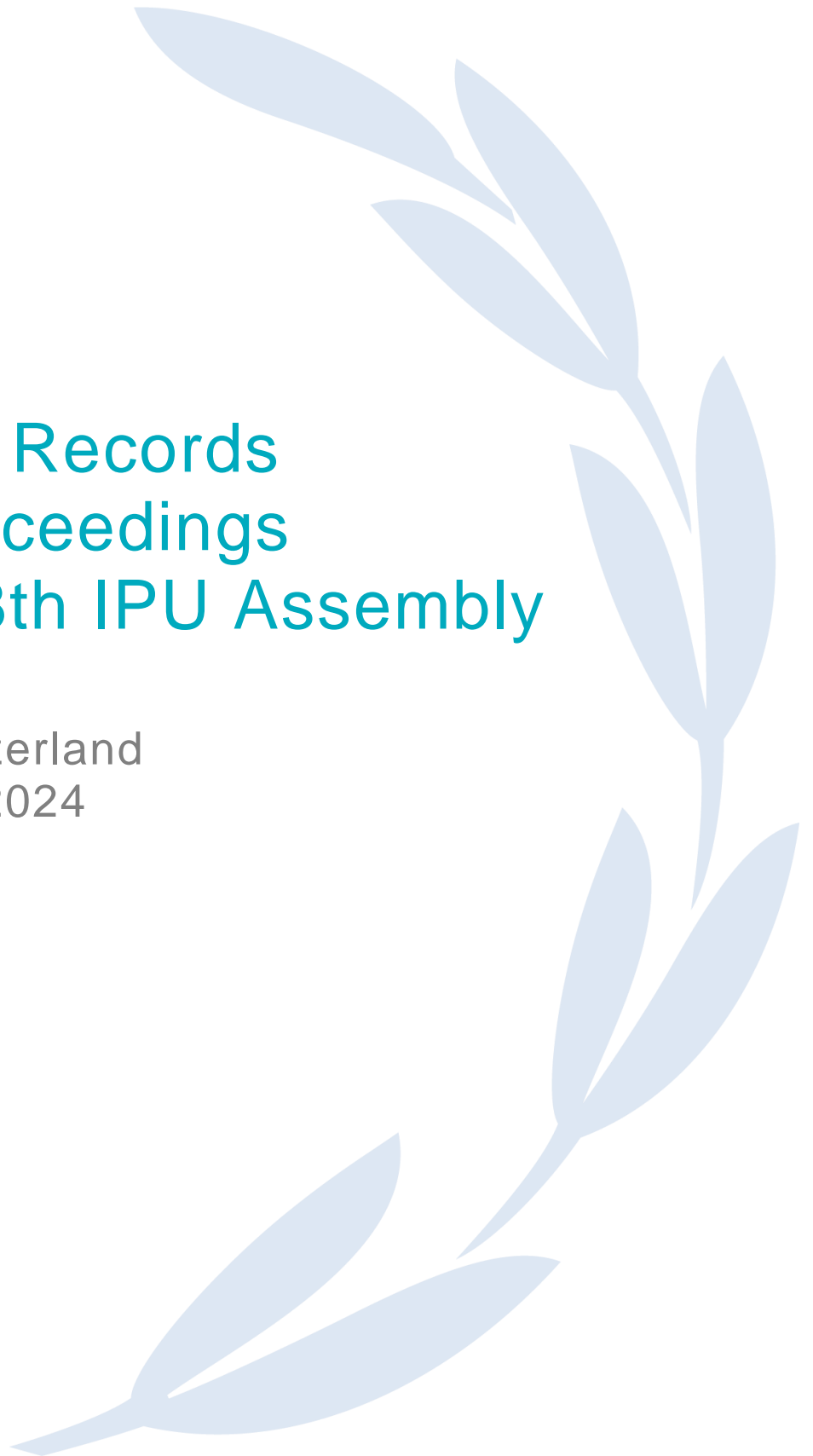


Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

# Summary Records of the Proceedings of the 148th IPU Assembly

Geneva, Switzerland  
23-27 March 2024

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Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

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Geneva

23-27 March 2024

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## Introduction

Delegations from 144 Member Parliaments took part in the work of the Assembly:

Afghanistan\*, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia (The), Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar\*, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Parliament of Jamaica also attended the 148th Assembly in an observer capacity, with a view to future affiliation.

The following seven Associate Members also took part in the Assembly: the Arab Parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), the Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS), the Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO), the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie (APF).

Observers included representatives of:

(i) the United Nations and related organizations: United Nations, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO), and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW);

(ii) parliamentary assemblies and associations: African Parliamentary Union (APU), Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), Baltic Assembly, Collective Security Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly (CSTOPA), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Forum of Parliaments of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (FP-ICGLR), Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC), International Parliamentary Network for Education (IPNEd), Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (IAO), Maghreb Consultative Council (MCC), Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), Parliamentary Assembly of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (AP-CPLP), Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States (TURKPA), Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Member States (PUIC), Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF), and UNITE Parliamentarians Network for Global Health;

\* As per the decision of the Governing Council in Madrid in November 2021, the IPU continues to engage with the former, democratically elected parliamentarians from Afghanistan and with the Committee to Represent Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) for Myanmar. The corresponding delegations attend Assemblies in a non-voting observer capacity.

(iii) Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI);

(iv) International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Development Law Organization (IDLO), International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), Organization of American States, and Sovereign Order of Malta.

Several special guests also attended the Assembly and gave addresses at high-level segments.

Of the 1,479 delegates who attended the Assembly, 716 were members of parliament (703 from Member Parliaments and 13 from Associate Member delegations), including 51 Presiding Officers, and 48 Deputy Presiding Officers. Member Parliaments' delegations included 252 women MPs (35.85%) and 194 young MPs (27.60%).

# Opening of the 148th Assembly

**SITTING OF SUNDAY, 24 MARCH 2024**

(Morning)

*The sitting was called to order at 11:10, with Dr. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania), President of the IPU, in the Chair.*

*The IPU Anthem was played.*

*At the proposal of the IPU President, a minute of silence was observed in honour of those who had passed away since the 147th Assembly, including notably Mr. H.G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, and the thousands of victims of circumstances such as war, terrorism, gender-based violence, disease and ill health.*

## Opening remarks

**The President**, noting in her opening remarks that the IPU Assembly was back in Geneva following an absence of almost six years, said that the President of the Senate of Jamaica was a welcome first-time observer of the proceedings with a potential view to his Parliament's affiliation with the IPU as its 181st Member. The theme of the 148th Assembly Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding went to the very heart of the rationale for the IPU's foundation in 1889, since when the Organization had remained the focal point for worldwide parliamentary dialogue, in line with Article 1.2 of its Statutes. Given the alarming rise in the number and intensity of conflicts around the world, the choice of that theme, alongside the IPU's 2024 priority theme of peace and security, made perfect sense – and indeed those same topics topped her own list of priorities as IPU President.

With a working group of the Executive Committee set to embark on its task of amending the IPU Statutes and Rules, the 148th Assembly offered a valuable opportunity to revitalize the IPU's agility in reacting to crises, including conflict. The IPU had for decades worked consistently to bring together parliamentarians from countries in conflict and, based as always on the principle that dialogue was central to the peaceful resolution of disputes, it intended to intensify its use of dialogue to that end in many conflicts in addition to those that it was already working to address. She welcomed all participants to Geneva and looked forward to a fruitful Assembly.

**The Secretary General**, reiterating congratulations to Dr. Ackson on her accession to the high office of President of the IPU and on her maiden Assembly in that capacity, said that the IPU looked forward to working with her for the success of the deliberations. It was an immense pleasure and privilege to welcome Members back for the first time since 2018 to the home base of their global organization of parliaments in the city of multilateralism and peace, an attribute that in itself confirmed that the IPU stood for the noble objective of peace and security to which a multitude of other organizations located in Geneva were likewise dedicated.

In articulating the virtues of international cooperation, especially among parliaments, it was important to be aware of the challenges facing the global community and to live up to the IPU motto of democracy for everyone. Expectations in respect of the contribution of the IPU and parliaments to ongoing peace processes were riding high, but responsibility for the conclusion of international agreements and treaties lay with the executive arm of governments alone. Parliaments and parliamentarians had often strenuously pointed out nonetheless that they needed to be key stakeholders in those processes and bring the voice of the people to the negotiating table.

Members were keenly aware of the value of parliamentary diplomacy in crisis-ridden areas of the world, making it an apt choice of theme for the current Assembly, during which the host of activities on offer would enable them to contribute towards efforts for the restoration of peace around the world. In that connection, their most important and hardest work – that of creating environments conducive to the implementation of peace agreements and to reconciliation for peaceful coexistence – would come later. In the interim, the Assembly was where parliamentarians from across political, religious, ideological and other divides could engage and, more vitally still, listen to one another so as to arrive at a common understanding of the direction of travel. With that in mind, Members were strongly encouraged to work in a spirit of accommodation and mutual respect with the aim of building a peaceful world for all communities and producing outcomes worthy of the expectations of those of



the world's 46,000 parliamentarians who could not be present and, most importantly, of the people whom they represented. He and his colleagues looked forward to assisting in any way possible towards the success of the deliberations and realization of the common agenda fundamental to the values articulated by the IPU's founding fathers, with an accent on dialogue as a means of resolving disputes and misunderstandings.

**Mr. D. Carden** (United Kingdom), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, in providing in line with customary practice a youth perspective on the topic of the General Debate, said that, despite the optimism of the 1990s around the prospects for global peace in a time of liberal democratic norms and rules-based international order, the world was again beset by instability and insecurity, as reflected in the many thousands of innocent lives lost in current conflicts, a disproportionate number of them being young people. The perverse irony was that young people, who accounted for almost one quarter of the world's population, were the first to be enlisted for fighting but the last to have a say in diplomatic and peacemaking processes, in which their increased representation was urged by the IPU and also in United Nations (UN) Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security.

To advocate for such representation was no silver bullet, however, as the search for genuine and lasting global peace was a more arduous task involving challenges such as making wide-ranging changes to the geopolitical organization, the global distribution of resources and, perhaps most importantly, outlooks. Cynicism was not the antidote to previous naive and Eurocentric assumptions about the universality of Western democracy and its capacity to insulate from conflict. Similarly, the collapse of the previous optimism must not lead to the conclusion that war was an inescapable feature of the human condition. There should be no idle acceptance of matters as they stood. The past was not inevitable and nor was the future predetermined. Peace was not unattainable but rather the only battle worth waging.

**Ms. C. López Castro** (Mexico), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, speaking via video link to articulate, also in line with customary practice, a gender perspective on the topic of the General Debate, said that she strongly believed in women's huge potential to contribute and lead in matters of peace and security. Regrettably, however, and notwithstanding the adoption of landmark Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, women were still not at the forefront of conflict prevention and resolution efforts, albeit that security, along with women's rights and empowerment, was under increasing threat.

As a powerful tool for building bridges to sustainable peace and for moving from exclusion and gender inequality to democratic decision-making and gender justice, the women, peace and security agenda offered the greatest hope for redressing that situation and for promoting peace, prosperity and stability. Parliamentarians must therefore make that agenda the focus of parliamentary diplomacy by removing all obstacles to gender parity in decision-making, ensuring women's participation and leadership in all peacekeeping, peacebuilding and security efforts, and ending all violence against women. Also key was their support for women's organizations working to fight injustice, promote peace and ensure women's rightful place at the negotiating table, along with their support for women and girl survivors of sexual violence in conflict, including in respect of reparation for violation of their rights. With the future of humanity depending on it, before yet more time passed, funds should be channelled into those areas and away from a frenzied arms race.

**Ms. M. Robinson** (Chair of The Elders, former President of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights) said in a video message that parliamentarians played an indispensable and especially valuable role in building bridges for peace and understanding, and in forging consensus on how to tackle shared challenges, with the IPU providing a critical forum for bringing them together in discussions to those ends. The focus on multilateralism, now in crisis, was welcome in the run-up to the Summit of the Future aimed at charting a new pathway forward for the international cooperation critical to addressing existential threats, including from climate, pandemics, nuclear weapons and unregulated artificial intelligence. Geopolitical tensions and social polarization were also rising and decision-making was too often governed by short-term self-interested calculations.

Despite recognizing the need to move away from fossil fuels, leaders were not acting at the speed required to address the continuing climate and nature emergency. The existing pathway was unsustainable and nor was there yet any consensus on an effective pandemic accord. Nuclear powers had still not met their commitment to reduce their arsenals and a new arms race loomed with the impending expiration of the few remaining nuclear agreements in place. The multilateral international peace and security architecture, notably the UN Security Council, was furthermore ill equipped to deal with crises arising from the proliferation of conflicts, some of which were not receiving due attention.

Against that backdrop, The Elders were calling for long-view leadership to tackle existential threats, build a more resilient and equal society, and resolve intractable problems through decision-making based on scientific evidence, reason and the humility to listen to all those affected. With adequate pressure from civil society and civic institutions, including parliaments, that model of leadership could flourish alongside hopes for a better future. The greatest and most abiding example of such leadership was Nelson Mandela, whose words in his 1994 inaugural presidential speech had renewed resonance in 2024, when 40% of the world's population would have the chance to vote in hugely consequential elections. Those words continued to resonate as a rallying cry for the crucial leadership role that parliaments could play in realizing the hopes and aspirations of people everywhere.

#### Item 1 of the agenda

### **Election of the President of the 148th Assembly**

**The President** said that, in accordance with the established practice of nominating the IPU President to preside over Assemblies taking place in Geneva, where there was no host parliament, the Governing Council had elected her to serve as President of the 148th Assembly.

#### Item 3 of the agenda

### **General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding* (A/148/3-Inf.1)**

#### **PRESIDING OFFICERS OF PARLIAMENT**

**Mr. A. Teshager Gessesse** (Ethiopia) expressed his delegation's condolences to the families of those killed in the recent terrorist attack in Moscow and said that the theme of the General Debate was a fitting reminder of the troubling and ever deteriorating state of global peace. Increasing violence worldwide prompted humanitarian tragedies while the use of technologies intensified the risk of miscalculation and ensuing escalation, with potentially catastrophic consequences. The maintenance of peace and security required political commitment and compromise at all levels, including from parliamentarians, whose indispensable responsibilities and unique characteristics could be leveraged to broaden peace.

In the volatile Horn of Africa, lingering conflict, external militarization and increased fragility were fuelling instability and insecurity in an already fractious environment, which would benefit from a stronger parliamentary presence and engagement in support of intergovernmental efforts towards peace and security. In that context, the inseparable linkage between a sustainable regional peace and the growing drivers of economic integration was evident. As to the two-year conflict now ended in northern Ethiopia, the use of dialogue and compromise to achieve a peaceful resolution had embodied in practice the notion of African solutions to African problems. Driven by a firm political commitment, Ethiopia's flagship transitional justice policy was another crucial path to sustainable peace, constituting a pioneering approach and a potential major milestone for lasting prospects of justice, reconciliation and accountability as well as peace. Similarly unwavering was Ethiopia's commitment to parliamentary dialogue and diplomacy at all levels as a means of galvanizing action for peace and security.

**Ms. S. Gafarova** (Azerbaijan) said that hopes for a better world were closely linked with peace and understanding, yet the world had become more fractured and less peaceful, with the debate raging about the ineffectiveness of multilateralism owing to non-compliance with international rules, double standards, and the predominating interests of certain States. Preconditions for the restoration and maintenance of peace included strict adherence to, and non-selective application of, the universally recognized norms and principles of international law, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, and protection of justice. With the importance of parliamentary diplomacy growing in global affairs, parliaments were a powerful additional resource in building bridges for peace, understanding, confidence and peaceful coexistence. In that regard, the IPU was true to its vision of dialogue and played an invaluable role, exemplified in its provision of a platform for the first meeting of the Speakers of the Parliaments of Azerbaijan and Armenia, which had allowed for constructive discussions, with the two countries now closer to peace than ever before.

Peace and understanding were essential to collectively addressing serious global challenges, climate change among them. As the chosen host of the 29th session of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP29), Azerbaijan was ready to contribute, as a bridge-builder and potential uniter of communities and countries behind a common cause, towards realizing a climate-focused, equitable and sustainable future. The Parliamentary Meeting to be organized at COP29 would be an opportunity for parliamentarians to contribute to the multilateral climate action identified as a priority by the IPU.

**Mr. Y. Koshanov** (Kazakhstan) expressed his delegation's condolences to the Russian Federation following the recent attack and condemned all terrorist attacks against civilians. He said that peace and security were crucial issues of global concern requiring constant work to strengthen the values of mutual respect and trust in international relations. Large-scale political reforms for building a fair, democratic, peaceful and prosperous society had equipped Kazakhstan, and indeed its Parliament, for contributing towards sustainable development and a harmonious future for all. Examples included its initiatives to combat nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, its congresses for leaders of world and traditional religions, and its work to promote implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Its recent deployment of an independent Kazakh peacekeeping contingent to the Golan Heights under UN auspices was also a measure of its contribution to global security and stability.

In terms of inter-parliamentary engagement, Kazakhstan was actively working through the Dialogue of Women of Central Asia to protect women's rights and their roles in the economy, innovation and technology, as well as in peace and security. In response to the need for solutions to maintain economic ties in an exceedingly difficult geopolitical situation, it was furthermore working tirelessly to diversify transcontinental transportation across Eurasia, notably through the Middle Corridor initiative for boosting economic connectivity, with an emphasis on a clear legal regime. It was also partnering with others to promote regional food security, efficient use of water resources and climate action, including through dedicated events.

**Mr. J. Buttimer** (Ireland) expressed his sympathies to the families of those killed in the attack in Moscow and said that parliamentarians had the shared mission and responsibility to end human suffering and geopolitical instability and bring peace to the world. A hallmark of Irish foreign policy, supporting and sustaining peacebuilding was about long-term leadership, bringing people together and using parliamentary diplomacy and dialogue to that effect, which called for mutual understanding and respect for differences. The IPU Members should stand with Ukraine and its people under illegal occupation and, in the case of the Israel-Palestine conflict, redouble their efforts to secure an immediate ceasefire, the delivery of humanitarian aid and the release of all hostages. It was not about picking sides but about standing up for the small, the weak and the vulnerable to create a world of equals. In that same vein, all IPU Members should support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people and empower them to stand as candidates and be elected as parliamentarians.

With regard to action on climate change, parliamentarians had no option but to carry out their solemn duty to lead and to bring the people with them in aiming to accomplish such goals as reducing emissions by 2030 and achieving net zero by 2050. As to language, what parliamentarians said and how they said it mattered. Therefore, in all the important discussions to be conducted at the current Assembly, they must respectfully put aside differences in favour of working for global peace and equality by acting, thinking and, above all, speaking wisely.

**Mr. A. Farrugia** (Malta), describing parliamentary diplomacy as a beacon of hope in an increasingly interconnected world beset by persistent conflict and misunderstanding, said that its immense potential for fostering dialogue, cooperation and conciliation was often overlooked in traditional diplomatic discourse. Embodying the principle of people-to-people diplomacy, it transcended boundaries to cultivate relationships rooted in mutual respect and understanding and build bridges to overcome historic grievances, ideological differences and geopolitical tensions. It also offered greater flexibility and potentially better outcomes, as parliamentary networks – particularly important in crisis situations – could be developed relatively easily. With parliamentarians playing a crucial role in conflict resolution and prevention, including through fostering communication and dialogue, the best practice giving the highest added value and clearest direction was to combine parliamentary and traditional diplomacy. Success in that event depended, however, on a common political commitment and vision.

Parliamentary diplomacy was based on a commitment to developing, as one of its strengths, a culture of meaningful dialogue and respect for diversity and identity, with an emphasis on surmounting societal constraints. It was by nature an interpersonal experience and an exercise in networking, friendship and confidence-building to diminish isolation and the related propensity for friction. Along

with diplomatic academies, the IPU could provide training and capacity-building in parliamentary diplomacy for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff. Common challenges could be overcome through global responses, coordination and collaboration among nations. Multilateralism clearly had a key role to play in addressing conflicts, without exception, but much more remained to be done.

**Mr. J.M. Zubiri** (Philippines) extended the condolences of his delegation to the families of the innocent people who had lost their lives in the attack in Moscow and said that the search for peace remained urgent but an elusive dream in a world of strife that underscored the mission of parliamentarians to stop war, bloodshed and civilian suffering. The IPU's legacy of bold thinking and brave action should inspire confidence in parliamentarians to facilitate peace and craft strategies for silencing the guns and ending the misery of those caught in the crossfire of conflicts now topping the common parliamentary agenda. The Philippines had long allied itself with the cause of peace, giving primacy to diplomacy as a means of conflict resolution and faithfully subscribing to the IPU's foundational principles, including by renouncing war as a foreign policy tool.

No country was immune to the global fallout from war and conflict, which included slowed economic recovery and growth, trade disruption, imbalances and deficits, inflation, rising food and oil prices, and supply chain turmoil. The IPU and its Members had proven capable of breaking impasses to reach compromise and consensus through understanding and respect for all views. Applying that same template and a new landmark law, his country had forged a principled and permanent settlement to one of the world's longest and fiercest secessionist wars, leading to a dramatic turnaround towards peace, stability and shared prosperity in the new Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. It called for international support, however, concerning its stand on freedom of navigation and adherence to international rules-based law and order in the West Philippine Sea, identified as a potential major flashpoint in the region.

**Ms. M. Guerra Castillo** (Mexico), observing that peace was no longer considered to mean the absence of large-scale conflict, said that the international community recognized the need to ensure development, prevent conflict and provide mechanisms for mediation and reconciliation. Initiatives were also needed to consolidate lasting peace, which entailed zero tolerance for violence against women and in families, communities, schools, the workplace and politics. Peace depended on gender equality in State structures and, therefore, on women's participation in all government institutions. In Mexico, where peacekeeping was a national priority, gender parity was a principle enshrined in its Constitution and had been achieved in its legislature. Women's active engagement in decision-making bodies and public life was likewise guaranteed, with every effort also made to promote further inclusivity and diversity by ensuring in addition the involvement of Afro-Mexican, indigenous, migrant and marginalized communities.

Peacebuilding through understanding, dialogue and cooperation should head the parliamentary agenda and underpin political agreements at all government levels. As lawmakers, parliamentarians must commit to laying the foundations and frameworks for prosperity and to working to secure universal respect for human rights. Within the IPU setting, they must continue to foster inter-parliamentary dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy, along with plurality, diversity and equal representation for all. IPU decisions and declarations reflected the voice of peoples in search of tangible results, including in respect of sustainable development and peace, in which parliaments must play their role.

**Ms. P. Maharani** (Indonesia), remarking that 2024 was a test of the commitment to build a peaceful, just and inclusive world, said that the global order was at a crossroads, with conflicts, crises and geopolitical tensions linked to great power rivalry intensifying and civilian suffering the consequence. In working to strengthen their collective efforts to achieve peace for all, parliamentarians must champion dialogue, diplomacy and cooperation in addition to upholding tolerance, respecting diversity, building trust and, most importantly, rejecting the use of force to resolve disputes. Sadly, the unjustifiable atrocity of the bombing and bloodshed in Gaza continued, yet the international community stood idly by, seemingly blind to the civilian suffering. The IPU Members should use their influence towards securing in that conflict an immediate ceasefire, the safe passage of humanitarian aid, respect for international humanitarian law, and the ultimate goal of a two-State solution.

International pressure should be brought to bear on parties in conflicts the world over to negotiate for lasting peace, which was key to better living standards, education and health care. Indeed, achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) would be difficult in a fragmented world without peace as the foundation for development, justice and democracy, which required not

only multipolarity but strong global institutions. The multilateral agenda should accordingly be focused on reform of the UN, in particular its Security Council. Parliaments played an important role in creating peace and security, including through lawmaking, and must redouble their commitment to working together to promote inter-parliamentary diplomacy and a strong culture of peace and mutual understanding.

**Mr. A.S.K. Bagbin** (Ghana) said that diplomatic discourse was enriched by the legitimacy and grass-roots representation inherent in parliamentary diplomacy, which required a balance between reality and perception to succeed. Such diplomacy should firmly uphold universal values and principles while respecting the rules and norms framing the international system and the cultures and values of a diverse world. Among its fundamental goals, building bridges for peace and understanding had a profound impact and involved dialogue and open, honest and respectful communication to overcome differences and foster reconciliation, trust, stability and cooperation, whether regionally or globally. With that in mind, parliaments should establish friendship groups or associations with their counterparts around the world, as his Parliament had indeed done.

Parliamentary diplomacy was a valuable tool for forging relationships, promoting inter-parliamentary cooperation and enabling parliamentarians to represent their country's interests and work towards building consensus on global matters. By actively participating in processes such as intergovernmental negotiations and peacebuilding initiatives, parliamentarians acquired an understanding of core issues and could contribute positively towards shaping global affairs, instruments and agreements. By advocating and engaging in dialogue, collaboration and conflict resolution, they could also eliminate divides and promote mutual understanding. Parliamentary diplomacy was undoubtedly fundamental to creating a better world and increasingly important to strengthening global governance. Parliamentarians must reaffirm their commitment to diplomatic engagement, prioritize peacebuilding efforts and foster collaboration among nations to create a more peaceful and prosperous world for future generations.

**Mr. A. Bictogo** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that parliamentary diplomacy complemented traditional diplomacy and was a powerful tool for promoting harmony. Parliamentarians could contribute significantly through their actions towards, among other things, preventing war and crises. Conflicts around the world persisted nonetheless, which called for more concerted parliamentary efforts to enhance bilateral or multilateral cooperation to resolve such conflicts as well as promote social justice and address climate change, terrorism, inequality and other issues of global concern.

Parliamentary diplomacy should be harnessed towards fostering peace and understanding, to which end parliaments benefited from joining inter-parliamentary organizations such as the IPU, where they could share experiences and strengthen mutual cooperation ties. Members must work harder, however, for more tangible results, starting at the current Assembly by creating a high-level group of Speakers of Parliament on diplomatic peace initiatives, calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, and condemning all attacks on democratic values that threatened peace and social cohesion.

**Ms. A. Brnabić** (Serbia), highlighting equality among countries, mutual respect and appreciation, and free exchange of opinions as the foundation of international relations, said that, in guiding a world marked by rapid changes and complex challenges towards a future where dialogue trumped discord and understanding superseded conflict, the importance of parliamentary diplomacy could not be overstated. Peace depended on respect for international law, without which perpetual war, loss of lives and instability were the likely result. In 1999, the very fabric of that law had been tested in her nation – then part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia – by the illegal act of aggression against it by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which had created a dangerous precedent and led subsequently to a further violation of international norms. Those events had unleashed far-reaching repercussions, with ripple effects that continue to unfold across Europe and beyond.

With tensions escalating and global conflict looming, the lessons of history must be learned and efforts redoubled to prevent similar catastrophic outcomes. All countries, regardless of size and might, must unfailingly respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all UN Member States and pursue dialogue and cooperation as the only pathways to sustainable peace and stability. Parliamentary diplomacy had the potential to build bridges in place of walls and was paramount in addressing, resolving and, most crucially, preventing breaches of international peace and security. Through promoting open and honest communication among nations, conflicts could be anticipated and resolved before they spiralled, preserving the dignity of all States and peoples.

*The sitting rose at 13:15.*

## Sitting of Sunday, 24 March 2024

(Afternoon)

*The sitting was called to order at 14:30, with Ms. D. O'Neill (Australia) in the Chair.*

Item 3 of the agenda  
(continued)

**General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary diplomacy:  
Building bridges for peace and understanding***  
(A/148/3-Inf.1)

### PRESIDING OFFICERS OF PARLIAMENT

**Ms. D. Gulmanova** (Turkmenistan) expressed her delegation's deepest condolences following the recent tragic events in Moscow that had resulted in the loss of many innocent lives and said that her country's foreign policy accorded with its UN-recognized permanent neutrality status aimed at contributing to global peace, security and sustainable development, with an emphasis in international relations on good-neighbourly cooperation for universal well-being. Turkmenistan attached great importance to the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA), located in Ashgabat, and had recently mooted the idea of developing a global security strategy based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and generally recognized norms of international law. As well as proposing the establishment of a conference, under United Nations (UN) auspices, on security in Central Asia and its adjacent zones, it had successfully initiated a UN General Assembly resolution declaring 2025 as the International Year of Peace and Trust.

With the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) key to promoting peace and security, Turkmenistan was implementing numerous joint projects for their achievement and an environmental agenda focused on green and renewable energy sources. It had furthermore initiated the establishment of the Group of Friends of Neutrality for Peace, Security and Sustainable Development as a platform for developing, under UN auspices, a dialogue on the practical application of the principles of neutrality in conflict prevention and related matters. In that context, it had recently hosted the first meeting of Heads of Parliament of the Group's Member States to discuss the role of parliamentary cooperation in strengthening peace and dialogue and was planning other events in 2024 for strengthening peace and trust, enhancing friendship and cooperation, and uniting parliamentary efforts to those ends.

**Mr. P. Wichitcholchai** (Thailand) said that his country had always pursued parliamentary diplomacy and consistently adhered to its international law obligations. Its Parliament, moreover, had a long and proud track record as a reliable and responsible IPU Member, reaching out to friends and partners worldwide to forge closer cooperation ties through bilateral parliamentary diplomacy, high-level parliamentary exchanges and parliamentary friendship groups. It had also signed numerous memorandums of understanding with counterparts on strengthening partnership and understanding. Thailand retained its faith in the multilateral system and worked in particular through the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly to consolidate peace and stability and tackle new challenges in the region.

His Parliament welcomed the IPU's lead in building more effective multilateralism by encouraging closer ties with regional organizations and promoting more meaningful parliamentary involvement in UN processes to address global crises. The international community must regain its trust in the multilateral system and work jointly on issues of mutual interest, including the delivery of humanitarian assistance to countries in need and the promotion of human rights for all. Sincerely committed to such issues, the Thai Parliament hoped that an upcoming regional seminar on health care in the Asia-Pacific region, to be co-hosted in Bangkok with the IPU, would help to mobilize parliamentary cooperation on the regional health architecture in the post-COVID era. It fully supported the IPU's role as a platform for leveraging parliamentary diplomacy to advance peace and prosperity, and stood ready to contribute within the IPU framework towards further strengthening the multilateral system and cooperation.

**Ms. T. Narbaeva** (Uzbekistan) echoed the condolences expressed by other delegations to the numerous victims of the recent terrorist attack in Moscow. Underscoring the growing role and relevance of parliaments in a rapidly changing and unpredictable international environment, she said that increasing tensions, crises of confidence and departures from the norms of international law called for heightened parliamentary diplomacy to help strengthen peace and global stability. In Uzbekistan, where fundamental reforms aligned with the SDGs were in progress, such diplomacy had a major place in its foreign policy. For its part, the Uzbek Parliament was actively reinforcing its inter-parliamentary cooperation and participating constructively in the work of inter-parliamentary organizations. It saw parliamentary diplomacy as an important trust-building mechanism with a key role to play in conflict prevention and supported the IPU's efforts to mediate between parliaments with the aim of finding compromise solutions to complex situations.

Defending the rights of vulnerable groups, including through combating discrimination, hatred and violence in all its forms, was another priority for parliaments, as was regional inter-parliamentary cooperation as a further mechanism for building trust and addressing shared problems. In the Central Asian region, inter-parliamentary bodies provided a vital platform for the discussion of regional issues and had helped to transform politics for the better. The Uzbek Parliament would continue to support IPU initiatives for developing parliamentary diplomacy and strengthening international relations for more effective responses to global challenges. It was grateful for the opportunity to host the 150th IPU Assembly, for which preparations were already under way and which would surely help to coordinate approaches to consolidating the role of parliaments in the achievement of sustainable development.

**Mr. S.D. Seoule** (Vanuatu) said that strengthened international cooperation was essential to tackling the climate change to which his and other small island States were especially vulnerable. Thanks to parliamentary diplomacy, the UN General Assembly had adopted a landmark resolution on climate justice, which stood as a ringing endorsement of that diplomacy and illustrated what parliaments could achieve by working together. Providing an excellent variety of tools for dealing with climate change, the resolution had stemmed from the growing awareness of the urgent need for coordinated action to address the problem and its effects on ecosystems around the world, as so alarmingly highlighted by scientific reports such as those of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Parliaments played a pivotal role in the development and implementation of ambitious climate policies and must mobilize politically to ensure the robustness of those policies, both nationally and internationally. In so doing, they must also ensure that the SDGs were translated into reality, above all in respect of climate action. As elected representatives of the people, parliaments were under obligation to deal with emergencies and join in confronting the challenges of the era, of which climate change was one, with a view to realizing a better and more sustainable future for future generations.

**Mr. A. Simonyan** (Armenia) condemned the recent terrorist attack in Moscow and expressed his condolences to the many victims. He said that parliamentary diplomacy had become a force in international relations, fostering stronger relations between nations through inter-parliamentary dialogue, exchanges and cooperation and helping to build trust and understanding. Parliamentary delegations and exchanges contributed to public diplomacy efforts and strengthened soft power. Through engaging with their counterparts from elsewhere, parliamentarians could shape public opinion, build networks and convey a positive image of their country abroad. Thanks to emphasis placed on parliamentary diplomacy, Armenian parliamentarians were involved in numerous inter-parliamentary forums and worked to strengthen ties and foster mutual understanding with others. They were doing their best to promote the peace process, with the regional security situation and national defence capabilities remaining as high priorities. Through its Crossroads of Peace project, Armenia was endeavouring to restore original transit roads and infrastructure so as to revitalize economic ties in the region and positively influence the overall security situation.

In a vivid example of parliamentary diplomacy at work, the IPU Secretary General had recently visited Armenia and Azerbaijan with the aim of understanding the situation in the South Caucasus, following which, at his suggestion, a trilateral meeting involving himself and the Speakers of the Parliaments of each country had taken place in Geneva only a few days previously. In conclusion, he invited young parliamentarians to attend the Tenth IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, to be held in Yerevan in September 2024, which would enable them to experience Armenia first hand and to foster ties with their counterparts in the true spirit of parliamentary diplomacy.

**Mr. H. Gebaly** (Egypt) said that urgent challenges and threats such as terrorism, climate change, geopolitical conflicts and rising alienation, extremism and hatred brought dire consequences from which no one was immune. The credibility of the global system was also at risk, given its inability

to end the longest occupation in modern history – that of Palestine by Israel. Talk of building peace and understanding was beside the point when the Palestinian people were victim to a full-blown war crime and gross violations of international law aimed at their annihilation, their forced displacement and eradication of their pressing cause. The international community would not be absolved of its responsibility for what was a catastrophe.

No effort must be spared to build bridges of understanding and dialogue based on mutual respect and acceptance of the other, in which regard parliamentary diplomacy undoubtedly played an important role. Egypt actively sought to promote coexistence and dialogue as the only means to peace, taking a comprehensive approach and helping to disseminate the values of tolerance, moderation and acceptance of others through initiatives such as international peace convoys and the establishment of a centre for interfaith dialogue. Parliamentarians must take on board the concerns of their peoples and urgently develop a global parliamentary vision for building understanding, dialogue and the capacity to resolve crises, and end the suffering of those living in inhumane conditions by establishing peace and security, and fostering coexistence.

**Mr. M.Y. Abeywardana** (Sri Lanka) said that parliamentary diplomacy ensured that public concerns and perspectives were taken into account in foreign policy formulation. In recent times, it had gained prominence as a tool for conflict prevention and resolution – and indeed the contribution of parliamentary diplomats to creating an environment conducive to peaceful coexistence could be especially valuable in regions marked by historical tensions or ongoing conflicts. In all its manifestations, parliamentary diplomacy was an important alternative form of diplomacy underscored by the increasing role of parliaments in foreign affairs and international relations. In Sri Lanka, parliamentarians had meaningful opportunities to engage in foreign policy by way of the scrutiny process and select committee oversight. Its Parliament participated in regional and international parliamentary meetings and parliamentary friendship associations and was a long-standing active member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA).

As to institutional diplomacy, parliamentary networks promoted bilateral or multilateral meetings of Speakers of Parliament to learn about and discuss the impact of key issues and explore solutions. Parliaments collaborated through inter-parliamentary organizations and bilateral and multilateral parliamentary groups, and could act for peace, friendship among peoples, democracy, the rule of law and human rights. Open parliamentary initiatives were effective in bringing parliaments closer to the people, including through outreach programmes, workshops and short courses on parliamentary practice and proceedings for university students, schools and local government officials. In sum, parliamentary diplomacy was a beacon of hope in a world often marred by strife and discord, playing a vital role in creating a more just, peaceful and interconnected world.

**Mr. G.O. Akpabio** (Nigeria), observing that choices made at the current pivotal moment in history would shape the future of a world in constant crisis, said that his multilingual, multi-faith, multicultural and multi-ethnic country had a stunning kaleidoscopic diversity that did not unfortunately shield it from the challenges of ethnic and religious conflict. Polarization along political, ethnic, religious or gender lines demanded concerted governmental and non-governmental efforts to foster peace, unity and justice, mediate disputes and find solutions, with parliaments playing a particularly important role in creating the right enabling environment, including through responsible lawmaking and select committee activities. Nigeria had levelled the playing field in nation-building by way of a landmark bill to lower the age of running for electoral office, while its Parliament approved cabinet nominees on the basis of merit – not party affiliation or other status – and worked to reduce tribalism and advance development. Nigeria also actively contributed towards international peace and security through its vital deployment of troops and resources for peacekeeping across Africa and beyond.

In addition to continuing their significant role in conflict prevention and resolution, parliaments could benefit from parliamentary friendship groups to forge bilateral relations, strengthen mutual ties, exchange knowledge and promote democracy and good governance. His Parliament's substantial achievements in upholding international law, holding the Government accountable and fostering peace were in line with IPU expectations and it looked forward to further progress in parliamentary democracy. It was essential for parliaments to work hand in hand to create a brighter and more equitable future for humankind.

**Ms. C. Sacramento** (Sao Tome and Principe) said that current conflicts and crises around the world were crying out for immediate action, with the attainment of peace and prosperity a prerequisite for alleviating human suffering, increasing understanding among peoples and nations, and achieving sustainable development. Thanks to their legislative, budgetary and oversight functions, parliaments



played a leading role in defending the most vulnerable, preventing all discrimination and hatred, and guaranteeing women's and youth participation in political decision-making. In the international setting, their members contributed significantly through parliamentary diplomacy to conflict prevention and resolution with a view to lasting peace.

Her Parliament had adopted measures to prevent and address polarization, whether based on political, ethnic, racial, cultural, religious, gender or other status, and to strengthen women's participation in public and political life. Indeed, women were entitled under the country's parity law to occupy 40% of elected and managerial positions. Regrettably, however, no provision had yet been made for young people's inclusion on political party lists. Her country had a rich history and was proud of its peaceful reputation, unique values and diverse population, whose differences had been settled through dialogue. Parliament had developed good practices in the exercise of parliamentary diplomacy with neighbouring and friendly countries, forming parliamentary friendship groups and participating in events organized by international, regional and subregional parliamentary bodies. It firmly believed that dialogue was key to building global understanding, peace and security and also honoured its international commitments, as evidenced by its recent ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), now incorporated into domestic law.

**Mr. B. Boughali** (Algeria), after congratulating South Africa on its historic initiative of taking the Zionist entity to the International Court of Justice and calling on Members to work in concert for an end to the war in Gaza, said that parliaments must seek to fulfil the wishes of their peoples to live in peace and harmony. To that end, they must work harder than ever, in particular through parliamentary diplomacy, to address threats to peace and security and challenges faced in such areas as human rights, environment and post-pandemic recovery.

His own Parliament was currently working on a series of legislative and constitutional reforms aimed at creating a new Algeria and raising the country's international profile. In the interest of achieving peace, security and sustainable development it was vital to uphold UN values and principles, including so as to enhance the effectiveness of international cooperation on key issues, to which Algeria attached great importance. Proud to represent both African and Arab voices, Algeria would, in its capacity as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, strive to establish peace and security, strengthen multilateral action, promote women's and youth empowerment, and advance UN reform. Again calling on parliamentarians to do all within their power to end the hostilities in Gaza and also ensure the implementation of UN resolutions relating to the rights of the Sahrawi people, he reiterated the Algerian commitment to working with the IPU to attain its laudable objectives.

*Dr. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania), President of the IPU, took the Chair.*

**Mr. M. Aslam** (Maldives) said that his country was not immune to the complex global challenges faced in an increasingly interconnected world and was working to better understand those challenges and complete its legislative framework for combating the rise in violent extremism and terrorism. Its institutional set-up had been strengthened to address radicalization, including through programmes established with like-minded partners and through early intervention strategies. Maldives had also long been plagued by the drug epidemic and related crimes but lacked resources to tackle drug trafficking, which demanded effective international cooperation on policy reform and operational activities.

Peace also meant climate security. As a small island nation, Maldives contributed little to climate change but was disproportionately affected by it and had no desire for its people to become climate refugees. Another concern was the gender disparity in its Parliament, which was now being proactively addressed via a proposal to reserve one third of seats for women – as in local councils – and thus foster inclusivity. Citizen engagement in the work of Parliament was also being increased through dedicated programmes. As to the conflict in Gaza, there must be an immediate and permanent ceasefire to prevent far-reaching consequences with ripple effects on global peace. Parliamentary diplomacy provided a legal framework for tackling such challenges through collective action that transcended political agendas to focus on the greater good. Including by way of parliamentary friendship groups, parliamentarians must work together for tolerance and understanding to promote peace and harmony as a legacy for the next generations.

**Ms. S. D'Hose** (Belgium) said that the world order that had long shaped institutions and politics was crumbling, yet international cooperation had increased wealth and freedom more than ever before in human history, which was a pendulum swinging between progress and setbacks. Undoubtedly, the setbacks of the current era were trade wars, actual wars, and the declining trust in democratic

institutions and politicians. Global democracy index scores had been falling for years, with wars and conflicts undermining democracy and ever more countries retreating to focus on themselves. Whereas economic and security interdependence prevented turning back the globalization clock, all wars must eventually cease, with parliaments using their power to that end as part of bettering lives and the world itself.

Lack of public belief in the system was down to a failure of politicians to rise to required democratic standards – not to a failure of democracy. Delayed decision-making and poor compromises were frustrating, especially in respect of pressing global issues where foot-dragging threatened overall security. Parliamentarians were obliged to make their parliaments perform and strengthen democracy and people's representation so as to restore the balance of power, including by addressing negatives associated with bureaucracy, technocracy and lobbying. In addition to combating disinformation and foreign interference in elections, the Belgian Senate was increasing its gender sensitivity and pursuing deliberative democracy through citizens' assemblies. Democracy would be preserved only through radical action to shake up the status quo, and through involving an educated population in policymaking to shape solutions to emerging problems and to battle tough times.

**Mr. S.A. Sadiq** (Pakistan), emphasizing his peaceful country's belief in dialogue for cooperation and understanding and the efforts of its parliamentarians to foster bilateral partnerships through parliamentary friendship groups, said that the death and destruction being witnessed in Gaza were extremely worrisome, with women, children and the elderly bearing the brunt and facing imminent starvation. Israel's actions constituted a war crime and a crime against humanity that the international community had failed to stop, undermining the legitimacy of such institutions as the UN Security Council. Pakistan reiterated its strong call for, among others, an immediate and permanent ceasefire and unimpeded humanitarian assistance to the Gazan population. The people of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir had likewise suffered decades of indignity and oppression, including the banning of political parties, incarceration of political leaders, and unpunished human rights violations. All defenders of democracy and human rights must speak out for those people.

With development for many remaining a distant dream, parliaments must legislate for education and health for all, stronger social safety nets and a cleaner environment. Resources were a problem, however, in the face of socioeconomic challenges, debt burdens, inequality in the global financial architecture, and unpredictable events requiring cooperative responses. Despite its negligible contribution to the global carbon footprint, Pakistan was vulnerable to climate change effects, including extreme flooding, and called for international action to galvanize such responses. In all the situations described, the IPU role was critical and parliamentary diplomacy imperative to reflecting public aspirations for peace and dignity.

**Mr. A.C. Bundu** (Sierra Leone), relating his own first-hand experience of the enormous value of parliamentary diplomacy, said that it had been employed by a previous hung parliament in his country to compel political leaders to cultivate an environment conducive to less strident and more civil discourse. A historic milestone of transformative proportions had resulted and, despite the challenges and uncertainties facing it, that young parliament had been able to stamp its imprimatur on a myriad of outstandingly impressive policies and turn them into groundbreaking legislation designed to withstand the test of time.

It was no exaggeration to consider that particular Parliament – the country's fifth – as a true example and classic case of the transformative power of parliamentary diplomacy. By its prismatic light, it had also served as a catalyst for building bridges, transcending the horrible scars of a civil war, healing the wounds of adversity, and forging a future defined by shared values of sustainable peace, mutual trust, inclusivity and prosperity. In the current global circumstances, the time was more than ripe for reaffirming the commitment to a future where peace reigned supreme, where connecting bridges replaced dividing walls, where understanding was sought in preference to perpetuating misunderstanding, and where diversity and inclusivity were embraced as a source of strength and not as a cause of division. Inspiration should be drawn from the words of Nelson Mandela: it always seemed impossible until it was done.

**Mr. D.R. Ghimire** (Nepal) said that the narrow traditional notion of government-to-government diplomacy had widened with the development of parliamentary diplomacy as an important complement or alternative that promoted the interests of the participating nations. Adding a democratic dimension and legitimacy to international relations and aimed at benefiting the public, parliamentary diplomacy built trust and goodwill, and produced sustainable as opposed to temporary results. Such involvement

by parliamentarians was indispensable to ensuring that citizens' voices and aspirations were reflected in international decision-making. Ever a proponent of peace and coexistence and with a foreign policy based on the Charter of the United Nations, Nepal adamantly believed that all nations must show one another mutual respect.

Many current tensions and conflicts had resulted from discretionary actions taken by State authorities without reference to their people or to parliaments, which must exercise their power of scrutiny to stop such actions and maintain international peace and understanding. Other burning challenges that could be addressed through parliamentary diplomacy included climate change, by which Nepal was disproportionately affected, its low carbon emissions notwithstanding. All nations under similar threat must raise a united voice for climate action, while those contributing most towards global warming must be urged by parliaments to fulfil their related commitments. For 135 years, the IPU had been practising parliamentary diplomacy, providing a forum for discussion, brainstorming and cooperation among parliamentarians on a wide range of issues. It had successfully maintained the glory of its two cofounders, both Nobel Peace laureates, whose motivation would undoubtedly continue to inspire it going forward.

**Mr. J.-F. Ndongou** (Gabon), paying a resounding tribute to those two founding fathers of the IPU and to all parliamentarians striving tirelessly to promote peace and democracy, said that his country was turning over a new page in its history in which parliamentary diplomacy held a special place. Since its inception in September 2023, the country's Transitional National Assembly had received visits from senior officials of the Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie (APF) and indeed, in January 2024, from the IPU Secretary General, who had also met with the Archbishop of Libreville, chair of the upcoming National Inclusive Dialogue in April 2024. It had regular interactions with ambassadors of friendly countries supportive of the transition process and was fully involved in diplomatic activities such as those in respect of Gabon's reinstatement as a member of regional organizations.

As those examples showed, Gabon was fully cognizant of the power of parliamentary – or people's – diplomacy and was harnessing its benefits to advance causes dear to its heart and to build stronger democratic institutions rooted in its sociocultural values and the determination to effect a peaceful return to constitutional order. It unreservedly proclaimed those benefits, including notably in the context of bilateral and multilateral efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts, disseminate a culture of peace and promote democracy. In that connection, parliamentarians must step up their commitment to restoring peace in conflict zones, notably in Africa and the Middle East, and urge their governments to defend just causes and those whom they represented.

**Mr. M. Nadir** (Guyana) condemned the recent attack in Moscow and expressed his delegation's condolences to the people of the Russian Federation. He said that all IPU Members firmly subscribed to the principles of international peace and security and were committed to parliamentary democracy and parliamentary diplomacy as founding values of the IPU. In that spirit, his delegation was co-sponsoring with that of Argentina an emergency item proposal calling for democracy in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which had passed a law annexing two thirds – amounting to 140,000 km<sup>2</sup> – of Guyanese territory.

In addition to constituting a threat to international peace and security, that law went so absurdly far as to impose a fine of over US\$ 100,000 on anyone publishing a map of Venezuela that did not include the Essequibo region of Guyana, in effect rendering over 150,000 Guyanese liable to that penalty. Guyana appealed to all IPU Members, both individually and collectively, to denounce that action by the ruling regime in Caracas, which endangered the peace and serenity of the Latin America and Caribbean region, and to act on calls to stand up for the weak, the defenceless and the vulnerable. His delegation was grateful to the parliaments of that region and of the Commonwealth that had already done so, and to the many international institutions that had joined their pleas. The Attorney General of Guyana would be elaborating further on the matter.

**Ms. M.F. Lay** (Timor-Leste) expressed her delegation's consternation and condolences for the recent terrorist attack against innocent civilians in Moscow and said that parliamentarians played a determining role in influencing public policy, promoting government accountability and transparency, and strengthening the foundations of democracy – all crucial for the advancement of peace, cooperation and human rights. That role also extended beyond traditional parliamentary functions, especially in the face of an increasing myriad of challenges requiring urgent collective action, such as climate change, which jeopardized food security and biodiversity. With the world at such a complex crossroads, efforts to encourage inter-parliamentary dialogue were essential to fostering peace and understanding worldwide.

Her country's journey towards self-determination was a foremost example of resistance, resilience and reconciliation with the past that had culminated in lasting peace and coexistence with its neighbours. To address conflict at its roots, parliaments must strengthen their legislative and political oversight to defend the rights of the most vulnerable, resolutely oppose all discrimination, and promote political and socioeconomic stability alongside peace. Among the world's youngest democracies, Timor-Leste worked steadfastly to create international spaces for dialogue, such as within the G7+, where small least developed countries like itself had a voice. In addition to privileged ties with the Community of Portuguese Language Countries, it cultivated friendship and cooperation with countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region and beyond, in line with the constitutional principles of sovereignty, independence and non-alliance, which had enabled substantial progress in the delineation of its maritime and/or land borders with neighbours. Timor-Leste reiterated its appeal for greater efforts to strengthen democracy and stability in the region, with a particular focus on Myanmar.

**Mr. R. Cifuentes Lillo** (Chile) said that peace was not an absence of conflict but rather an absence of violence as a means of conflict resolution. Parliaments provided daily proof that institutions committed to dialogue could generate peace. As representatives of the people, their wider perspective and greater flexibility indeed facilitated open dialogue, broad consensus, and innovative and fair negotiated solutions to seemingly intractable problems. Combined with respect for the rule of international law, those attributes were fundamental to promoting sustainable peace and understanding through a positive and participatory process. As it had so often done, parliamentary diplomacy could contribute substantially towards building post-conflict societies and establishing democratic institutions and social dialogue as enablers of development conducive to a just and inclusive peace for all.

Peace and development were interdependent, with parliaments instrumental to both by virtue of their legislative, budgetary and oversight powers, which they must exercise to promote sustainable development so as to eliminate socioeconomic inequalities and prevent protracted violent conflict. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) served as a road map for the implementation of socioeconomic, political and environmental commitments through a people-centred approach in which parliaments should again lead by identifying gaps, challenges and good practices through inter-parliamentary cooperation and forums such as the IPU. With democratic institutions a prerequisite to development and to fair, peaceful and inclusive societies, parliaments must rise to meet citizens' expectations and build their trust by working for the common good and well-being of all, using parliamentary diplomacy as a powerful tool for producing synergies.

**Ms. S.S. Chaudhury** (Bangladesh) said that the current world order was complex and fragmented, requiring proactive parliamentary diplomacy to bring about peace and understanding. Entrusted to effect positive changes in the lives of those whom they served, including by legislating on key issues associated with well-being, parliamentarians were uniquely placed to ensure equal opportunities enabling all individuals to attain their aspirations. In multilateral decision-making, the people's voice must be more loudly heard to enhance the response to the multifaceted impacts of globalization, which fundamentally affected lives and had ramifications for democracy. In view of transnational challenges ranging from climate change, refugee migration, forcible displacement and conflict to human trafficking, terrorism and extremism, the concept of the internationalization of parliaments was gaining momentum to occupy centre stage.

Parliamentary diplomacy had proven instrumental in resolving complex problems through dialogue and peaceful negotiation. It helped to build consensus in less formal settings and made democracy better able to deliver in responding to challenges of poverty and inequality so as to foster inclusive and sustainable development. Her Parliament promoted such diplomacy through parliamentary friendship groups and engagement with inter-parliamentary forums, the IPU among them. Its vision, as the country shifted towards developing country status, was to build an equitable society, free from poverty and exploitation, where justice and social, economic and political will were assured for all. Parliamentary diplomacy would play a crucial role in that regard, with all parliaments working together as strong, responsive and smart institutions to nurture the intrinsic values underpinning global peace and security.

**Mr. P. Katjavivi** (Namibia) said that, in addition to rooting themselves in the principles of dialogue and cooperation, all parliaments must take advantage of their strength as legitimate representatives of their citizens to foster communication and collaboration domestically, regionally and internationally. The IPU platform enhanced parliamentary diplomacy and facilitated interchanges among parliamentarians from around the world, thereby going beyond conventional diplomatic

practice to resolve critical issues and find common ground for resolving conflict. Parliamentary diplomacy furthermore embodied the principles of accountability and transparency, which must also be leveraged to develop activities aimed at promoting peace and inclusion.

The work of the IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine was a noteworthy illustration of how parliamentary diplomacy could contribute towards creating bridges for understanding and peace. Despite its minimal progress to date, the Task Force demonstrated the importance of parliaments in the resolution of domestic and global conflicts. Other examples included the engagement of parliamentary delegations in facilitating dialogue and reconciliation in various parts of the world through diplomatic missions, fact-finding trips and mediation efforts. In short, parliamentary diplomacy could serve as an effective strategy for advancing peace and understanding in the global interconnected world. Without parliaments, it would be nigh impossible to strengthen democratic governance, resolve conflict and encourage international cooperation, peace and understanding. His delegation hoped that the current debate would translate into tangible outcomes, better understanding and new avenues for peaceful conflict resolution.

**Mr. D. Zvizdić** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that his was a multi-ethnic and multireligious country where followers of all monotheistic religions had lived together for centuries. Its religious and cultural diversity was an advantage that made for a richer and more tolerant society. Every effort would be made to preserve that diversity, which was the country's true hallmark. Thirty years previously, it had unfortunately experienced a devastating war that had brought huge loss of life, including from an episode of genocide, along with widescale destruction. It therefore knew the value of building bridges for peace and understanding as an important goal for governments and parliaments alike, as there could be no progress or development without long-term peace and stability.

Current geopolitical challenges would lead to a new world order requiring a coherent strategy and national and regional harmonization with agreed rules, principles, objectives and jointly defined limitations in ways and models of action. His country was therefore keen to participate in all peace and cooperation efforts. It was, moreover, in negotiations for full European Union (EU) membership, demonstrating that it entirely shared the values of democracy and peace and was on board with common EU foreign policy and security issues. That historical step forward towards lasting peace and prosperity had ensued from parliamentary diplomacy. Through a dialogue of civilizations, the country would continue working cooperatively to secure a peaceful and safe environment for its citizens and across the region.

**Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda** (Zimbabwe), citing the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* definition of diplomacy, said that parliamentary diplomacy was pivotal to the peaceful coexistence of States whose pedestal was justice anchored on the tenets of the rule of law, legality, constitutionalism and vibrant democracy for all. The absence of conflict was not in itself, however, a precondition for peace and security. For the IPU founders Cremer and Passy to have underscored dialogue and negotiation as the fulcrum for parliamentary diplomacy, in line with Article 1.2 of the IPU Statutes, was scarcely surprising.

In his region, the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) was engaged in parliamentary diplomacy to curtail the insurgent conflicts in northern Mozambique and eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Internationally, parliamentary diplomacy was employed by the IPU Task Force on a peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine in its peace-brokering efforts, which must be vigorously sustained in view of the substantial inflation and supply chain disruption caused elsewhere by that war. As to the current Middle East conflict, its effect on the Suez Canal trade route was destabilizing global economies, with Palestinians meanwhile being annihilated and infrastructure being destroyed on a colossal scale, all of which called for more emphasis on parliamentary diplomacy. Ironically, the lesson of history was that belligerence could win battles but not wars. No war had ever ended other than through diplomacy and dialogue, showing that the pen was mightier than the most lethal weapon. The IPU spirit of parliamentary diplomacy must rise to the occasion and be found not wanting.

**Mr. P.T.C. Skelemani** (Botswana) said that innovative solutions were needed to quell the daily threats posed by raging conflicts across the globe and challenges such as pandemics, terrorism, climate change and geopolitical tensions. To that end, it was important to continue promoting multilateralism as a rules-based international order, including for the peaceful resolution of conflicts. His Parliament continuously engaged in parliamentary diplomacy, using inter-parliamentary platforms to further foreign relations, conducting visits to other parliaments in the region and participating in inter-parliamentary events. Its partnerships with various organizations, including UN agencies, and the EU, had furthermore enabled it to enhance its capacities and knowledge in such areas as climate change, migration, trafficking and children's rights.

Parliaments were duty-bound to pass laws supportive of dialogue for peace and conflict prevention, transpose key aspects of peace agreements into national legislation, and ensure subsequent implementation. Concerning the parliamentary contribution to peacekeeping, it remained under constant public scrutiny amid increasing expectations for parliaments to be progressive and act as agents for peacekeeping within the parameters of their constitutional mandates. In Commonwealth countries with Western-style governance models, parliaments were often constitutionally required to legislate for good governance, peace and security. Parliaments played a key role in safeguarding peace. The IPU played a vital part as a peace-broker through its provision of a platform for dialogue aimed at finding solutions to problems.

**A delegate from India**, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he rejected the preposterous comments made about his country, which was the world's largest democracy, considered by many as a model to be emulated. It was laughable that a country with no track record of democracy should lecture others. Pakistan would do better not to undermine the importance of the IPU platform by making such absurd allegations and relating false narratives. As to the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and also Ladakh, they had been and would always remain an integral and inevitable part of India, a fact that no amount of rhetoric or propaganda could override. Pakistan would be well advised to stop its terror factories that continued to launch cross-border terrorist attacks in Jammu and Kashmir while claiming to champion the cause of human rights. The IPU Members were well aware that Pakistan had an established history of harbouring, aiding and actively supporting terrorists. Indeed, Osama bin Laden, the face of global terror, had been found in Pakistan, which held the ignoble record of having the largest number of terrorists proscribed by the UN Security Council. He trusted that Pakistan would draw the correct lessons for the good of its people.

#### Item 2 of the agenda

#### **Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda** (A/148/2-Inf.1-rev.6 and A/148/2-P.1 to P.6)

**The President**, introducing the item, said that six requests had been received for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda. The first had been submitted by the delegation of South Africa, with the support of the African and Arab Groups; the second by the delegation of Israel; the third by the delegations of Indonesia and Malaysia; the fourth by the delegations of Denmark, France, Hungary, Ireland, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom; the fifth by the delegation of Argentina, on behalf of the delegations of Argentina, Guyana, Peru and Uruguay; and the sixth by the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She had been informed, however, that, depending on the outcome of negotiations among the delegations concerned, the first and fourth requests might ultimately be combined into a single proposal.

**The Secretary General**, confirming that six formal requests had been received for consideration, said that the delegation of South Africa, supported by the Arab and African Groups, had indeed been negotiating with the Twelve Plus Group with a potential view to producing a single request. He suggested that, while awaiting the submission of any such request, the Assembly might wish to consider the other requests on the table. After hearing an explanation of all requests and any statements of contrary opinion, the Assembly would subsequently proceed to a formal vote to determine which of the requests would be included as the one emergency item in its agenda.

**The President** said that, in considering the requests and with a view to avoiding a repeat scenario, delegations should keep in mind the impasse that had prevented the inclusion of an emergency item in the agenda of the previous Assembly in Luanda. With the world watching, they should be internalizing how to vote to ensure that the IPU, as an international parliamentary body, expressed its opinion on a recent major situation of international concern, such as that in the Middle East. She invited the sponsors of the requests to present their proposals.

**Ms. S.E. Lucas** (South Africa), presenting her delegation's proposal entitled *Raising awareness of the International Court of Justice provisional measures for Israel in relation to Palestinians in Gaza, and of the need for urgent action on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza*, which was set out in document A/148/2-P.1 and supported by the African and Arab Groups, said first of all that no combined proposal would be forthcoming owing to lack of agreement with the Twelve Plus Group over the issue of political detainees. Given the immense urgency and concern surrounding the unfolding humanitarian

crisis in Gaza and the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict, it was therefore imperative to rally collective support behind her delegation's crucial proposal underscoring a series of critical collaborative actions that could be undertaken to catalyse positive change and relieve the tremendous suffering of civilians, especially women and children, in the region.

Also to be emphasized was the profound importance of the judgment and provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in respect of Israel. That judgment provided a legal and diplomatic framework for addressing the conflict and its humanitarian consequences, setting a precedent for dealing with similar situations in future. She implored Members to support her delegation's proposal and join in advocating for the urgent measures outlined therein. In so doing, they would demonstrate not only their dedication to promoting peace and security in the Middle East but also their shared commitment to upholding multilateralism and international law, tackling humanitarian crises, fostering peace, and protecting and ensuring the well-being of conflict-affected populations. Supported in addition to the Arab and African Groups by the delegations of Indonesia and Malaysia, the all-important initiative embodied in the proposal, if adopted, would be instrumental in effecting the positive change vitally needed in the region.

**Ms. M. Rempel Garner** (Canada), expressing a contrary opinion concerning the proposal and observing that all parliaments and countries were currently preoccupied with the incredible humanitarian crisis in Gaza, said that the proposal contained no overt call for an immediate ceasefire to protect civilians on both sides, which was one of three essential demands to be included in any draft resolution. The other two were the release of all hostages and the immediate and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance. Members should therefore support instead the proposal by the delegations of Denmark and France, as set out in document A/148/2-P.4. The alternative was to bring the latter together with the South African proposal to serve as a clear and immediate call for action to realize those three urgent demands and move the situation forward in a peaceable manner.

**Mr. A. Gryffroy** (Belgium), speaking in his capacity as President of the Twelve Plus Group and stressing that it was imperative for the IPU to adopt an emergency item resolution on the Israel-Palestine situation, said that, following two brief discussions with the South African delegation and the Arab and African Groups, his Group was convinced that common ground existed for consensus on a combined proposal entitled *Raising awareness of the International Court of Justice provisional measures for Israel in relation to Palestinians in Gaza, and of the need for urgent action on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza*. Based on the proposals by the delegations of not only South Africa but also Algeria, as President of the African Group, of Denmark and France, and of Malaysia and Indonesia, that common ground related to four issues: an immediate ceasefire on all sides; the immediate release of hostages on all sides; the immediate and unabated delivery of humanitarian aid; and respect for international law, among others, the ICJ and the Geneva Conventions. The idea was that a drafting committee comprising two representatives of each geopolitical group could then work on finding further common ground, in addition to deciding on such matters as the use of the term "political detainees" in the hostage context, so as to produce a draft resolution capable of winning huge majority support.

**Ms. S.E. Lucas** (South Africa), responding to a request from the President for clarification concerning the status of that combined proposal, said that her delegation and representatives of the Twelve Plus Group had indeed been unable to agree as to whether the term "political detainees" should feature in such a proposal. The upshot was that no consensus had been reached concerning the hostage release issue. Her delegation had therefore reverted to its original proposal at the request of its supporters.

**The President**, in light of that clarification, requested the delegation of South Africa and the Presidents of the African, Arab and Twelve Plus Groups to consult informally with a view to resolving all wording issues and to determine accordingly whether or not the former's original proposal was to be superseded by a combined proposal.

**Mr. D. Danon** (Israel), presenting his delegation's proposal entitled *The immediate release of the hostages in Gaza*, as set out in document A/148/2-P.2, said that his nation had been forced into a war with the radical terrorist group Hamas. He had heard the delegate from South Africa express support for that group and describe its members as political detainees. In so doing, she was protecting the Hamas terrorist animals who, on 7 October 2023, had savagely attacked Israel, kidnapped innocent children after killing their parents before their very eyes, and videotaped their rape of such

children. Support for the South African proposal would be tantamount to representing the Hamas terrorist organization. Israel would exert ceaseless efforts to secure the release of Israeli parents, siblings and children being held by Hamas. The atrocities had not ended on 7 October 2023, with 134 hostages, including young girls and babies, being raped and tortured as he spoke. His question was whether anyone imagining a family member of theirs in that situation would vote in support of the South African proposal.

**Mr. I. Khraishi** (Palestine), speaking on a point of order, said that it was incomprehensible and unacceptable that a representative of a government engaged in terrorism and killing should be permitted to make a statement attacking the Palestinian people and echoing the assertion made by the Israeli defence minister, on 9 October 2023, that Israel was fighting “human animals”. The use of such callous and unethical language was shameful and a breach of the rules of conduct, which must be respected.

**The President**, noting that the delegate from Palestine had begun his remarks with similarly unacceptable language, said that his statement did not constitute a point of order but rather a right of reply, which he was free to request. She invited the delegate from Israel to resume his presentation.

**Mr. D. Danon** (Israel) said that the Palestinian National Authority had not once condemned the events of 7 October 2023, which was no way to conduct itself. Israel had no desire to fight a war brought upon it in Gaza and was willing to stop its military efforts immediately if Hamas surrendered and released the hostages. Israel called for global condemnation of the Hamas terrorist organization, its Iranian sponsor, and the events of 7 October 2023. It also called on non-State actors to work for the release of the hostages. Any delegate able to offer an alternative to the war in Gaza as a means of securing their release would be readily heard. Instead of condemnation and demands, Israel expected respect for its people and a moral clarity that would lead Members to vote against the South African proposal, which reiterated the same failed argument as in the ICJ case brought by South Africa. It was vital to be resolute in the face of evil and be guided by the lessons of history towards a brighter and safer future for all,

**Ms. R. Garvey** (Ireland), expressing a contrary opinion concerning the proposal, said that it was a lie to say that there was no solution other than war for obtaining the release of the hostages in Gaza. Having faced similar difficulties, her country had alternative solutions to offer should the delegate from Israel indeed be ready to hear them. The killing of so many thousands in Gaza, including children, had resolved nothing, nor led to the release of any hostages. The solution to the British invasion of Ireland had come from putting down the guns – not from picking up more. No hostages would be returned to their families – who had been failed by the Israeli Government – until arms were laid down and there was a full ceasefire.

**Mr. B.O. Kalu** (Nigeria) said by way of general remarks that Members had tried and failed at the previous Assembly to express a collective view on the situation in Gaza. It was now time to set aside egos and emotions in favour of basic standards of humanity, which necessitated the adoption of an IPU resolution on that situation, as anticipated by the watching world. Exemplified by the lack of drinking water, children dying and others suffering from infected gunshot wounds, the issues in Gaza were abundantly clear. The cessation of hostilities, access to humanitarian aid, and release of the hostages – possibly along with prisoners of war – were first steps towards negotiations for a sustainable peace and must form part of any IPU resolution relating to Gaza. If no agreement could be reached on those matters, a small three-person drafting committee should be tasked with finalizing an all-encompassing and humane text for adoption by Members, who would then have the opportunity to propose amendments. It was imperative to discuss the Gaza issue at the 148th IPU Assembly and for the IPU to raise its voice to prevent more children in Gaza from dying.

**Mr. K. Albakkar** (Jordan) said that the outstanding issue around the release of political detainees held by Israel and of the hostages held by Hamas could be resolved through a compromise solution. In that event, the IPU would have a crucial opportunity to adopt a bold and decisive emergency item resolution, in line with world expectations, and debunk the lies uttered by the delegate from Israel in the face of UN and EU reports of imminent famine and threat of disease in Gaza, where the Zionist enemy was knowingly acting in violation of international law. As a respectable democratic institution, the IPU should not allow such lies to be aired before those who supported freedom for all and for Palestine.



**Mr. F. Zon** (Indonesia), presenting also on behalf of the delegation of Malaysia a proposal entitled *Parliamentary diplomacy for peace in Palestine*, as set out in document A/147/2-P.3, said that the IPU was maintaining its silence on the continuous and wholly disproportionate Israeli bombardment of Gaza, where countless civilians had been killed and international law, including international humanitarian law, was repeatedly ignored. At the Luanda Assembly, the troubling failure to take a common stance on stopping the war in Gaza had been down to such silence and to blindness associated with international politicking and double standards. That failure should not and must not be replicated at the current Assembly. With evidence clearly pointing to the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in Gaza, the IPU must express an opinion on the events taking place with the blessing of those holding power in the international arena, which were addressed with vague words alone and without any humanitarian awareness of their root causes.

The draft resolution annexed to document A/148/2-P.3 was intended to express a parliamentary position on the unfolding tragedy in Gaza, halt the genocide and prevent any further blatant violation of international norms by Israel. United in that stance, the delegation of South Africa had agreed to reflect in its own draft resolution the views of the Indonesian and Malaysian delegations, which would therefore be withdrawing their proposal.

**Ms. L. Crexell** (Argentina), presenting also on behalf of the delegations of Argentina, Guyana, Peru and Uruguay a proposal entitled *Free, fair and transparent elections without prohibitions: Towards an orderly and peaceful democratic transition in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*, as set out in document A/148/2-P.5, said that the proposal related to the erosion of electoral systems, a significant issue in her region that was also of international relevance. More precisely, it concerned the repression of opposition parties, often by governments elected freely and fairly, only to become increasingly autocratic and inclined to deny the exercise of fundamental rights. A case in point was the current Venezuelan regime, which had banned political opponents and denied the Venezuelan people the opportunity to elect their representatives, leading to a grave humanitarian crisis felt across the region owing to the huge outflow of Venezuelan migrants fleeing poverty.

**Mr. M. Nadir** (Guyana), continuing the presentation, said that the lack of parliamentary democracy in Venezuela was to blame for the Venezuelan absence from the Assembly. Venezuela had been suspended from IPU membership, not because – as some would have it – of non-payment of its dues but because the country had no democratically elected parliament. Furthermore, the largest number of individual and collective violations of the human rights of parliamentarians recorded by the IPU was in Venezuela. He urged support for the draft resolution annexed to document A/148/2-P.5, which called for the conduct of democratic elections in Venezuela, in line with one of the IPU's founding principles.

**Ms. A.M. Marí Machado** (Cuba), expressing a contrary opinion concerning the proposal, said that her delegation opposed the related draft resolution, which was an attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of Venezuela, in violation of international law. The rights of all free and sovereign peoples must be respected. Venezuela was, moreover, acting in conformity with its laws and Constitution.

**Mr. G.A.R. Mendoza Leigue** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), speaking on a point of order, asked how it was procedurally possible for a Member to be named as a co-sponsor of a proposal without its consent, which could have implications for the proposal concerned.

**The President** said that the IPU Secretariat would follow up on the matter but it appeared that a member of the Ecuadorian delegate's staff had been behind the error.

**Mr. A. Mbata Betukumesu** (Democratic Republic of the Congo), presenting his delegation's proposal entitled *Call for urgent action to end the aggression and massive violations of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, as set out in document A/148/2-P.6, after reading out the draft resolution annexed thereto, said that its aim was to raise international awareness of the situation described with a view to ending the Rwandan intervention and human rights violations in his country. His delegation would, however, be withdrawing its proposal to lend its support to the South African proposal but urged the IPU to take the next available opportunity to examine the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**The President**, returning to the matter of the possible combined proposal, said that she had been informed that no consensus had ensued from the informal consultations between the delegation of South Africa and the Twelve Plus Group. The former's original proposal would therefore be retained and the proposal by the delegations of Denmark and France would be presented for consideration.

**Mr. S. Søndergaard** (Denmark), presenting also on behalf of the delegation of France a proposal entitled *Call for urgent action regarding the conflict in the Middle East*, as set out in document A/148/2-P.4, said that the IPU must avoid a repeat of what had happened at the previous Assembly and take a stand on the extremely grave situation in Gaza. Having welcomed the prospect of combining the proposal with the South African one, both co-sponsors and their supporters – namely the delegations of Hungary, Ireland, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom – were disappointed that the delegation of South Africa had ultimately decided against a compromise and to maintain its original proposal.

The draft resolution annexed to document A/148/2-P.4 had been kept deliberately brief to lessen the chances of disagreement over wording and encourage support for its content, consisting of four elements identical to those previously mentioned by the President of the Twelve Plus Group, specifically: an immediate ceasefire to protect civilians on all sides; the release of all hostages; the immediate and unimpeded delivery of essential humanitarian assistance; and respect for all relevant international laws. All Members could surely agree on those four elements as a good starting point for a short draft resolution focused on action, bearing in mind that the inclusion of further elements could be negotiated subsequently.

**Mr. K. Albakkar** (Jordan), expressing a contrary opinion concerning the proposal and noting that his delegation, as a member of the Arab Group, supported the South African proposal, said that only the title of a combined proposal should have been agreed, with the entire content left for a drafting committee to decide. It would be misleading and one-sided to speak of the release of hostages without identifying as political detainees the thousands of Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank, including women and children, who were in Israeli captivity. His delegation stood ready to cooperate on producing a draft resolution worthy of an organization intent on promoting peace and security, which was, moreover, the IPU's priority theme for 2024. It would reject any proposal that failed to treat hostages and Israeli-held detainees as equals by referring to the exchange of one for the other.

**Ms. E. Nyirasafari** (Rwanda), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the source of insecurity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo stemmed from the lack of political will to address the root causes of the conflict in the country's eastern region and from the State's ongoing collaboration with its coalition of over 200 illegal armed groups. Chief among those groups was the genocidal militia known as the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a UN-sanctioned terror group whose members had fled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the immediate aftermath of their killing of over one million Tutsi in Rwanda in 1994. The collaboration mentioned only aggravated violations of the fundamental human rights of Congolese Rwandophones, especially the Tutsi communities, and continued to threaten security across the whole region. For Rwanda, which had been experiencing the humanitarian pressure of over 100,000 Congolese refugees since 1995, security in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo remained a particular concern.

Rwanda believed that the conflict would be resolved through dialogue rather than a ritual blame game in which it was falsely accused of creating conflict to enrich itself with its neighbour's natural resources. That scapegoating strategy was aimed at covering up the true causes of instability, relating essentially to security issues, governance failures and persecution of those Congolese who happened to live near the Rwandan border. Rwanda reiterated its steadfast commitment to regional peace initiatives, including the Nairobi and Luanda processes. In the interest of lasting peace, the international community should press the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to address the root causes of the conflict, end support for the genocidal FDLR, and guarantee the safe and dignified return of Congolese refugees.

**The President** said she had been informed that the delegation of Israel had withdrawn its proposal, leaving three proposals on which a vote by roll call would take place, namely those presented by delegates from South Africa, Denmark, and Argentina and Guyana.

**The Secretary General**, explaining the voting procedure, said that a vote by roll call would be conducted in accordance with Articles 15 and 16.1 of the IPU Statutes and that the allocation of votes was as set out in the table already circulated, which did not include delegations not entitled to vote under the provisions of Article 5.2 of the Statutes concerning arrears in the payment of financial contributions. As was the usual practice, voting would take place in a single round, with delegations casting for each proposal the full number of votes to which they were entitled.

*A video entitled “Voting guide for emergency items during an Assembly” was played.*

*A vote by roll call was taken on the three proposals presented by, respectively, delegates from South Africa, Denmark, and Argentina and Guyana.*

*With 904 votes in favour, 470 against and 237 abstentions, the proposal presented by the delegate from South Africa failed to obtain the required two-thirds majority of the 1,374 “yes” and “no” votes cast and was therefore rejected.*

*With 778 votes in favour, 471 against and 362 abstentions, the proposal presented by the delegate from Denmark failed to obtain the required two-thirds majority of the 1,249 “yes” and “no” votes cast and was therefore rejected.*

*With 225 votes in favour, 760 against and 626 abstentions, the proposal presented by the delegates from Argentina and Guyana failed to obtain the required two-thirds majority of the 985 “yes” and “no” votes cast and was therefore rejected.*

**The President**, after confirming that there would be no emergency item debate, said that Members had only themselves to blame for having failed to reach consensus on a simple wording issue that could have been resolved in a drafting committee. She informed the Assembly that, in the absence of an emergency item resolution, she and the IPU Secretary General would be issuing a Leadership Statement on the situation in Gaza, based on the fundamental values and principles of the IPU, calling for an immediate ceasefire and the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. The statement would also appeal to the relevant authorities to expand the flow of essential humanitarian aid, reiterate the IPU’s utter condemnation of any violence against civilians and stress the need for respect for international humanitarian law.

*The sitting rose at 19:15.*

## Final Agenda

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1. Election of the President of the 148th Assembly
  2. Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
  3. General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding*
  4. Special accountability segment on the implementation of IPU resolutions and other decisions
  5. *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence*  
(Standing Committee on Peace and International Security)
  6. *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity*  
(Standing Committee on Sustainable Development)
  7. Reports of the Standing Committees
  8. Approval of the subject items for the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and for the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development for the 150th Assembly and appointment of the co-Rapporteurs
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## Sitting of Monday, 25 March 2024

(Morning)

*The sitting was called to order at 09:00 with Mr. H. Singh (India) in the Chair.*

Item 3 of the agenda  
(continued)

### **General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding***

#### **PRESIDING OFFICERS OF PARLIAMENT**

**Ms. N.B.K. Mutti** (Zambia), quoting Mr. António Guterres, said that it was widely recognized that there was no peace without development and no development without peace.” Yet, conflicts continued to escalate in certain regional hotspots around the globe, including in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan and the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. According to the *Global Peace Index 2023*, the level of global peacefulness had deteriorated for the ninth consecutive year which was making it very difficult to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). There was therefore a vital need for collective action aiming to foster peace, understanding and harmony. Parliaments provided unique platforms to promote dialogue, compromise and conflict resolution. Using their legislative, oversight, budgetary and representative functions, parliaments were encouraged to ensure safety, peace and equal opportunities for all people, including the marginalized.

The Parliament of Zambia was committed to safeguarding peace and security. It was responsible for ratifying international agreements and conventions; participated actively in peacebuilding efforts at various international and regional parliamentary bodies; and took part in regional election observation missions, with recent missions taking place in Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Other actions it had taken included establishing parliamentary committees on national security, the rule of law and democratic governance, which were the building blocks of peace, and getting involved in parliamentary friendship groups to foster exchange of views, best practices and lessons learned between countries.

Two key issues had come to light on Zambia’s journey to promote parliamentary diplomacy. First, there was a need for greater parliamentary independence, particularly financial independence, so that parliamentarians did not have to toe existing government positions. Second, the high turnover of parliamentarians was leading to inconsistency in parliamentary work, including on international matters. It was important to introduce administrative mechanisms that ensured continuity.

Parliamentary diplomacy was a powerful tool for engaging in global affairs, shaping foreign policy and fostering peaceful international relations. She called on delegates to utilize all available avenues to engage in parliamentary diplomacy as a means of resolving conflict and building bridges for peace and understanding.

**Mr. R. Mancienne** (Seychelles) expressed disappointment at the failure to agree on an emergency item. It was particularly disappointing given that Members had disagreed not on the fundamental issue but on how it should be presented. Instead of embracing common ground, they had allowed their differences to divide them. The warring parties could not be expected to compromise for peace when the international community could not even agree on the wording of a statement. It might be worth considering whether it remained reasonable to require a two thirds majority for adoption of the emergency item or whether negotiations should be allowed to continue. Revising the rules could help to break the stalemate.

Despite the outcome of the emergency item, the IPU must not give up on its peacebuilding efforts. Conflicts had ripple effects around the world and represented an existential threat to humanity. While the situation in Ukraine and Palestine deserved attention, it was important not to put aside other conflicts, especially those in the African region, notably the persisting strife in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the devastating civil war in Sudan. The hope to resolve those conflicts rested in collective action, including through the IPU.

The IPU must play a stronger role in conflict resolution and engage with it more consistently and persistently. It was unfortunate that polarization and lack of consensus had befallen the IPU in the same way as the United Nations (UN). However, the recent efforts of the IPU President to engage with

the parties of ongoing conflicts were commendable and should continue in parallel to UN efforts. He suggested that a high-level body focused specifically on conflict resolution be set up within the IPU. Overall, the IPU must be a stronger force for peace.

**Mr. A. Frick** (Liechtenstein) said that national parliaments had an important role to play in countering the many conflicts raging across the world. They must be guided by respect for international obligations and speak up against serious human rights violations.

The Parliament of Liechtenstein placed huge importance on the SDGs, the cornerstone of which was the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies. Every proposal put to the Parliament included an SDG impact section. Equally, the Parliament had increased its budget for international humanitarian cooperation and development and, in 2023, had spent as much as seven million Swiss francs on projects related to SDG 6 on peaceful and inclusive societies. By so doing, there was less fertile ground for conflict.

During its presidency of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers, Liechtenstein was working tirelessly to strengthen human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Given the role of the European Court of Human Rights in safeguarding those principles, it was vital to ensure the full, effective and prompt execution of the Court's judgments.

Liechtenstein was also a strong supporter of the International Criminal Court (ICC), which was key to addressing the countless violations of international criminal law around the world. Parliamentarians must speak up in favour of the ICC and advocate for bringing perpetrators to justice.

The UN Security Council held primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security yet, time and again, it had shown its inability to do so. In response, Liechtenstein had spearheaded the Veto Initiative, which sought to activate the UN General Assembly whenever a veto was cast at the Security Council. The initiative was a significant step towards protecting the role of the UN in peace and security efforts.

Building sustainable peace required a comprehensive response from all stakeholders. It was important to put people first by supporting initiatives that built bridges for peace, strengthened the rules-based order and ensured accountability for serious crimes.

**Mr. N. Lalabalavu** (Fiji) said that building bridges for peace and stability was not only about resolving or preventing conflict but about fostering understanding and creating social inclusion. Individuals and communities irrespective of their gender, age or ethnicity must be given opportunities to participate in society. Parliaments and parliamentarians had a fundamental role to play in promoting social inclusion through dialogue, legislative action and oversight. They had the power to address polarization along political socioeconomic, gender, ethnic, cultural and religious lines.

Fiji's development had been adversely impacted by political upheavals in the post-independence period, but in 2014, after eight years without a parliament, the country had returned to parliamentary democracy. Fiji was now working to restore trust in the parliamentary system, foster social inclusion and promote peacebuilding in its communities.

The Parliament of Fiji was taking a lead role in national healing and had recently passed a motion to establish a truth and reconciliation commission in relation to past political conflicts. Efforts were also being made to foster an inclusive and participatory process in Parliament with parliamentarians from both the government and the opposition encouraged to participate in interparliamentary engagements and take bipartisan approaches. Furthermore, in 2023, Fiji had introduced the use of vernacular language in Parliament, which made parliamentary processes more accessible to non-English-speaking Fijians.

Climate change, which was a particular concern for small island developing States (SIDS) such as Fiji, was a huge threat to peace and security. There must be stronger interparliamentary dialogue on climate change, including on its connection with conflict. Parliaments must invest time and resources into effectively addressing climate change. The IPU, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and the regional parliamentary networks in the Pacific were useful platforms to encourage collective efforts on climate change.

When parliamentarians made a well-defined, concerted effort to foster dialogue and social inclusion at home, they were in a stronger position to do the same internationally. It was through parliamentary diplomacy, including on climate change, that parliamentarians could build peaceful societies.

**Mr. F. Fakafanua** (Tonga) said that one of the greatest threats to peace was geopolitical conflict. With conflict widespread, it was clear that the peace and security mechanisms enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations were grossly inadequate. The Veto Initiative proposed by Liechtenstein was commendable.

He drew attention to the persisting acts of unilateral violence and violations of international law by both State and non-State actors, often with impunity, which contributed to conflict. There were double standards in the treatment of perpetrators, and States often turned a blind eye to the realities on the ground. Parliamentarians had a sacred duty to uphold peace by passing parliamentary resolutions and keeping governments accountable.

Climate change was another significant threat to peace. The lack of ambition and commitment to climate change was therefore regrettable. Noting that 2023 was the warmest year on record, he listed some of the climate events that had occurred, including unprecedented heating of oceans, accelerated sea level rise, the worst glacial retreat on record, and drought and flooding that had afflicted millions. Such events would only become more frequent and severe in the future. The time to act was now.

To combat climate change, parliaments must decarbonize their energy systems and transition towards renewable or nuclear energy. Fossil fuel subsidies, amounting to trillions of dollars per year and funded using taxpayers' money, were blocking the widespread adoption of renewables. It was estimated that the resulting air pollution caused eight million deaths per year and cost the health care sector US\$ 2–4 billion per year. It was clear that policymakers were ignoring the negative externalities of fossil fuels. With that in mind, parliaments must phase out all fossil fuel subsidies and price externalities in a way that took into account the true value of the environment and the true value of health.

**The Chair** said that Afghanistan currently had no functioning parliament. However, as a symbol of solidarity, the IPU governing bodies had decided to continue engaging with the former, freely-elected parliament.

**Mr. M.R. Rahmani Qalanderkhan** (Afghanistan) said that, following the Taliban takeover in 2021, the Parliament of Afghanistan had been dissolved and the Constitution abolished. As such, the country was in a state of limbo and the people had been stripped of their rights. He thanked the international community for their efforts to bring back constitutional order to the country but emphasized the need for further support. He called on delegates to invite real Afghan parliamentarians to their events and hear what they had to say. It was vital to address gender segregation in Afghanistan and give women a place at the negotiating table.

**Mr. J. Ntakirutimana** (East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)) said that armed conflict continued to afflict many parts of our world, including East Africa. The conflicts in East Africa were resource-based, driven by scarcity, greed, the desire for control, economic inequality and discrimination of marginalized groups. The roots of the conflicts could be traced to major world powers plundering resources, thus causing tensions among local citizens.

Parliamentarians must use their legislative, oversight, representative and budgetary functions to foster dialogue for peaceful co-existence and address the root causes of conflict. It was important to establish specialized caucuses that empowered marginalized groups, such as women and young people.

The EALA had been working to make East Africa into a prosperous, competitive, secure, stable and politically united region. It had introduced a number of laws, manuals and policies seeking to prevent conflict, such as the East African Community Protocol on Peace and Security and the East African Community Regional Strategy for Peace and Security, and had established a standby force with the power to intervene in conflicts taking place in partner States. Several resolutions aiming to empower citizens had also been passed, including resolutions on the promotion of gender equality in access to food and nutrition, and on the prevention of trafficking in persons. Other milestones included the establishment of a conflict early warning and response mechanism, the introduction of a regional conflict prevention, management and resolution framework and the implementation of a small arms and light armaments initiative.

Overall, sustainable peace could not be attained until safety, trust and government accountability had been restored. The EALA stood ready to promote peaceful coexistence and solidarity in the region and around the world.

**Mr. R. Gonzalez Patricio** (Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO)) said that peace and international security were issues that required the close attention of parliamentarians. Latin America and the Caribbean had been proclaimed a zone of peace but that did not mean that peace was guaranteed in the region. Peace in the region was threatened by intolerance, hate speech, inequalities, corruption and organized crime, amongst other things.

Many Latin American and Caribbean countries had expressed alarm at the ease at which criminal organizations were able to purchase arms from the United States of America. The United States, particularly Florida, was in fact the main source of illegal firearms in Haiti. He called on parliamentarians to support the recovery efforts of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in Haiti.

Another threat to peace and security in the region was foreign military presence, including 80 foreign military bases, mostly belonging to the United States. Unilateral coercive measures, particularly the financial, economic and trade embargo of the United States against Cuba, were also problematic. Such measures had been adopted without the authorization of the international community and were in flagrant violation of international law. The abovementioned threats affected more than one country and could be addressed through parliamentary diplomacy.

Given their connection to peace and sustainable development, parliaments must remain committed to democracy, not only nationally but also internationally, in line with the Universal Declaration on Democracy. PARLATINO had recommended to the UN Secretary-General that the next International Day of Democracy be dedicated to the international dimension of democracy and asked for support from the IPU in making that a reality. Democratization in international relations must go beyond the UN Security Council. The inability of the IPU to adopt an emergency item reflected the lack of democracy around the world. He expressed his support for Spanish to be added as an official language at the International Court of Justice.

Parliamentary diplomacy could make a great contribution to peace and conflict prevention, including in Gaza. The Israel-Palestine conflict was essentially a problem of two peoples, each having the right to exist without the other being exterminated or expelled. Through dialogue, parliaments could support the creation of a Palestinian State existing peacefully alongside Israel.

**Mr. A. Al-Asoomi** (Arab Parliament) said that parliaments could play a pivotal role in settling disputes and building a genuine culture of peace. He drew attention to the situation in Gaza where war crimes, including genocide, were being committed. A policy of starvation was in place and entire families, including women and children, were being massacred daily. He condemned the attitude of the international community towards the crisis. The UN Security Council had proved beyond doubt how powerless it was in managing the international system while the IPU had for a second time failed to agree on an emergency item. The scale of international hypocrisy was unacceptable. The IPU must have a clear position aiming to bring an end to the massacres in Palestine and show support for Palestinians. It was deplorable that some IPU Members continued to support the massacres.

*Dr. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania), President of the IPU, took the Chair.*

### Special segment of the General Debate

#### *Mitigating the humanitarian consequences of war: The role of parliaments*

**The President**, introducing the special segment, said that more than 100 armed conflicts were currently ongoing around the world and were having devastating humanitarian consequences. People were being forced to flee their homes, women and girls were being subjected to sexual violence and civilians continued to be victims of indiscriminate attacks. It was crucial to abide by the rules of international humanitarian law (IHL), refugee law and human rights law to afford protection to those affected by armed conflicts. The special segment had been organized to mark the 75th anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, which were the foundation of IHL, and was an opportunity to discuss how parliamentary diplomacy and action could contribute to mitigating the humanitarian consequences of war. The discussion would be divided into two parts focusing on: (1) the humanitarian impact of war, with a particular focus on sexual violence in conflict and displaced populations; and (2) the role of IHL in modern day conflicts. She introduced the panellists.

**Ms. P. Patten** (UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict), panellist, said that the world was facing a record number of conflicts characterized by human rights violations and reversal of gender equality gains. It was estimated that 117.2 million people had been forcibly displaced, and more than 600 million women and girls were living in conflict-affected countries. Funding for humanitarian aid was shrinking despite the increasing demand for it.

Conflicts and wars were not gender neutral and had a devastating effect on the lives and dignity of women and girls, exposing them to a heightened risk of human rights violations, including sexual violence. New and emerging trends of sexual violence had been reported in connection with increased militarization, illicit arms proliferation and food insecurities, and were particularly common in the context of displacement. The consequences of sexual violence were devastating and profoundly affected women's physical, sexual, reproductive and mental health.



She drew attention to several conflicts where sexual violence was widespread. In the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, women and girls were being forced into prostitution as a means of survival and subjected to sexual violence whilst carrying out livelihood activities around camps, for instance, when collecting wood or water. It was unacceptable that women were having to choose between economic subsistence and sexual violence. In Libya, displaced women and girls were being forced by transnational criminal networks to exchange sex for food. In Afghanistan, high levels of displacement, poverty and food insecurity were exacerbating harmful coping mechanisms, including forced marriage. Lastly, in Sudan, there were disturbing reports of rape, gang rape and trafficking of women and girls for the purposes of sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual slavery, and child and forced marriage.

Another negative impact of conflict was the massive and widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure, including health facilities, as was the case in Ukraine, Gaza and Sudan. The destruction was severely impeding access to life-saving medicines and essential health services, including sexual and reproductive health care. Survivors of sexual violence, pregnant and breastfeeding women as well as new mothers were particularly affected, with unprecedented numbers of women in Gaza reported to have died before or during childbirth. Furthermore, in Haiti, armed gangs were subjecting women and girls to sexual violence while controlling access to essential resources such as water, food, fuel and medical services. In Libya, Mali, Myanmar and Sudan, service providers were themselves threatened with sexual violence, thus limiting their ability to provide life-saving services, protection and redress to women.

The proliferation of conflict and widespread insecurity was causing unprecedented suffering and reversing hard-won progress on women's rights. However, the dire picture was not inevitable or irreversible. Civilians needed more than solidarity. They needed concerted action and political resolve to ensure their protection. She called on parliamentarians to make women part of the solution by including them in leadership and decision-making roles in the area of humanitarian response. Women's needs would remain unaddressed as long as their voices were absent in the design and implementation of humanitarian interventions.

The best form of protection was prevention. Noting that women had acted as peace mediators in families and societies for generations, parliamentarians must use their platform to reinforce those skills. It was possible to promote the full participation of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding by taking into account their capabilities and vulnerabilities, supporting initiatives that offered protection from sexual and gender-based violence, improving the availability of quality health care and reproductive health services, providing access to education and skills development training, and assisting women to generate their own income.

Establishing peace in full respect of international humanitarian and human rights law should be the primary goal of the international community and not just an aspiration. It was important to guarantee justice, dignity, protection and development for all.

**Ms. E. Tan** (Director, Division of International Protection, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)), panellist, recognizing that democracy was at the heart of the IPU's mission and work, said that the power of the people had been far too often transformed into power against the people. So-called leaders violated human rights to stifle opposition or were quick to war, with devastating consequences, including large-scale forced displacement. Currently, there were more than 114 million people around the world who had been forced to flee their homes, mostly by conflict.

All parties to conflict must comply with IHL and it was up to the rest of the world to ensure that compliance. Not only would compliance protect civilians and prevent irreparable damage, but it would also preserve future peace processes. Unfortunately, the conduct of hostilities around the world had gone in the wrong direction, as seen in Gaza, Ukraine and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where sexual violence was despicably rampant.

The international community must do more to support people in need, including those forced from their homes by violence and human rights abuses. There was a particular need for financial support. The UNHCR, which was voluntarily funded, received only 50% of its budget in the best of years. In 2023, it had received about US\$ 1 billion less than in 2022 and the financial outlook for 2024 remained even more worrying. The consequences of the lack of funding were grave for the displaced, for their hosts and in some cases, for the stability of communities and countries. She appealed in the strongest of terms to all members of parliament with resources to do more to fund humanitarian responses around the world.

Another way to support people forced to flee was by ensuring access to territory and the right to seek asylum. Approximately 90% of the world's forcibly displaced were in low- and middle-income countries which were doing all they could to uphold international protection. However, international protection was a shared responsibility according to the 1951 Refugee Convention and the rest of the world must also contribute. She recognized the pressure on borders, including in parts of the developed world, and that domestic services were under strain. It was not about letting everyone in but about creating a process that was fair and fast. While those in need of international protection should be granted asylum, those who did not meet the criteria should be returned with all their rights and dignity upheld. Focusing only on deterrence, by erecting walls, wire and bureaucratic barriers, was not going to resolve the problem. Instead, a comprehensive route-based approach was needed. A route-based approach would help better control borders and address needs along the route in countries of transit, countries neighbouring conflict and especially in countries of origin, thus reducing the drivers of displacement.

Parliamentarians must keep their governments focused on more than just the crises topping the headlines. The conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza were eclipsing other crises such as those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar and Sudan. Sudan, in particular, was experiencing a mega crisis, which had driven more than eight million people from their homes in less than a year. Noting that UN appeals for Sudan and neighbouring countries were only 4% funded, she stressed the need for more financial support for those people.

Lastly, it was vital for parliaments to show support for peacemaking around the world. Too many people believed that conflicts, once quiet, could be contained. However, as seen in Gaza, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Armenia and Azerbaijan, unresolved conflicts came back with a vengeance, bringing with them enormous human and financial costs. Efforts must be focused towards peace.

**A delegate from Bahrain** asked what parliamentarians could do to protect women peacebuilders from violence, including sexual violence.

**A delegate from Uganda** said that Uganda understood the challenge of war as it had experienced war itself and was now grappling with the burden of hosting the largest number of refugees in Africa. Expressing concern at the failure to adopt an emergency item, he said that the IPU must develop strategies and mechanisms to put an end to conflict and suggested putting together a team of peacemakers.

**A delegate from Iraq** denounced the international community for failing to support Iraq in its fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), even in the face of horrendous crimes, such as the rape and murder of women, notably Yazidi women. He drew attention to al-Hawl refugee camp, which was not under the control of any State and therefore a ticking time bomb for terrorism.

**A delegate from Germany** asked why Ms. Patten had mentioned Gaza but not Israel following the publication of her recent mission report which had found that Hamas had committed sexual violence during the attacks on 7 October 2023. It should be clarified what could be done to prevent sexual violence from happening in the future.

**A delegate from Morocco** said that the world was experiencing an unprecedented number of conflicts, with women and children particularly affected, including by sexual violence. It was clear that the international organizations set up after the Second World War were no longer able to preserve peace and stability or to protect refugees. Displaced people should be treated equally no matter where they were from. Given that terrorism was a key driver of displacement and the source of many atrocities, the international community must take a firm stance against countries that hosted, funded or otherwise supported terrorist organizations.

**A delegate from Australia** condemned the international community for struggling to address the chilling offences committed against women. She asked what could be done to shift education and cultural practices to bring about transformational change. Men around the world could help by standing up against other men.

**A delegate from the Democratic Republic of the Congo** said that women and children continued to experience atrocities in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, including rape, murder and displacement, despite the presence of a UN peacekeeping force. It was war, the Rwandan

aggression and the activities of the M23 terrorist group that had led to those atrocities. The international community had done nothing to address the situation which was completely unacceptable. IPU meetings were pointless if solutions were not found.

**A delegate from Rwanda** said that it was unfortunate that the delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo continued to politicize the work of the IPU Assembly as it sought to hide its Government's internal governance and security failures. More than 260 militia groups were in coalition with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and those groups, supported by the Government, had made sexual violence into a weapon of war. Rwanda hosted more than 140,000 Congolese refugees, including women and girls, who had fled sexual violence. Those refugees had found a safe place in Rwanda. The IPU must continue to foster parliamentary diplomacy with a view to building sustainable peace and ending sexual violence in conflict.

**A delegate from Peru** said that it was vital to examine what was going on in families and schools that caused children to grow up to be assassins. Education was a powerful way to change the world.

**A delegate from Malta** said that the IPU must gather information about the violations committed, identify the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

**Ms. P. Patten** (UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict), panellist, said that sexual violence was one of the world's most silent and least condemned crimes but was on the increase. Evidence suggested that there had been a 49% increase in sexual violence in conflict since 2020.

The way to prevent sexual violence was to raise the cost because currently impunity was the norm and justice was the rare exception. Parliamentarians had a key role to play to ensure that a robust legal framework was in place to prosecute any form of sexual violence. The focus must be on justice and accountability. Sexual violence was not an inevitable by-product of war nor was it collateral damage and never was it an accident. It was in fact preventable.

Her Office was doing its best to support Member States in tackling sexual violence. For example, it had launched a country-level prevention framework, signed various frameworks of cooperation on prevention and response and was helping to provide holistic services to survivors of sexual violence. The challenge, however, was in the lack of funding. Nongovernmental organizations and peacebuilders were in particular need of funding.

The focus of her statement had been on humanitarian catastrophe which was why she had mentioned Gaza and not Israel. However, her mission report had found clear and convincing evidence that sexual violence, including rape and gang rape, had been perpetrated against Israeli hostages. There was also evidence that the sexual violence was ongoing, hence her recommendation for the immediate and unconditional release of hostages. To prevent further incidents, she had extended the support of her Office to the Government of Israel and had recommended that a fully-fledged investigation be conducted into the atrocities committed during and after the attacks on 7 October 2023.

Her Office was working in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and had established good collaboration with the Government, which had real political will to address the situation. However, it was true that the resumption of hostilities by M23 in 2022 had caused a huge spike in cases of sexual violence. Iraq was another priority country for her Office. She had been working with the Government of Iraq to address the needs of Yazidi women, including through legislative reform and provision of holistic support to survivors.

**Ms. E. Tan** (Director, Division of International Protection, UNHCR), panellist, said that UNHCR was a humanitarian agency which, by default, dealt with the fallout of violence, war and persecution. The way forward was clear: the international community must step up their political and diplomatic efforts to build peace and prevent war. In the meantime, compassion was needed to protect those who were suffering.

**The President** said that parliamentarians wished to be told exactly what they needed to do to help end sexual violence in conflict and she appealed to the panellists to be clear in that regard. Responding to the delegate of Uganda, she said that the reason the IPU had been unable to adopt an emergency resolution was the failure to engage in dialogue and compromise. Dialogue was about give and take rather than all or nothing.

**Ms. M. Spoljaric Egger** (President of the International Committee on the Red Cross (ICRC)), panellist, said that the year 2024 marked the 75th anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions which were the bedrock of modern IHL. The premise of those Conventions was simple: human life and dignity must be preserved even in the worst times of conflict. The root cause of many tragic events in war time, such as the collapse of medical systems and deliberate blockage of humanitarian aid, was a flagrant disregard for the spirit of IHL, namely, to minimize civilian harm. It was a problem that all countries had a stake in overcoming since war could hit anywhere at any time. Yet, the world continued to standby and allow the dehumanization of entire populations. If the disregard of IHL was left unaddressed, the law would no longer be able to protect populations and there would be nothing to replace it. Parliamentarians had a duty to stand up for IHL and must call out abuses when they occurred.

It was important to celebrate the successes of IHL and its track record of saving thousands of lives. Indeed, the four Geneva Conventions had significantly increased the body of treaty law protecting victims of armed conflict and were a compelling example of what could be achieved by States coming together driven by the common purpose to preserve humanity. However, the Geneva Conventions, while universally ratified, were far from being universally respected and people continued to suffer as a result of violations.

In recent years, voices of resignation doubting the relevance of the Geneva Conventions and of IHL more widely were increasing. The Conventions were, however, just as relevant today as they had been 75 years previously. She looked to political leaders to make the preservation of IHL a political priority. In doing so, they would make a difference to those suffering currently and prevent suffering from happening in the future.

*Mr. A. Farrugia (Malta) took the Chair.*

**A delegate from Lebanon** said that, in light of the flagrant violations of IHL, the international community must find new ways of approaching conflict. Lebanon was a small country hosting as many as two million Syrian refugees. It was doing its best to provide them with assistance and protection, but the burden was huge. Urgent support was needed from the international community.

**A delegate from Madagascar** supported the spirit of the Geneva Conventions but suggested that they should be updated to improve their effectiveness and better meet current needs.

**A delegate from Nigeria** pleaded with Israel and Palestine to put their egos aside and come up with a lasting solution. It was not worth it to see more casualties for no justifiable reason.

**A delegate from Malta** said that the international community, including the IPU, had failed to unite in the face of conflict, letting down populations that had been taken hostage or killed, including many women and children. The inability to reach consensus was deplorable as it meant that human rights violations could not be condemned. Parliamentarians had a shared responsibility to stand up for the victims of conflict. He thanked the ICRC for being a beacon of light in moments of darkness, especially when the international community had failed to do its duty.

**Ms. M. Spoljaric Egger** (President of the ICRC), panellist, said that, for 160 years, the ICRC had been trying to help people affected by armed conflict and would continue to do so in the future. However, nowadays, it was more and more common to see political responsibility offloaded onto humanitarian actors. She appealed to parliamentarians to help reverse that trend. Political leaders must come together and forge agreements between warring parties. Humanitarian assistance could not be a distraction from the fact that warring parties were more and more reluctant to negotiate agreements. Neutral intermediaries, such as the ICRC, were key to maintaining those negotiations. Indeed, the ICRC undertook dialogues on the implementation of IHL with hundreds of armed groups and States around the globe. However, it relied on the support of governments to be able to continue that work.

When the Geneva Conventions were violated, it did not mean that they were out-of-date but that they needed to be implemented. The Geneva Conventions had achieved strong international consensus having been ratified by all States. It was vital to preserve and uphold that consensus. She appealed to parliamentarians to make sure that the additional protocols, which held complementary provisions to the Geneva Conventions, were also universally ratified. There were still 22 States that had not ratified the first additional protocol and 27 States that had not ratified the second. Additional

legal frameworks were also needed to respond to the challenges posed by artificial intelligence and digital technologies, including autonomous weapons systems. Those frameworks would help the world adapt to modern warfare.

**The Secretary General of the IPU** said that the 75th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions was a good opportunity for the IPU to renew its long-standing cooperation with the ICRC to promote greater respect for IHL. He stood ready to work with the ICRC on the pointers mentioned above, such as the need to ensure universal ratification of the additional protocols and to adopt additional legal frameworks on artificial intelligence (AI) and digital technologies.

At the 90th IPU Assembly in Canberra in 1993, the IPU Members had adopted a foundational resolution entitled *Respect for international humanitarian law and support for humanitarian action in armed conflicts*. The resolution had been the framework of cooperation on IHL over the years and had led to the establishment of the IPU Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law. The work of the Committee continued to be highly relevant today in light of the multiplicity of conflicts taking place around the world.

**The Chair** said that the IPU would strengthen its engagement on promoting respect for IHL and would continue to mobilize parliaments in that regard with a view to protecting people affected by conflicts.

Item 3 of the agenda  
(continued)

**General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary diplomacy:  
Building bridges for peace and understanding***

**Mr. D. Simoes Pereira** (Guinea-Bissau), noting the absolute lack of consensus on the emergency item, said that parliamentarians should consider ways to combine freedom of expression with a sense of responsibility to move forward effectively. Parliamentarians had a duty to legislate, to represent and stand up for the people, but not to make judgements. The stalemate must be broken in order to address the conflicts happening around the world, whether in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Gaza or Ukraine.

Guinea-Bissau was a small country with a unique history of democratic openness but currently found itself in a difficult situation. Members of parliament were facing all kinds of constraints, including restrictions on travel, while citizens were being subjected to interrogations and beatings. In addition, the Parliament had been taken over by unidentified forces and the salaries of parliamentarians had been withheld.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau had arisen after the current President had dissolved Parliament with a view to silencing the opposition. In doing so, he had placed himself above the law and carried out a constitutional coup d'état. It was unacceptable for parliamentarians, who were the representatives of the people, to be subjected to sanctions simply for doing their job and speaking up against the President. Freedom of speech and the right to protest were fundamental human rights and could not be denied by those in power. It was not democracy when those elected by the people were replaced by cronies of the President.

The time had come to take a firm stance in favour of human rights and democracy. The IPU must not stay silent in the face of injustice and oppression. Parliaments must be made up of the legitimate representatives of the people.

*Mr. F.J. Ibrahim (Nigeria) took the Chair.*

**Mr. T. Tavares-Finson** (Jamaica), speaking in the capacity of observer in view of future re-affiliation with the IPU, said that, as a previous Member of the IPU, Jamaica could attest to the value of the IPU's work and was pleased to be participating in the Assembly as it reassessed its IPU membership status.

It was becoming increasingly apparent that parliamentary diplomacy was necessary to address pressing global issues, such as climate change, poverty and conflict. As such, Jamaica continued to play an active role in facilitating dialogue and cooperation within CARICOM, including with Haiti where it was helping to restore peace and stability. He acknowledged the presence of other CARICOM Members at the Assembly, such as the Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana. Guyana was currently facing an existential threat to its territorial integrity which required the urgent attention of the IPU.

Jamaica continued to uphold strong democratic principles, including the consistent transfer of power, and had established an effective bicameral parliamentary system with a strong, independent accountability framework. It was keen on ensuring diversity and inclusiveness in Parliament while also providing dynamic and effective leadership that could better respond to the needs of the people.

The Parliament had a high level of female representation and both the Leader of Government Business in the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives were women. In 2023, a bicameral caucus of women parliamentarians had been established with the aim of promoting constructive dialogue on issues of importance to women. The establishment of the caucus supplemented broader efforts on gender equality in Parliament.

A significant number of young parliamentarians and persons with disabilities were also included in Parliament. Jamaica considered the participation of young people as fundamental to its development and had set up a national youth parliament which contributed to parliamentary work.

The IPU must build the capacities of parliaments, especially those of developing countries, to effectively address global challenges. Jamaica understood the importance of multilateral cooperation in confronting shared challenges and remained committed to working closely with our international partners, including the IPU.

**The Secretary General of the IPU** wished to welcome Mr. Tavares-Finson to the deliberations of the IPU and hoped it was just a question of time before Jamaica re-joined the IPU as a fully-fledged Member. He noted Jamaica's desire to work with international partners, including the IPU, and hoped to pursue that cooperation, not only with Jamaica but also with other SIDS in the Caribbean, which were a strong constituency within the IPU.

He expressed solidarity with Mr. Simoes Pereira in relation to the situation in Guinea-Bissau and commended his efforts to push back on those who were undermining democracy. The IPU would continue to work with Guinea-Bissau to restore democracy in the country and protect parliamentarians.

**Mr. S.M. Tunis** (Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)) said that the ECOWAS Parliament had been established to promote peace, security and stability in West Africa through representative democracy, cooperation and solidarity.

Parliaments were integral to the management of governance processes as well as in peacebuilding, helping to oversee the implementation of peace agreements and promote national dialogue. Parliamentary diplomacy was therefore an important aspect of regional conflict prevention. Since its establishment, the ECOWAS Parliament had actively engaged in parliamentary diplomacy, particularly in conflict areas such as in the Mano River region and provided valuable recommendations for resolving political crises, including the crisis in Guinea Bissau. It had also carried out numerous fact-finding and mediation missions across its Member Parliaments.

Parliamentary diplomacy was a viable tool to promote mutual understanding, dialogue, harmony and cooperation. Through legislative initiatives, policy advocacy and oversight functions, parliamentarians could contribute to developing the frameworks needed to enhance peace, economic growth and development around the world. However, escalating geopolitical tensions, regional conflicts and power rivalries posed significant challenges to parliamentary diplomacy. The rise of authoritarianism, populism and democratic backsliding in various parts of the world threatened the principles and practices of parliamentary democracy. Moreover, limited resources, funding constraints and capacity gaps within the parliamentary institutions could impede the ability of lawmakers to effectively engage in diplomatic initiatives and address complex global issues. Innovative approaches and resource mobilization were therefore needed.

Parliaments must partner with civil society organizations to promote greater citizens engagement, accountability and responsiveness to societal needs and aspirations. The ECOWAS Parliament was open to sharing experiences on such partnerships and promoting other ways of enhancing parliamentary diplomacy for peaceful and prosperous societies. Parliaments must play an increasingly important role in peace initiatives and conflict prevention efforts.

## FIRST SPEAKERS FROM DELEGATIONS AND INVITED ORGANIZATIONS

**Ms. H. Sverrisdóttir** (Iceland) said that the outlook in international relations was grimmer than had been seen in decades with a full-scale war in Europe, horrific conflicts in the Middle East and polarization on the rise. Given the circumstances, it was essential to reflect on the origins of the UN and the multilateral system which had emerged from the aftermath of a devastating war. The primary aim of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was to prevent future horrors and was an important

instrument to build bridges for peace and understanding. Unfortunately, many countries around the world, including in Europe, were backsliding on human rights and the rule of law.

Iceland was committed to prioritizing human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Those values served as the foundation for its alliances and guided its actions within international organizations. The country also took a robust stance in favour of gender equality and women's empowerment.

It was more crucial than ever to work together to secure the universal human rights of all people, regardless of race, religion, beliefs, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. The core values of democracy, freedom and human rights must be upheld alongside the principles of freedom of expression and assembly. She stressed the importance of fostering dialogue, even where there were disagreements and noted the IPU's important role in that regard. The absence of dialogue only served to protect human rights violators. The IPU Members must make it their shared goal to break the stalemate within the Organization so that it could go back to serving the people.

**Ms. Noda Seiko** (Japan) said that peace was about more than just the absence of armed conflict. It was about creating conditions where the life, health and basic human rights of each individual were protected and where people could enjoy fulfilling lives in an environment of mutual respect.

Noting the importance of parliamentary diplomacy, she encouraged parliamentarians to engage in candid discussions with their colleagues as a way of promoting mutual understanding, nurturing trust and building long-term relationships. The discussions should reflect the diverse views of the population without being bound to the position of the government. Long-term bonds fostered between parliamentarians were unaffected by shifting circumstances, such as changes in leadership, and were therefore the glue that bound countries together. Those bonds could act as a safety mechanism when peace was under threat and dialogue between governments was difficult.

**Mr. D. Pacheco** (Portugal) said that parliamentarians had a duty to take stances on issues but also to negotiate and find points of understanding. It was important to do so not only nationally but also internationally. He noted with regret that the IPU had failed or was unwilling to reach an understanding on the tragic situation in Gaza. The stalemate was representative of a wider crisis of multilateralism. Just as the UN could not agree, neither could the IPU. It was his hope the stalemate would be resolved at the following Assembly.

He expressed solidarity with the Russian Federation following the terrorist attack in Moscow, as well as with Guinea-Bissau. Terrorist attacks, no matter where they took place, must always be condemned.

**Ms. L. Malema** (Mozambique) said that conflict prevention was made up of three parts: (1) addressing root causes; (2) preventing confrontations from becoming violent; and (3) containing expansion or escalation of violence. Parliamentarians had an important role to play in those efforts. At the same time, it was becoming increasingly apparent that security, whether national or international, should not be concerned with military action or war alone but instead extend to all major threats to human survival.

The world was currently in times of uncertainty. The uncertainty came from the increasingly complex international environment that rendered all guiding intellectual frameworks obsolete. It was a time when countries should remain open rather than closed to the outside world.

Healthy dialogue made room for different opinions. It was important to create avenues of cooperation that gave everyone a chance to contribute. People did not need to think alike but should try to understand each other's ways of thinking. One of humanity's biggest lessons was to coexist in peace. Diversity should be cherished as something that enriched the human experience rather than diminished it.

Peace went hand in hand with justice and sustainable development. Legislative bodies had a crucial role to play in building and maintaining peace as well as in guaranteeing well-being. The Parliament of Mozambique had passed a number of laws with the objective of promoting peace and had recently celebrated the 30th anniversary of its multiparty system, which had been an important step in fostering harmonious relations in the country.

**Ms. R.L.M.M. Merkesdal** (Norway) said that, in times of increasing polarization worldwide, Norway recognized the impact that decision-makers could have, both on a personal and organizational level. It was crucial for parliamentarians to advocate for unity and understanding within society. The primary task in combating polarization was to acknowledge and embrace diversity. Parliamentarians had a duty to enact laws and policies that promoted equality and strengthened human rights.

Parliaments worldwide could significantly contribute to peace and international security through engagement in global initiatives and dialogues. Strengthening international agreements and fostering collaboration were key to resolving conflicts and preventing wars.

The Norwegian Parliament had numerous tools at its disposal to facilitate dialogue between parliaments on the topic of peace. It used formal and informal channels to foster interactions with politicians from other countries and to collaborate with different organizations, especially human rights organizations. It also exercised vigilant oversight over the Government in a spirit of cooperation, ensuring it upheld the laws, policies and international agreements to which it had committed. Recent efforts in the Norwegian Parliament had focused on strengthening regulations on government transparency and accountability to improve public trust in political processes. All parties were active in those processes and stood united in times of difficulty, particularly when facing the press.

She drew attention to the use of AI in spreading fake news and manipulating public opinion. It was imperative to swiftly establish national and international regulations governing the ethical use of AI. Regulating AI was vital to prevent conflict, unfair treatment and societal instability. Human rights must be upheld both online and offline. Norway was currently implementing various forms of AI content labeling.

**Mr. K.E. Kandodo** (Malawi) said that parliaments, by their very nature, were platforms for dialogue and compromise. At their very core was the act of finding common ground – an act that embodied the spirit of peacemaking. Protecting human rights was essential to preventing violent conflicts and ensuring peace and security around the world.

Parliaments could play a crucial role in addressing polarization and corruption with a view to fostering peaceful coexistence. Through their legislative, representative and oversight roles, parliaments must introduce laws and policies that promoted unity, inclusivity and social cohesion. Examples of laws and policies might include anti-discrimination laws, hate speech regulations and policies promoting diversity and tolerance.

The Parliament of Malawi had the responsibility to address the root causes of conflict within its own borders, such as inequality and discrimination, and had taken many actions to promote peaceful coexistence. For example, in 2020, following a disputed presidential election, the Parliament had passed key legislation that had eventually led to a new presidential election. To address polarization, parliamentarians organized meetings, public forums and community events which helped to promote dialogue, address grievances and build trust among diverse communities. Furthermore, in 2022, the Parliament had passed a peace and unity bill, which provided the legal basis for the establishment of peace institutions. Thanks to those actions, Malawi was rated as one of the most peaceful and democratic countries in the world.

Parliaments must integrate gender perspectives into laws and policies on peacebuilding, and should support gender equality regionally and internationally through ratification of protocols. Malawi had ratified the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), amongst others.

Over the years, the Parliament of Malawi had supported budgets for international peacebuilding missions. It also had several good practices in the area of parliamentary diplomacy, enabling collaboration with other countries and international organizations.

Parliamentarians must foster dialogue between communities and advocate for inclusive policies locally, regionally and internationally. In doing so, they could contribute to building a more inclusive, harmonious and resilient society.

**Ms. Shin Hyun Young** (Republic of Korea) said that polarization, conflict and politics of hate were threatening the security of parliaments and their members. Along with geopolitical tensions and trade wars, new threats, such as the digital revolution, climate change and infectious diseases, had become new sources of division globally.

Parliaments must serve as a bridge between opposing groups by fostering peace and understanding and mitigating social polarization and discrimination. Some ways to do so included promoting the political engagement of women and youth, and strengthening new forms of security, such as public health security. It was imperative to ensure high levels of diversity in parliament, including more women and young people. Currently, women and young people represented only 27% and 2.8% of parliamentarians worldwide which was unacceptable. Increasing the political participation of women and young people would not only help to empower them but also strengthened the foundation of democracy and peace.



Progress on women's participation in politics remained slow in the Republic of Korea, although discussions about quotas had taken place. It was encouraging that the number of women participating in international institutions such as the IPU or the UN was increasing.

Parliaments had a key role in shaping new concepts of security, such as climate security and public health security. Those new concepts of security transcended national borders and affected the most vulnerable communities first.

She drew attention to the impact of the climate crisis on global public health. Natural disasters directly harmed the human body and adversely affected food and housing stability as well as sanitary conditions. The climate crisis was also linked to an increased risk of infectious diseases. Systemic responses based on comprehensive and specialized research must be developed. That required international cooperation, including to raise funds.

Parliaments must build consensus on pressing global issues. Direct communication among parliamentarians from around the world could help clarify the perspectives of different countries. The IPU Assembly provided extraordinary opportunities for parliamentary solidarity allowing for an exchange of views on diverse areas. She remained committed to strengthening parliamentary diplomacy and cooperation within the IPU and other international forums.

*Dr. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania), President of the IPU, took the Chair.*

**Keynote speaker: Dr. Tedros Adhanom Gebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO)**

**The President** said that the WHO had always been a long-standing partner of the IPU – a partnership that had been key to bringing the scientific and parliamentary communities closer together. It was more important than ever to make evidence-based decisions and to counter misinformation.

WHO Member States were currently negotiating an international agreement for pandemic preparedness and response. Political momentum on the COVID-19 pandemic must not be lost, as was often the case after a crisis abated. The world must be better prepared for future pandemics. A more equitable and fair global system that put people's lives and well-being at the centre was also need.

**Dr. T.A. Gebreyesus** (Director-General, WHO), keynote speaker, said that, as a former Ethiopian parliamentarian and minister, he had seen first-hand the power of parliaments to enact laws, regulations and budgets that served the people.

In 1948, the nations of the world had converged on a seminal instrument of international law that had made a huge difference to global health: the WHO Constitution. The WHO Constitution was the first legally-binding document to affirm the right to health for all people without distinction. However, it went further by saying health was fundamental to achieving peace and security. Neither health nor peace could be achieved by any single country or agency alone. It required strong partnerships. The partnership between the WHO and the IPU was key for translating political commitments and policies into action to advance the right to health and create the foundations of peace.

In 2018, the WHO and the IPU had signed a Memorandum of Understanding that committed the two organizations to work together on several key issues, including universal health coverage, global health security and the health of women, children and adolescents. The following year, the IPU Assembly had adopted a resolution entitled *Achieving universal health coverage by 2030: The role of parliaments in ensuring the right to health*. Together, the WHO and the IPU had developed several tools, including handbooks on universal health coverage and global health security as well as an online course on the use of taxes. Joint activities had also been undertaken to engage parliamentarians on the key issues mentioned above.

It had, however, become clear that more needed to be done. Today, a new Memorandum of Understanding would be signed to renew the collaboration between the WHO and the IPU for the next five years. The agreement committed the two organizations to working together in four priority areas critical to the right to health: universal health coverage, global health security, health promotion and reduction of health inequities, especially in relation to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Furthermore, the agreement included three additional cross-cutting areas of work: (1) mobilizing parliamentary support for sustainable financing for the WHO; (2) developing the pandemic agreement; and (3) addressing climate change. A joint focus group would also be established to address the health of migrants and refugees.

The COVID-19 pandemic had taken the lives of at least seven million people and caused significant social, economic and political upheaval. It was just a matter of time before the next pandemic hit. The same mistakes must not be repeated again. As such, at the World Health Assembly in May 2024, WHO Member States were scheduled to consider a new, legally-binding agreement on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. The pandemic agreement aimed to address gaps and challenges and ensure countries were better prepared for future pandemics.

The new agreement would be an instrument of international law, similar to the many other accords and treaties that nations had agreed, such as the Geneva Conventions and the Paris Agreement. However, there were currently two major obstacles to approving the pandemic agreement by the May 2024 deadline. The first obstacle was a group of issues on which countries had not yet reached consensus. Countries were encouraged to find common ground and overcome their differences. The second obstacle was the litany of lies and conspiracy theories about the agreement. It had been wrongly suggested that the agreement was a power grab by the WHO that would cede national sovereignty to the WHO and give it the power to impose lockdowns or vaccine mandates on countries. Some of those lies had been spread even by members of parliament and in some cases by Heads of Government. He wished to be clear: those claims were utterly, completely and categorically false. The agreement was being written by countries for countries and would be implemented by countries, in accordance with their own national laws. It would not give the WHO any power to dictate policy to any country and, in fact, under article 24, paragraph 3 of the negotiating text, it said exactly the opposite.

It was difficult to understand how elected officials could mislead the people – either knowingly or unknowingly. If unknowingly, it was negligent not to be properly informed. If knowingly, it was a deliberate deception that put at risk the health of future generations and the social and economic stability of nations. He urged parliaments to be aware of those issues and to support the ongoing negotiations. The pandemic agreement was the cornerstone of a new, stronger architecture for global health security and would include key actions for stronger governance, stronger financing, stronger systems and tools and a stronger WHO.

Parliamentarians were encouraged to support the finalization of the pandemic agreement and, pending its approval, its ratification and implementation. They were also encouraged to support action on the priority areas identified in the new WHO-IPU Memorandum of Understanding. The WHO remained committed to supporting every country and every parliament with the evidence, science and technical support needed to make the right to health not just a slogan but a reality for the people.

*The Secretary General of the IPU took the Chair.*

**Ms. L. Clifford Lee** (Ireland), President of the IPU Advisory Group on Health, underlined the importance of reaching an agreement and engaging stakeholders in the process. She noted the many crises affecting national health systems and limiting country capacities to respond to emergencies.

The COVID-19 pandemic had shown that emergency preparedness and response required equity at all levels. Dr. Gebreyesus should clarify how the pandemic agreement would help bridge the equity gap within and between countries in relation to emergency preparedness and response capacities and access to treatments and vaccines.

**Mr. F. Ndugulile** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that COVID-19 had shown that countries needed to find ways to scale up funding for emergency preparedness and response, which often meant moving money from some programmes to others. He asked what parliamentarians could do to ensure that funding for vulnerable populations, especially women and children, was safeguarded and that health systems continued to take their needs into account during health emergencies.

**Mr. W. William** (Seychelles) said that, while climate change was an existential threat, especially for SIDS such as the Seychelles, it was also impacting disease patterns and increasing the risk of outbreaks, epidemics and pandemics. He asked how the WHO was addressing the complex linkages between climate change and health, and whether the pandemic agreement would contribute to strengthening country capacities to tackle climate change.

**Ms. H. Ramzy Fayez** (Bahrain) said that women were particularly vulnerable to the effects of crises whether directly or indirectly. They were also witnessing a reversal of their human rights, with harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation, continuing to heavily impact the health, education and lives of women and girls. She asked what the WHO was doing to combat those trends.

**A delegate from Malta** said that he was very happy to learn that one of the pillars of the pandemic agreement would be to fight inequalities, especially in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights. He asked what difference the pandemic agreement would make to island States such as Malta. The WHO, the IPU and parliamentarians should carry out joint awareness raising campaigns to fight misinformation.

**A delegate from the Netherlands** asked how the WHO could help parliamentarians fight disinformation and misinformation about the pandemic agreement.

**A delegate from Burundi**, noting that three-month-old babies in Burundi received three vaccines, which was rather traumatic, suggested that the global health community find ways to combine the vaccines into one.

**Dr. T.A. Gebreyesus** (Director-General, WHO), keynote speaker, said that WHO Member States had agreed that the pandemic agreement would address the deep inequities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It would do so in two ways, firstly, by strengthening local production capacity in the Global South. The WHO had already started taking action in that regard, for instance, by establishing the mRNA vaccine technology transfer hub in South Africa and the global training hub in biomanufacturing in the Republic of Korea. The second way the agreement would address inequities was by requiring that a certain percentage of global production be allocated to the Global South, thus helping to ensure equitable distribution of vaccines, diagnostics and treatments. The provisions on equity would make a difference to low- and middle-income countries as well as to SIDS.

The climate crisis was a health crisis, the impacts of which included growing levels of asthma in children, increased cardiovascular disease, and malaria and dengue spreading into new areas. The 28th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) had helped increase awareness of the link between climate and health. Several initiatives had also been launched to address the health impacts of the climate crisis in SIDS which were disproportionately affected.

He agreed that women and children should be at the centre of global efforts on pandemic preparedness and response. It was disappointing to see that the human rights of women were being reversed, especially with regard to female genital mutilation. Such trends required political interventions from parliaments, such as the adoption of laws that banned female genital mutilation and the allocation of funds for women and children.

Expressing his gratitude to parliamentarians for their commitment to the cause, he said that the WHO was happy to pass on documents outlining ways to combat mis- and disinformation about the pandemic agreement.

Lastly, he took note of the recommendation to simplify vaccine delivery methods, agreeing on its importance, but noted that the way vaccines were delivered depended on the type of vaccine. It was his hope that vaccine companies would work towards simplification.

**The Secretary General of the IPU** said that entry points for continuing the dialogue between the WHO and the IPU must be created and suggested that a space be made at the 77th World Health Assembly in May 2024 for parliamentarians to meet with WHO officials with a view to dispelling any lingering doubts about the pandemic agreement. The IPU was committed to ensuring national implementation of the pandemic agreement but, in order to do so, the doubts of parliamentarians must be dispelled.

*The Memorandum of Understanding was signed.*

**Dr. T.A. Gebreyesus** (Director-General, WHO), keynote speaker, said that the WHO Youth Council brought together the voices of young people from 22 youth organizations. It was the first ever structure of its kind at the WHO, providing advice on global health and other developmental issues from a youth perspective. The Youth Council health priorities were broad, with a specific focus on maternal health, climate change, non-communicable diseases, universal health coverage, youth leading for health and the pandemic agreement.

**Ms. K. Almazidou** (WHO Youth Council) wished to hand over a letter on behalf of the WHO Youth Council urging parliaments to reinvigorate their commitment to legislating for and investing in health for all in line with the IPU resolution on universal health coverage.

*The sitting rose at 13:10.*

## Sitting of Monday, 25 March 2024

(Afternoon)

*The sitting was called to order at 14:30 with Ms. P. Glover-Rolle (Bahamas) in the Chair.*

Item 3 of the agenda  
(continued)

**General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary diplomacy:  
Building bridges for peace and understanding***  
(A/148/3-Inf.1)

### FIRST SPEAKERS FROM DELEGATIONS AND INVITED ORGANIZATIONS

**Ms. S. Xayachack** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that she strongly condemned all forms of terrorist acts and expressed her condolences to the victims of the recent mass shooting in Moscow.

Her country, which highly appreciated the IPU's role in fostering peace, stability and international security, had consistently upheld a foreign policy of peace, independence, friendship and cooperation. It was actively involved in inter-parliamentary diplomacy and the Lao National Assembly had hosted the first Cambodia-Laos-Viet Nam Parliamentary Summit at the end of 2023. It held the Chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN) in 2024. The theme of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) was on the role of parliaments in enhancing connectivity and inclusive growth of ASEAN, with the aim of ensuring sustainable development.

All IPU Members should intensify the role of parliaments through bilateral and multilateral cooperation frameworks with a view to facilitating the peaceful resolution of disputes and conflicts and adherence to the fundamental principles of international law.

**Mr. A. Almodóbar Barceló** (Spain) said that parliamentary diplomacy was increasingly important in a world marked by conflicts. It offered a channel for dialogue to share different perspectives, cultivate relations based on mutual understanding and cooperation rather than suspicion and hostility, and pave the way for peace and prosperity. Commitment, patience and a willingness to put aside differences and listen to others were required to make it effective. Parliamentarians had a responsibility to fight for dialogue and defend the principles of tolerance, understanding and respect.

Spain had always shown commitment to dialogue and international cooperation to promote stability and the peaceful resolution of conflicts and was an active supporter of the European Union's efforts in parliamentary democracy.

Parliamentarians could use tourism, which was a tool to foster cultural exchange and dialogue, to promote peace, understanding and, strengthen international relations based on respect and collaboration.

In order to ensure peace, efforts were required to build bridges, rather than walls, across continents and cultures. Parliamentarians should focus their work on improving the lives of their people and be mindful of all those suffering the consequences of conflict.

**Mr. V. Vojtko** (Czechia) said that, in a world where conflicts persisted, parliamentary diplomacy emerged as a beacon of hope and common sense and as a force that built bridges between countries and peoples. Diplomacy was unfortunately often not enough to respond to armed conflict, and, with their mission to engage in dialogue and foster understanding, parliamentarians complemented diplomatic and multilateral efforts.

In addition to the diplomatic pressure placed on the Russian Federation, parliamentarians had the opportunity to remind the Russian delegation of the importance of international law and order. They should also support actions enabling the delivery of humanitarian assistance, the release of hostages, the establishment of a ceasefire, and respect for international law with respect to the conflict in Gaza.

Collective efforts in the area of parliamentary diplomacy would lead to a more harmonious world where dialogue triumphed over discord and understanding prevailed over hatred.

**Ms. Z. Musa** (Malaysia) said that parliamentary diplomacy played a significant role in fostering peace, understanding, and cooperation, and in shaping a more harmonious and interconnected world. Parliaments had the responsibility and capability to encourage peace in three ways. First, they could develop a common understanding of how regulatory frameworks needed to be developed to foster an environment conducive to international cooperation, including by ensuring that domestic legislation was harmonized with international standards and agreements. Second, parliaments could help to prevent and address polarization along political, ethnic and gender lines in society, including by encouraging inclusive political discourse and promoting tolerance, diversity and respect for human rights. Third, parliaments served as a tool for ensuring compliance with international laws and treaties. In that regard, she noted that the Parliament of Malaysia had joined efforts to ease the suffering of innocent Palestinians affected by the ongoing conflict. The Prime Minister had called for the immediate cessation of hostilities and had also used parliament as a platform to condemn all killings of women, children and civilians. Countries should not be complicit in crimes against humanity; they should promote regional and international stability and champion justice.

**Mr. A. Gajadien** (Suriname) said that it was important to recognize and address the different challenges facing the international community. Parliamentary diplomacy, which provided a basis for fostering mutual understanding, dialogue and cooperation, played a decisive role in that regard. Meaningful action must be taken to ensure that collaboration transcended ideological divides and empathy guided decisions. While diversity of opinion was an inherent characteristic of humanity, there was a collective responsibility to differentiate between constructive dialogue and harmful polarization. By fostering empathy and promoting nuanced discussions, it would be possible to mitigate the polarization of information, including on social media, and foster a culture of informed dialogue. Initiatives undertaken in his country to combat polarization through legal measures served as a beacon of hope.

Parliamentary cooperation at the regional and international levels was indispensable in addressing pressing issues. His country's collaboration with international organizations, including the IPU and the United Nations (UN) exemplified its commitment to collective action in pursuit of regional stability and global prosperity. Furthermore, legislative measures played a decisive role in upholding international norms and fostering peace, and his country was party to various international treaties. As a member of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force, Suriname was committed to combating money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

**Mr. H. Singh** (India) said that, in a world facing several transnational challenges and at a time of increasing interdependence, parliamentary diplomacy offered an avenue to foster collaboration, dialogue and peace among nations. Noting that parliamentarians were uniquely positioned to influence governments as well as public opinion, he said that India's Presidency of the G20 in 2023 had begun with the theme *One Earth, One Family, One Future*, reflecting the core values of Indian civilization. India had decided to put the interests and issues of the Global South at the heart of the agenda of its G20 presidency and the 9th G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit (P20) hosted by India had underscored his country's commitment to shaping the global order through consensus and collaboration, and had emphasized the significant influence of the collective voice of parliamentarians worldwide.

In recent years, multilateral cooperation had faced an unprecedented crisis. There was a need to reform international governance structures, including the UN Security Council that faced increasing paralysis, and international financial institutions to reflect contemporary realities and address the vulnerabilities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Parliamentarians should promote and showcase good practices in on legislation and oversight. The Indian Parliament remained committed to cooperating in international efforts to maintain peace and security and his country stood ready to build the capacity of others by sharing its knowledge and experience.

**Ms. G. Morawska-Stanecka** (Poland) said that the international community had clear priorities: democratic values, the rule of law and solidarity, and the determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war as enshrined in the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations. Parliamentarians bore a special responsibility for words, which could either build bridges between States or increase division and foster hatred. The importance of that parliamentary dimension and dialogue must not be forgotten.

It was important to respond to violations of international law and human dignity; weak words could have dangerous implications and be considered as support for the perpetrators of such acts. Parliamentarians must not stand idle while the world of values was being destroyed, not only in Ukraine, but also in the Middle East and Africa. Words without action meant nothing. The IPU Member Parliaments must focus on action and inform, educate, stand up for those who suffered, and encourage the prevention and end of conflicts. Parliamentarians should be the guardians of peace, and it was disappointing that the parliamentary community had failed to speak unanimously for a ceasefire and peace.

**Mr. L.A. Baez** (Dominican Republic) said that his country's neighbour, Haiti, had seen the complete disintegration of the rule of law in recent years. Describing the challenging situation in Haiti, he appealed to the IPU Member Parliaments to encourage their governments to come together through the UN to provide much needed assistance to allow Haiti to recover after years without peace, including through the establishment of free and fair elections.

The political instability and lack of security in Haiti was a matter of national concern to the Dominican Republic. His Government strongly supported the UN Security Council resolutions concerning Haiti adopted in 2022 and 2023, which must be respected. There was a need for funding for the Multinational Security Support Mission for Haiti. The international community must support the establishment of a legitimate government that enjoyed the support of the people of Haiti, and any transitional process must respect human rights, reflect the will of the people and establish an institutional framework.

**Ms. R. Kirova** (Bulgaria) said that, as a woman parliamentarian, she was deeply troubled by the growing polarization in the world and the suffering of civilians, women and children in conflict zones. The current crisis in the rules-based international order and its negative effect on multilateralism were of concern. The dialogue should be brought back to previous priorities, namely peace, security and attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Any attempt to reformulate or selectively apply the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations Charter should be strongly opposed.

Parliamentarians must be united in the quest for decisive steps and policies to achieve lasting peace in a world fragmented by growing inequalities in which the right to peaceful coexistence was under real threat. Continuous dialogue was required for peacebuilding efforts and parliamentary diplomacy was a powerful tool for negotiation based on the friendships and personal relations formed by parliamentarians. Parliamentarians should use their unique platform for dialogue and diplomacy to coordinate new ideas and initiatives and find solutions to resolve conflicts. They should use their power to make a difference in the world to build bridges, eliminate division, implement the rule of law, and ensure long-lasting peace for future generations.

**Mr. D. McGuinty** (Canada) said that the Assembly's focus on parliamentary diplomacy was less a celebration than a very urgent reminder of the challenges arising out of conflict, incompatible interests, misunderstanding and distrust, and of the contributions that parliamentarians were obliged to make. So many people were living in conflict, and although the world was more interconnected than ever, there was a tendency to disconnect. There was an epidemic of loneliness and isolation and genuine mutual compassion and engagement were lacking.

Governments could not address conflict or promote security on their own, and intergovernmental processes had proven insufficient. Parliamentary diplomacy had much to contribute, but had to be meaningful, authentic and truthful. Parliamentarians had a tremendous responsibility and privilege to safeguard humanity's future in the face of the potential for even more division and huge challenges, including natural security that was already leading to climate refugees. Spending on parliamentary diplomacy should be put into context: the IPU's annual budget was around three to six times less than the cost of one ballistic missile. Parliamentarians could not afford silence, which could lead to misunderstanding, mistrust, isolation and dangerous nationalism that could have devastating consequences for constituents; parliamentarians must keep talking.

**Mr. A. Shakhwan** (Iraq) said that the role of parliaments should be strengthened to identify solutions to current problems and encourage cooperation to achieve stability in areas of conflict and war zones. Parliamentary diplomacy could help to achieve peace, democracy and respect for human rights. It could also help in ending conflicts and in strengthening cybersecurity to protect digital data. Efforts should be made to strengthen relations between parliaments and share best practices, and joint parliamentary action on issues such as climate change and sustainable development was required.

His Government had adopted legislation and regulations aimed at improving the quality of life of the Iraqi people and had signed various conventions that sought to put an end to conflicts. It was also working towards achieving social equality, justice and protecting women, children and the elderly. He called on parliaments to stand with Iraq and protect its natural resources.

He also called on all parliaments to take action to end the bloodshed in Gaza and to work together to ensure immediate and unimpeded access to humanitarian aid, and to protect civilians from the bombings. Continued actions to violate and ignore the rights of the Palestinian people would only lead to further instability in the historically important Middle East region. He urged those who believed in the rule of law to call for the creation of a Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital. He concluded by noting that no effort should be spared to achieve the IPU's goals.

**Mr. K.J. Skriver** (Denmark) said that, although it had previously been widely thought that war had been consigned to the past, the numerous ongoing conflicts proved otherwise and were leading to an increasingly insecure world and to fear and unease among populations. Parliamentarians sought to create a better society and provide opportunities for future generations, yet in the current interconnected world, decisions made within the borders of one country impacted other nations. One of the key solutions lay in fostering dialogue, as exemplified by the IPU.

It was vital to continue to engage in meaningful discussions about common challenges. Such discussions should culminate in agreements, the value of which lay in their implementation. Parliamentarians should commit to fulfilling their obligations and be willing to make compromises, particularly when negotiating across borders and interests. All countries should engage in introspection, set aside preconceptions and foster trust among nations. Countries should prioritize collaboration and honour commitments, driven by the ambition to secure a better future for the next generation. By demonstrating the power of dialogue and the importance of upholding agreements, it would be possible to instil hope in the younger generation.

**Mr. J. Mhagama** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the primary goals of parliamentary democracy were to facilitate international cooperation, resolve conflict and prevent the escalation of tensions. It could promote dialogue, understanding and cooperation among the diverse ethnic and tribal groups in his country, foster a sense of national unity and harmony through the implementation of initiatives that promote respect for cultural diversity, ensure equal representation of different communities, and contribute to peaceful elections and political stability. Parliamentary diplomacy could also facilitate reconciliation efforts between conflicting parties, and lawmakers could engage in legislative reforms to address the root causes of internal division and conflict.

Parliamentary diplomacy could also strengthen Tanzania's engagement as a member of various regional organizations and foster cooperation, mutual understanding and peace at the regional and international level. It could also support legislative reforms that promoted human rights, equality and the rule of law, and that addressed discrimination.

**Mr. X. Iacovelli** (France) said that, having been elected by their constituents, parliamentarians had legitimacy and were freer to express their views than diplomats who had to reflect their government's position. Parliamentary diplomacy could therefore complement diplomatic efforts and could be a key element in fostering greater peace and security. It was at the very heart of the IPU, and the Organization had a key role to play in maintaining dialogue despite increasing international conflicts and challenges, geopolitical tensions and abuse of international humanitarian law (IHL).

The crisis provoked by the Russian Federation's illegal occupation of Ukraine and the situation in the Middle East necessitated a strong response from the IPU. It was deeply regrettable that the Assembly had not been able to develop a draft resolution on the humanitarian situation in Gaza, despite agreement on a number of key elements. The failure to deliver a strong message reflected the divisions in the international community. Parliamentarians had not lived up to their responsibility in the face of the humanitarian crisis. He trusted that such a situation would not be repeated at the next Assembly.

**Mr. V. Nair** (Singapore) said that the international order established by the UN to protect humankind from the enormity of war was under threat each time a major power appeared to disregard international law. Some of the countries considered to have violated international law had also been victims of such violations. All countries would, however, be worse off if the international order broke down. Singapore was therefore unwavering in its commitment to international law and to the multilateral rules-based order.

The failure of the IPU to pass a resolution on the Middle East should not be viewed as a failure of the institution. The two proposed draft resolutions on the issue had garnered considerable support. The tone of the debate had been impassioned, and although both proposals had points of disagreement, they also had points of convergence. Ultimately, international organizations worked through a process of consensus, and he thanked all those for their efforts to reach agreement. Parliamentarians should be advocates for the common principles of humanity and respect for international law in their own countries.

**Ms. M.d.C. Alva Prieto** (Peru) said that, as one of the founding fathers of the IPU, William Randal Cremer, had observed, parliamentary diplomacy was the best way of building a world of dialogue and mutual understanding. As elected representatives of their peoples, parliamentarians had a key role to play in using diplomacy to protect democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Peruvian Parliament had adopted measures to promote peace and overcome the challenging legacy of the former President Pedro Castillo and had managed to avoid a military coup. Now that the country had greater economic and political stability, it was attracting greater investment and had been chosen to host various events, including the Pan American Games in 2027.

The IPU should remain vigilant with respect to events in all countries, as peace was not merely the absence of armed conflict but linked to the political stability of countries. Member Parliaments must remain united in fighting any threats to democracy and the rule of law. The IPU, through its various committees, should speak out clearly in defence of democracy. It should not give consideration to those who attempted to attack the rule of law and destroy the constitutional order.

She concluded by noting that parliamentary diplomacy should not just serve the interests of governments but should defend key principles such as respect for human rights and the balance of powers.

**Mr. A. Mbata Betukumesu** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that parliamentary diplomacy complemented classic diplomacy. It involved democratically elected representatives and was characterized by people who spoke the truth, rather than those who attempted to conceal it. His country had been engaged in parliamentary diplomacy for peace and understanding, not only in Africa, but also outside the continent through mediation and diplomacy.

Peace had eluded the Democratic Republic of the Congo because of the country's huge wealth of natural resources. His country had also been the victim of aggression from Rwanda in complete violation of international law, and the principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty, and millions of citizens had been killed and displaced. Describing events that had led to the presence of the Rwandan army in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, he thanked those countries, including Belgium and France, that had drawn attention to the situation. The agreement between the European Union and Rwanda to exploit the country's natural resources was regrettable. Parliamentary democracy should be used to put an end to the Rwandan aggression and secure peace for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. African resources should be used for the benefit of Africa's development.

**Mr. S. Özboyacı** (Türkiye) said that the Assembly was taking place at a time when the international rules-based order was seriously undermined, against the backdrop of the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza and many other complex and interconnected crises. Such challenges should be tackled by countries working together, yet the world was more fragmented and polarized than ever.

Actions spoke louder than words. Unfortunately, Member Parliaments had once again failed to find common ground to take necessary action on the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza. The creation of a hierarchy among civilians was a manifestation of racism, and the double standards over the life and rights of Palestinians were glaring. Some of the interventions made during the discussion the previous day had added insult to injury, and the moral, legal and political bankruptcy of some countries and institutions regarding Gaza would have consequences for years to come. He questioned the purpose of a universal forum of parliamentarians serve if it failed to address the most urgent issues of concern to all.

Efforts were required to better leverage parliamentary democracy for peace and understanding. Israel's indiscriminate attacks in Gaza and the unprecedented devastation had outraged humanity, yet the international community had failed to provide timely responses. The UN Security Council, which had been left paralysed due to the power of veto, had to be made more representative, democratic and effective.

Türkiye was making every effort to ensure an immediate ceasefire for the delivery of humanitarian aid and to prevent further escalation of the conflict in the region. He called on countries to work together to restore public confidence in their institutions, ensure justice and build a lasting peace.



**Ms. S. Tal Meron** (Israel) said that she stood before the Assembly as a proud woman parliamentarian, as a mother and as the voice of the 19 women who had been held in Gaza as hostages for the past 171 days. No woman, irrespective of nationality or religion, deserved to be sexually assaulted, and Israel would not stop until the hostages were returned. Women's organizations around the world had failed to speak up and stand by the innocent Israeli women who had been subjected to gender-based violence, and only in March 2024 did the UN Secretary-General's special representative on sexual violence in conflict report that there were reasonable grounds to believe that conflict-related sexual violence had occurred in at least three locations of Israel and Gaza during the attacks on 7 October 2023. She called on all women parliamentarians to speak up for women's rights on behalf of those women who had lost their lives and those hostages still enduring such crimes. The 7 October 2023 massacre would remain a stark reminder of the devastation that extremism and terrorism left in their wake.

In remembering the victims, it was crucial to address the underlying issues, including the role of the Islamic Republic of Iran in regional and global terrorism. Iran's support for extremist groups, which had been a major contributor to the perpetuation of violence in the Middle East, could not continue and Iran must be held accountable. Without an iron-clad determination to tackle terrorism and its sponsors, it would be virtually impossible to implement a peaceful vision for the Middle East. The enduring unity and cooperation between nations must be emphasized. The Abraham Accords and the Negev Forum demonstrated the power of diplomacy in fostering peace and remained a beacon of hope in the region.

Close collective efforts and an unwavering commitment to building a better tomorrow were required to build bridges for peace and understanding. The Middle East should work together as a region where mutual respect and peaceful coexistence prevailed. It should pledge to stand united against terrorism and build a world characterized by security and prosperity, not hatred and war.

**Mr. P.F. Casini** (Italy) said that the need to increase inter-parliamentary dialogue to work towards peace, development and mutual understanding had become a priority because of the evident crisis in the mechanism of international cooperation, the weakening of multilateral organizations and the rampant conflicts in the world, many of which were disregarding international treaties and conventions. Parliamentary diplomacy added value, including by creating a space for dialogue, enabling the exchange of points of view that government officials might not want to convey, keeping channels of discussion open and seeking common ground. As a forum for informal parliamentary diplomacy, the IPU had played an essential role over many years.

In an age of multilateralism, neutral forums in which to settle conflicts could produce results over time. Such an approach was even more urgent, not only because many of the current conflicts were being resolved through the use of force, but also because the regulatory function of international forums was a source of frustration. The continuing war in Ukraine presented a constant risk of escalation. Moreover, the tragic events following the mass brutal attack against the State of Israel had brought the Israeli-Palestinian issue, which the international community had culpably removed from the multilateral agenda, back to the fore.

A strong stance and commitment were required. However, the IPU had not been able to approve a resolution on such an important issue as the humanitarian situation in Gaza. The IPU Presidency must reflect on the situation and propose a solution for the future. Parliaments had a duty not to remain subordinate to the approach of governments but to take a stand and condemn what was not acceptable. They must recognize the added value of their presence in international forums and exercise their legislative function by giving political direction to prevent and respond effectively, and by developing a common position.

**Mr. A. Al-Kaabi** (Qatar) said that, while efforts to build bridges and peace were laudable, current violations of human rights and threats to people's rights, notably to self-determination, appeared to be taking place before a passive international community. Between the two World Wars, efforts had been made and treaties signed to preserve the rights of those in the Middle East region. However, thousands of women, children and the elderly were now being killed in Gaza. The international community's failure to respond to such aggression and its inability to ensure that the perpetrators were held accountable and to restore peace were a source of frustration. It was unacceptable that the law of the jungle appeared to prevail. Parliamentarians needed to use all available tools, including dialogue, to address the threats to democracy. They must be heard and should be able to help governments to ratify appropriate legislation and promote transparency and accountability.

**Ms. S.-M. Dinică** (Romania) said that the Assembly's focus on peace and security was very timely; enhanced parliamentary input was needed to facilitate cooperation and identify solutions to the multiple crises and conflicts around the globe. The Romanian Parliament had always been a strong supporter of interparliamentary cooperation at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels, and participated in various multilateral forums. It would host the forthcoming 31st Annual Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Parliamentary diplomacy facilitated dialogue and mutual understanding among countries and offered a unique capacity-building tool for parliaments to scrutinize foreign policy and the implementation of international agreements. It also helped parliaments to perform better, be more transparent and give a stronger voice to the people they represented.

The best way for parliaments to promote peace and security was to take a pre-emptive approach. However, some parliamentary diplomacy initiatives, including the IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine, were being driven by current crises and conflicts. Unfortunately, parliaments throughout the world continued to dedicate valuable time and resources to address conflict, instead of harnessing parliamentary diplomacy to its full extent to advance sustainable development.

She concluded by noting that actions in the area of parliamentary diplomacy would be beneficial only if they were based on good governance and full respect for the principles and values underpinning democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

**Mr. V. Klein** (Germany) said that the current discussion could be seen as a continuation of the discourse in Luanda. As prosperity could only develop in a safe and stable environment, action was needed to tackle conflicts and terror and provide security. The huge investments required for sustainable development would only be made if a stable and reliable legal framework existed. While no one could dictate how such a framework should be developed, the sharing of experiences through parliamentary democracy would contribute to it.

The absence of armed conflicts was the most important precondition for better life, yet some 56 countries had experienced conflict in 2023. The Russian Federation's war in Ukraine had brought enormous suffering to those living in both countries. The stable ceasefire in the Middle East had been terminated on 7 October 2023 following Hamas' acts of terror against civilians in Israel, and the ongoing destruction of infrastructure was causing huge suffering. Such actions were unacceptable, and a sustainable peace was desperately needed in Gaza, Israel and beyond.

Parliamentarians were part of the grassroots movement and at the same time of an international network. They should use their unique position to bridge gaps, find compromises and work towards sustainable peace.

**Mr. C. Cajado** (Brazil) said that the troubling fact that almost 60 countries were involved in armed conflicts in 2024 showed that much remained to be done to ensure that people could live in dignity, freedom and security.

The peaceful resolution of conflict and the repudiation of terrorism and racism were guiding principles of Brazil's international relations. The Brazilian Parliament had not shied away from taking a stance on various situations that threatened the rights and freedoms of those involved, including by speaking out in defence of unjustly invaded nations, and showing solidarity with victims and refugees.

Parliaments had a duty to demand respect for the fundamental principles set out in the Charter of the United Nations and the strengthening of international organizations should be a topic of discussion. Brazil had expressed interest in reforming the system of global governance to give more legitimacy to the decisions taken, including by the Security Council and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Peace would not be possible where hunger persisted, and large food producing countries had a responsibility to overcome trade barriers and develop food security policies for vulnerable countries. Parliaments played a decisive role in that regard. Legislation that was effective in the fight against hunger should be replicated wherever possible.

Parliamentary diplomacy had the power to spread good practices around the world, strengthen democratic relations within countries and create more peaceful relations abroad. Parliamentarians could contribute to the cessation and peaceful resolution of conflicts and promote respect for self-determination and the territorial integrity of States.

**Ms. K. Bradley** (United Kingdom) said that building bridges was part of the job of parliamentarians. Successful leaders knew that compromise was essential, yet all too often parliamentarians let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Citing examples from her own country, she

said that Parliament had failed to build bridges when it delayed delivering on the result of the United Kingdom's referendum to leave the European Union. The delay had resulted in the public treating parliamentarians with disdain and many parliamentarians had subsequently lost their seats. The Belfast Agreement, however, was an example of where parliamentarians had made compromises and built bridges. The IPU had played a very significant part in that process; representatives of the British and Irish Member Parliaments had formed the British-Irish Parliamentary Body and their cooperation had laid the foundations for the leaders to make the compromises needed.

If parliamentarians could move away from the ideal, they would achieve so much more. It was simply not feasible for parliamentarians to think that they could deliver everything that their constituents wanted, and such an approach would backfire.

The alternative to working together was chaos. Malign influences that did not believe in the world order and rule of law existed and were making it difficult for the necessary compromises to be made. Parliamentarians had a choice: to work together and do the job for which they were elected or to watch the world descend into chaos and the end of democracy.

*Ms. A. Brnabić (Serbia) took over as Chair.*

**Mr. S. Smith** (New Zealand) said that parliamentarians across the world had the power to make a real impact and foster a culture of peace and security, including by strengthening regional security, raising awareness of international obligations, scrutinizing legislation and condemning violations of international law.

As a significant influence in the Pacific region with a robust diplomacy, New Zealand was committed to building bridges for peace. It was party to various multilateral treaties aimed at promoting the peaceful resolution of conflict and disarmament and took a strong stance against nuclear proliferation. Its parliamentary system provided a platform for cross-party collaboration and engagement in international security efforts. Its dialogue with regional organizations offered a unique opportunity to foster cooperation and stability in the region. New Zealand's contribution to over 40 UN peacekeeping operations signified its commitment to global peace and security, and its interparliamentary friendship groups strengthened diplomatic ties and promoted parliamentary democracy.

Parliaments played a pivotal role in shaping global peace and culture, and should continue to leverage initiatives that upheld the principles of democracy and cooperation on the global stage to work for a safer and more peaceful world.

**Ms. P. Glover-Rolle** (Bahamas) said that peace was paramount for meaningful progress on the SDGs. The effects of conflict spread like a plague, and she applauded the efforts of the IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine. She also noted the shared concerns about the ongoing conflict in Israel and the Gaza Strip and condemned the acts of terror perpetrated by Hamas and the violations of fundamental human rights and IHL by both sides.

The international community should also draw its eyes to the West, where conflicts with direct repercussions for members of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) were growing. There was an urgent need for dialogue and mediation to prevent the further escalation of tension between Guyana and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The ongoing atrocities and widespread poverty and hunger in Haiti was creating a migrant crisis, which other Caribbean States were having to tackle with little or no support. Efforts had been made by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to explore potential solutions. While the Bahamas had been one of a few Caribbean nations to publicly commit to supporting the Multinational Security Support Mission in Haiti, the scale of the problem was far too big for Caribbean countries, as small island developing States, to manage alone. The lack of focused global efforts to address the plight of the Haitian people was a travesty.

She invited fellow parliamentarians to support the advancement of global peace in all regions. The IPU, which had never shied away from addressing important issues, had the ability to influence discussions and coordinate action. The IPU Assembly should continue to push for world peace, including among GRULAC members.

**Mr. R. Lopatka** (Austria) said that the current situation with respect to international peace and security was alarming. In an era of increasing polarization, widespread conflict and global crisis, commitment to parliamentary diplomacy was more critical than ever. It was therefore disappointing that, for the second time, the IPU Assembly had been unable to discuss the situation in Gaza. The terrorist attack of 7 October 2023 by Hamas-led militants and the humanitarian crisis in Gaza should have been the focus of the emergency item. Indeed, other conflicts and humanitarian crises had been

discussed at previous assemblies. While feelings of frustration and disappointment were understandable, it was important to learn lessons, maintain a respectful dialogue and identify common ground for discussion on an emergency item at the next Assembly.

Against the background of emerging threats and challenges to democratic values and global stability, parliamentary diplomacy represented a unique and vital tool to foster global peace and mutual understanding. It offered a means for parliamentarians, who represented the voice of the people, to engage directly in the international arena. Such a people-centred approach ensured that the pursuit of peace was not simply a top-down endeavour, but a shared responsibility that reflected the real aspiration of the global community. Parliamentary diplomacy had become increasingly important, and the UN was involving more parliamentarians in its work. Noting his Parliament's strong support of inter-parliamentary activities, he joined others in calling for parliamentarians to work together for a more peaceful and safer world.

**Ms. G. Burokiene** (Lithuania), noting that understanding was central to peace, said that parliamentarians should be concerned not only about the internal stability of countries but should also defend the principles of international law. They must not remain on the sidelines and must underscore the critical importance of a unified international response in order to uphold the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and defend the integrity of the rules-based order. Support for the right of every country to defend its sovereignty and internationally recognized territory must be unwavering.

Countries not so close to Ukraine as Lithuania were also experiencing the consequences of the Russian Federation's illegal war of aggression, including through increased migration flows and reduced Ukrainian exports. Ukraine was not only fighting for its own survival; the aggression was a blatant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and an acute challenge to global peace and security. The international community must take action against the aggressor, which should not be allowed to participate in international forums on an equal footing or have the privilege of exercising the right of veto.

While parliamentary diplomacy might not be the most powerful weapon in that context, it could have an impact if all parliaments worked together, including through their friendship groups, the sharing of experience and development cooperation.

**Mr. M. Balla** (Hungary) said that face-to-face parliamentary events facilitated greater understanding of different interests and opinions and the building of bridges. Parliamentary diplomacy could be important in maintaining sustainable peace by encouraging consensus instead of a continued arms race that could lead to the further expansion of armed conflict. The IPU's specialized bodies provided the best examples of parliamentary diplomacy.

As one of the nine founding members of the IPU, the Hungarian Parliament had played an important role in the work of the Organization and members of the Hungarian National Group of the IPU assisted the work of the numerous friendship groups established by parliamentarians in the National Assembly.

The IPU provided an important forum through which parliamentarians could inform others of political, economic and social processes in their home countries. Member Parliaments must contribute to IPU's goal, namely the preservation of peace, which in turn would help to build resilient societies, the respect of the rights of minorities, the fostering of sustainable development and strengthening of democratic institutions.

**Mr. Xiao Jie** (China) said that his country, which opposed any form of terrorism, strongly condemned the recent terrorist attack in Moscow and expressed its condolences to the victims. The topics chosen for discussion at the Assembly reflected the common aspiration of parliaments around the world and the call of the international community for global peace and security. The three initiatives put forward by President Xi Jinping, namely the Global Development, Global Security and Global Civilization Initiatives, were in line with the theme of the Assembly.

Efforts were required to build an equal and orderly multilateral society with the UN at its core, where the international order was underpinned by the rule of law, where all countries, irrespective of their size, were treated equally, and where the global governance system was more equitable. China was following closely the humanitarian situation in Gaza and called for a comprehensive ceasefire as a matter of urgency. Differences and disputes should be settled through political consultation, and the world should not be weighed down once again by a cold war mentality. China promoted the Global Security Initiative and supported a vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security.

China appreciated the IPU's efforts to tackle pressing regional and international issues and build consensus, and welcomed the Organization's endeavours to align its development agenda with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). China's Global Development Initiative served to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and make economic globalization more open, inclusive and equitable.

All civilizations should coexist in peace and harmony. None were superior or should force their values on others. Parliaments should leverage their unique strength to promote exchanges in various fields. China would continue to be a stabilizing force for global growth and work to build a community with a shared future for humankind.

**Mr. A. Neofytou** (Cyprus) said that parliaments could leverage their unique assets to sustain peace at the regional and international levels, and serve common goals. Given the ongoing challenges presented by the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, parliaments must play a more robust role in international relations. As they were not bound by formal negotiating mandates, parliamentarians could make an important contribution in conveying political messages and establishing communication channels. Noting that a strong and effective international legal framework with the UN at its centre was necessary to preserve global peace and security, he said that parliamentarians could provide valuable input to global deliberations and UN processes.

Violations of international law constituted the heaviest blow to efforts to safeguard global peace and security. The logic of double standards demonstrated by the international community, however, was alarming and he asked why Türkiye's total disregard of international law was being tolerated in respect of its occupation of more than one third of Cyprus territory. The Greek Cypriot community would endeavour to reach a just and viable settlement of the Cyprus problem on the basis of a bi-zonal and bi-communal federation to reunify the country and achieve lasting peace and security for Turkish and Greek Cypriots in Cyprus, for Türkiye and for the wider region.

**Mr. O. Diallo** (Burkina Faso) said that the discussion would provide an opportunity to consider the significant role that parliamentarians must play in fostering international peace and security. Burkina Faso, which used to be a place of peaceful coexistence, was having to deal with terrorist attacks and experiencing a worrying humanitarian crisis, like its neighbours Mali and Niger. It was hoped that diplomacy would help to resolve conflicts in the Sahel since peace and stability in the region were vital. He hoped that other countries would provide support through the technological means at their disposal to tackle the terrorist threat in Burkina Faso. Parliamentary diplomacy could also enable the exchange of good practice for peacebuilding and assist the Sahel countries that had fallen prey to terrorism. He appealed for international solidarity and commitment in that regard. World peace would not be possible unless all countries, even the smallest of States, lived in peace.

**Mr. S. Sk Njie** (the Gambia) said that, at the heart of parliamentary diplomacy lay the recognition that dialogue, cooperation and meaningful engagement were indispensable tools for resolving conflict, promoting reconciliation and advancing shared interests. Parliamentary diplomacy and democracy played a pivotal role in addressing the pressing challenges in the world, including: the conflicts in many African countries that were inflicting profound suffering on communities and exacerbating a humanitarian crisis; ongoing conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine that served as a stark reminder of the fragility of peace in Europe and was leading to food insecurity, human displacement and economic instability; and the enduring Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which underscored the urgent need for concerted efforts toward peace and reconciliation.

The Gambia joined the international community in condemning all forms of violence and aggression, in particular the recent Israeli military operations in Gaza, and called for an immediate ceasefire to prevent further bloodshed and alleviate the dire humanitarian situation facing the Palestinian people. The UN Security Council must act positively and pass a unified resolution to condemn Israel and end the war. All parties responsible for violations of international law and human rights must be held accountable and brought to justice, and the Gambia called for thorough and impartial investigations into the alleged atrocities. His country also supported the establishment of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital on the basis of the pre-1967 borders. The international community should redouble its efforts to facilitate a comprehensive and inclusive peace process.

Parliamentarians bore a profound responsibility to advocate for dialogue, reconciliation and respect for fundamental human rights of all peoples. The Gambia's recent submission to the International Court of Justice regarding the Israeli occupation underscored the importance of addressing ongoing conflicts through international legal channels and of collective action through parliamentary diplomacy.

Since the establishment of the IPU, parliamentary diplomacy had proven to be a powerful tool and he called on parliamentarians to affirm their unwavering commitment to the principles of peace, justice and equality for all peoples.

**Ms. M. Valente** (Angola) thanked parliamentarians for making the 147th IPU Assembly hosted by her country a success.

The international community was experiencing a period of intense instability and multiple challenges. Parliamentary diplomacy had an important role to play in promoting dialogue and cooperation rather than division and conflict. No State alone was powerful enough to deal with such challenges as international terrorism, environmental preservation and international trade. Parliamentarians must therefore be committed to parliamentary diplomacy to strengthen international relations and foster trust. They had a responsibility to seek peaceful solutions to global challenges rather than simply dealing with the national interests of their States.

It was important to recognize that Africa remained a scene of conflict, which was affecting the achievement of the SDGs. The President of Angola was committed to increasingly participatory and inclusive forms of governance that contributed to the achievement of a national culture of peace, and he had been appointed by the African Union as the Champion for Peace and Reconciliation in Africa.

Parliamentarians should work together to strengthen democratic institutions, fight corruption, promote gender equality and protect human rights. All peoples were part of the same human family and should treat their neighbours with dignity. The Ubuntu philosophy should permeate efforts in parliamentary diplomacy so as to build a more peaceful, just and supportive world for generations to come.

**Mr. A.-E. Ntugu Nsa** (Equatorial Guinea) said that the various crises in the world were undermining international peace and security. Parliamentary diplomacy should be used to find institutional and international solutions and to foster peace and understanding. It should endeavour to promote respect for human rights, more inclusive societies, cooperation with religious organizations and leaders, the empowerment of women and youth, parliamentary alliances, and the participation of parliamentary delegations in UN disarmament processes.

The Parliament of Equatorial Guinea had implemented a number of good practices in the area of parliamentary diplomacy, including the establishment of friendship groups with other countries, and participated in inter-parliamentary structures at the regional and international levels. It had also increased high-level visits to other parliaments and the signature of memorandums of understanding with a view to building bridges and promoting peace.

**Ms. S. Codina** (Andorra) said that over the previous year the divided world, which continued to suffer from serious natural disasters that could lead to waves of climate refugees, had experienced numerous armed conflicts. In such a period of instability when the widespread use of force went unpunished and international law had been seriously eroded, it was more important than ever to support the IPU in making 2024 a year of peace and international security.

Parliamentarians had a responsibility to play a key role in that regard at the domestic and international levels, including by seeking to combat political polarization and hate speech, promoting peaceful coexistence and social cohesion, and encouraging government investment to ensure equal opportunities and a fair education system for all. Efforts were also required to share good practices to counter polarization and regulate artificial intelligence, which could be used to spread political disinformation and fake news.

Parliamentary diplomacy provided huge opportunities for collaboration, dialogue and building mutual understanding, and could complement and reinforce government diplomacy. Parliamentarians should identify what further tangible steps they could take to promote peace and security.

**Mr. H. Traoré** (Mali) said that parliamentarians had a key role to play in preventing conflicts and helping to build peace, which was a precondition for development. The IPU Assembly was taking place at a time of serious geopolitical and security tensions, and the theme of the General Debate showed a common determination to contribute to building international peace and security.

Armed terrorist groups had been working with separatists in Mali for more than a decade. Foreign troops had been requested to withdraw from the country to help it regain full sovereignty over the entire territory as their presence had prevented Malian forces from accessing certain parts. Alliances between countries of the Sahel were required to respond to terrorism and promote development.

The world expected results from the IPU Assembly. He hoped that it would produce important outcomes to support parliamentary diplomacy, with a view to preventing violent conflict and promoting peace. Wealthier States were urged to finance development projects in countries in conflict, and to take steps to protect the rights and well-being of vulnerable populations.

**Mr. L. Bugli** (San Marino) said that the Parliament of San Marino was committed to fulfilling its responsibility to support peace and security between States as well as democracy and freedom within the country itself. It had expressed its position, not only on the current armed conflicts but also on political conflicts that had been neglected by many, including in respect of Cyprus. San Marino's parliamentarians were firmly committed to global dialogue. They participated in electoral observation missions and promptly ratified all treaties signed by the Government, including the Arms Trade Treaty adopted by the UN in 2013.

The Parliament supported a strategic concept, where possible, to regulate the use of force for the resolution of disputes. San Marino had been the first State to approve the abolition of the death penalty and was working towards becoming the first State in the world without prisons. Its Parliament was at the forefront of supporting restorative justice for a liberal democratic society that would help to prevent social polarization. Its actions were encapsulated in a simple idea by Ortega y Gasset, namely that civilization was nothing more than the effort to reduce the use of force to the last resort.

**Mr. J. Laouhingamaye Dingaomaibe** (Chad) said that, through parliamentary diplomacy, parliamentarians could work together to prevent destructive behaviour. The increasing polarization of societies, including as a result of the growth of social media, was hugely challenging for parliaments and had to be prevented.

Chad had moved to a transitional regime after the sudden death of the President, and the National Transitional Council of Chad was placing emphasis on social cohesion with a view to overcoming inequalities and creating a more balanced society. The Head of the Transitional Council had sought the support and views of other countries on the transition to ensure that Chad remained stable and that Presidential elections were held in May with a view to ensuring a return to the constitutional order.

The armed conflict in neighbouring Sudan was having an impact on Chad. He thanked those countries and partners that had provided support in managing the influx of refugees and called on others to do likewise.

**Ms. S. Ntakarutimana** (Burundi) said that parliaments could help to prevent conflict, and efforts to build peace at the national level should extend to the regional and international levels. The Parliament of Burundi sought to foster an understanding of the importance of social cohesion. Meetings between elected parliamentarians and their constituents provided an ideal opportunity to better understand the situation in the country and possible sources of tension. The Parliament also worked with others through friendship groups, visits and involvement in inter-parliamentary activities. Such cooperation served to facilitate greater understanding of different political situations, dispel prejudice and reduce tension between countries.

She concluded by noting that her country had benefited from parliamentary diplomacy and the support of the IPU and the Forum of Parliaments of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region in reducing tensions after the 2015 elections.

**Mr. K. Kosachev** (Russian Federation) thanked participants for their condolences in respect of the terror attack in Moscow and invited all those that had not yet done so to join a written declaration condemning the attack and reaffirming the need for all States and nations to combat terrorism using all possible means.

Exactly 25 years ago, on 24 March 1999, countries from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) had bombed the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Four years later NATO countries had attacked Iraq under the pretext that it had become dangerous.

It had appeared that NATO was going to enlarge and would try to dominate, reserving the right to attack any country that it disliked. For that reason, in 2007 during a speech in Munich, the Russian President had said that a decisive moment had been reached when all should think about the architecture of global security and should proceed by searching for a reasonable balance between the interests of all participants in the international dialogue. Western countries had not reacted, and NATO had gone on to intervene in Libya, and to invite Georgia and Ukraine to become members.

NATO had ignored the fundamental security interests of the Russian Federation and other countries. The Russian Federation had tried to support the Minsk agreements for eight years, during which Kyiv continued to bomb its own citizens. The security arrangements that the Russian Federation

had put forward to NATO countries at the end of 2019 had been totally ignored, and in March 2022 some NATO members had prevented Ukraine from starting to negotiate peace with the Russian Federation.

The Russian Federation was, however, ready to build bridges in the interests of peace and mutual understanding. The principle of the supremacy of international law must be protected. The term “rules-based order” was arbitrarily invoked, but it was not relevant as no rules existed. As for the right to self-determination, the question was who had the right to determine which peoples had that right. The Russian Federation was not the reason why the common security arrangements in Europe were a concern. His country stood ready to engage when the NATO countries stopped fighting and started to talk.

**Ms. G. Chakor** (Netherlands) said that the ongoing conflicts worldwide served as a reminder of the fragility of peace and stability. However, they were only one facet of the crisis facing the international community, with climate change and economic instability also imminent threats. Moreover, the rise of anti-institutional extremism was threatening governments worldwide and was undermining trust when it was most needed.

Parliamentarians had a solemn responsibility to uphold the values of peace, justice and trust, and the Dutch city of The Hague hosted numerous organizations dedicated to promoting those ideals. In order to ensure peace, efforts were needed to stand up for the most vulnerable and to combat discrimination and hatred in all their forms.

At a time when countries were striving to uphold security and the rule of law and ensure the conditions for individuals to thrive, they were having to face a troubling reality, namely the use of artificial intelligence (AI) to produce deep fake videos, which were undermining the integrity of society. Her Government was taking steps to fight that issue. However, legislative action alone was not enough. The international community must come together to denounce such actions and condemn the misuse of artificial intelligence to manipulate and undermine. Global measures must be put in place to prevent and punish such abuse and ensure the rights and dignity of all individuals.

**Ms. K. Lundgren** (Sweden) said that the exchange of ideas, thoughts and experiences was vital, particularly at a time when the international community was facing several challenging issues. Freedom of expression was a central feature of a democratic society but was accompanied by the responsibility to listen and show tolerance and respect for the views of others.

Since the 147th Assembly, the war in the Middle East had continued and events had shown that when IHL was not followed, it was civilians, in particular women and children, who suffered. The full-scale invasion of Ukraine had also continued, and the Russian Federation’s heinous acts constituted an attack on democracy, human rights and international law.

The best way for parliamentarians to promote peace and international security was to stand up for democracy, human rights and a rules-based world order, which meant that the law of the sea should apply and the current attacks on cargo ships in the Red Sea should cease immediately. Democracy was a prerequisite for lasting global peace and security, yet it was in decline and a larger proportion of citizens were now living in authoritarian countries. Although democracy and human rights were weakening in many countries, there were several examples, notably in Latin America, where the opposite was true.

At times of dramatic change when different value systems and interests were colliding, tools were needed to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. The UN and forums such as the IPU Assembly offered a meeting point for identifying solutions. Countries should promote peace and security by following a path built on the cornerstones of democracy.

**Ms. M. Lauri** (Estonia) said that she had recently attended the Women Political Leaders Summit in Athens, the theme of which had been *Democracy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*. Participants at that meeting had understood that the most important task for politicians was the obligation to look to the future and build a better life for their citizens. The same obligation applied to parliamentarians. The sharing of experience could help to promote greater understanding and solve complex problems. Prejudices must be put aside, but that might be challenging if emotions clouded clear thinking.

The IPU provided a unique forum to have an exchange with parliamentarians from other countries, address shared diplomatic challenges and promote collaboration. Parliamentarians could build bridges to fill gaps between governments and citizens and strengthen international relations. Building diplomatic relationships on the basis of mutual respect and cooperation could pave the way for lasting peace. The international community tended to forget the simple truth that no man was an island, until it faced a serious challenge and had to rediscover the need to cooperate.

*The sitting rose at 18:30.*



## Sitting of Tuesday, 26 March 2024

(Morning)

*The sitting was called to order at 09:00, with Ms. H. Alahmadi (Saudi Arabia) in the Chair.*

Item 3 of the agenda  
(continued)

**General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary diplomacy:  
Building bridges for peace and understanding***  
(A/148/3-Inf.1)

### FIRST SPEAKERS FROM DELEGATIONS AND INVITED ORGANIZATIONS

**Mr. G. Stojović** (Montenegro) said that dialogue was central to the peaceful resolution of conflict, and parliamentarians should seek out the best ways of contributing to conflict prevention and peacebuilding nationally, regionally and internationally, including through parliamentary diplomacy. While parliamentary diplomacy lacked the strict rules that governed traditional diplomacy, it could serve as an effective tool early on in the ceasefire process. In addition, inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation, oversight of government actions, and the promotion of democratic values could play a role in preventing polarization along political, ethnic, racial, cultural and religious lines and help to ensure respect for the rule of law both domestically and internationally. Use of various multilateral and bilateral tools, such as the IPU and groups of friendship, could contribute to government efforts to promote peace and security through the sharing of experiences and the promotion of national and geostrategic interests. Parliamentarians needed to be aware of the importance of parliamentary diplomacy and the opportunities it brought, and find unique ways to spread a message of peace and mutual understanding.

**Mr. M. Rezakhah** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that at least one thousand children in Palestine had had limbs amputated without anaesthesia because the genocidal entity that was indiscriminately bombing homes, schools, hospitals and religious buildings was also blocking Palestinians' access to food and medicine. As foreign journalists were not permitted to report from Gaza, the full extent of the crimes being committed by Israel was unknown. Nonetheless, the Israeli regime's criminal actions and the shameless intentions voiced by its officials represented textbook cases of genocide. His country recognized Zionism as a political colonial ideology that was distinct from the Abrahamic religion of Judaism and had always stood against the illegal occupation of Palestine; it had paid a heavy price as a result. Yet his country had chosen resistance in the face of unilateral coercive measures. It was appalled by the heinous violations of human rights and the lack of action by the international organizations tasked with upholding those rights. Furthermore, it was regrettable that no fact-finding committee had been established to address the genocide taking place in Palestine. Peace would be impossible without justice, and there could be no peace if the Israeli occupation, the expansion of illegal settlements and the massacre and forced displacement of Palestinians continued. It was important to hold the regimes of Israel and the United States of America to account.

**Mr. G. Volski** (Georgia) said that parliaments played a significant role in fostering peace, and parliamentary diplomacy was critical to promote friendship, trust and understanding between countries. His Parliament had actively engaged in parliamentary diplomacy and adopted key laws and regulations as part of the process of obtaining its status as a European Union candidate country. His Parliament had gone to great lengths to strengthen trust by promoting open, accountable and transparent governance and was a global leader in that area. Furthermore, parliamentary diplomacy could play an important role in tackling disinformation, which undermined trust in democratic institutions.

With fascist military forces illegally stationed on the territory of Georgia, his country faced a high risk of conflict escalation. He was therefore grateful to the international community for supporting the adoption of the United Nations General Assembly resolution 77/870 (2023) on the status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia. It was important to resolve the issue through peaceful means despite the political differences.

The Parliament of Georgia had therefore approved a package of laws developed with the involvement of all political parties and designed to create trust and facilitate the development of business and other relations. He appealed to all international organizations and stakeholders to further support such efforts. His country was committed to being a regional actor that promoted dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution in the South Caucasus region. It had already taken steps to facilitate communications between the Governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan, thereby contributing to stability in the region.

All of the above demonstrated the importance of parliamentary diplomacy in building channels of communication. Establishing friendship groups with other countries and promoting peace through parliamentary dialogue were key tools for achieving the common objectives of peace and security.

**Ms. M. Saleh** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, alongside foreign policy, parliamentary diplomacy gave greater credibility to countries, both domestically and internationally. It was therefore important to engage in related activities, such as by establishing friendship groups and parliamentary committees. Her country believed in the role and importance of parliamentary diplomacy in building bridges for peace and understanding – real, constructive dialogue was the only way to resolve the world's problems. Yet certain so-called superpowers that claimed to be free and democratic conducted terrorism and imposed sanctions without any deterrence. The international community would not be able to move forward until such countries stopped wielding their power and began complying with international law. There were many examples of such actions worldwide, including the barbaric actions of the Israeli entity, supported by the United States of America. The Palestinian people were defending their land, and history would bear witness to the genocide being committed against them. The global community needed to take a stance and ensure that it was on the right side of history.

Despite the many complex challenges faced by her country, it was committed to continuing to fight for its identity and to support the Palestinian people. Justice would prevail, and she looked forward to living in a world where human rights, human dignity and the rule of law were respected. The hegemony and treason practised by the United States of America and the Zionist entity must come to an end.

**Ms. A.M. Mari Machado** (Cuba), condemning the terrorist attack that had occurred in Moscow, expressed her condolences to the Government of the Russian Federation and the families of the victims. The full exercise of parliamentary diplomacy was essential in the current global context. The most powerful countries in the world did not comply with their commitments under international law and were increasingly using coercion and unilateral sanctions against countries that stood up to them. Parliamentary diplomacy must be used to condemn such measures. Cuba had for more than six decades withstood a ruthless unilateral economic, commercial and financial blockade, and the Government of the United States of America continued to ignore the unanimous calls of the international community to end its illegal policy against Cuba. Despite the blockade, her country had shown that it was willing and able to continue cooperating with other countries through dialogue and mutual understanding. Her country was committed to strengthening integration mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean, with 2024 marking the 10th anniversary of the declaration of the region as a region of peace. She also welcomed the request by the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament for the International Day of Democracy to be dedicated to the international dimension of democracy and its relationship with peace and sustainable development.

Condemning the genocide being committed by Israel against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, she called for a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict that guaranteed the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to build their own State. Parliamentary diplomacy could contribute to efforts to build a more cooperative and solidarity-driven approach to issues affecting the Global South. Measures of progress in sustainable development should go beyond gross domestic product and factor in developing countries' access to financing and the technical support received. The Parliament of Cuba called for the establishment of a just, democratic and equitable international order that sought to eliminate the root causes of hunger and inequality and to promote sustainable development for all peoples. Her Parliament embraced the full exercise of multilateralism and condemned all forms of war, the plundering of natural resources, the imposition of unilateral coercive measures, and any other aggression that undermined international peace and stability and violated the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

**Ms. D. O'Neill** (Australia) said that the Australian Parliament actively promoted parliamentary diplomacy and recognized the importance of creating opportunities to exchange ideas, respect differences and identify shared aspirations. To that end, in 2023, it had made 28 outgoing delegation

visits and welcomed 9 delegations from various countries. It had also hosted the Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) and remained an active member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). Her country's parliamentary networks and country groups constituted a key component of its international programme, providing opportunities to promote understanding, improve knowledge and foster democratic development. Her country's 11 parliamentary networks facilitated awareness-raising and promoted shared interests in a non-partisan manner and were open to all parliamentarians.

Globalization and the digitalization of the economy represented significant challenges for the international tax system. It was estimated that base erosion and profit shifting represented US\$ 500 billion in lost revenue for governments every year. Such tax avoidance practices were a concern for all; they not only undermined the efficiency and sustainability of the international tax system, but also significantly hampered progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), fostered inequality and undermined public trust. Over the previous year, her country's parliamentary committees had uncovered significant efforts on the part of multinational corporations to deliberately avoid corporate tax responsibilities in Australia. Those committees would continue their inquiries, while also considering what integrity measures were needed to enhance and strengthen anti-tax avoidance laws and the implementation of the 15 actions to tackle base erosion and profit shifting proposed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). It was important for parliamentarians to work together, and with the OECD, to develop global, coordinated solutions and hold multinational companies accountable for their global tax practices.

**Ms. J. Simanovska** (Latvia), stressing the importance of sharing the perspective of small countries, whose needs were often overlooked in global talks, said that aggressions by larger countries, such as the Russian Federation, against smaller, sovereign States undermined the foundations of international law and the principles on which the United Nations (UN) had been founded. Small countries were forced to focus on the consequences of armed conflict and to spend large sums on defence rather than focusing on global challenges such as climate change, underfunded health care, food insecurity and biodiversity loss.

While she condemned the terrorist attack that had occurred in Moscow, it was important not to politicize such attacks or use them to spread disinformation. At the same time, she also condemned the attacks by the Russian Federation against civilians in Ukraine and the deportation of Ukrainian children to the Russian Federation. And while she condemned the terrorist attack by Hamas on Israel, she could not close her eyes to the loss of life in Gaza. There should be no tolerance towards any escalation of the aggression in Gaza, and the killing of terrorists could not be used as a pretext for large-scale attacks on civilians. She called for an immediate ceasefire; it was regrettable that the Assembly had failed to adopt a resolution that addressed the crisis in Gaza. Parliamentarians should champion dialogue over conflict, truth over misinformation and cooperation over division. Violations of international rules should not be tolerated, even when the aggressors were influential countries.

**Mr. S. Yang** (Cambodia) said that the theme of the General Debate was timely and relevant given currently global challenges. The people of his country knew all too well that peace was priceless – without peace there could be no freedom, no rule of law, no democracy and no human rights and only limited education, health care and development. His country shared its experience on landmine action globally and provided technical assistance in that area, deploying large numbers of peacekeepers in several countries. Cambodia had gone from war to peace and from peace to development and prosperity. It had held peaceful, free, fair, just and credible congressional elections in July 2023, electing its first woman President. A new Government had been approved, and Senate elections had subsequently been held in February 2024. The Parliament of Cambodia would work closely with the IPU and other legislative entities, while the Government would continue to work with ASEAN Member States and the UN to promote peace, stability, security and development. The experiences and lessons learned from the dialogue and negotiations held in his country with former members of the Khmer Rouge could serve as an example of a win-win policy that resulted in hard-earned, lasting peace.

**Mr. Tran Quang Phuong** (Viet Nam) said that conflict and arms races affected international security and undermined progress on poverty reduction, sustainable development and the response to climate change. Parliamentary diplomacy had a key role to play in that regard, and the IPU's continued efforts to promote parliamentary diplomacy were appreciated. Peace could not be achieved through violence and coercion but instead required determination, solidarity and the continued efforts of all individuals, organizations, countries and peoples. His country pursued an independent, self-reliant

foreign policy of peace, friendship, cooperation, development and diversification as a friend, a partner and a responsible member of the international community. It stood ready to serve as a bridge for cooperation and dialogue, based on the principle of resolving disputes through peaceful means, in compliance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

It was important to strengthen parliamentary diplomacy; promote cooperation, dialogue and understanding; build trust; foster respect for peace; and prevent war and conflict. To achieve that, Member Parliaments should create the necessary legal frameworks; exercise oversight of international commitments to peace and cooperation, including in relation to arms control and weapons of mass destruction; promote human-centred policies; ensure democracy, equality and non-discrimination; enhance countries' conflict resolution capacities; and encourage other parliaments to engage in diplomatic efforts to promote peace. The IPU should continue to ensure that parliamentarians played a leading role in promoting peace and coordinate with the UN system and with parliaments in that regard. Mutual understanding was the key to building sustainable peace and more prosperous development. He condemned terrorism in all its forms.

**Mr. M.A. Al-Shadadi** (Yemen) said that peace required ties between countries, civilizations and cultures in order to identify common goals. Parliamentarians needed to redouble their efforts in order to create a world of prosperity, justice, equality and peaceful coexistence. A quarter of all countries was enduring war and suffering, and the chaos in his region was spreading across borders. It was therefore important to ensure that parliaments engaged in parliamentary diplomacy in order to protect democracy, share knowledge and experience, and supervise the executive branches of government. Effective mechanisms needed to be in place to that end. His Parliament had engaged in a national dialogue involving all civil society players and developed a consensus-driven road map that reflected the country's shared values.

The current unprecedented situation in Palestine warranted the international community's full attention. It was important to show solidarity with the Palestinian people, who must be allowed to exercise their right to self-determination.

**Mr. P. Bakovic** (Slovenia) said that efforts must be stepped up to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure during armed conflicts. The international community also needed to do more to prevent conflicts and atrocities, with a focus on an appropriate, early response. Effective multilateralism was key to ensuring international peace and security, and the UN should play a central role in that regard.

Slovenia, which had recently taken up its non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council, saw an opportunity for non-permanent members to play a role in overcoming the impediments faced by the Security Council when responding to threats to international peace and security. With that in mind, his country had adopted a proactive, transparent and integrative approach to addressing issues within the Security Council. It had also identified prevention of conflicts, protection of the population in armed conflicts, and women, peace and security as priority areas for its engagement in Security Council matters. Slovenia would continue to act as a connecting force and a constructive player, actively seeking progress on global issues with an unbiased perspective as a small country and promoting mediation as one of the most effective ways of preventing conflicts and creating the conditions for peace.

Slovenia was actively involved in the Group of Friends of Mediation and the Group of Friends of Mediation in the Mediterranean, paying particular attention to developments in Europe, notably Ukraine, the Western Balkans, Nagorno-Karabakh and the Mediterranean. It was also paying close attention to the worrying situations in the Middle East and in Africa. No country could successfully overcome the numerous challenges and threats to national peace and security alone – countries must come together and respond to challenges in a coordinated and timely manner. Parliamentarians played a vital role in that process.

**Mr. J. Fakhro** (Bahrain), expressing his condolences to the people and Government of the Russian Federation following the attacks in Moscow, said that the theme of the General Debate reflected the importance of parliamentary diplomacy in rising to current challenges affecting global peace and security. The IPU and its Members had a key role to play in strengthening parliamentary diplomacy, which should complement the diplomatic efforts of governments. In that regard, the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly should be amended to ensure that the Assembly was more effective and could address matters more efficiently, particularly in relation to the war of aggression by Israel against the Palestinian people. It was unfortunate that the Assembly had again failed to adopt a decision on the related emergency item.

Over the years, his country had supported many efforts to build bridges for peace and understanding among nations and had organized a number of dialogues and meetings to that end. It was essential to strengthen the role of the IPU and parliamentary diplomacy in order to lay the foundations for international peace and understanding. It was important to carefully consider why the UN Security Council had, on numerous occasions, failed to adopt a resolution on Gaza, and the implications of such failure. His country was determined to strengthen international partnerships and would continue to send out a message of peace by fostering ties between religions, faiths and communities and strengthening the spirit of dialogue.

**Ms. S.E. Lucas** (South Africa) said that to achieve sustainable peace, it was necessary to confront underlying injustices, which perpetuated inequality and hindered human development. The IPU had a responsibility to build a new social and political order by actively seeking new ways to build bridges for peace and understanding. Parliamentarians must use every possible avenue available to foster lasting peace and cohesion among nations through dialogue, consensus-building and negotiation.

The people of Palestine had endured a lack of peace and security for a very long time, which was why the Government of South Africa had sought legal intervention to prevent further devastation in Gaza, where genocide was being recorded in real time. Parliamentarians must urgently support initiatives that could deliver lasting peace between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. It was imperative to keep channels of communication and dialogue open to unequivocally advocate for a two-State solution. She welcomed the International Court of Justice's firm and legally binding provisional measures in that regard. All parliaments had the obligation to ensure that their governments refrained from contributing to genocidal acts. The IPU needed to put measures in place to ensure collective oversight in relation to the provisional measures, while also establishing other mechanisms to address issues such as those detained or held hostage in the conflict.

The IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine had provided a meaningful opportunity to pursue processes towards the cessation of hostilities and seek a diplomatic solution through dialogue and consensus. By embracing and implementing such practices, parliaments could contribute to fostering peaceful and collaborative international relations and to facilitating understanding, collaboration and constructive engagement globally.

**Ms. E. Nyirasafari** (Rwanda) said that, following the 1994 genocide, her country had transformed into a peaceful country that embraced a vision of consensus-based and pluralistic democracy founded on the principles of power-sharing, equal opportunity, inclusiveness and resolution of conflict through dialogue. Through parliamentary diplomacy, parliaments should take a strategic role in reinforcing and consolidating governments' conflict resolution and peacebuilding peace-building efforts. In particular, parliaments should encourage governments to implement peace agreements and enact policies that would have a positive impact on peace nationally, regionally and internationally.

Responding to the statement made by a delegate from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, she said that the presence of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) militia group along the border between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the group's association with the national army of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its protection by that country's Government posed a serious security threat to both Rwanda and the entire Great Lakes Region. She urged the international community to call on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to cease its collaboration with, and preservation of, the FDLR and effectively implement the Luanda and Nairobi Processes, along with other related international mechanisms. Many individuals suspected of involvement in the 1994 genocide remained at large and had found refuge in various countries; measures must be taken to prevent them from evading accountability for their crimes. She invited those present to learn from the lessons of her country's painful past as part of the Assembly's continued work to find effective ways to ensure the peaceful settlement of conflicts and forge understanding among people.

**Ms. A.A. Rodriguez Montero** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that efforts to build peace and equality must be grounded in full respect for fundamental rights, particularly democracy. Yet countries were enduring hunger, authoritarianism, persecution, violence and violations of those fundamental rights, and ecosystems and the environment were being affected by the indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources caused by the constant expansion of mining and farming activities. Her country was experiencing the uncontrolled expansion of coca cultivation in many areas, leading to migration and the extinction of Indigenous peoples. While the recent pledge by the European Union to provide funding to support forest conservation was greatly appreciated, it should be pointed out that it was the

Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia that authorized coca farmers and miners to burn and destroy the land. Furthermore, it was unlikely that the funds would be used to protect the forests and help Indigenous peoples; instead, they would remain in the pockets of certain officials. Such practices had disastrous consequences, including food shortages, a lack of impartial justice and increased poverty. She nevertheless expressed the hope that the situation could be changed by building substantive democracies in which young people, women, children and Indigenous peoples were the true decision makers. The IPU played a critical role in that regard.

**Mr. K. Albakkar** (Jordan) said that, by remaining silent in the face of the horrendous crime of genocide, the international community had failed the Palestinian people and must work to ensure the implementation of and compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL). The war must be brought to an end, and the Assembly must consider whether, by remaining silent and not condemning the genocide, it was complicit in those crimes. There needed to be an immediate intervention to stop those crimes and prosecute the perpetrators. Parliamentarians should urge their governments to take the necessary action and decisions. Representatives of Israel must stop telling lies and manipulating and distorting the truth. The Assembly could not talk about peace at a time when famine and starvation were being used as weapons of war. There would be no peace and stability in the Middle East without a fair and lasting solution for the Palestinian people. The continued aggression in Gaza would spill over to other countries, leading to catastrophe across the entire region. He commended all parliaments and peoples that had stood by the Palestinian people, particularly South Africa.

**Mr. S. Al Sadi** (Oman) said that peace and understanding were two of the most important values in the current world. The IPU and its Members played an important role in ensuring respect for, and implementation of, the principles of peace and understanding, and no effort should be spared in that regard. It was essential to develop recommendations and guidelines that governed relations between countries based on those values. The system in his country was built on strengthening peace and cooperation and on non-interference in the affairs of other countries.

More than two million individuals in Gaza were being subjected to the crime of genocide as the world watched on; Israel continued to destroy the population with total disregard for international law. The IPU had to take a firm stance by stressing the importance of respecting humanity and of ending the brutal occupation.

**Mr. S. Tynkkynen** (Finland) said that countries needed to learn to live together peacefully and sustainably, particularly in the light of challenges such as autonomous weapons, artificial intelligence (AI), nuclear weapons and climate change. Authoritarianism was also on the rise globally, with many countries, such as the Russian Federation, looking to obtain more money and more land at the expense of others. The aggression against Ukraine had been unprovoked – the West had not attacked the Russian Federation and had no interest in undermining its sovereignty and borders. His country was supporting Ukraine because its sovereignty must be protected. Such brutal conquests must end, and the international community could not remain neutral in the face of the developments occurring in places such as the Middle East and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Swift action was needed to bring people's suffering to an end. Peace did not only mean the absence of war but the ability for people to live peacefully in their own country, yet many vulnerable people were unable to do so.

**Mr. S. Kalafatis** (Greece) said that parliamentary diplomacy played a key role as a catalyst for mutual understanding and deeper cooperation between States and peoples. It could be used to promote dialogue for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the consolidation of security and the protection of the rule of law and, ultimately, democracy. In the face of modern challenges – such as the climate crisis, global threats to public health, immigration, and the digital revolution and AI – and conflicts, inter-parliamentary diplomacy could highlight common principles and universal values capable of paving the way to commonly accepted solutions and jointly agreed responses. To that end, parliamentarians should strengthen cooperation and relations between parliaments and by extension ties among peoples; highlight national priorities and positions on international issues at the parliamentary level; and build bridges for the construction of peace and understanding.

The IPU, through national parliaments and in cooperation with other international organizations, should play a more active role in matters of world peace, security and stability, particularly in the light of the large number of conflicts worldwide and the importance of peace in addressing global challenges, such as the achievement of the SDGs. Parliamentary friendship groups were particularly important in that regard, as they could contribute to a better understanding of issues through dialogue, mediation, conflict avoidance, defence of human rights, implementation of international commitments

and mutually beneficial cooperation. His Parliament had established 91 such groups, strengthening bilateral relations and cooperation in the face of mounting challenges. Lastly, it was necessary to regulate technology, as it brought about significant changes in the way in which economies and societies functioned. New challenges and threats to the planet, countries and people must create fertile ground for meaningful discussions and bold, collective decision-making.

**Mr. M.A. Ouerghi** (Tunisia) said that it was important to address the relationship between peace and development, as reflected in SDG 16 (peace, justice and effective institutions). Currently, peace was under threat due to emerging violent conflicts that seriously undermined IHL and destabilized the principle of the universality of human rights. The systematic killing and starvation of the people of Palestine had demonstrated the limits of that law. The situation had reached the stage of genocide and constituted a blatant threat to human security, with no deterrence or intervention by the international community. As representatives of the people, parliamentarians must reflect on their role in that regard. He reiterated his country's unconditional support for the Palestinian people in recognizing their legitimate, national rights to establish an independent and fully sovereign State. Through the IPU, parliamentarians must step up their efforts and exert more pressure on the Zionist entity to put an end to the barbaric and brutal war. Furthermore, there was an urgent need to reform the UN Security Council to ensure that it could maintain international peace and that the right to veto was used responsibly.

More effective and efficient approaches were needed to address global challenges such as irregular migration, which was the responsibility of all source, transit and destination countries. His country was dealing responsibly with that issue within the framework of the universal human rights system and in full compliance with its international obligations. However, greater solidarity and cooperation were needed to tackle the issue and address its deep-rooted economic and social causes.

*Mr. P. Katjavivi (Namibia) took the Chair.*

**Mr. A. Al Nuaimi** (United Arab Emirates) said that parliamentarians should be working to find common ground in order to bring different viewpoints and perspectives together based on the fundamental values of peace, dialogue, good governance and human rights. Dialogue was the only way to find solutions to regional problems and ensure that all countries were allies. Condemnation and criticism hindered such efforts to find common ground and build consensus. It was regrettable that the Assembly had failed to adopt a resolution on an emergency item concerning Gaza.

**Ms. K. Slassi** (Morocco) said that the massacre of defenceless civilians in Gaza was one example of the many flagrant violations of human rights and international law currently being committed around the world. Countries had a moral duty to try to bring an end to such crimes. It was also essential to address the underlying causes of conflict. Occupation was one such cause, and the Palestinian people should be able to live in an independent State.

It was essential to respect the territorial integrity of countries and combat extremist speech and terrorist doctrines, which undermined peace and conflict prevention efforts. Consequently, the statement by the delegate from Algeria was regrettable; such separatist language was designed to spread violence and even terrorism and represented an attempt to politicize dialogue, running contrary to parliamentary diplomacy. Algeria had violated the principles of IHL and the Charter of the United Nations, giving power and support to armed separatist groups that came into the territory of Morocco and destabilized the entire region. The international community had supported the proposal by Morocco concerning the future of the autonomous territories, which were prospering economically and socially. A number of parliamentary missions had visited the area, and parliamentary diplomacy was being used as a tool to build prosperity and security.

Strengthening democratic institutions and interfaith dialogue was key to building peace and security. Members of the Moroccan Parliament were proud to have taken steps to that end, including through the parliamentary conferences on interfaith dialogue held in Marrakesh and Rabat. Parliaments were a key part of international efforts to build more peaceful coexistence and understanding around the world.

**Mr. A. Kingi** (Kenya) said that conflicts in places such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gaza, Ukraine, Chad, Mozambique, Sudan and the Sahel served as a reminder that parliamentarians' collective promise to provide the people with a peaceful, prosperous and habitable world had been broken. Prompt action was therefore needed. Through its legislation, oversight,

representation and budgeting, the Kenyan Parliament played a central role in conflict prevention and resolution and had achieved key milestones through its use of parliamentary diplomacy, securing its position as an institution for political negotiation and mediation. Examples of parliamentary diplomacy included the *Building of Bridges* initiative and the National Dialogue Committee, both of which had brought a range of political players to the negotiating table for talks on key issues. Following the post-election violence in 2007 and 2008, legislation on a national dialogue for reconciliation had paved the way for dialogue and consensus on the inclusive constitutional review process.

In the light of the threats fuelled by unending conflict and upheavals, parliaments needed to take the lead in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. The IPU should step up to the plate by fostering parliamentary diplomacy. Parliamentarians' voices must rise above the noise of war, helping to promote unity, diffuse tensions and restore livelihoods.

**Mr. M. Dounoh** (Guinea) said that the theme of the General Debate was of utmost importance, given the role played by parliaments in responding to the political upheavals caused by war and conflict. His country was in the process of re-laying the foundations of society. Respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the non-use of force, the promotion of dialogue and good neighbourliness were non-negotiable parts of that process. Given the multitude of conflicts globally, efforts should focus on reviving preventive parliamentary diplomacy, which would spare States the costly consequences of conflict. Parliamentarians must be capable of objectively assessing the needs and expectations of their people as part of their responsibility to ensure peace and resolve conflicts. Parliaments must use parliamentary diplomacy as a political tool to consolidate and strengthen ties between parliaments, in part by reviving parliamentary friendship groups and other bodies. As a positive example of parliamentary diplomacy, the Parliament of Guinea was constructing a new parliamentary building with support from the Government of China.

It was also important to ensure that early warning systems for conflicts were sufficiently proactive, equipped with the necessary resources and based on a comprehensive and robust analysis of the risk factors, with management tools to identify, assess and address priorities. Parliamentarians must focus on dialogue and negotiations, seeking to forge strong ties between parliaments, supporting countries in difficulty and promoting peace-related initiatives. He expressed solidarity with all victims of conflict without exception and thanked the IPU for its initiatives to support countries in transition.

**Mr. N. Mdluli** (Eswatini) said that the theme of the general debate resonated profoundly with the challenges and opportunities the world currently faced. Humanity and diplomacy must be grounded in engagement, the resolution of differences and dialogue. It was essential to revitalize global and regional structures and move away from cynical double standards. His country brought a unique perspective on the use of dialogue as a key tool for diplomacy, having navigated through changing times by using peaceful means and resolving differences. The country's governance system was based on a dual structure that combined traditional and parliamentary approaches, reflecting the commitment to preserve traditions and embrace progress. The culture of consultation and representation was based on individual merit, as seen and defined by the people. The annual dialogue forums represented a platform for people to freely express their challenges, needs and hopes, underscoring the commitment to listen to people and incorporate their perspectives into decision-making processes.

In the modern world, diplomacy needed to be driven less by power and more by the quest for mutually beneficial solutions. He therefore supported calls to reform the UN system, particularly the Security Council, to ensure that it was more representative and that participation in decision-making was expanded. The UN was the only truly multilateral platform for deepening diplomacy. Parliamentarians should commit to advancing diplomacy as a force for positive change, guided by the principles of dialogue, cooperation and mutual respect.

**Mr. O. Korniyenko** (Ukraine) said that the Russian Federation continued to attack civilian buildings and energy facilities in his country, yet the people of Ukraine continued to heroically resist the Russian aggression. He thanked the allies of Ukraine for their military and financial support. Numerous international human rights monitoring and investigative bodies had documented ample evidence of widespread human rights violations by the Russian occupiers. Journalists, human rights campaigners and lawyers continued to face interference and persecution. The Russian Federation required people from the occupied territories to serve in its military, which was a grave breach of IHL and constituted a war crime. Ukrainian prisoners of war and civilians in Russian detention were being tortured and treated inhumanely, while Ukrainian children had been forcibly transferred or deported to the Russian Federation. Those violations of international law by the Russian Federation necessitated a strong response from the international community.



The Government of Ukraine had developed a peace formula that addressed issues such as the prevention of nuclear-related threats, the huge damage caused to the environment, the abuse and torture of captured military and civilian personnel, the numerous war crimes committed and the need for war damages. The peace formula was holistic, contained closely interrelated elements and was grounded in the key principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, as well as in respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries within internationally recognized borders. However, just, comprehensive and lasting peace would only be possible through collective will and action and if Ukraine was provided with reliable multilateral security guarantees. Responsible States that respected international law must remain united in their commitment to peace.

He drew attention to the plans for a global summit for just, lasting and comprehensive peace that was expected to take place later that year. He was confident that the international parliamentary community would make a significant contribution to achieving the aims of the peace formula, and he called on parliamentarians to support the formula and the summit.

**Mr. A. Ruhunda** (Uganda), sharing his country's experiences of war, said that Uganda was currently hosting refugees from a number of African countries and that the theme of the General Debate was very timely and relevant, and should become a recurring theme of the Assembly. The IPU must play a central role in championing peace and condemning acts of war. He expressed regret that the Assembly had failed to adopt a resolution concerning the situation in Gaza and suggested that the issue should be taken up again at the current Assembly. It was important to address the root causes of conflict and understand why people were at war. The IPU should establish a select committee to focus on peace and conflict reconciliation.

**Mr. C. Ribeiro** (Cabo Verde) said that the 148th Assembly was an opportunity to deepen dialogue on peace, tolerance and understanding between nations and strengthen the role of parliaments in promoting peace, which was a fundamental condition for tackling global development challenges. Parliaments played a crucial role in promoting peace through dialogue, respect, tolerance, inclusion, equal opportunity, respect for fundamental rights and other policies aimed at strengthening democracy and the rule of law.

His country's Parliament played an active role in promoting peace, exercising oversight and supervising government policies and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, promoting dialogue, gender equality, education and health for all, and the protection of the environment. Building peaceful societies involved creating economic opportunities and equal access to health and education without discrimination. His Parliament had been working to strengthen its gender-sensitive budget monitoring capacities and to mainstream gender policies. It was building an open Parliament with mechanisms for communication, interaction and citizen participation, while at the same time strengthening transparency and accountability. The Parliament of Cabo Verde was also active in international forums, promoting dialogue as the best way to resolve conflicts. Given the increasing tensions between superpowers with nuclear weapons, the main focus of the current Assembly should be to prevent the escalation of those tensions.

**Mr. M.R.V. Tsiebo** (Madagascar) said that it was imperative for parliamentarians to work together to resolve conflicts and disputes by promoting dialogue and mediation through parliamentary diplomacy. Parliaments had a duty to make their respective governments aware of the need to fight for peace rather than against each other. As his country was particularly affected by climate change despite its low carbon emissions, he called for an increase in funding to protect biodiversity and ensure equity; industrialized countries needed to honour their Paris Agreement commitments to help developing countries to implement climate adaptation and mitigation measures. He called on parliamentarians to raise awareness within their respective countries of the various investment opportunities in Madagascar, which was a leading producer and exporter of vanilla and cloves. Manufacturing, mining, agriculture and tourism were also key business sectors.

In order to build a prosperous and inclusive future, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), it was essential to convince decision-making authorities of the importance of SDG 16. Given the deadlock in various peace negotiations, the IPU should include a timeline and monitoring mechanism in related resolutions, to ensure concrete, tangible results that were measurable over time.

**Mr. M. Hadid** (Palestine) said that, while the Assembly had spent time discussing the wording of a draft resolution, the Israeli occupier had continued its genocide against unarmed Palestinian civilians. Adopting an emergency item on the issue at the Assembly would not have stopped the war or

restored peace in Palestine and the Middle East, as Israel was a rogue State that exercised State terrorism and completely ignored international law. The Israeli leadership was willing to turn the Middle East into hell in order to remain in power and evade prosecution for crimes of corruption. Systematic starvation was crueller than dying under bombs or missiles, and he commended all those who had called for an end to the humanitarian tragedy in Gaza and for humanitarian aid to be allowed to enter in order to end the famine. The priority should be to ensure a permanent ceasefire and prevent the massacre and mass displacement that Israel planned to commit in Rafah. The international legal movement led by South Africa and supported by other countries was commendable and would help to bring Israel to justice and hold it accountable for the crime of genocide. The current aggression against the Palestinian people was one in a long tragic series that could not be resolved with temporary solutions and short-term ceasefires but instead required an end to the occupation through a two-State solution. The international community needed to reform the international system in order to achieve justice for all the vulnerable people of the world and regain power from countries that used their UN Security Council veto unjustly.

**Mr. S.J.-C. Apithy** (Benin) expressed his sympathies for all the innocent victims of terrorist attacks and numerous conflicts around the world. Constant exchanges between parliaments strengthened parliamentary diplomacy and contributed to reducing conflict. Parliamentarians had the responsibility to legislate for the well-being of their people and also to contribute to building a peaceful and harmonious world. Parliamentary diplomacy played an essential role in strengthening international relations. By forging ties based on trust and promoting dialogue between parliaments and peoples, parliamentarians could help to ensure the peaceful resolution of conflicts and foster international cooperation and mutual respect among countries. It was imperative for parliaments to promote the values of peace, dialogue and understanding by working together, overcoming differences and looking for common ground. The current Assembly was an opportunity to share viewpoints and experiences to build mutual understanding; such exchanges were a key tool in addressing shared challenges and could help to stop conflicts in their early stages. Given the frequent failures of traditional diplomacy, it was up to parliamentarians to rise above political and national barriers and facilitate dialogue between parties.

Furthermore, domestic legislation must be adapted to current security and climate-related challenges. Intercultural and interfaith dialogue, including with traditional religions, was also essential. Parliamentary educational initiatives aimed at enhancing intercultural understanding among young people could help to break the cycle of hatred and ensure that future generations were involved in the process of building a more peaceful world. It was also essential to involve women in peacebuilding processes.

**Mr. W.M. Aye** (Myanmar) said that armed conflicts were increasing in severity, including in Myanmar, causing damage to the regional and global economy and threatening peace and security. While diplomatic dialogue was important, it could be further enhanced by collective and timely interventions.

Parliamentarians engaged in diplomacy on a daily basis but needed to do more to promote that role. He called on those present to do more to help the people of Myanmar and bring an end to the illegal military rule in his country. Many people had been forcibly displaced, executed, raped and tortured, with nearly 19 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. The military was forcibly recruiting young people into the army, prompting many people to flee. Parliamentarians in the country were working with other stakeholders to find a solution to the current situation through parliamentary diplomacy, laying the groundwork for the creation of a peaceful society for the people of Myanmar.

**Mr. P.-E. Nguema Bea** (Parliamentary Assembly of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (AP-CPLP)) said that parliamentary diplomacy represented a duty that parliaments must fulfil. The CPLP was aligned with the objectives of the IPU, striving to achieve peace in countries in conflict and in post-conflict situations and to ensure respect for human rights, gender equality and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other States. He called for the Statutes of the IPU to be amended to include Portuguese as an official working language.

**Mr. M.R. Majidi** (Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA)) said that the theme of the General Debate was of critical importance given the grave humanitarian tragedy unfolding in the Gaza Strip. In the six months since the 147th Assembly, it was regrettable that no progress had been made to prevent the massacre of women and children in Gaza. The UN system had failed to stop the crimes committed by the Zionist entity. Although a UN Security Council resolution had been adopted, it would

prove to be of no avail unless there was strong will for practical action. The Assembly had failed to adopt an emergency item to support innocent civilians exposed to heavy bombardment and starvation, meaning that parliamentary diplomacy had lost its core function. It was high time to reconsider the functional structures of international organizations. If no concrete measures were taken to stop the horrendous crimes in Gaza, peace, understanding and security would all be under threat.

**Ms. S.R. Dato Haji Abdul Rahman** (ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)) said that despite efforts to foster peace and inclusivity, conflicts, discrimination and exclusion persisted in many parts of the globe, exacerbating social and economic disparities. Inequality and exclusion were pervasive issues globally, regionally, and nationally, and those most vulnerable were often at the intersection of multiple forms of exclusion, such as young women and women with disabilities. AIPA was committed to advancing women's political participation and leadership through the Women Parliamentarians of AIPA. Recognizing the importance of youth inclusion, AIPA had recently established the standing committee of the Young Parliamentarians of AIPA to ensure that the voices of young people were heard and represented across regional processes.

Parliaments played a crucial role in promoting peaceful and inclusive societies. However, it was essential to recognize that despite progress, significant gender disparities persisted. It was possible to unleash women's potential and accelerate progress across diverse sectors by prioritizing investments in women's education, health care, economic empowerment and leadership development. AIPA was developing a regional plan of action and implementation framework on women's political participation and leadership, with a strong focus on women, peace and security. The aim was to overcome barriers to women's political engagement while promoting their significant role in peacebuilding efforts. Empowering women and ensuring that they had equal access to opportunities could accelerate change, spur innovation, stimulate economic growth and enhance social cohesion.

**Mr. R. Baptista-Leite** (UNITE Parliamentarians Network for Global Health) said that parliamentarians' actions could make a difference, and inaction was a political choice. It was important for parliamentarians to consider how they chose to act and how they could help to change their countries and the world, particularly at a time when so many citizens questioned the basic merits of democracy as a model of governance. Parliamentary diplomacy could help to accelerate development, make citizens healthier and foster world peace. In May 2024, countries would be voting on the adoption of a pandemic agreement at the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly. He called on all those present to join their country's delegation at the Health Assembly and convey the importance of ensuring that the pandemic agreement was approved in order to make the world a healthier and safer place for all.

**Mr. S. Boule** (Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria) said that the Global Fund's new grant cycle had begun in 2024, with over 120 countries eligible to receive funds. Countries were grappling with a web of interconnected crises that exacerbated the difficulties of fighting infectious diseases, particularly those encountered by the most vulnerable population groups. Armed conflict also threatened access to health care in many parts of the world. In Ukraine, for instance, over 1,200 health facilities had been damaged or destroyed since the start of the war. In addition, health workers risked death and injury, people were displaced, malnutrition weakened immune systems and the lack of food made it difficult to take certain medicines. The sad reality was that more people died from disease than from bombs and bullets during armed conflicts. To provide extra assistance during times of crisis, the Global Fund had disbursed over US\$ 130 million from its emergency fund and provided numerous grants. Funds were used, among others, to provide medicines and diagnostic equipment, support community-led organizations and provide food to combat malnutrition. The Global Fund would continue its work to build strong, resilient health systems that addressed both current diseases and future pandemic threats. However, progress would continue to be severely threatened where there was armed conflict and where efforts to sustain peace failed.

**Mr. J. Vucāns** (Baltic Assembly) said that the people of the Baltic States had demonstrated the importance of parliamentary diplomacy during the occupation by the Soviet Union, when they had worked together to build a democratic system of elections and governance. At that time, the Russian Federation was also seeking to follow the path of democracy and respected the principles of parliamentary diplomacy in its foreign policy. Unfortunately, that was no longer the case, and Ukraine was bearing the consequences. It was not possible to form truthful relations with the current regime in the Russian Federation, which was a clear limitation of parliamentary diplomacy. Nevertheless, parliamentary diplomacy had a major role to play in building bridges for peace. To that end, the Baltic

States were supporting Ukraine and shedding light on the aggressive and violent activities of the Russian Federation. Baltic parliaments could bring clear added value to international efforts to promote peace and security, as they understood why Ukraine was determined to remove every Russian soldier from its territory – there could be no life, freedom or development under Russian control and influence. It was essential to support Ukraine and keep it on the international agenda. There could be no peace while countries were allowed to commit gross violations of international law.

**Mr. A. Ware** (Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND)) said that parliamentarians should do their utmost to ensure that their governments adhered to their obligation to resolve conflicts peacefully and remind governments of the comprehensive set of mechanisms available to ensure the peaceful and just resolution of conflicts, including the United Nations Mediation Services, the Permanent Court of Arbitration and the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Parliamentarians should support the UN Secretary-General's call for all States to accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ in order to ensure the peaceful and just resolution of international conflicts. Furthermore, an excellent handbook had been produced by Switzerland and six other countries on accepting the jurisdiction of the ICJ and on the related parliamentary process. The forthcoming UN Summit of the Future would be an opportunity to promote international peace and diplomacy, including the role of the ICJ, and parliamentarians should take an active role in the Summit and its preparatory process.

Threats to use nuclear weapons undermined peace, security, diplomacy and understanding. Parliamentarians should therefore support the G20 Bali Leaders' Declaration concerning the inadmissibility of nuclear weapons and ensure implementation of the ruling of the ICJ on the unlawfulness of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. The PNND welcomed the opportunity to work in cooperation with the IPU in order to advance peace, common security, conflict resolution and nuclear disarmament, especially in preparation for the UN Summit of the Future.

**Mr. L. Achour** (Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM)) said that the theme of the General Debate was timely and allowed parliamentarians to take stock of the challenges the world currently faced. He condemned the genocide against the people of Palestine, which was taking place before the eyes of the international community without any response. Close to half of the population of Gaza was facing famine, and the international community needed to take urgent action. Israel must be made to comply with international law, and humanitarian aid must be brought to the region. Such crimes undermined peace and security throughout the world, which was why PAM supported all efforts by the UN Secretary-General towards an immediate ceasefire. PAM would also participate in the UN Summit of the Future. It was essential to ensure that international law, including IHL, was respected and to engage in dialogue and international cooperation. In addition to inter-parliamentary dialogue, parliaments needed to work with executive branches, the private sector, academic institutions and other stakeholders.

**Mr. J. Nhan-O'Reilly** (International Parliamentary Network for Education (IPNEd)) said that the world was still a long way from reaching the goal of educating every child, with the prospects of achieving SDG 4 becoming more remote every day. Education faced a triple crisis of equity, quality and relevance, all of which were exacerbated in conflict situations. Some 222 million children worldwide were caught up in crises and in urgent need of educational support, but were often denied the support and funding needed to resume their education. A well-resourced education system could be an effective, long-term preventive tool to protect, build and sustain peace before, during and after conflict. Parliamentary action for peace must therefore prioritize parliamentary action for education. In addition, concerted action was needed to ensure that all children went to school, learned how to read and received a healthy meal at school. Parliamentarians were central to that vision.

**Ms. F. Bustreo** (Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)) said that conflict clearly had a tremendous impact on the health and lives of women, children and adolescents, depriving young people of the opportunity to grow healthily, have a future and become productive citizens. In addition, maternal deaths were on the rise, with many of those deaths concentrated in countries affected by conflict and crisis, and the climate crisis was having a significant impact on the food security and nutrition of mothers and their children. Drawing attention to the issue of female genital mutilation, she expressed concern at attempts in some African countries to overturn laws that banned the practice. Her organization was available to members of the Parliament of Eritrea and others to provide the information and medical knowledge required to truly understand the damage that the phenomenon caused to the future health of young girls and women.

**Mr. M. Cassayre** (International Development Law Organization (IDLO)) said that his organization had witnessed the benefits of investing in institutions of governance and putting people and their needs at the centre of justice. The rise of authoritarianism, increasing human rights violations and the deepening of social and economic inequalities, coupled with challenges such as climate change, health emergencies and food insecurity, were increasingly driving communities into conflict. Solutions based on the rule of law, such as eliminating discriminatory laws and policies, strengthening institutions, improving access to justice and empowering citizens to claim their rights, could play a key role in addressing the root causes of existing conflicts and preventing new ones.

The IDLO was keen to enhance its relationships with parliaments in key areas. It would welcome: engagement with parliaments to improve legal frameworks that allowed women and girls to fully contribute to development outcomes, governance and meeting communities' needs; collaboration with parliaments in order to draw on their close connections with communities to improve people's access to and experience of justice and governance institutions; and expanded partnerships with parliaments to develop the right domestic legal frameworks to promote investment, improve food security and implement health regulations, in order to achieve sustainable development.

**Mr. M. Di Bartolomeo** (Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie (APF)) said that trust in democratic institutions had been undermined and the number of armed conflicts between States and involving extremist groups was increasing. In response, parliamentarians must step up to the plate, drawing on parliaments' potential to foster dialogue. As part of its strategic framework 2023–2030, the APF had made parliamentary diplomacy a priority, along with efforts to review democratic monitoring mechanisms such as sanctions. In the previous year, the APF had adopted a new system to support transitional governments based on dialogue with political leaders and technical support for parliamentary administrations. The coups that had taken place in Africa in recent years differed greatly and not all transitional leaders were credible in their willingness to return to free and transparent elections. In Gabon, however, the transitional authorities appeared determined to return to democracy rapidly. That was why the APF had urged the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa to lift its sanctions on Gabon. It was important to monitor all such transitions carefully, and parliamentary diplomacy had a central role to play in that regard.

**Mr. F. van Rompaey** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)) said that the executive heads of the IPU and UNIDO had met in 2023 to express their commitment to strengthening the IPU-UNIDO partnership, with a focus on tackling climate action and combating child labour by rendering supply chains more sustainable. Welcoming the draft resolution on partnerships for climate action, promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity, he said that UNIDO was eager to support that initiative, appreciated the IPU's pivotal role in that regard and recognized the importance of national parliamentary action in shaping an equitable and sustainable future. UNIDO looked forward to strengthening its partnership with the IPU and to exploring ways to join forces to help to build more sustainable and environmentally friendly societies.

**Ms. M.-T. Pictet-Althann** (Sovereign Order of Malta) said that the Sovereign Order of Malta enjoyed excellent cooperation with the IPU on issues of mutual interest, such as human rights, peace and security, climate change and interfaith dialogue, and had been actively involved in the preparatory process for the first Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue in Marrakesh in June 2023. The panel discussion on promoting gender equality and youth participation had highlighted the important contribution that religious leaders and faith-based organizations made to parliamentary work and the need to expand that collaboration. It was important to strengthen parliamentary diplomacy, especially internationally, so that the voices of all members of society could be heard, with a view to fostering peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding, promoting tolerance and combating discrimination, hatred, violence and extremism. Collaboration with faith-based organizations was crucial in that regard. The input of parliaments in UN processes, such as the Human Rights Council and Universal Periodic Review, was essential to achieve progress and ensure implementation. Parliamentarians were encouraged to share with their respective governments best practices for the benefit of their citizens. The Sovereign Order of Malta looked forward to continuing its work with the IPU, in particular in preparation for the second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue to be held in the year 2025.

**Mr. P.S. Rudana** (Global Organizations of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC)) said that war and conflict had become an arena in which people with power could exercise their authority unchecked. Corruption in the arms sector could result in compromised or poor intelligence, potentially leading to large amounts of wasted resources, security failures and even human rights violations and the suppression of freedoms. Strong parliaments were therefore needed to provide a clear, impartial, unbiased judgement of accountability and secrecy in the security sector. Parliaments should be equipped with adequate knowledge and resources on the interplay between corruption and human rights. To that end, GOPAC had launched several programmes, including a workshop on anti-corruption and human rights for parliamentarians. Such inter-parliamentary efforts were focused on how to use parliamentary diplomacy to strengthen capacity and dialogue, which was essential to addressing conflicts. To ensure peace through dialogue, parliaments needed to be vigilant in their oversight of the security sector and prioritize effective control of the international arms trade.

*The sitting rose at 13:20.*

## Sitting of Tuesday, 26 March 2024

(Afternoon)

*The sitting was called to order at 14:30 with Mr. A. Almodóbar Barceló (Spain) in the Chair.*

Item 3 of the agenda  
(continued)

**General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary diplomacy:*  
*Building bridges for peace and understanding*  
(A/148/3-Inf.1)**

### SECOND SPEAKERS FROM DELEGATIONS

**Mr. T. Utikere** (New Zealand) said that New Zealand, having served as an honest broker and mediator, took its role in regional security and peacekeeping efforts seriously. It was committed not only to its own people but also to those around the world. New Zealand's leadership in the area of nuclear disarmament was particularly noteworthy, and the state of being nuclear - free was firmly embedded in the identity of the nation.

More recently, New Zealand's focus had been on promoting a stable, prosperous and resilient Pacific, which included fostering a greater presence in the region. New Zealand had supported Pacific countries on a number of regional priorities, such as climate change, economic resilience, health, education, gender equality and human rights, and assisted with policy and partnership opportunities across the region.

He highlighted the importance of parliamentary select committees, which played a vital role in scrutinizing the executive and encouraging public input into political processes. The committees could initiate independent inquiries into matters of importance, thus ensuring transparency and building public confidence.

Parliamentarians, given their privileged position, must reflect upon the role they could play in the area of peace and security, both nationally and globally.

**Mr. K. Valentin** (Denmark) said that the world was standing at a critical juncture in human history, facing the urgent need to address climate change and create a more sustainable and resilient future. One key step forward was to phase out fossil energy from the global energy mix, ideally by 2035. Fossil energy had been a driver of human progress but had also contributed to biodiversity destruction and climate disruption. It was time to embrace a new era of clean renewable energy sources. Renewable energy presented opportunities for job creation, technological advancement and inclusive economic development across the world. It was important to work together to establish robust regulatory mechanisms, carbon tax and incentives for clean energy adoption. He urged each and every parliamentarian to embrace the challenge of phasing out fossil energy by 2035.

**Ms. S. Mikayilova** (Azerbaijan) said that, at a time when global issues were becoming more complex and interconnected, parliamentary diplomacy played a crucial role in fostering international cooperation, facilitating dialogue and influencing foreign policy decisions. Parliamentarians brought value to conflict resolution and dispute settlement processes. They were integral in building post-conflict governance and in securing successful implementation of peace agreements.

Azerbaijan and Armenia were currently in the process of normalizing post-war relations, including through a long-awaited peace deal. It was a time where the two nations were turning away from hatred and opening up to a new era of harmonious relations. It was unacceptable that some foreign parliaments were interfering in the process and adding fuel to the fire. Parliaments that were unable to contribute should at least keep silent for the sake of peace and security.

While parliamentary diplomacy had the potential to build bridges for peace, security and understanding, the opposite was happening at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) as exemplified by the decision to reject the credentials of the Azerbaijani parliamentary delegation. PACE should be a platform for dialogue and cooperation but was instead making decisions that punished States, national representatives and ordinary citizens.

**Mr. R. Fogiel** (Poland) said that parliamentary diplomacy should be about more than just going abroad, voting on resolutions and congratulating each other on a job well done. It should be about listening to each other and finding common ground. Unfortunately, the IPU had not been succeeding in that regard as demonstrated by its failure to agree on an emergency item. The lack of consensus within the IPU was serving the Russian Federation, preventing further discussions on the illegal war against Ukraine. He urged delegates to stand firmly in the values of the IPU and do their utmost to find common ground.

**Mr. H. Arshakyan** (Armenia) condemned the terrorist attack in Moscow and highlighted the need for unity against extremism. Parliamentary diplomacy was a powerful tool through which countries could engage in global affairs, shape foreign policy and foster peaceful international relations.

Armenia remained dedicated to peace and stability in the South Caucasus region. It was currently in negotiations with Azerbaijan with a view to reaching a peace agreement, delimiting borders and unblocking transport communications. Those efforts were guided by three previously agreed principles. First, Armenia and Azerbaijan would recognize each other's territorial integrity based on the 1991 Alma Ata Declaration. Second, the 1991 Alma Ata Declaration would be the political basis for the border delimitation process, recognizing the former Soviet administrative borders as interstate borders. Thirdly, regional communications would be unblocked based on the principle of equality and reciprocity. The approach was vital for fostering peace, prosperity and trust.

He invited delegates to the 10th IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians to take place in Armenia in September 2024.

**Ms. J. Tielen** (Netherlands) said that, as a coalition country where political parties rarely had an absolute majority in Parliament, the Netherlands was not only aware of the importance of cooperation, but cooperation was the essence of its political and parliamentary work. The country had created the polar model – a method of consensus-based decision-making – and always looked to find common ground, discover mutual interests and build bridges between those with conflicting opinions and expectations.

Freedom was fundamental to cooperation, whether freedom of speech, freedom of information, freedom of religion, freedom of association or freedom of press. The press, in particular, must be free to deliver factual information to the people. The Netherlands had one of the highest levels of freedom of press in the world, yet its journalists continued to be intimidated and threatened, especially when female. Parliamentarians must work together across borders and cultures to build and maintain freedom of press. She suggested that freedom of press be put on the agenda of the 149th IPU Assembly.

**Mr. G.A.R. Mendoza Leigue** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) drew attention to three fundamental elements of parliamentary diplomacy: democracy, integration and peace. Democracy was not just about holding elections but about engaging with the many different forms of democracy, including parity democracy, gender democracy, community democracy and direct democracy. In the name of integration, he suggested that all parliamentary blocs, at least in Latin America, including the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), the Andean Parliament, the Central American Parliament (PARLACEN) and the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO), become observers to the IPU. Lastly, there could be no parliamentary diplomacy without peace. Efforts must be made to fight racism and hate speech.

**Ms. M.-N. Battistel** (France) expressed satisfaction at the adoption of United Nations (UN) Security Council resolution 2728 (2024) calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza but was disheartened that some nations behind the said UN resolution had blocked the adoption of an emergency item resolution at the IPU. Recognizing that parliamentary diplomacy had the potential to make a big impact, she was disappointed by the lack of consensus at the IPU.

France had recently hosted the Women Speakers' Summit which addressed women's rights at a time where they were under threat. The declaration adopted at the Summit called for urgent action on women's rights, including the right to education and health, notably sexual health and reproductive rights. Parliamentarians must keep a watchful eye over women's rights, which could be challenged at any time, never taking them for granted.

**Mr. B.O. Kalu** (Nigeria) said that, in failing to reach consensus on the emergency item, the IPU had missed a crucial opportunity for collective action. It was a prime example of what parliamentary diplomacy should not be. True diplomacy required compromise and understanding even on contentious issues. He reminded delegates that war was expensive both in human and material costs.



The IPU must reconsider its approach to emergency items. One potential way forward was to have several emergency items addressing multiple urgent issues. Addressing only one issue had left some continents short-changed and neglected, including Africa. Africa was rarely mentioned in emergency items despite the many difficult crises it was experiencing.

Gender equality and women's inclusion in governance and peacebuilding was essential to achieving a better world. At only 27%, the representation of women in parliament was poor and more must be done to increase it. In addition, it was not possible to build bridges for peace without including the voices of all, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan.

Parliamentary diplomacy offered a strategic approach to global peace. Parliaments must focus on conflict prevention, conflict management and post-conflict peacebuilding in their diplomatic efforts. The National Assembly of Nigeria had launched the *Peace in South East Project* which aimed to foster reintegration and rehabilitation in the southeast of Nigeria following many years of war.

**Ms. Yoshikawa Yumi** (Japan) said that, during her parliamentary career, she had fought for the protection of civilians in armed conflict as well as for the need to comply with international law. Currently, she was making every effort to advocate for humanitarian assistance and reconstruction support in Ukraine and Gaza.

The House of Councillors of Japan was responsible for exercising oversight over government activities, including with regard to development assistance. It regularly dispatched specialized research groups on development overseas and questioned the Government as regards to their initiatives. Japan actively contributed to the construction of infrastructure, such as bridges, through its development assistance. Bridges physically connected countries and regions but also closed gaps between people's hearts and minds.

Globalization had made it impossible to separate international issues from domestic ones, hence the importance of national parliaments in international affairs. Japan was committed to building peace and understanding through parliamentary diplomacy. Noting that the Constitution of Japan recognized the right to peace for all peoples of the world, the right to peace must also be upheld as a basic principle of the IPU.

**Mr. A.A. Paredes Gonzales** (Peru) said that dialogue, consensus and compromise were vital for genuine parliamentary diplomacy. The IPU must be an example of genuine parliamentary diplomacy by showing that agreements could be reached even in the face of many differing opinions. It was disappointing that the IPU had not been able to do more at the present Assembly but there was always hope for a better outcome next time.

**Ms. R. Conway Walsh** (Ireland) said that the global community must not remain silent as an entire nation faced annihilation. What was happening in Gaza was the greatest human rights violation of current times. The people of Gaza faced horrifying levels of hunger and eminent famine while also enduring genocide, slaughter, displacement, dispossession and disease. She condemned Israel for its relentless bombardment of Gaza and for using starvation as a weapon of war.

Ireland had experienced conflict and understood the value of hard-won peace. The Good Friday Agreement showed that no conflict was intractable. Leaders across the West must join forces and push unequivocally for an immediate, full and permanent ceasefire in Gaza. Ireland had been the first country in Europe to categorically state that Israel had carried out the crime of annexation in the occupied territories. It was also examining a number of related bills namely, the Unoccupied Territories Bill and the Illegal Israeli Settlements Divestment Bill. Ireland stood with Palestine and stood for peace.

**Ms. J. Pejović** (Montenegro) said that growing up in a country butchered by war left nothing but horrible scars. No one benefited from war, not even the winners – a truth that the former Yugoslavia knew all too well. It was unacceptable that more than 600 million women and children were currently living in war zones.

The international community could stop war through parliamentary diplomacy and dialogue. Parliamentarians must use their voices to promote understanding, call for ceasefires and find resolution. There was a need to talk openly and loudly about how violence affected lives, even years after a conflict had ended. The IPU should be used as a platform to build bridges and spread empathy. Although the conclusions of parliamentarians were not always binding, it was possible to put pressure on governments by talking with one voice. The refugee issue was an issue that affected everyone.

**Ms. C.S.J. Pereira** (Singapore) said that the representation of women in her Parliament currently stood at 30%. Female parliamentarians in Singapore played an important role in understanding and articulating the needs and aspirations of women as well as in ensuring that national laws and policies were supportive of women. According to the UN Human Development Reports, Singapore had had one of the lowest gender inequality index values in 2022 compared to which much progress had been made on gender equality in the country, including in areas such as education, employment and health.

Despite those achievements, the Parliament of Singapore could not rest on its laurels and regularly reviewed how it could improve. In early 2022, the Parliament had endorsed a white paper on women's development which included 25 action plans in 5 key areas: equal opportunities in the workplace, recognition and support for caregivers, protection against violence and harm, other support measures for women and mindset shifts. It was also considering a workplace fairness law which aimed to strengthen fair practices in the workplace, including by prohibiting specified forms of discrimination based on gender, marital status and pregnancy status. The Parliament of Singapore was committed to advancing women as integral and equal members of society in line with the principle of meritocracy.

## YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS

**Mr. A. Ekpenyong** (Nigeria) said that young people were eager to be heard and to make a meaningful impact on the world they were inheriting. However, they were not naive to the historical and political precedent set by those who had come before them. That precedent served as both a guide and a challenge – a reminder of the progress achieved through dialogue and cooperation but also of the vast terrain yet to be traversed.

To build bridges, it was important to recognize that every nation had its own history, struggles and aspirations. Understanding those narratives was the first step towards empathy which was the cornerstone of peace. Parliamentarians must use every tool at their disposal to keep the channels of communication open.

Parliamentary diplomacy was the cornerstone of cooperation and mutual understanding, providing a unique platform for nations and regions to engage in constructive dialogue, promote peace, and resolve conflicts through diplomatic means. He urged the IPU to enact resolutions that did not merely seek peace but actively constructed architectural solutions that recognized the suffering of women and children and the importance of youth engagement in political processes.

Quoting Kofi Annan, he said that peace was never a perfect achievement and required a commitment to the ideals of understanding, tolerance and shared prosperity. Peace was not just a destination but a manner of travelling.

**Mr. R. Kempself** (United Kingdom) said that there was a new generation of young leaders emerging around the world who were championing freedom, supporting the rule of law and advancing democracy. They were determined to fight hatred and division and to rebuild and reinvigorate the rules-based order for a new global era. Their heroes were the young parliamentarians of Ukraine who were standing up against the illegal war being waged upon them, the young female politicians around the world fighting for equal representation in their societies, and the brave parliamentarians resisting oppression and tyranny, even by laying down their lives.

The tyrannies and dictatorships of the world would eventually end, crushed by the irrepressible human desire for freedom. Young parliamentarians would stand against authoritarians to build a free world. Delegates were encouraged to join the new democratic generation and reject the false promises of authoritarianism.

**Mr. K.W.L. Chua** (Singapore) said that parliamentarians played a critical role in promoting peace, stability and the overall well-being of nations. By scrutinizing draft laws and taking up a critical and inquisitorial role in parliament, parliamentarians could empower citizens and ensure healthy national dialogue on issues that mattered to the people.

The IPU had been founded on the notion that dialogue was central to the peaceful resolution of conflict. With that in mind, parliamentarians from Singapore had worked hard to contribute to peace and understanding. For instance, they had established regional parliamentary groups, engaged in regular parliamentary dialogue and participated at interparliamentary conferences. The regional parliamentary groups were an opportunity to forge closer and more regular relations with parliamentarians from other regions of the world, including by hosting incoming visits. In addition,

parliamentarians regularly attended interparliamentary conferences and meetings organized by multilateral institutions such as the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA).

**Mr. T. Hurter** (Switzerland) said that, although governments were ultimately responsible for international relations, parliamentarians also had an important part to play. For example, parliaments adopted budgets, which gave governments the means to take action, voted on agreements and approaches, and guided the government on foreign policy. It was important to strengthen the links between State institutions and nongovernmental organizations, whose work was complementary. The work should be distributed in a way that helped achieve the given objectives. Good coordination between the two sides was paramount.

He commended the IPU for drawing on parliamentary diplomacy to support other governmental and intergovernmental processes, including through the Committee on Middle East Questions and Group of Facilitators for Cyprus. It was vital for parliamentarians to be involved in such processes. Overall, parliamentarians had a responsibility to take action in their own countries and abroad with a view to promoting international cooperation.

**Mr. K. Ait Mik** (Morocco) said that parliamentarians must use parliamentary diplomacy to ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They must be honest mediators for peace, security and understanding, using all diplomatic tools available to resolve conflicts and working together with other stakeholders. National dialogues must also be established. A comprehensive approach to peace was needed in line with government policies. Parliamentary diplomacy should involve various activities, including foreign missions.

He called on the IPU to continue its work to establish peace and to consider intervening in conflict zones. The participation of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians and the Forum of Women Parliamentarians within IPU activities should be strengthened.

**Mr. G. Calovini** (Italy) said that, although democracy should be for everyone, it remained a distant mirage, with too many people not living by basic rules of law. The world was experiencing a moment of extreme geopolitical tension characterized by constant conflicts and clashes. Awareness and courage were needed in order to change direction.

**Mr. K. Bayramov** (Azerbaijan) said that mutual respect and the equality of all States, large and small, were the most important principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Harassment and aggression against sovereign States were totally unacceptable. It was vital to develop multilateralism, promote the equality of all countries in both rights and opportunities, and make efforts to create a new type of international relations based on respect, justice and mutually beneficial cooperation.

International organizations were powerless in solving global problems and preventing conflicts since States often ignored their legally-binding international commitments. By and large, global security and stability continued to be undermined by international organizations that remained silent or failed to act effectively and efficiently. To achieve peace and security, the entire system of international organizations must be reformed. In that regard, he welcomed the motion of the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs on UN Security Council reform.

Young parliamentarians must ensure the supremacy of international law and work to empower international organizations to have a real impact on States that fraudulently ignored their obligations.

**Ms. S. Carvajal Isunza** (Mexico) drew attention to the issue of organized crime which was a challenge to development and democratic governance. An international crime by nature, organized crime sought to establish itself as an alternative system that operated outside of the rule of law. The crisis of multilateralism must be resolved regionally and globally to protect against organized crime and other transnational issues. The international community must recognize the weakness of the current international institutional architecture and enact a paradigm change. Global organizations must be more effective and efficient in resolving global problems thus giving them greater legitimacy.

**Mr. J. Meilvang** (Denmark) said that achieving a peaceful world would take more than just words but a great deal of hard work and dedication.

He appealed to the Russian Federation to stop the war in Ukraine – a country guilty of nothing except a desire to become part of the free and open world. Ukrainians in their brave fight against the Russian Federation had proved that the bonds between free people were more potent than the fear of any authoritarian regime. As such, the Russian Federation would never win the war and would only be weaker, not stronger, from it.

The West did not dream of a world without the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation, a country of great culture and history, had a great deal to offer the world and the world had a great deal to offer it. It was never too late to turn the situation around.

**Mr. B. Griffin** (Bahamas) said that permeating unease was engulfing the world, with tensions and conflicts rising in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the heart of those tensions was one defining question which was whether the international community would come together to reject conflict. With 56 countries experiencing armed conflict in 2023, the IPU provided a much-needed space for parliamentary dialogue and diplomacy globally.

The Caribbean was currently grappling with growing conflict in Haiti and an existential threat to Guyana's territorial integrity. The situation in Haiti was particularly dire with the country well on its way to becoming a failed State. Government institutions and basic services in Haiti had broken down and gang violence had sparked one of the worst humanitarian crises the world had ever seen. The Bahamas was on the front lines of the crisis, having become home to over 80,000 Haitian refugees. With that in mind, the Caribbean was in desperate need of the world's assistance.

Even in the midst of contrary views, the Government of the Bahamas was steadfast in its foreign policy of active engagement and had made friends, allies and partners around the world. It was only through cooperation, friendship and multilateralism that the world could realize true peace, stability and prosperity.

**Mr. M.A. Bouchouit** (Algeria) said that parliamentary diplomacy had failed to protect the people. Voices against humanism continued to dominate with many countries still reading from the old colonial book. Politics seemed to justify the powerful and ignore the victims, as was the case in Gaza. Algeria had always defended and would continue to defend all just causes, including the principles of non-interference in the domestic affairs of foreign States. He welcomed UN Security Council resolution 2728 (2024) on Gaza.

Responding to the delegate from Morocco, he said that the situation of the Sahrawi people in the Western Sahara was under consideration by the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

**Mr. K.U. Ritter Ocampo** (Mexico) said that peace was not possible without justice. Justice was needed for all those who had been historically marginalized, including women. The active participation of women in political life and decision-making must therefore be encouraged. Mexico had achieved gender parity in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate and both chambers also had women Speakers. Furthermore, in upcoming elections, the country was likely to elect its first female President as well as a female governor in the state of Morelos. Mexico would continue to promote gender equality both nationally and internationally. Its contribution to world peace through parliamentary diplomacy would only be enriched by the participation of women. The equal participation of men and women improved the representativeness and legitimacy of State institutions while also helping to build more peaceful and resilient societies.

**Mr. R. De Battista** (Malta) said that the IPU had failed to reach consensus on the emergency item because Members had refused to listen to opposing arguments on Gaza. In doing so, they were allowing hatred to win over love and hope. Hatred also continued to spread in other parts of the world. For example, the Parliament of Georgia had recently begun debating a bill that prohibited gender affirmation and banned same-sex couples from adopting. Similarly, the Russian Government had added organizations that supported the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) community to its list of extremist and terrorist organizations. Noting that LGBTIQ+ people often faced physical violence, extortion and imprisonment simply for being who they were, he appealed to the Secretary General of the IPU to ensure the safety and protection of all LGBTIQ+ parliamentarians. A forum of LGBTIQ+ members of parliament should be established at the IPU with a view to ensuring democracy for everyone.

*Dr. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania), President of the IPU, took the Chair.*

### Special guest speakers

**The President** said that, in 2023, the UN had established the UN Youth Office to lead engagement and advocacy on youth issues across the organization. The new office, which had integrated the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, also served to promote the inclusive and effective engagement of youth and youth-led organizations at the UN. The UN Youth Office, and the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth before it, had been close partners of the IPU for years, especially with the Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

Young people were among the first victims of radicalization and conflict. Their participation in conflict prevention and resolution of disputes was therefore essential for building sustainable peace. She drew attention to UN Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security and invited Dr. Paullier, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, to outline how parliamentarians could help implement it.

**Dr. F. Paullier** (UN Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs), special guest speaker, said that, in a world facing conflict, environmental degradation and democratic backsliding, the future ahead, especially for future generation, was alarming. As much as 90% of young people lived in developing countries and often faced negative stereotypes, including erroneous associations with the threat of violence. The truth, however, was that young people, embodied a beacon of hope in the fight for peace, taking active roles as peacebuilders, activists, human rights defenders, innovators and leaders of social movements.

UN Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security had been ground-breaking in recognizing the positive role that young people could play in fostering peace and preventing violence. It was vital to see young people as partners rather than passive observers and as creators of initiatives rather than recipients of services. Young people must be systematically included in decision-making processes at all levels, especially in peacebuilding efforts.

Unfortunately, younger generations were still largely absent from decision-making and faced multiple cultural, structural, financial and legislative barriers in exercising their political rights. Only 2.8% of members of parliament were under 30 and less than 1% were young women. Young women, due to their age and gender, faced particular difficulties in gaining office, and even more so when additional factors such as race were taken into account. Since their priorities were rarely recognized, many young people mistrusted political institutions. It was time to shake up the system by introducing spaces for the political engagement of young people, including in the negotiation of peace agreements.

Inclusion of young people in decision-making processes was vital to restore faith in political institutions. The only sustainable peacebuilding efforts were the ones inclusive of young people. It was not just a matter of youth representation in politics but a cross-sectoral and human rights issue. To meaningfully increase the representation of young people in politics, more disaggregated data was necessary. Strong and reliable data would help assess the current level of youth engagement in politics, including in peace processes. It would also help inform policies and remove barriers.

Members of parliament must take action to advance the participation of young people in peacebuilding. First, they must lead or support the youth peace and security agenda within parliamentary commissions, for instance, by introducing accountability systems to monitor implementation at the country level. Second, they must support the creation of youth bodies in parliament, including mechanisms to ensure systematic consultations with young people in parliamentary deliberations. Third, they must advocate for the adoption of national action plans, roadmaps and frameworks as well as for the establishment of national coalitions on youth, peace and security that had specific budget allocations. Lastly, they should support the IPU campaign, *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!*.

When opening up spaces for the participation of young people, it was vital to recognize the interconnected factors that shaped their vulnerabilities, including gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity and disability. Indeed, the participation of young people needed to be fully accessible and safe. Young people in all their diversity had the right to participate.

The task of ensuring meaningful youth engagement, particularly in building bridges for peace, was an intergenerational commitment.

**The President** said that the IPU and the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) had a strong partnership. UNRWA had played an active role in IPU Assemblies and its contribution to the IPU Committee on Middle East Questions had been instrumental in advancing the IPU's understanding of the grave humanitarian crisis in Palestine. The IPU remained committed to UNRWA's mission to provide relief and human development to all Palestinian refugees, including essential services, such as education, health care and emergency assistance. The efforts of UNRWA went beyond politics and were rooted in a shared belief in every individual's intrinsic rights, dignity and worth regardless of nationality, ethnicity or creed. She invited Mr. Majekodunmi, Chief of Staff of UNRWA, to take the floor.

**Mr. B. Majekodunmi** (Chief of Staff, UNRWA), special guest speaker, said that the international community had failed for 75 years to provide a political solution to the conflict in the Middle East that would do right by Palestinians, Israelis and the region as a whole. To fill the political vacuum, the UN General Assembly had tasked UNRWA with providing services, such as education, health care and

social support, to Palestinians. UNRWA was mandated to support the human rights of Palestinians but also to bring a measure of stability to the region. UNRWA continued to operate despite the deteriorating security context.

On 7 October 2023, civilians in Israel had been the victims of horrendous attacks, including killings, sexual violence and hostage-taking. Since then, Gaza had experienced what could only be described as catastrophic killing and suffering. More than 30,000 people, the majority civilians, had been killed, including 13,000 children. Schools, places of worship, places of employment, cemeteries, roads, homes and electricity and water infrastructure had all been destroyed. The situation in the south of Gaza was one of indescribable tension. There were people absolutely everywhere moving from one place to another trying to avoid the missiles. The most frightened people were not children but parents wondering how to provide for their children and keep them safe. In their desperation, people had resorted to digging in the earth for roots to eat. Despite the situation, Gaza was actually within walking distance of running water, electricity and truckloads of food. It was clear that the conflict was a political conflict, and the humanitarian crisis was fundamentally a political one.

UNRWA was serving as a platform for every aspect of humanitarian assistance from facilitating the movement of trucks, to distributing food, to helping the Bank of Palestine move cash to keep the economy going. UN Member States had recognized UNRWA as a vital lifeline for humanitarian action in Gaza as well as an essential piece of the political solution and equation for peace in the region. UNRWA had also been essential in providing Palestinians with hope for an end to the violence and a sense that they had not been forgotten. However, UNRWA's role was not assured and was in fact being undermined, with funding and political support being actively withdrawn.

Gaza was in desperate need of an urgent multilateral solution based on human rights, international law and political consensus. A solution was needed for the benefit of Palestinians, Israelis and the region as a whole. Unfortunately, the solution did not seem to be on the horizon. He appealed to parliamentarians to inspire their governments towards resolving the humanitarian and political catastrophe happening in Gaza.

**A delegate from Iraq** said that the suggestion that sexual violence had occurred on 7 October 2023 was false information being spread by the Israeli regime to justify its genocidal crimes in the Palestinian territories. The events of 7 October 2023 were carried out by a resistance movement fighting an illegal occupation. The Palestinian people had every right to defend themselves from the occupation just as the Ukrainians had the right to defend themselves from the Russian aggression. The Palestinian situation could be compared to that of other colonized countries many of which had had proud independence movements that had overthrown the colonizers through the use of force. It was a disgrace that the international community continued to stand still in the face of a genocide where children were being bombed, massacred and deprived of food. He asked the representative of UNRWA for his perspective on allegations that UNRWA had worked with Hamas.

**A delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that the world was turning a blind eye to the genocide perpetrated by the Israeli regime in Gaza where more than 30,000 people, including women and children, had been killed and many more denied access to water and medicines. Even journalists and aid workers had been killed despite being protected by international agreements. He called on governments and parliaments to stop the atrocities against the Palestinian people.

**Mr. B. Majekodunmi** (Chief of Staff, UNRWA), special guest speaker, said that the finding on sexual violence was not a finding of UNRWA but of the Office of the UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. He referred the delegate from Iraq to the mission report in which the finding was set out.

There had been more children, journalists and UN staff killed in Gaza in the last six months than in any conflict ever. The situation was catastrophic and must be stopped.

### Special accountability segment on the implementation of IPU resolutions and other decisions

**The President** said that the IPU was a Member-driven institution that had a mandate to nurture a culture of mutual accountability on all levels. An accountable IPU was one where IPU outcomes were taken back to national parliaments and translated into national realities. Parliamentarians had a duty to follow up on their international commitments.

As per articles 6 and 7 of the IPU Statutes and Rules, Members must report back to the IPU regarding national implementation of IPU outcomes in the annual reporting exercise. To facilitate the process, each year, a number of parliaments from each geopolitical group were designated to answer a survey sharing details of their progress. Voluntary responses were equally welcomed. The Secretary General then prepared a report based on the details shared.

**Mr. M. Huertas Glauser** (IPU Secretariat), accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that the annual reporting exercise for 2023 had had a good response rate (71%) with 32 of the 45 Members designated to report submitting responses to the survey. A further 8 Members had also contributed voluntarily. The IPU Secretariat had made an active effort to showcase the good practices shared not only in the report of the Secretary General but also on the IPU website and at the data and accountability booth during IPU Assemblies. Although the response rate had improved over the past few years, the hope was to see all Members scheduled to report fulfilling the said statutory obligation. He urged the geopolitical groups to remind the Members scheduled to report to participate in the annual reporting exercise. The Members scheduled to report in 2024 should have already received the survey.

**The President** said that, in recent years, the IPU had adopted a number of resolutions, declarations, outcome documents and decisions on various topics, such as climate change, gender equality, peaceful coexistence and humanitarian crises. She invited delegates to share what they had done to give life to these commitments, particularly in the areas of: (1) parliamentary solidarity to defend the human rights of parliamentarians; (2) parliamentary engagement for the promotion of inclusive societies; and (3) parliamentary action to tackle climate change.

**Ms. D. O'Neill** (Australia) said that Australia recognized climate change as the greatest shared threat to the Oceania region and was committed to working with its Pacific Island neighbours and Southeast Asian partners to strengthen climate resilience and fulfil Paris Agreement obligations. In 2023, Australia and Tuvalu had signed the Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union Treaty – the world's first bilateral agreement on climate mobility. The agreement was based on the Tuvaluan values of neighbourliness, care and mutual respect or *falepili*, and sought to bring the two nations together to navigate the shared challenge of climate change. By 2050, it was estimated that over half of the Tuvaluan capital, Funafuti, which was currently home to over 6,000 people, would be flooded. In recognition of that immediate crisis, and under the Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union Treaty, special visa arrangements would be put in place for Tuvaluans to live, work and study in Australia. An additional AUD 16.9 million would also be provided by Australia for the Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project to build the island's climate resistance.

The Union Treaty was complemented by Australia's climate finance efforts. Australia expected to deliver AUD 3 billion in climate finance to other countries in the region over the period 2020–2025. At the 2024 ASEAN-Australia Special Summit, the country had also committed AUD 10 million to a climate and clean energy window in Southeast Asia. The window would provide multi-year funding for climate and clean energy programmes, including technical capacity building, and ensure that Australia and Southeast Asian countries could share expertise and learnings.

*A video inviting delegates to the 29th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP29) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Azerbaijan was played.*

*Mr. J. Fakhro (Bahrain) took the Chair.*

**Ms. S. Mikayilova** (Azerbaijan) said Azerbaijan was currently going through a period of transition from traditional to alternative energy sources. Clean development was one of five priority areas of the country's new socioeconomic development strategy. With several renewable energy projects underway, the share of renewables in the total energy capacity of Azerbaijan was expected to surpass 37% by 2030. Noting that the fastest way to reduce global warming in the short term was to reduce methane emissions, Azerbaijan had recently joined the Global Methane Pledge. It had also signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of an Azerbaijan-European Union green corridor project which planned to supply green electricity produced by Azerbaijan through Georgia and the Black Sea to Romania for subsequent transportation to Hungary and the rest of Europe. Other initiatives included designating one of its biggest areas, the Karabakh Economic Zone, as a green energy area and making the territories liberated from occupation into a carbon neutral zone by 2050. Azerbaijan wished to be a frontrunner in the green transition and was keen to invest part of its oil and gas revenues in renewables. It had recently introduced its first electric buses and taxis and designated the year 2024 as the Green World Solidarity Year.

Having been entrusted with hosting COP29, Azerbaijan was recognized worldwide as a country making a great contribution to global climate policy. COP29 was a brilliant chance to share experiences in renewable energy generation, to which Azerbaijan was ideally suited given its warm climate.

*A video about China's efforts to fight climate change was played.*

**Mr. C. Ribeiro** (Cabo Verde) said that, as a small island developing State (SIDS), Cabo Verde was one of the lowest emitters of greenhouse gases but also among the most vulnerable to climate change. The country was prone to many environmental risks, such as volcanic activities, droughts, floods, sea level rise and erosion, which impacted human settlements and natural ecosystems.

In its most recent nationally determined contributions, Cabo Verde had identified five contributions on mitigation and nine contributions on adaptation. Contributions on mitigation related to energy efficiency and renewables, low carbon transportation, nature-based solutions and sustainable tourism. Contributions on adaptation related to water management, food safety, coastal management, land use planning and disaster risk reduction. Cabo Verde therefore had a clear picture as to where it was and where it wished to get to in terms of the transition to a zero carbon economy.

Cabo Verde was seeking to boost its blue and circular economies. In doing so, it hoped to reduce emissions by 20%, generate 100% of energy using renewables by 2040, achieve 100% electric mobility by 2040 and reach carbon neutrality by 2050. Commitments had also been made to preserving marine biodiversity. For instance, a number of marine parks had been set up with a view to protecting marine species. There was also a charter for blue economy policies, a special maritime economy zone and a centre for research and development of the oceans. Lastly, Cabo Verde had taken measures in the area of waste management, including awareness raising activities on plastic waste reduction, and signed an agreement with Portugal to set up an environmental climate fund.

*A video was played about Chile's efforts to ensure the inclusion of people with down syndrome in society.*

**Mr. F. Undurraga Gazitúa** (Chile), referring to the video, said that parliamentarians in Chile had been working for the inclusion of people living with down syndrome for the past 14 years. It was not enough to ask the private sector to make changes in favour of inclusivity. Those changes must first be made within parliament.

To foster genuine inclusivity, it was vital to treat those with differing opinions as legitimate people and see the situation from their point of view without getting caught up in personal ideas. Unfortunately, the IPU Members had failed to do so over the course of the Assembly. Inclusivity must underpin all political activity. There must be inclusivity in all spheres, including work, education and religion, and of all people, including those living with disabilities and minorities. The Parliament of Chile was working hard to achieve those goals.

True action was needed and not just words. He called on the IPU to set up a committee dedicated to the rights of people living with disabilities.

**Ms. S. Carvajal Isunza** (Mexico) said that Mexico had a climate change law which laid out specific responsibilities at the three levels of government. The law had been in place for 10 years and was regularly updated. A recent amendment to the law aimed to support the country in replacing gasoline cars with electric cars.

In addition to the climate change law, there was a law on the energy transition which laid the foundations for the move towards renewables. The law had enabled the Chamber of Deputies to continue advancing the energy agenda by requiring the Government – which had not made that agenda a priority – to fulfil certain obligations. It showed the important role of parliaments as guardians of the rule of law and in influencing decisions.

Given the impact on security, economy and well-being, Mexico understood the importance of addressing climate change urgently and comprehensively. It had set up a parliamentary committee on climate change and sustainability which was one of the most active committees in Parliament. The committee was currently considering 69 climate change proposals. The protection of natural resources, biodiversity and climate resilience were other priorities for the Chamber of Deputies.

**Mr. P.S. Rudana** (Indonesia) said that the Parliament of Indonesia was committed to supporting the green economy, including the energy transition. It continued to prioritize the finalization of new renewable energy bills, the phasing out of fossil fuel subsidies, the introduction of carbon markets and the adoption of the Forest and Land Use Net Sink 2030 policy. In addition, the Parliament was currently deliberating a bill on the management of climate change which would serve as the legal foundation for national efforts. The bill would ensure a comprehensive, systematic and integrated approach to climate management through budgeting and oversight. He invited delegates to the parliamentary meeting at the 10th World Water Forum in Bali in May 2024 which sought to strengthen water security.



In line with the Marrakesh Communiqué, Indonesia upheld the principle of “*bhinneka tunggal ika*” or “unity in diversity” and strove to promote understanding, dialogue and respect among its people. The Parliament was seeking to adopt a bill on the protection of all religious leaders and symbols. Diversity should be considered a blessing rather than a reason for conflict.

**Ms. N. Lahiani** (Tunisia) said that the right to a clean environment was stipulated under the Constitution of Tunisia. As such, Tunisia was prohibited from engaging in development that was damaging to the environment.

Tunisia contributed as little as 0.07% to global emissions yet was one of the countries most impacted by climate change. The Parliament was working with government ministers and civil society to increase the country’s resilience and capacity. It had adopted a national strategy for climate and was currently reviewing a number of climate-related and environmental laws, including laws on waste management and protection of endangered species, with a view to aligning them with international agreements and conventions.

She called on parliamentarians to shoulder their responsibilities on climate change. It was vital to provide climate support to least developed countries, including by funding climate programmes.

**Ms. P. Damoff** (Canada) said that the Government of Canada was increasingly encouraging the use of public and active transportation, thereby supporting the green transition. Since 2015, the Government had provided more than CAD 20 billion in funding to support public transit projects in communities across Canada. In February 2021, it had announced the creation of Canada’s first permanent public transit fund which would become operational in 2026 and was also investing CAD 3 billion per year in permanent federal public transit funding. Several projects to build new and expanded networks of pathways, bike lanes, trails and pedestrian bridges were also underway, and an active transportation fund of CAD 40 million had been put in place to promote the use of active forms of transport over a five-year period. Those investments were intended to help Canada meet its climate targets since the transportation sector accounted for approximately 25% of greenhouse gas emissions.

The Canadian Group of the IPU regularly communicated the results of IPU meetings, including resolutions and statements, to the Prime Minister, the Speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons as well as to the appropriate ministers and parliamentary committee chairs. It was clear that Canada continued to act on its international climate commitments.

**Ms. S. Mingoen-Karijomenawi** (Suriname) said that the Parliament of Suriname was building an inclusive society where gender equality was a must, and both men and women had equal opportunities and rights. It had committed itself to promoting the rights of women in all areas of society, including through legislation.

The Parliament was all ears for the needs and problems of society. Any proposals or working documents from society were taken seriously and discussed by a committee of rapporteurs. If necessary, proposals could be submitted to the President and the State Council. Doing so helped build bridges between the Parliament and society.

The Parliament of Suriname had participated in many activities and conferences raising awareness of climate change among the citizens. It had submitted a proposal calling on the Government to address climate change in its policies and was currently discussing a law that would set up institutions on environmental protection.

Suriname was a carbon negative country and the most forested country in the world with 93% forest coverage and a low deforestation rate. Noting the role Suriname’s forests had in absorbing global carbon emissions, she asked whether the world could still believe in carbon credits.

**Mr. S. Søndergaard** (Denmark) said that, according to the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, 732 current and former members of parliament from 47 countries had been subjected to human rights violations in 2023, including restrictions on their freedom of expression, deprivation of their parliamentary mandate and imprisonment. Any attack on the human rights of a citizen was a problem but attacks on the human rights of parliamentarians were a particular problem because they undermined the very foundation of democracy.

The Danish Parliament had decided to follow the cases of parliamentarians in Europe, including by sending delegations to court hearings, posting letters and discussing the cases with representatives of the countries concerned. One such case was that of Selahattin Demirtaş from Türkiye who had been imprisoned since November 2016. Mr. Demirtaş had taken part in the Turkish presidential election in 2018 running the campaign from his prison cell. His case was being examined not only by the IPU but also by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg which had demanded his immediately release.

The issue of the human rights of parliamentarians was not a matter for one single country but for all countries. He urged other parliaments to show solidarity by taking similar initiatives to those of the Danish Parliament.

**Ms. J. Simanovska** (Latvia) said that the Latvian Parliament was enhancing its response to hate speech by collaborating closely with nongovernmental organizations and law enforcement authorities. While hate speech had already been criminalized in Latvia, the country was currently exploring more nuanced measures, including administrative actions.

For a long time, Latvia had been dependent on foreign fossil gas and had been unable to reduce its consumption due to pressure from fossil gas lobbyists. However, immediately after the Russian aggression in Ukraine, fossil gas consumption had begun to drop and had now dropped by 30%. A ban on free imports of Russian gas introduced from 1 January 2023 had facilitated the process. The situation had shown how quickly Latvia could change its behaviour when faced with a visible threat and with obvious public support. Noting that climate change was not being taken seriously enough, she encouraged politicians to raise public awareness about the risks of climate change, advocating in particular for long-term gains over short-term benefits.

**Mr. P. Limjaroenrat** (Thailand) drew attention to three key pillars of inclusive societies: (1) marriage equality; (2) ethnicity and indigenous rights; and (3) labour protection.

The Parliament of Thailand would soon be deciding on a historic landmark law on marriage equality, which, if passed, would make Thailand the first country in Southeast Asia to legalize same-sex marriage. The law would send the message to all LGBTIQ+ people around the world that they were included in society. Thailand was also acutely aware of the need to support indigenous communities, for instance, by taking into account cultural differences, fighting for land justice and including them in the education system. Labour protection was also important and required countries to promote decent jobs, ensure gender parity in the workplace and introduce a work-life balance. By coming together, parliaments could break down walls and barriers.

**Mr. U. Lechte** (Germany) said that over 15% of the world's population was living with a disability yet people with disabilities were often excluded from society, including in terms of access to health care, education and work. The full participation of people with disabilities was a human right, not an act of mercy. They must be placed at the heart of society right from the start, for instance, by creating jobs and designing workplaces in a way that allowed them to participate without noticeable barriers.

Highlighting that many people with disabilities were skilled workers, integration into the labour market was a major goal for Germany. Private and public employers with at least 20 employees were required to ensure that 5% of its workforce was made up of people with disabilities – a requirement which, if not met, would incur a levy. The country was also working to reduce long administrative processing times to bring people with disabilities together with suitable employers more quickly. Lastly, measures were being taken to make all development aid projects accessible to people with disabilities and not just those projects specifically conceived for people with disabilities.

It was important to focus on international partnerships and cross-sectoral cooperation as no single actor alone could bring the necessary changes. Parliamentarians must come together to break down barriers, including the barriers in people's minds.

**Mr. P. Nanda** (India) said that the ideals of inclusive development and peaceful coexistence were profoundly engrained in India's socio-political psyche and the country was implementing a number of policies and actions in that regard. In particular, India was committed to promoting gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments. The Parliament had recently passed the Women's Reservation Bill which reserved one third of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies.

Addressing climate change was another priority for India and the country had been actively involved in many climate initiatives. The Parliament was committed to implementing legislation and scrutinizing budgets to support the goals of the Paris Agreement and other climate accords.

The Ninth G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit (P20) held in New Delhi in October 2023 had demonstrated India's dedication to democratic values, international cooperation and cooperative parliamentary efforts to address climate change and other issues of global importance.

**Mr. E. Parras** (Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (IAO)) said that it was the first time that an international parliamentary institution with observer status was participating in the special accountability segment. To achieve a peaceful and sustainable future, it was important for all stakeholders to participate regardless of legal status and formal procedures.

The IAO had undertaken a number of activities to promote the Marrakesh Communiqué. First, part of the discussions at the 30th General Assembly of the IAO had been dedicated to the Marrakesh Communiqué where the document had been shared with partners for the widest possible visibility. Second, the IAO was working with the Parliamentary Union of the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to organize a parliamentary dialogue conference for the promotion of interfaith understanding between the Christian and Muslim worlds. Third, in February 2024, the IAO leadership had participated in the international conference on “Parliamentary and religious leaders for coexistence and peace” in Sarajevo where it had once again underlined the importance of the Marrakesh Communiqué. Lastly, in May of 2024, the IAO in collaboration with the Commission of the Bishops’ Conferences of the European Union, the Conference of European Churches and the organization “Together for Europe” would hold an international political conference entitled *Politics as a space for the expression of Christian values in everyday life*. One of the roundtables of the conference would be dedicated to the Marrakesh Communiqué as a positive model for the involvement of the religious sector in international politics.

**A representative of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)** urged parliamentarians to ensure that IPU resolutions were impactful for the most vulnerable populations. Actions pertaining to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 on climate action should be prioritized in the 2024 voluntary national reviews paying particular attention to women, children and adolescents.

**Mr. K.E. Kandodo** (Malawi) said that, over the past two decades, Malawi had endured many climate hazards, ranging from prolonged dry spells, to devastating cyclones and flash floods which had wreaked havoc on communities, jeopardizing food and water security and undermining the very fabric of society. Amidst those challenges, the Parliament of Malawi had risen to the occasion, enacting progressive legislation, allocating resources and exercising robust oversight to address the impacts of climate change head on. One of the most notable achievements of the Malawi Parliament was the enactment of the Climate Change Act – a landmark piece of legislation that provided a comprehensive framework for mitigating and adapting to climatic change impacts. The Act not only aligned national policies with the objectives of international agreements such as the Paris Agreement but also mandated the integration of climate considerations into sectoral policies, thus fostering a holistic approach to climate action. Furthermore, the Parliament had played a pivotal role in the allocation of resources to climate-related initiatives in areas such as renewable energy, afforestation and climate smart agriculture. By prioritizing climate change adaptation and resilience building efforts, the Parliament had laid the groundwork for a sustainable future.

*Ms. M. Guerra Castillo (Mexico) took the Chair.*

Item 3 of the agenda  
(continued)

**General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary diplomacy:  
Building bridges for peace and understanding***

**Ms. P. Aguirre** (Ecuador) said that peace was not just about the absence of conflict but about acting with dignity and creating a better future.

Although Ecuador was not fighting a war with another country, it was indeed fighting a war against organized crime. The global war on drugs had failed and Ecuador was suffering the consequences. In 2023, 8,000 Ecuadorians had been killed as a result of organized crime despite the country previously being one of the safest in Latin America.

The Parliament of Ecuador had taken a number of actions to tackle organized crime, including putting the army onto the streets. Those actions, however, were not good enough because organized crime had infiltrated the State. Criminals were, for instance, being released from prison by judges who had been paid off by drug money. Digital tools, such as artificial intelligence (AI), could help to fight organized crime but were unfortunately in the hands of criminals rather than States due to their high cost. Developing countries, in particular, did not have the resources to pay for such tools. Tax havens were another significant problem allowing criminals to hide their money in “black holes” that were not monitored.

The most effective way to stop drug trafficking was to stop the funding of organized crime. Latin America and the world at large, Europe included, must also gain better control over their ports, and criminals must face real consequences and sanctions. It was unacceptable that criminals were currently living comfortably in prison with access to internet and mobile phones, thus allowing them to continue business as usual.

To achieve peace, it was vital to win the war on drugs. Organized crime was not just Ecuador's problem but a problem of the whole world. Statements of solidarity were not enough. Real actions must be taken.

**Ms. R. Chemeris** (Russian Federation) thanked delegates for their condolences following the terrorist attack in Moscow, where dozens of people, including children, had died.

The new threats and challenges that were emerging in the multipolar world required the international community to unite and consolidate its efforts. Parliamentarians, in their effort to find compromise, could play a stabilizing role in the entire system of international relations. As carriers of democratic legitimacy, they had a great deal of authority when it came to expressing the will of the people. The mission of parliamentary diplomacy was to promote a united and constructive agenda and to strengthen trust between peoples and countries. As such, maximum efforts must be made to build parliamentary bridges in the interest of peace and understanding.

**Mr. M. Nandlall** (Guyana), quoting Martin Luther King Jr., said that peace was not the absence of war but the presence of justice and brotherhood.

The IPU, given its commitment to dialogue, was ideally poised to support the peaceful resolution of conflicts. At the current Assembly, however, it had failed to condemn the human rights tragedy in Gaza as well as the lack of democracy in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Those two horrendous events, though occurring at opposite sides of the globe, showed the deadly havoc that armed conflicts wreaked and the social disorder that the absence of democracy produced.

He wished to highlight another dimension of Venezuelan politics, namely its unlawful claim to two thirds of Guyana's sovereign territory. The claim by Venezuela had been finally and conclusively settled in an arbitral award in 1899 – an outcome that Venezuela had accepted for six decades thereafter. It had not been until the early 1960s that Venezuela had, without a scintilla of evidence, deemed the arbitral award as unlawful. In 2018, the UN Secretary-General had referred the matter to the ICJ. Thus far, Venezuela had refused to accept the Court's jurisdiction or be bound by any order of the Court and had even threatened physical invasion. The ICJ had issued interim measures restraining Venezuela from taking further steps.

In December 2023, the Presidents of Venezuela and Guyana had signed the Argyle Declaration calling on the two countries to resort to diplomacy and dialogue in resolving the dispute. In that process, Guyana had emphatically insisted that the matter be resolved by the ICJ. Unfortunately, however, in March 2024, in breach of the interim measures granted by the ICJ and the Argyle Declaration, the Venezuelan Government had enacted laws to annex two thirds of Guyana's sovereign territory.

He appealed to delegates to condemn Venezuela's actions, demand compliance with international law and call for diplomacy to be used as a bridge for peace and understanding. It was not a favour to Guyana but a duty to the world.

**Mr E. Zingeris** (Lithuania) said that the system of international law adopted after the Second World War had been a response against the brutality of the Nazi regime, yet the threat of another world war was looming again. He called on the Russian Federation to stop the aggression against Ukraine. The international community should sanction the Russian State rather than Russian democrats. It was important to cooperate with the UN, the Council of Europe and other bodies to establish an international commission to investigate the death of Alexei Navalny. International justice would not be served as long as the Russian Federation was allowed to proceed as it had.

**Ms. S. Unnoporn** (Thailand) said that, against the backdrop of escalating conflicts and fragile global peace, Thailand firmly believed that now was the time for parliamentary diplomacy in pursuit of the common global agenda for peace, prosperity and sustainability, and in the spirit of multilateralism and solidarity. Thailand had long pursued peaceful and collaborative relations with all members of the international community based on mutual trust, understanding and respect.

Long-lasting peace could only be achieved through sustainable development. As such, the Parliament of Thailand was doing its utmost to get the SDGs back on track. It also fully supported the collective efforts of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to achieve diplomacy, de-

escalation and sustainable peace in the region, including for the situation in Myanmar. As an immediate neighbour, it was in Thailand's interests to see a quick return to peace in Myanmar. The Government of Thailand had recently launched an initiative to establish humanitarian corridors along the Thailand-Myanmar border. The initiative aimed to upscale humanitarian assistance without politicization.

Thailand supported the agenda of the IPU on peace, security, development, climate change management, democracy, human rights and the promotion of partnerships between stakeholders at all levels. Young parliamentarians from Thailand would use parliamentary diplomacy to work closely with all nations and partners and meet global challenges head on.

**Ms. L. Clifford Lee** (Ireland) said that peace was promoted through economic equality, gender parity and equal treatment of all societal groups.

It was particularly important to dismantle the patriarchal systems of government that, for too long, had worked against women, leading to poor outcomes for societies globally. Parliamentarians must commit to having more women in parliament, particularly in senior leadership positions. Harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation, must be stopped along with other forms of violence against women and girls. There must be no more threats to reproductive rights and health care and no more gender income inequality. Unequal access to education, nutrition and health care for girls and women globally must also be stopped.

Conflict and war disproportionately impacted women and children. Parliaments must build bridges, engage in diplomacy and commit to ceasefires, lasting peace and cooperation. She urged parliamentarians to reject populism, polarization and other divisive means to gain support which were huge threats to security and stability. It was incumbent on parliamentarians to be honest with the electorate and bring people together.

**Mr. K. Kabre** (Burkina Faso) drew attention to the devastating impact of conflicts on young people. Not only did they experience material loss and psychological damage but also persistent exclusion from political and social life. Young people were often the first victims of conflicts but last to be included in peace and reconciliation processes. Their voices were drowned out by the noise of weapons and their potential compromised by the uncertainty and instability of war. It was imperative to recognize the huge potential of young people to contribute to peace and stability. Young people were full of energy and creativity and had an overwhelming desire for change. Those were precious resources that must not be disregarded. He urged countries to invest in the education and professional training of young people, provide them with economic opportunities and build their resilience. The voices of young people must not only be heard but also taken into account. In doing so, it would be possible to build a fairer, more peaceful and more inclusive world.

**Mr. M. Yusefi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that young people around the world were exposed to many dangers, such as war, climate change and food crises. The situation for young people in Palestine was particularly dire. Young people were being massacred, tortured, deprived of food and expelled from their homeland as part of the genocidal agenda of the Israeli regime. It was not possible to talk about a future for Palestine without young people. The international community must speak with a united voice and take decisive action to support young people in Palestine.

Parliamentary diplomacy was a tool for peace and understanding that should be used to achieve equality and justice for young people around the world. Unilateral coercive measures, such as the sanctions imposed on the Islamic Republic of Iran, prevented the development of young people and undermined their human rights, including the right to health and the right to education. Nonetheless, young people had redoubled their efforts to overcome those obstacles. Blocking the transfer of technology or creating centres to spread false information were other examples of actions that thwarted the participation of young people in society.

Cooperation among the IPU Members on youth issues was needed to create a safe, peaceful and prosperous future for young people.

**Ms. K. Carter** (New Zealand) said that sustained peace could not be achieved alone, nor could it be achieved by deeming some human lives to be more valuable than others. Parliamentarians must commit to upholding human rights, including indigenous rights, and non-violent conflict resolution. She was outraged at the loss of over 30,000 Palestinian lives since the attack on 7 October 2023 and called for the immediate release of hostages from both Israel and Palestine as well as for an immediate ceasefire.

The Green Party of New Zealand was part of a global movement working to change politics by putting people and planet first. Indeed, people and planet were connected: when the land was well then so were the people. The crisis facing the planet required solutions that stretched across borders. Children were depending on adults to put their needs first, end poverty, stop pollution and face up to the climate crisis. She called on parliamentarians to stand up for justice and peace, particularly in West Papua, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Palestine.

**Mr. N. Scherak** (Austria) said that, in a world shaken by multiple crises, he wished to emphasize the importance of multilateralism. As a young parliamentarian, he was worried about the stability of democracies in the coming years as the world became more and more divided. Strong political discourse based on compromise and dialogue was a challenge in current times but crucial in order to find solutions. Indeed, stability was achieved through compromise and dialogue, particularly when many actors were involved. Multilateralism had brought many beneficial outcomes to the world. It had, for instance, facilitated the creation of international law, which was the cornerstone of the modern system of governance, as well as the Schengen Area in European Union, which had led to more freedom for Europeans. It was important to strengthen bonds among States so they could work towards common goals and aspirations. The best way to do so was through multilateralism.

**Mr. R. Cunha** (Brazil) said that humanity was likely to suffer the consequences of their actions in relation to climate change and the environment, which was why there was currently an enormous global effort towards decarbonization. The world was at a historic moment in which two paths could be taken: (1) continue destroying the planet through the exploitation of finite resources; or (2) seek a change of direction.

He drew attention to an environmental tragedy occurring in the city of Maceió, Alagoas, Brazil where 60,000 people had been forced to leave their homes due to the operations of the multinational mining company Braskem. That company had been indiscriminately exploiting rock salt in urban areas for more than 40 years, leading to sinking ground and cracks in streets and buildings. The damage to the city and environment was irreparable.

He urged the international community to seek fair redress for people who suffered as a result of such environmental destruction and to call for environmental rules and mining inspections to be strengthened. The IPU should set up a committee to follow up on the environmental crimes happening in Maceió.

**A delegate from Morocco**, speaking in exercise of the right of reply and responding to the delegate from Algeria, said that the issue concerning the Sahara had not been referred to the ICJ but was in fact before the UN Security Council.

*The sitting rose at 18:15.*

# Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

**SITTING OF SUNDAY, 24 MARCH 2024**

(Morning)

*The sitting was called to order at 09:25 with Ms. A. Kuspan (Kazakhstan), President of the Standing Committee, in the Chair.*

## **Adoption of the agenda** (C-I/148/A.1)

*The agenda was adopted.*

## **Approval of the summary record of the Committee's session held at the 147th IPU Assembly in Luanda (October 2023)**

*The summary record was approved.*

## **Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence**

### **(a) Presentation of the draft resolution and the explanatory memorandum prepared by the co-Rapporteurs**

**The President** congratulated the two co-Rapporteurs, Ms. M. Stolbizer (Argentina) and Mr. C. Lacroix (Belgium), for their work on the draft resolution entitled *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence* and the explanatory memorandum. She regretted that Ms. Stolbizer could not attend the meeting. However, Ms. L. Crexell (Argentina) would speak on her behalf regarding the amendments.

**Mr. C. Lacroix** (Belgium), co-Rapporteur, said that Dürrenmatt had written a play, *The Physicists*, in which he explored the relationship between reason and madness, knowledge and power, and progress and destruction. One could see those themes appear in relation to Nobel's and Oppenheimer's scientific discoveries. When coupled with a lack of public debate, broad consensus and ethical, social and political limitations, such discoveries threatened humankind. Dürrenmatt had written that, although scientific work concerned physicists, its effects concerned all of humankind.

Although there was no universally accepted definition of artificial intelligence (AI), it clearly represented a significant and valuable scientific breakthrough. However, using AI as a weapon could have serious consequences. The draft resolution therefore focused on systems that could select and attack human targets autonomously. The members of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians and the Forum of Women Parliamentarians had expressed their concerns as young people and women were particularly vulnerable to wars and conflicts. Such weapons could, for example, target women for rape and acts of sexist violence.

Regarding the draft resolution, the co-Rapporteurs had considered the Guiding Principles affirmed by the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (GGE), the Belén Communiqué and the special communication on the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapons that had been endorsed at the 28th Ibero-American Summit. They had referred to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), which had recalled the need to respect international humanitarian law and human rights. They had also taken into account the views of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots, European Commission High-Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence (AI HLEG), and UN rapporteurs. The UN Secretary-General had called on States to adopt by 2026 a legally binding instrument prohibiting lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS) that functioned without human control or oversight and regulating all other types of autonomous weapon systems. There would be opportunities to discuss an international and binding regulation and perhaps to amend the draft resolution. The adoption of UN General Assembly resolution 78/241 had reflected the global consensus on the urgency to tackle the

challenges that autonomous weapon systems presented. Member States, international organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), civil society, the scientific community and industry had been invited in the UNGA draft resolution to give their views. An IPU resolution would further UN work, demonstrate parliamentarians' concerns and prompt governments to take action.

The IPU draft resolution aimed to give parliaments an active role due to the ethical, legal, humanitarian and security implications of LAWS which governments and technocrats alone could not handle. It referred to international humanitarian law (IHL) and the potential ethical violations of autonomous weapon systems. The secret proliferation of autonomous weapon systems would intensify the arms race and potentially destabilize global peace. Some States – particularly those that were highly militarized – might antagonize others, leading to regional and even international conflicts. Many delegations had submitted amendments on that issue. The draft resolution highlighted that autonomous weapon systems could become weapons of mass destruction; humans should therefore monitor those weapons throughout their life cycles. The draft resolution underscored the need to manage such technology responsibly by ensuring that it contributed to progress without undermining peace, international security or global stability. It referred to IHL, which aimed to limit suffering in conflict, and the Convention On Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed To Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW). The draft resolution encouraged parliaments to promote international discussions on a binding instrument and urged parliaments to promote respect for international law and ethics, and to work with all stakeholders, including the defence industry, civil society and academia. Parliaments were urged to hold governments accountable and ensure transparency regarding LAWS. Although AI and autonomous weapon systems were complicated scientific and technological fields, parliamentarians must learn about them and make decisions that enabled humankind to maintain a peaceful and compassionate world. The draft resolution urged parliaments to request that governments clearly define responsibilities, such as those of LAWS developers in the event of errors committed in conflicts, and to adopt legislation to ensure that such systems did not fall into criminal hands. Parliaments and parliamentarians were encouraged to exchange good practices among each other.

**The President**, thanking the co-Rapporteurs, declared the debate on the draft resolution open.

### (b) Debate

**Mr. Z. Mojskerc** (Slovenia) said that the use of autonomous weapons was a pressing issue that shaped military strategies. It raised ethical and moral concerns bearing on the future of humanity. Ensuring accountability, control and compliance with international law and ethical principles were top priorities. Slovenia was working towards the international regulation of autonomous weapon systems and aligned itself with countries advocating for their controlled use, preferably through an international instrument. Slovenia aimed to be transparent in the production, trade and use of such weapons. It was important to comply with international law, distinguish between military and civilian targets as well as combatants and non-combatants, and retain full human control over autonomous weapon systems. The establishment of a transparency mechanism in international transfers of autonomous weapons would represent progress.

Parliamentarians were crucial to developing regulatory frameworks that ensured that AI was used in accordance with the highest moral and ethical standards. In October 2023, Slovenia had joined 50 countries in endorsing the Political Declaration on Responsible Military Use of Artificial Intelligence and Autonomy. The Declaration established a normative framework and mandated participating countries to implement oversight measures on the military use of AI to ensure compliance with IHL and maintain human control over AI.

**Mr. Banno Yutaka** (Japan) said that he supported the draft resolution. There should be a shared sense of urgency regarding autonomous weapon systems, and discussions on their regulation should be promoted. AI could reduce human labour and errors but risked catastrophe if used incorrectly. AI decision-making must never threaten civilians and all weapon systems must adhere to IHL. Discussions must continue to focus on ensuring transparency, accountability and regulation through consensus-building.

Japan had not developed fully autonomous lethal weapons. However, definitions of LAWS differed, as did views on their regulation. Creating a binding international instrument based on common understanding was difficult. Discussions should continue to work towards an effective framework and he hoped that the resolution would help parliaments to alert the international community regarding the current situation, deepen discussions and promote international consensus-building.



**Mr. A.K. Mittal** (India) said that India did not support the draft resolution. The Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW remained the most appropriate forum to discuss issues related to LAWS legislation and the GGE continued to work on emerging technologies. Parallel mandates and processes would slow down or reverse progress in deliberations. It was more important to build a common understanding of LAWS, including a universally agreed definition of LAWS, among all High Contracting Parties to the CCW. Only then could deliberations on measures or instruments begin.

**Mr. H. Al-Qahtani** (Arab Parliament) said that it was increasingly apparent that, in current wars and crises worldwide, some countries were using AI to achieve rapid victories. However, LAWS could lead to mass destruction lasting for generations. Atrocities reflecting the destructive nature of such weapons had been witnessed in Gaza and had led to over 30,000 deaths. LAWS, which could inflict mass harm and operated without human control, had the potential to become future weapons of mass destruction. Many UN Member States had considered that fact when adopting UN General Assembly resolution 78/241. It was difficult to assess the harm that humanity would face were the weapons to fall into the hands of terrorists or non-State actors. Binding international legislation, such as urged by the draft resolution, was necessary to prohibit the use of LAWS and parliamentarians should aim to adopt such legislation by 2030. He did not have comments on the current draft resolution. However, he hoped that it would be drafted clearly to ensure the total prohibition of LAWS.

**Ms. D.E. Diakude** (South Africa) said that she advocated for the adoption of the draft resolution. The use of autonomous weapon systems had profound social and humanitarian implications and it was parliamentarians' responsibility to address those critical challenges proactively. The advent of LAWS represented a monumental shift in warfare requiring immediate attention. The absence of human intervention in decision-making posed a fundamental threat to the ethical and legal standards underpinning the principles of warfare. It was imperative to recognize that LAWS could disrupt the delicate balance in conflicts and threaten civilians and global stability.

Parliamentarians were vital to fostering understanding of the multifaceted challenges of LAWS and advocating for legislative measures that aligned with IHL and human rights norms. They had a responsibility to ensure appropriate regulatory frameworks that upheld ethical and legal principles, and safeguarded individuals and communities' well-being. Supporting the draft resolution furthered the implementation of a robust and proactive approach towards LAWS. It underscored commitment to understanding and addressing the complex societal and humanitarian implications of autonomous weapons, and amplified the ethical considerations of using force in armed conflicts. Parliamentarians should recognize their responsibility and pledge their commitment to upholding IHL and human rights while leveraging parliamentary influence to safeguard the global community's welfare.

**Ms. Shin Hyun Young** (Republic of Korea) said that the draft resolution emphasized the security threats that LAWS posed and called for a legally binding instrument to regulate LAWS development. Her delegation had submitted amendments because it was important to consider different perspectives in order to reach an agreement. LAWS-related discussions should not focus solely on the risks of LAWS but should consider the need for security. Moreover, before developing a legally binding LAWS instrument, an internationally recognized definition of LAWS must be agreed. The revisions that her delegation had submitted therefore reduced the emphasis on the negative aspects of LAWS and encouraged the international community to engage in more discussions with all relevant stakeholders before agreeing a legally binding instrument. The revisions incorporated elements of UN General Assembly resolution 78/241 and the Guiding Principles affirmed by the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of LAWS, which the High Contracting Parties to the CCW had endorsed.

**Mr. J. Alias** (Malaysia) said that Malaysia supported the draft resolution and recognized the importance of understanding how weapons-related technological developments affected global peace, security and human rights. National and international legislation, particularly regarding the creation and use of autonomous weapon systems, could be drafted if national parliaments engaged actively and effectively. Parliaments must focus on and debate the resolution. Emerging technologies threatened international peace and security, and raised questions about humans' role in warfare. Regulations on autonomous weapon systems must consider the effects of those systems and humans must consider the ethical, legal, humanitarian and security implications. The Malaysian Defence White Paper had highlighted the importance of universal peace. He agreed that through research and investment in sophisticated military technologies, including AI and algorithmic data processing, highly

militarized States could gain a significant advantage in their ability to conduct war and amplify existing global power imbalances, threatening international peace and security even further. AI was a general-purpose technology; the impetus for AI innovation therefore came from a broad set of actors, and countries and companies were investing heavily in it. The history of economic and military power suggested that, although some AI uses might enhance existing power, the general purpose of AI would be to limit first-mover advantage.

**Mr. S. Stefanou** (Cyprus) said that systems with automatic analysis and autonomous capabilities could perform tasks requiring human intelligence. Although rapid technological developments, such as AI, created opportunities and could transform economies and societies, they also presented ethical, security and regulatory challenges that required robust legal and regulatory frameworks and international cooperation.

It was important to adopt an international treaty by 2026 prohibiting the use of LAWS. There was also an increasing need for a binding international instrument to regulate the development and use of autonomous weapons, and to uphold ethical, legal and humanitarian principles and IHL. Parliaments were pivotal to addressing such challenges; they should protect those principles through national legislation and call for the prohibition of the use of LAWS against, or in the vicinity of, humans. Parliaments should cooperate with stakeholders and support international negotiations for a binding instrument that regulated LAWS, upheld ethical, legal and humanitarian principles, listed developers' responsibilities, promoted awareness and facilitated the exchange of best practices between States.

The draft resolution highlighted that the most militarized States, which leveraged AI to enhance their military capabilities, threatened international security. The risk that criminal or non-State groups might use LAWS as weapons of mass destruction was equally serious. Through international cooperation and IHL, technological progress could be aligned with shared values and the safeguarding of global peace.

**Mr. C. Sathawornwichit** (Thailand) said that Thailand did not produce LAWS. The implications of their use, and the rapid proliferation of drones with lethal capabilities, were concerning. The humanitarian, legal, security and ethical implications of non-State armed groups using dual-use drones were particularly alarming. In Thailand, laws and regulations controlled the import and export of strategic goods, including conventional dual-use items such as drones. They promoted responsibility and transparency, prevented misuse, and strengthened national and international security. In the draft resolution, he appreciated the emphasis on the need to regulate and prohibit autonomous weapons while retaining meaningful human control and complying with IHL. Parliamentarians were pivotal to engaging with citizens and raising awareness of LAWS. He hoped that the draft resolution would lead to parliamentary responses and the conclusion of a legally binding instrument on autonomous weapon systems by 2026.

**Mr. A. Golroo** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that LAWS required an inclusive, transparent and balanced approach. Aligning methods and work promoted coherence within analyses and the establishment of a unified LAWS framework. The production of various texts and diverse initiatives had fragmented the discourse on LAWS. Instead, a single methodological approach within the most specialized body should be adopted to ensure a clear, coherent and effective debate. Consensus should be reached regarding the definitions, concepts, characteristics and functions of LAWS. It was also important to maintain human oversight of LAWS to mitigate risks and ensure respect for ethical requirements, human dignity and life.

LAWS-related negotiations should be based on multilateralism and non-discrimination, and concerns should be addressed comprehensively, transparently, multilaterally and in a balanced manner. Discussions and potential policies must not prevent the peaceful use of emerging technologies. Despite the challenges that LAWS presented, the potential benefits of autonomous technologies should be recognized. All countries had the inherent right to research, acquire, supply, build, develop and benefit from emerging technologies – including AI and related technologies – and any political or legal action should not result in revoking or limiting those rights.

**Ms. R.M. Singkaru** (Indonesia) said that AI would significantly influence international security. It was parliamentarians' moral duty, and one of their core obligations, to ensure that technological advancements prioritized ethical and legal principles, and did not harm innocent people. Autonomous weapons must be regulated through a legally binding instrument, rather than a political declaration or other non-binding documents, to ensure compliance within States. Efforts to ensure respect for international law, including IHL and LAWS-related instruments, should not be biased or demonstrate

double standards. Parliaments must act immediately to promote dialogue and enhance cooperation in order to address the welfare implications of emerging technologies and prioritize humanitarian needs over those of the military. The House of Representatives of Indonesia therefore welcomed efforts to shape the discourse on the social and humanitarian impacts of autonomous weapon systems and AI.

**Mr. O. Merezhko** (Ukraine) said that the draft resolution was missing a key issue: aggression. It was a crime under international law for aggressor states to use weapons, including autonomous weapon systems, to kill civilians and destroy civilian infrastructure. However, international law permitted the victims of aggressor States to use those weapons to defend themselves. The Russian Federation, which was led by what many parliaments had recognized as a terrorist neo-Nazi regime, used drones daily to kill civilians in Ukraine. The Islamic Republic of Iran provided the Russian Federation with Shahed drones and was therefore an accomplice in the Russian genocide of Ukrainians. The resolution should therefore address terrorist regimes' use of weapons, including autonomous weapon systems.

**Mr. R. Soto Mardones** (Chile) said that his delegation supported the draft resolution because the international political community could not keep up with global technological progress, particularly the use of AI in security and defence. That progress was outpacing efforts to reach a global and national consensus on how to take responsibility for the consequences of those technologies. The uncontrolled and unregulated development of autonomous weapon systems fostered wars and genocide, and could lead to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the end of humanity. He therefore supported the draft resolution because it fostered international cooperation and built international consensus on prohibiting and limiting the development of those weapons. He also supported it from a human rights, ethical, political and humanitarian perspective. Countries needed to regulate themselves and reach national consensus to establish adequate controls, regulations and legislation, which should be based on a commitment and sense of responsibility to care for humanity. Global peace, humanity and human rights must be safeguarded. Although efforts to reach an international consensus had progressed slowly, they should continue.

**Ms. R. Saint-Germain** (Canada) said that her delegation's amendments harmonized the draft resolution with UN General Assembly resolution 78/241. Currently, no resolution defined LAWS. Weapon systems that selected targets and applied lethal force without human intervention ran counter to the IHL principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution. Although autonomous weapon systems were on the rise, completely autonomous lethal weapon systems did not exist yet. Canada supported the work of the GGE. She urged other states to do so and to encourage civil society organizations to participate in the Group's discussions. Since national political systems differed, the draft resolution should avoid calls for national parliaments to adopt laws, budgets and specific policies. States and the GGE should outline procedures, training and best practices to ensure military systems complied with IHL and her delegation would submit amendments in that regard.

**Ms. F. Belhirsch** (Netherlands) said that using AI in autonomous weapon systems threatened human rights. It was essential to retain meaningful human control, raise awareness, define AI in the military domain and determine how to develop, manufacture and use such weapons responsibly. In the military, AI also impacted data analysis, decision-making, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance activities. However, AI raised concerns regarding system predictability, lack of human control and the escalation of violence. It was essential to make the military use of AI more transparent and establish frameworks to uphold humanitarian law in wars. Establishing those frameworks should be a priority and her delegation therefore welcomed the draft resolution. Discussions about AI should also be held with AI stakeholders, such as academics, civil society, the private sector, think tanks and international organizations.

**Mr. L. Slutskiy** (Russian Federation) said that he disagreed with Mr. Merezhko. It was well known that Ukraine, which had been involved in the terrorist attack in Moscow, was a neo-Nazi regime. He was grateful to those delegations that had expressed their condolences.

He agreed with Mr. Sathawornwichit and Mr. Golroo. The draft resolution was not ready to be adopted because it did not present a balanced view and he wished to annul the amendments that the Russian delegation had presented. Autonomous weapon systems should be regulated by the CCW and experts should explore those systems further. There was still no definition of autonomous weapon systems – an issue that the GGE was addressing – which prevented discussions on the work of some international organizations, such as the ICRC. He had presented a report to the PACE and the

Committee on AI on the work of the ICRC but only the CCW could deal with autonomous weapon systems. LAWS referred to absolutely autonomous technical weapons that used lethal force without human intervention. Highly autonomous systems, which were currently in use, should be considered a separate category of weapon. However, in some cases, LAWS could be more effective than humans in upholding international humanitarian law. Although there were concerns regarding the intersection of lethal weapon systems and AI, those should be addressed comprehensively and alongside the CCW. He urged delegations not to adopt the draft resolution.

**Mr. M.C. Martell** (Cuba) said that the adoption of UN General Assembly resolution 78/241, and regional and national initiatives, demonstrated the interest in LAWS. The IPU should help adopt a legally binding instrument prohibiting completely autonomous weapons and regulating semi-autonomous weapons. The draft resolution must recognize the transformative nature of technologies and AI. However, the IPU should highlight the legal, ethical and humanitarian implications of emerging technologies regarding peace and international security. Discussions could not focus solely on international humanitarian law. Autonomous and semi-autonomous weapons should respect international law, including IHL, or be prohibited before their production and use became widespread. Weapons that could not guarantee significant human control should not be developed.

Completely autonomous lethal weapon systems challenged international law and could be used to undermine the principles of national sovereignty and territorial integrity enshrined in Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations. There was no guarantee that LAWS could uphold the IHL principle of distinction. Moreover, LAWS risked exacerbating biases. Machines should not take over the most important decisions in warfare. Human decision-making was vital in military operations, guaranteed compliance with international law and ensured national responsibility.

**Ms. H.R. Khar** (Pakistan) said that humans had often been slow to recognize challenges, collaborate and address them, which had cost lives. Pakistan believed in multilateralism, solutions and global cooperation to address challenges. It had participated in discussions at the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the CCW where it had made several proposals, including establishing a legally binding instrument on LAWS.

Her delegation had proposed amendments to the draft resolution. The amendment to preambular paragraph 2 clarified that there was no consensus regarding the ICRC definition of LAWS, although Pakistan agreed with it. In preambular paragraph 3, the term “automated systems” should clarify that LAWS did not refer to automated systems in which there was some degree of human-machine interaction and reliance on human inputs for their operations. Her delegation’s new preambular paragraph 4bis aimed to recognize language that over 170 countries had agreed at the UN General Assembly.

The development, deployment and integration of AI for military purposes and autonomous weapon systems had serious implications for regional and international security and stability. The resolution, which her delegation was proud to support, should recognize that fact. LAWS could promote asymmetric warfare. The recent use of drone strikes had been widespread because those launching the drones did not witness the loss of human life. LAWS would compound that issue; eliminating human control could lead to unpredictable consequences and rapid escalation. It was dangerous to increase the speed of warfare and decrease the decision-making timeframe, particularly in regions where tensions were high and there had been accidental launch incidents. It was particularly concerning that larger countries in her region did not support the draft resolution. Her delegation had therefore proposed incorporating language from UN General Assembly resolution 78/241.

Her delegation sought a legally binding instrument rather than a political statement or resolution. In that regard, concrete action was necessary. There were many conflict zones, including in the Middle East, where autonomous weapon systems were being used but it was unfair to single one out without referring to the others.

**Mr. V. Vojtko** (Czechia) said that autonomous weapon systems and AI posed serious threats, as evidenced in the scope of Russian aggression against Ukraine. Those threats had ethical, social and political dimensions. The risks and consequences of misuse were alarming. It was therefore necessary to work towards meaningful and efficient regulation and security measures globally. The draft resolution could help in that regard and in deepening understanding of autonomous weapon systems and AI.

**Ms. Y. Eriksson** (Sweden) said that Sweden acknowledged concerns regarding AI and was open to implementing control mechanisms; however, it would not prohibit AI use entirely. It was almost impossible to ban AI research, and civilian and military research mutually benefited one another. Moreover, banning research would reduce innovation and competitiveness while harming the economy. Since AI was likely to revolutionize lives in the coming years, further research and development should be encouraged.

Totalitarian regimes could use AI to control political opposition, rig elections and spread false information. All States would need to adhere to international conventions reducing or limiting the military use of AI. Regulations on the use of AI in the defence industry, which were necessary, would require unanimous support and should be implemented according to international humanitarian law. Negotiations and compromises would be needed.

**Ms. Li Yuping** (China) said that she agreed with several points that the Russian and Indian delegations had raised. LAWS and the rapid development of AI were major, complicated and highly technical issues. Her delegation did not object to the IPU discussing LAWS. However, given the technical nature of the issue, the GGE should be the main negotiation and discussion forum. The IPU draft resolution should be succinct and only contain clear and core messages.

Although new technologies – particularly the military use of AI – presented challenges and raised concerns, they had the potential to advance human welfare and, in certain circumstances, protect civilians in conflicts. The draft resolution should therefore be more balanced. Her delegation looked forward to reaching a consensus on the draft resolution.

**Mr. S. Pariyar** (Nepal) said that Nepal was a peaceful country that did not believe in aggression or war. Technological advancement should benefit humans. His delegation favoured protecting humanity and facing the challenges that technological and military developments presented. Laws, rather than political statements, should regulate autonomous weapons and AI. The Nepali delegation stood ready to work alongside IPU Members in that regard. Human aggression and power imbalances should be addressed. In the meantime, Nepal would adopt national laws and provide solidarity globally.

**Ms. C. Féret** (France) said that it was essential to discuss the legal impact of developing LAWS. France had been among the first countries to raise that issue. Technological progress and the development of defensive AI had given rise to increasingly autonomous weapon systems, which raised concerns regarding the dehumanization of war and the possibility that algorithms would take lives. Although LAWS were not yet fully autonomous, it was time to discuss frameworks to regulate them in terms of international law and the law of war. It was particularly important that the IPU discussed those issues and created conventions because applying IHL principles required a degree of subjectivity that could not be programmed into LAWS. For example, doubts concerning the ability of LAWS to distinguish between civilians and combatants concerned the principle of distinction. Similarly, criminal responsibility for IHL violations that LAWS had committed would raise issues. It was therefore important to continue discussing laws within the framework of the CCW and it was incumbent upon parliamentarians to support those diplomatic processes to protect civilians and prevent issues with defensive AI.

**Mr. M.B. Anakoka** (Zambia) said that the debate focused on regulating the use of LAWS but was based on two problematic assumptions: (1) that it was possible to wage war with minimal or no social and humanitarian impact on civilians; and (2) that war was inevitable. Every effort should be made to prevent war. Time and again, regulations had not prevented wars. Wars worldwide took a severe toll on civilians, and the world was powerless to prevent them. Rather than regulate new warfare technologies, work should focus on preventing conflicts from escalating into wars, particularly through multilateralism. Given that some countries already disregarded humanitarian laws and international warfare conventions, a new regulation would not necessarily lead to change. It would be better to create a global dispute resolution mechanism.

**Ms. C. Mumma** (Kenya) said that she supported the adoption of the draft resolution and recognized the importance and power of science and technology in helping humanity. She favoured the equitable inclusion of all persons and regions in development, and the equitable benefit of science for all, in accordance with human rights principles. Her delegation had submitted amendments which focused on ensuring that autonomous weapons respected IHL and the principles of human rights and dignity. If used improperly, AI could destroy humanity or seriously violate the laws upon which

humanity and civilization was based. It could be used for ethnic cleansing. Parliamentarians must therefore help establish a code of ethics to limit AI use in wars. She supported the current discussions, the results of which should be forwarded to the UN so that it could consider parliamentarians' views.

**Mr. S. Özboyacı** (Türkiye) said that humanitarian considerations should apply throughout the life cycle of autonomous weapon systems. It was important to guarantee meaningful human oversight, particularly to ensure accountability. Given the lack of a definition of LAWS and their ever-evolving nature, LAWS should be used responsibly and controlled through best practices. As with all weapons, IHL should apply to autonomous weapon systems. His delegation supported efforts to develop standards on the responsible use of LAWS and had submitted amendments to the draft resolution.

**Mr. V.B. Abang** (Nigeria) said that, although AI could benefit humanity and development, recent developments and its application in political, economic and social spheres threatened democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Legislators worldwide should address those threats. His delegation supported the use of AI and its regulation to prevent non-State actors from obtaining it.

**Ms. L. Reynolds** (Australia), Rapporteur of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, said that the Forum had discussed many of the concerns raised during the current debate. Unfortunately, women and children were disproportionately impacted in armed conflicts and the use of LAWS would exacerbate their vulnerability. The Forum was particularly concerned about reports that biases against men and women were already embedded in AI algorithms, which would worsen gender inequalities. Those biases must be eliminated from algorithms and data sets to ensure unbiased machine learning processes, including for military applications. In that regard, comprehensive and culture-specific approaches on gender should be adopted. Over 90% of programmers were male and their cultural, gender and racial biases were unconsciously coded into AI systems. The draft resolution already addressed some of those concerns, including through the adoption of measures to ensure a gender and intersectional perspective based on UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in discussions of LAWS and military AI strategies. However, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians believed that those protections must be stronger and had submitted two amendments in that regard.

**Mr. J. Hill** (Australia) said that the unconstrained proliferation and irresponsible use of autonomous weapon systems risked violating IHL. Multilateralism was key to building common understanding on those issues. He aligned himself with the remarks of the Canadian delegation, among others, and agreed that multilateralism was preferable to individual parliaments acting unilaterally.

He disagreed with assertions in the draft resolution suggesting that the development and use of autonomous weapon systems was a lawless domain. The final resolution should clearly state that international law already regulated the research, development, acquisition and deployment of new weapons, including autonomous weapon systems and new technologies. It was critical that any resolution encouraged states to strengthen compliance with existing international law, including IHL. Australia had worked with the GGE as part of the CCW to promote IHL as the key legal framework regulating all weapons, including those with autonomous functions.

It was necessary to build shared understanding of how humanitarian law applied to LAWS before creating a new legal instrument. There was no universally agreed definition of LAWS and the term "killer robots" was unhelpful. For decades, it had been possible to incorporate autonomous functions into weapon systems. His delegation believed that work should align with existing multilateral efforts, including UN General Assembly resolution 78/241 and the work of the GGE.

**Mr. R. Darmoch** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that development and technology should benefit societies. They should not prompt the creation of autonomous weapon systems that could lead to a collective genocide. Such weapons killed hundreds of Gazans every day and risked falling into the hands of terrorists. Terrorism had spread across the world, as demonstrated in his country where terrorists from over 80 countries had joined the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) to destroy the Syrian Arab Republic. Despite the blockade, his country continued to focus on the non-proliferation of such weapons. Peace and security worldwide should be protected.

**Mr. J. Gai Nyuot Yoh** (South Sudan) said that his delegation supported the discussions on, and adoption of, the draft resolution. The reasons why the resolution was important were threefold. First, technology was rapidly overwhelming humans in terms of ethics and international law. Second, there was an urgent need for a global consensus on how to manage, use and classify autonomous weapon

systems. Third, the world must regulate through consensus-based multilateral regulations non-State actors, whose technological power was rapidly increasing. Least developed countries, especially in Africa, must support those discussions because automated weapon systems were already used in an unregulated manner. Given the lack of mechanisms to protect states and their populations, it was time to ensure regulated human control over such weapons. The world should agree regulations that were clear about the usefulness of those weapons and the dangers that they presented when they lacked human oversight.

**Mr. A. Alharbi** (Saudi Arabia), expressing his condolences to the Russian delegation, said that AI weapon systems had been used in many terrorist attacks. He appreciated the inclusion of that fact in the draft resolution.

His delegation supported the draft resolution because it addressed the negative impacts of autonomous weapons and AI. The peaceful use of AI was supported and, five years earlier, Saudi Arabia had established a governmental committee to ensure the best use of emerging technologies, including AI, which supported the educational, health and energy sectors. The Governmental Strategy Index for AI had ranked Saudi Arabia first for its governmental AI strategy. It was difficult to imagine the impact that AI-based lethal weapons would have on humanity.

**Mr. A.N. Salman Ahmad** (Bahrain) said that international legislation should address the ethical and technical aspects of autonomous weapons and AI. Parliaments should hold consultations in that regard and promote legislation to mitigate dangers. Governments should prioritize those issues and produce guidelines that considered international law and IHL. Parliaments worldwide should prompt governments to develop policies and safe systems for AI and autonomous weapons. There should be ethical guidelines to develop those weapons, as well as transparency, accountability and guarantees to avoid negative consequences. Laws should prohibit the proliferation of weapons that targeted civilians. Lack of legislation, controls and accountability measures had prompted massacres and genocides worldwide, including in Gaza.

**Mr. H. Ebrahim** (Bahrain)<sup>1</sup> said that internationally agreed legislation was the main reference on autonomous weapon systems which should be properly controlled. Discussions that included experts and stakeholders should continue in international forums and within the UN. States and companies wanted to keep abreast of the use and rapid development of autonomous weapons. Hence, there should be an international document on AI clarifying how to use it safely and the risks it posed, particularly to individual privacy. It was important to shed light on the legal and ethical implications of autonomous weapon systems and AI, for which parliaments should find appropriate legislative solutions. Governments should establish policies, guidelines and principles based on international law and IHL. He was pleased to note that some of those points had been incorporated into amendments to the draft resolution.

**Mr. S. Praseuth** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that technological progress had developed human civilization, led to cultural change and provided innovative work methods. AI in particular was leading to innovations. However, the military use of AI threatened peace, stability and international security, and had ethical implications. It was therefore necessary to impose limits on AI use and ensure human oversight. In that regard, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Inter-Parliamentary Assembly had adopted the *Resolution on Enhancing Cybersecurity and Data Protection Towards a Resilient Cyberspace in ASEAN* and the *Resolution on Fostering Human Security to Achieve Digital Inclusion in ASEAN*.

In his country, laws on telecommunications, information and communication technology, signatures and combating cybercrime had been passed. The ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly must debate how to address LAWS-related threats to peace and security. Parliamentary engagement was necessary to develop national, regional and international rules and regulations that considered the ethical, legal, humanitarian and security implications of using LAWS, particularly on humans or in their vicinity. Technology should be managed responsibly while ensuring it did not threaten peace, stability, security and global stability.

### (c) Drafting and adoption of the draft resolution in plenary

**The President** announced that the Committee would proceed to discuss the proposed amendments in plenary that afternoon.

*The sitting rose at 11:45.*

<sup>1</sup> Bahrain's speaking time was divided to allow two delegates to take the floor.

**SITTING OF TUESDAY, 26 MARCH 2024**

(Afternoon)

*The sitting was called to order at 15:10 with Ms. A. Kuspan (Kazakhstan), President of the Standing Committee, in the Chair.*

**(c) Drafting and adoption of the draft resolution in plenary**

**The President** invited the Committee to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

*The delegation of Thailand seconded the President's proposal but the delegation of the United Kingdom requested a vote on each paragraph of the draft resolution. Preambular paragraph 1 was sub-amended – 13 delegations voted in favour of the amended wording; two voted against – and adopted – 17 delegations voted in favour of adopting the amended paragraph; four voted against. Votes were held on several of the following preambular paragraphs (with no proposals for sub-amendments), following which the delegation of the United Kingdom retracted its request and the Standing Committee proceeded to adopt the draft resolution by vote. Twenty-six delegations voted in favour of the draft resolution; five delegations voted against.*

**The President** invited delegates to express their reservations.

**Ms. C. Féret** (France) said that she regretted that her delegation had reservations regarding the resolution. The debate on lethal autonomous weapon systems had been essential for five reasons. First, parliamentarians could not ignore concerns within society about killer robots. Second, the sensationalist and mediatised image of killer robots fed into fantasies; parliamentarians must adopt an approach that was as objective and rational as possible since fully autonomous lethal weapon systems did not exist. Third, increased autonomy in weapon systems, which significant advances in artificial intelligence (AI) had enabled, raised questions about humans' role in war and the principles of international law in conflicts. Fourth, discussions on lethal autonomous weapon systems had been held at the international level in Geneva, Switzerland for 10 years but had been met with indifference. However, there should be general interest in work relating to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (GGE). Fifth, the search for increased autonomy was creating a new arms race and changing the strategic landscape. She thanked the President and the co-Rapporteurs for their work but the central issue of the debate was missing. Instead of discussing lethal autonomous weapon systems, the resolution discussed autonomous weapon systems in general. Some autonomous weapon systems, such as underwater drones, could protect undersea communications cables. Her delegation did not think it had been necessary to include such weapons in the scope of the resolution.

**Mr. K. Kosachev** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation considered the GGE to be the most suitable platform to address autonomous weapon systems; allowing other platforms to deal with the issue would be counterproductive. The adopted resolution did not assuage his delegation's concerns. International law, including international humanitarian law (IHL), was fully applicable to autonomous weapon systems. Therefore, an immediate ban or limitations on such systems was unnecessary until legal, technological and military experts had examined them. Proper implementation of current international legal norms could address concerns regarding autonomous weapon systems. Human control constrained autonomous weapon systems and should remain at the discretion of States. He requested that the Russian delegation's opposition be included in the final version of the resolution.

**Mr. J. Hill** (Australia), thanking the President, the Secretariat and the co-Rapporteurs for their work, said that although work over the previous two days had significantly improved the resolution and achieved consensus regarding the operative paragraphs, his delegation continued to have reservations, particularly concerning the preambular paragraphs. The final version of the resolution was inconsistent, contained unclear terminology, and confused certain concepts. It was premature to call to regulate autonomous weapon systems when they were not officially defined and it was unclear



whether they even existed. Alongside many countries, Australia had consistently called for clarification on how IHL applied to autonomous weapon systems and that work was ongoing within multilateral forums. He underscored the importance of IHL, multilateralism and the GGE.

The resolution referred to “ethical standards”, which was concerning because IHL was very clearly founded on ethical principles. Caution should be exercised when referring to undefined ethical standards that were separate from IHL, given the scope for divergent interpretations as to what those ethical standards were. The resolution referred to “human control” and “meaningful human control”, which were imprecise and enabled States to find loopholes within IHL to behave illegally.

Referring to the degree of autonomy – partial compared to full autonomy – of autonomous weapon systems was imprecise and not a useful or relevant metric for determining compliance with IHL. Human supervision over any weapon system must ensure compliance with humanitarian law and would depend on the operational context and weapon system. Autonomy was not static; over the decades, numerous weapon systems had had varying degrees of autonomy and had complied with IHL.

Focusing on killer robots – which did not exist – in discussions on conflicts such as in Gaza distracted from the issue of bad AI and poor targeting which were killing tens of thousands of people. Evidence had emerged that humans were part of the kill chain and fired missiles based on poor algorithms and data. However, that issue was separate from autonomy and the inclusion of the term “killer robots” in the resolution distracted from genuine breaches of humanitarian law.

**Mr. A.K. Mittal** (India) said that his delegation opposed the resolution and requested that the President ensure that that opposition was noted in the final version of the resolution.

**The President** said that she would do so.

**Mr. I. Liddell-Grainger** (United Kingdom) said that the biggest issue with the resolution was that it was unenforceable. Whereas autonomous weapons could pinpoint targets, non-autonomous weapons had caused far more damage since the emergence of gunpowder and led to horrific collateral damage, as had been evidenced in Gaza. The collective aim should be to prevent that collateral damage. It was impossible to prevent wars and the rise of autonomous weapons, regardless of new legislation. The resolution simply did not stand up to scrutiny or make sense and he regretted that he could not congratulate the co-Rapporteurs. It was not possible to legislate for something that did not exist or was undefined, and for countries that did not want to abide by legislation. Moreover, the question was if under law the use of autonomous weapon systems constituted a crime against humanity or genocide. The use of gas during the First World War, and autonomous weapons such as V-1 and V-2 missiles during the Second World War, had been impossible to define. Unfortunately, the resolution would not save lives and the British delegation could not support it under any circumstances. The people that the resolution was trying to protect were being let down. It was revealing that delegations representing some of the largest and most industrialized countries, including member States of the Five Eyes Alliance and India, had expressed concerns. The lack of consensus was a collective failure.

**Mr. S. Smith** (New Zealand) said that, as a small non-nuclear nation, New Zealand relied on other countries for its security. His country was very interested in peace and security, but he had no confidence in the resolution and his delegation did not support it.

**Ms. Yan Jiarong** (China), thanking the Secretariat and the co-Rapporteurs for their work, said that although the amended resolution was more balanced, her delegation wished to disassociate itself from it. Her delegation was particularly concerned about inconsistency within the resolution. United Nations (UN) General Assembly resolution 78/241 and the mandate of the GGE concerned lethal autonomous weapon systems, not autonomous weapon systems. The discussion of both was confusing, and diverting IPU discussions to autonomous weapon systems was not conducive or helpful to current work within the UN, particularly within the GGE. The reference to “weapons of mass destruction” was concerning because there were UN conventions that clearly defined such weapons. The wording could reduce the value and weight of the resolution because it suggested that autonomous weapon systems were weapons of mass destruction, without applying the standard UN process to identify them. The references to the statements of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the GGE were selective and inaccurate.

**Ms. P. Aguirre** (Ecuador) said that she wished to add a topic that was relevant to developing countries, including those in Latin America. The use of AI in drug trafficking operations had particularly affected Ecuador. Although AI could advance education, white collar criminals used it to infiltrate developing countries. Every 69 minutes, someone was killed in Ecuador; drug trafficking and organized crime were parts of everyday life. Nobody knew when the kidnappings and extortions would end, both of which were facilitated by AI and social media. It was important that the resolution highlighted that although AI could further development, it could also help States fight drug trafficking and organized crime. The Ecuadorian anti-asset laundering body used computers that were over 10 years old and could not afford patents, whereas drug traffickers used AI. States worldwide should ensure that AI became part of international cooperation with developing countries and helped the fight against drug trafficking.

**The President** said that such topics should have been discussed during the drafting of the resolution and not as a reservation.

**Ms. R. Saint-Germain** (Canada) said that she was speaking as a representative of a member State of the Five Eyes Alliance, and as a representative and citizen of a country that promoted peace worldwide. Canada had consistently supported UN peace missions and continued to do so. Her reservations concerned the precision and coherence of the resolution. Although the aim of the resolution was noble and its objectives were important and relevant, she could not support a text that was so incoherent. Doing so could undermine the credibility of her country. She would therefore abstain from voting in favour of the resolution as a whole.

### Preparations for future Assemblies

#### (a) Proposals for a subject item for the next resolution to be considered by the Committee

**The President** said that the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security had met earlier that morning to discuss the subject item for the resolution to be considered by the Standing Committee at the upcoming IPU Assembly. The delegations of Morocco and Nigeria had submitted proposals. In accordance with Article 20.4 of the Rules of the Standing Committees, the Bureau had chosen *The role of parliaments in advancing a two-State solution in Palestine* as its theme.

*It was so decided.*

#### (b) Proposals for the choice of two co-Rapporteurs

**The President** said that Mr. M.A. Bouchouit (Algeria) from the African Group and Ms. R. Garvey (Ireland)<sup>2</sup> from the Twelve Plus Group had offered to serve as co-Rapporteurs. Other regional groups would put forward names, which would be shared later.

**Mr. I. Liddell-Grainger** (United Kingdom) asked whether it would be better to vote once all the names for co-rapporteurs had been submitted.

**The Secretary** said that the Bureau had agreed the theme of the debate unanimously. To ensure that the resolution was as balanced as possible, a proposal had been made to have a different number of co-rapporteurs than usual. At present, the nominations from the African Group and the Twelve Plus Group had been received.

**Mr. M.A. Bouchouit** (Algeria) said that it had been agreed that there would be a co-rapporteur from almost every geopolitical group. The representative of the Arab Group would come from Bahrain and the Bahraini delegation would nominate and announce the name of its representative.

**The President** said that each geopolitical group should nominate its co-rapporteur.

**Mr. M.A. Bouchouit** (Algeria) said that the Arab Group had chosen Bahrain.

**The President** said that the Arab Group should officially declare that it had nominated Bahrain.

<sup>2</sup> The Twelve Plus Group and Ireland later changed their nomination to Mr. J. Buttimer (Ireland).

**A delegate from Saudi Arabia** said that it was more important to reach a consensus regarding the subject of the resolution. The names of the co-rapporteurs were secondary and might take time to be agreed. He would support any nominations that might be made from Saudi Arabia.

**The President** agreed that the nominations would be submitted later.

**Mr. S. Jackson** (United Kingdom) said that he agreed with the delegate from Saudi Arabia regarding the topic of the debate being settled. However, it was unclear how many co-rapporteurs there would be and whether different people within each geopolitical group were seeking to serve as co-rapporteurs.

**The President** said that the Bureau had proposed that each geopolitical group would nominate one co-rapporteur for the resolution in order to ensure balance and fairness. However, some geopolitical groups had not yet had the chance to nominate their candidate. Regardless, every delegation would be able to propose amendments.

*It was so agreed.*

**The President** said that, according to Rule 6 of the Rules of the Standing Committees, the IPU Standing Committees established their own work plans and set their own agendas. In that context, the Bureau would meet in the coming months to decide on its agenda for the 149th IPU Assembly in October 2024, which would certainly include a hearing on the topic of the next resolution. .

*It was so agreed.*

*The sitting rose at 16:45.*

# Standing Committee on Sustainable Development

SITTING OF SUNDAY, 24 MARCH 2024

(Morning)

*The sitting was called to order at 09:00 with Mr. W. William (Seychelles), President of the Committee, in the Chair.*

## Adoption of the agenda

*The agenda was adopted.*

## Approval of the summary record of the Committee's session held at the 147th IPU Assembly in Luanda (October 2023)

*The summary record was approved.*

### ***Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity***

**The President** drew attention to the draft resolution entitled *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity*. Climate action had been the main theme of the year in 2023 after Members had requested that it be a priority within the IPU Strategy 2022–2026. In March 2023, the IPU had launched a new climate campaign, *Parliaments for the Planet*, designed to encourage parliaments to accelerate climate action. A year on, the campaign had already mobilized hundreds of trailblazing parliamentarians who had shared good practices and solutions related to greening parliaments and to implementing the Paris Agreement. Climate action remained a priority for the IPU in 2024 with a renewed emphasis on providing a global platform for parliamentarians to stay informed about climate change, access the most relevant resources and share replicable good practices. The IPU wished to hear more about the actions parliaments were taking on climate, especially in the lead-up to the 29th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP29) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Azerbaijan in 2024 where a parliamentary meeting would be organized.

**Ms. C. Adam** (Director and Principal Legal Adviser, Division of Legal Affairs, UNFCCC Secretariat) wished to share some remarks on the accomplishments of COP28 and the key outcomes expected at COP29. In 2023, COP28 had delivered the UAE Consensus – a historic set of decisions which included the Global Stocktake decision. It also included a number of other outcomes, notably an agreement to put into operation the Loss and Damage Fund, the adoption of the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience and the institutionalization of the Presidency Youth Climate Champion.

The Global Stocktake was the culmination of a two-year process that had started in 2021 and had been mandated under the Paris Agreement. It provided parties with an opportunity to assess collective progress towards achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement but also to look ahead on what still needed to be done. While the Global Stocktake had shown overall progress towards implementing goals of the Paris Agreement, many countries were not fully on track. In response, parties had been urged to take further action by tripling their renewable energy capacity and doubling energy efficiency improvements by 2030. They had also been encouraged to transition away from fossil fuels, for instance, by phasing down unabated coal power and inefficient fossil fuel subsidies. The transition should be done in a just, orderly and equitable manner and should be led by developed countries. In the short term, countries were also encouraged to come forward with ambitious economy-wide emission reduction targets, covering all greenhouse gas sectors and categories. In addition, the Global Stocktake had called on countries to submit new and additional nationally determined contributions (NDCs) well ahead of COP30 in 2025. Those NDCs should be in line with the outcome of the decision on the Global Stocktake and should be more ambitious than before. It was a legal requirement for NDCs to be informed by the outcome of the Global Stocktake which was in turn regulated under the Paris Agreement.

COP29 would take place in Baku in 2024 under the leadership of the Azerbaijani Presidency. The overall vision for COP29 was to build confidence and trust amongst parties that the outcomes of the first Global Stocktake were being implemented; ensure commitments by all parties for the

implementation of the Enhanced Transparency Framework; and establish the long-term finance architecture to address the priority needs of countries. Regarding finances, it was necessary to provide assurances through the operation of the Loss and Damage Fund, deliver on the US\$ 100 billion commitment, double adaptation finance, and implement Article 9 of the Paris Agreement.

COP29 would be a chance to review progress made as part of the first Global Stocktake and see how parties planned to contribute to global mitigation and adaptation efforts and targets through their 2025 NDCs. The Global Stocktake decision in 2023 had also established an annual Global Stocktake dialogue starting in June 2024 which would facilitate the sharing of knowledge and good practices on how the outcomes of the Global Stocktake were informing the preparation of the next NDCs. It was worth mentioning that the Presidencies of COP28 (United Arab Emirates), COP29 (Azerbaijan) and COP30 (Brazil) had formed a troika to better align the work across the different presidencies going forward. The troika had launched the *Roadmap to Mission 1.5°C* to enhance international cooperation on limiting the global temperature rise and stimulate ambition in the next round of NDCs.

Another monumental outcome of COP29 would be the submission of the first Biennial Transparency Report, demonstrating that the Enhanced Transparency Framework, set up under the Paris Agreement, had successfully entered into full implementation. Biennial Transparency Reports were a mandatory requirement under the Paris Agreement and included information on greenhouse gas inventories as well as on progress in implementing NDCs. The aim of the Biennial Transparency Reports and the Enhanced Transparency Framework was to build mutual trust among parties and promote effective implementation of the Paris Agreement.

COP29 was labelled as a finance COP and was expected to see the conclusion of the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG) which would be set beyond the goal of US\$ 100 billion per year. Elements such as the temporal scope of, quantum and transparency arrangements for the NCQG needed to be determined. The adoption of the NCQG was a crucial element of the COP29 success and an essential step into the future of the global climate response. Through those outcomes, COP29 should lead to concrete implementation action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Overall, COP28 and COP29 should be turning points in scaling up climate finance and providing a strong boost for climate ambition. The conclusion of the NCQG would be particularly relevant for ensuring adequate and predictable finance resources necessary to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5°C. The implementation of the Enhanced Transparency Framework, the submission of the first Biennial Transparency Report and the roll out of technical expert reviews would be other important milestones. In addition, COP29 should boost meaningful progress on both the political and technical aspects in preparation for the next rounds of NDCs.

Parliamentarians had a key role to play in putting climate change at the heart of national agendas and in ensuring accountability at every step of the way. Global agreements set out the right direction, but the world's fate would ultimately depend on whether or not countries would play their role in addressing the climate crisis. Key outcomes such as the UAE Consensus needed to be translated into transformative domestic legislation and policies.

**The President** said that the Parliament of Azerbaijan had appointed one of its members, Mr. Mammadov, as the Rapporteur for the parliamentary meeting at COP29. He would prepare an outcome document which would be discussed at the next IPU Assembly. There would be opportunities to contribute to the outcome document through virtual consultations.

**Mr. S. Mammadov** (Azerbaijan), Rapporteur for the parliamentary meeting at COP29, said that Azerbaijan's objectives for COP29 were to advance the green agenda and develop climate change partnerships with the international community, focusing on implementation of new technologies, capacity building and burden-sharing between developing and developed countries. He looked forward to strengthening the role of parliaments in addressing climate change, developing a strong legislative base, overseeing country commitments and aligning national strategies with international recommendations.

The energy and climate policy implemented by Azerbaijan in recent years aimed to strengthen the country's energy security architecture using renewable energy sources. The policy had helped Azerbaijan to rank thirty-second in the Energy Transition Index of the World Economic Forum and to become a leading country in terms of its share of investment in renewable energy resources in gross domestic product (GDP).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were an integral part of Azerbaijan's energy and climate policy. State programmes, strategies and action plans covering socioeconomic and environmental issues had been adjusted to meet the SDGs. One of Azerbaijan's national priorities was to ensure a clean environment and green growth. As a result, in 2021, a national Law on the Use of Renewable Energy Resources in Electricity Production had been passed. In addition, Azerbaijan had joined initiatives related to green energy and energy efficiency within the framework of COP28 and planned to increase its share of renewable energy in its total installed electricity capacity from 20% to 33% by 2027. Discussions on the implementation of integrated wind and green hydrogen power plants were currently ongoing. Azerbaijan also hoped to become one of the largest exporters of green energy to Europe through the Black Sea Energy Submarine Cable project.

COP29 would tackle the main challenges related to climate change and environmental protection, including climate finance. Climate finance required joint efforts from countries, international organizations and the private sector. Parliaments had a very important role in convincing governments and the public of the importance of climate finance and in approving an appropriate budget.

The parliamentary meeting at COP29 would be an important platform to review the progress made on the implementation of the recommendations outlined in the outcome document for the parliamentary meeting at COP28. He stressed that the following points should be on the agenda of the parliamentary meeting at COP29: NDCs and international cooperation; promotion of inclusive and equitable climate strategies; scale up of investment in renewables; ways to increase the budget to address climate finance gaps; and best practices in climate legislation and policy implementation. The outcome document of the parliamentary meeting at COP29 would aim to ensure a fair and sustainable future focused on climate change.

**The President** said that the draft resolution entitled *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity* had been distributed to the IPU Members on 18 January 2024. Members had then had until 8 March 2024 to submit amendments. A total of 293 amendments had been submitted by 27 parliaments which was the highest number the Committee had ever received. The co-Rapporteurs had met the previous day to work on the amendments and were invited to present their proposals.

**Ms. M. Al Suwaidi** (United Arab Emirates), co-Rapporteur, said that the co-Rapporteurs had been working on the resolution for a number of months bringing in different perspectives from across the geopolitical groups and ensuring that the document was as holistic as possible. The text had been submitted to the Secretariat in December 2023 and opened up to Members for amendments. A total of 293 amendments had been received, which was an unprecedentedly high number, and the co-Rapporteurs had spent a long time going through each and every one of them. If an amendment on a particular topic had been submitted by more than three countries, then it had been automatically accepted to ensure neutrality and avoid politicization. However, exclusions requested by more than three countries had not been automatically accepted but were considered on a case-by-case basis. In some instances, similar amendments submitted by different countries had been merged into one.

Given the overwhelming number of amendments, she suggested that, instead of a debate, the Committee go straight into the discussion of the amendments.

**Ms. L. Vasylenko** (Ukraine), co-Rapporteur, said that the resolution stressed that partnerships for climate action were not just about ensuring free and equitable access to green energy and innovations but also about taking responsibility for climate damage. Countries must take the matter of climate damage seriously.

As drafting proceeded, delegates should bear in mind that the objectives of the co-Rapporteurs had been to retain the essence of the amendments, making space for the perspectives and cultural approaches of all countries and regions, while also incorporating international language and terminology from already existing climate environmental protection documents such as the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.

She seconded the request to skip the debate and go straight into the discussion of the amendments. The large number of critical amendments submitted merited a longer, more in-depth discussion.

**The President** took it that the Committee wished to skip the debate and go straight into the discussion of the amendments.

*It was so decided.*

**The President** announced that the Committee would proceed to discuss the proposed amendments in plenary.

*The discussion continued from 09:45 to 13:00. The sitting then rose.*

#### **SITTING OF TUESDAY, 26 MARCH 2024**

(Afternoon)

*The sitting was called to order at 17:00 with Mr. W. William (Seychelles), President of the Committee, in the Chair.*

#### **Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity**

**The President** took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft resolution entitled *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity*, as amended.

*The resolution, as amended, was adopted.*

**Ms. M. Al Suwaidi** (United Arab Emirates), co-Rapporteur, drew attention to an error in preambular paragraph 15 which should say “within reach of 1.5°C” instead of “below 1.5°C”, as approved in the drafting session. The final text would be amended accordingly.

**A delegate from the Russian Federation** agreed that global warming must be addressed but believed that the resolution placed too much emphasis on reducing methane emissions. Restricting methane emissions would affect agricultural production and exacerbate food insecurity. Overall, the Russian Federation was in favour of a fair energy transition that took a gradual and balanced approach, focusing not only on renewable energy sources but also on low emission energy sources, such as nuclear energy and natural gas. Natural gas should have the status of a transitional fuel.

Armed conflict was irrelevant to global warming and should not be mentioned in the resolution. He also opposed the use of the climate agenda as a pretext to enact trade barriers. Trade barriers disrupted energy logistics and fertilizer deliveries, amongst other things. The resolution should include a provision calling on parliaments to defend critical energy infrastructure, including against terrorist attacks.

**A delegate from the Russian Federation** said that it was unacceptable to link the climate agenda to armed conflict, noting that the Russian Federation was likely to defeat Ukraine’s undemocratic regime before the climate effects of the conflict could be felt. It was equally unacceptable to hold back the development of many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America by restricting methane emissions.

**A delegate from China** said that, in general, China supported the resolution but noted that some paragraphs were not inclusive, failed to respect the nationally-determined nature of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and were therefore inconsistent with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. He wished to express reservations on those paragraphs.

**A delegate from India** said that India wished to dissociate itself from the resolution due to multiple objections and noted that the text did not address the core objectives which it had originally set out to achieve. The text was meant to promote partnerships for climate action and equitable green energy but instead set out goals which appeared to promote principles and policies that had not been universally agreed. For example, several provisions related to the Global Methane Pledge to which India had not signed up. Since India did not wish to take a sectoral and gas-specific approach, it could not accept any provisions related to methane emissions. It must be noted that India’s methane emissions came from subsistence activities by small-scale and marginal farmers and were survival emissions, not luxury wants. As demonstrated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), carbon dioxide, not methane, was the main driver of climate change.

He called on countries to ensure that the pledges made at the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) were translated into concrete action. Evidence of progress towards targets must be publicly available, and all debates must encourage discussions on accountability, including historical accountability.

**A delegate from Kenya** thanked the co-Rapporteurs for accommodating as many amendments as possible.

**Mr. C.P. Mutseyami** (Zimbabwe), expressing a point of order, said that the Committee had already discussed the resolution and its amendments in detail and did not understand the purpose of the current discussion.

**Ms. A. Blagojevic** (Secretary of the Committee, IPU) said that the purpose of the current discussion was to give delegates the opportunity to express reservations on the resolution, as set out in the rules. The reservations would then be noted in the final text.

**Ms. N. Lugangira** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that developing countries might find it difficult to finance the implementation of the resolution and called on the IPU to consider the idea of debt swap.

**The President**, responding to Ms. Lugangira, said that the purpose of the current discussion was to express reservations, not to discuss the text of the resolution as the resolution had already been adopted.

**Ms. N. Lugangira** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that she understood the resolution had been adopted but wished to reaffirm that, going forward, the IPU should consider debt swap strategies to support developing countries in financing climate action.

**A delegate from Ukraine** reminded the representatives of the Russian Federation that it was the Russian Federation that had invaded the sovereign country of Ukraine and killed more than 100,000 civilians. The Ukrainian Government had been elected in free and democratic elections.

**A delegate from Denmark** said that he was happy to see that the goals on methane had been included in the resolution. He understood that reducing methane would put pressure on food production but was certain that those problems could be resolved through technology. The resolution was right to stress the phasing out of fossil fuels.

**A delegate from Thailand** thanked the co-Rapporteurs for accommodating such a large number of amendments and for getting the key messages across. Next, the IPU and parliamentarians should consider how to promote the resolution worldwide.

**A delegate from Finland** understood that countries with large methane emissions were afraid of change but emphasized the importance of a greener energy system.

**A delegate from Timor-Leste** said that members of parliament played a critical role in advocating for climate action. More ambitious commitments were needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and limit global warming to 1.5°C. There was also a need for increased financial and technical assistance, technology transfer, capacity building and knowledge sharing, particularly for developing countries.

Future texts on climate change should reflect the UNFCCC correctly and appropriately, uphold the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, and promote climate finance, particularly through the Loss and Damage Fund.

**A delegate from Chile** said that agriculture was an asset for the environment and the best way to ensure sustainable and eco-friendly economies. It must therefore be part of the solution. Agriculture kept populations in rural areas, thus limiting migration to urban areas, helped maintain biodiversity and good soil health, promoted food production and helped to absorb carbon dioxide. He emphasized the need for local economies, noting the environmental impact of transporting food across long distances. Local economies helped to support the agricultural sector.



**The President** wished to nominate himself as the rapporteur who would present the resolution to the Assembly.

*The Rapporteur was appointed.*

### Preparations for future Assemblies

#### (a) Proposals for a subject item for the next resolution to be considered by the Committee

**The President** said that the Committee was expected to submit to the Assembly a proposal for the theme of the next resolution. After considering various proposals, the Bureau had decided on the following theme: *Parliamentary strategies to mitigate the long-lasting impact of conflicts, including armed conflicts, on sustainable development*. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the proposal.

*It was so decided.*

#### (b) Proposals for the choice of two co-Rapporteurs

**The President** said that Mr. R. Fogiel (Poland), Ms. H. Ramzy Favez (Bahrain) and Ms. E.T. Muteka (Namibia) had been nominated as co-Rapporteurs. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the nominations.

*It was so decided.*

#### (c) Proposals for other items for the Committee's agenda

**The President** said that, in terms of the workplan for the 149th IPU Assembly, the Bureau proposed that the Committee should hold a debate on the theme of the next resolution, organize a panel discussion on the theme , *Towards a fair global financial system: The role of parliaments in preventing corporate tax avoidance and achieving sustainable development*, and hold a preparatory segment for the parliamentary meeting at the COP29, in Azerbaijan in 2024. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the workplan.

*It was so decided.*

### Elections to the Bureau of the Standing Committee

**The President** said that there was one vacancy on the Bureau to be filled by the Arab Group. The Arab Group had decided to fill the vacancy at the next Assembly.

### Any other business

**The President** said that the World Water Forum was the largest international gathering in the water sector which brought together various different stakeholders. A parliamentary meeting would take place on the occasion of the 10th World Water Forum. The meeting was organized jointly by the IPU and the Parliament of Indonesia and would take place in Bali in May 2024.

**Mr. L. Fauchon** (President, World Water Council), speaking via video message, said that the 10th World Water Forum was scheduled to take place in Bali in May 2024. It would bring together thousands of participants from all over the world to discuss commitments and solutions to the major challenges of water and sanitation. The event was an opportunity to catalyse action, share knowledge and strengthen international cooperation on crucial water-related issues. The 10<sup>th</sup> edition was of particular importance in the face of unprecedented challenges such as water security, climate change, demographic growth, ecosystem degradation and growing pressure on freshwater resources. Those challenges demanded a collective and ambitious response.

The Forum provided a unique platform for long-term collaboration between the water community and political decision-makers. Water and sanitation should be political priorities at all levels – international, national and local – and required political commitments and actions. As elected

representatives of the population, parliamentarians had the power to influence policies, vote in laws and mobilize financial resources to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation for all. The commitment of parliamentarians to the cause of water was essential to ensure effective, sustainable and transparent governance in the water sector.

During the Forum, there would be opportunities to discuss best practices, exchange experiences and promote cooperation and parliamentary diplomacy to meet the challenges of water. It was vital to implement water budgets, advance the water agenda nationally, regionally and globally, and promote water laws that nurtured the link between water, man and nature. He thanked the IPU for its commitment to the cause of water and for co-organizing the parliamentary meeting at the 10th World Water Forum. The parliamentary meeting would contribute to making the Forum a success.

**Mr. P.S. Rudana** (Indonesia) said that one of the goals of the World Water Forum was to provide fresh water for all. Bali had a great deal of local wisdom around preserving water. The people of Bali made an effort to take care of their springs and even held traditional ceremonies to honour water. It was crucial to hold discussions on access to water in order to prevent water-related conflicts. Parliamentarians should be involved in those discussions hence the importance of holding a parliamentary meeting at the Forum.

*The sitting rose at 17:40.*

# Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

SITTING OF MONDAY, 25 MARCH 2024

(Morning)

*The sitting was called to order at 9:45 with Mr. A. Torosyan (Armenia), Vice-President of the Standing Committee, in the Chair.*

## Adoption of the agenda

(C-III/148/A.1)

*The agenda was adopted.*

## Approval of the summary record of the Committee's session held at the 147th IPU Assembly in Luanda (October 2023)

*The summary records were approved.*

## Preparatory debate on the next resolution of the Standing Committee: *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*

**The Chair** introduced the two Rapporteurs of the draft resolution, Ms. M. Rempel Garner (Canada) and Ms. N. Lugangira (United Republic of Tanzania), and the guest speakers, Mr. T. Lamanuskas (Deputy Secretary-General, International Telecommunication Union (ITU)) and Mr. P. Sibal (Programme Specialist, Digital Policies and Digital Transformation Section, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)).

**Ms. M. Rempel Garner** (Canada), co-Rapporteur, said that three capacity-building webinars had been held: *An overview of recent advances in artificial intelligence(AI)*, *The emerging impacts of artificial intelligence on society* and *Global responses to emerging advanced AI technology*. A workshop on AI would be held later that day to deepen the debate on the impact of AI on democracy, human rights, equity and inclusiveness. It was important to facilitate dialogue to ensure that the draft resolution was consensus-based. The Global South in particular needed a stronger voice in discussions on regulatory processes and AI.

**Ms. N. Lugangira** (United Republic of Tanzania), co-Rapporteur, said that the webinars had aimed to ensure a participatory approach in preparing the draft resolution and to provide parliamentarians with capacity-building. They had been attended by 204, 101 and 147 parliamentarians respectively from 110 national parliaments. Despite progress on AI globally and within international organizations, parliamentarians should work more in that field and there was a lack of AI legislation. Differences in AI development opportunities between the Global North and South should be addressed. AI would have the most significant impact in the Global South. Issues regarding the monetization, manipulation, extraction and abuse of data, as well as deepfakes and online gender-based violence, should be discussed.

**Mr. T. Lamanuskas** (Deputy Secretary-General, ITU) said that the ITU had been established to operationalize and democratize scientific breakthroughs, such as AI. The United Nations (UN) General Assembly had adopted a landmark resolution on the promotion of safe, secure and trustworthy AI systems to benefit sustainable development for all, which 120 Member States had co-sponsored, calling for the respect, protection and promotion of human rights, and the bridging of AI and other digital divides between countries. Other recent developments included the European Parliament passing the Artificial Intelligence Act and the Committee on AI of the Council of Europe agreeing the Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence, Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law. Discussions were taking place worldwide and some 100 countries were developing AI regulations and policies. Global AI governance, especially the Global Digital Compact, would be a key topic at the Summit of the Future. The UN Secretary-General had created an AI Advisory Board to advise and assist Member States with deliberations.

AI was increasingly viewed as an existential threat but the reality was more complex. AI presented risks – misinformation, disinformation and deepfakes, which were particularly concerning during a year when over half of the global population would vote – but action was being taken. Several American states had passed laws on deepfakes and the European Commission was expected to adopt guidelines to mitigate the risks to election integrity. AI bias could harm vulnerable people – a recent global analysis had found that 45% of AI systems had a gender bias – and they consumed considerable amounts of water and energy. However, estimates suggested that generative AI could add some US\$ 4.4 trillion to the global economy. According to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Digital Development Agenda, digital technologies could help achieve 70% of the targets. AI could mitigate 5% to 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and improve health, disaster management and agriculture.

There was a significant risk that the benefits of AI would be unevenly distributed, particularly with 2.6 billion people worldwide remaining offline. The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) *Technology and Innovation Report 2023* had revealed that a handful of countries produced nearly half of AI-related publications and patents. Value creation was becoming very concentrated and *The Economist* had reported that in hardware, model-making and applications, the three biggest companies had increased their share of overall value created by a median of 14 percentage points in the past year and a half. There were also divides in terms of the skills required to use and develop AI, positioning in the value chain (some countries had many data labellers, whereas others had AI engineers with PhDs), and the representativeness of AI datasets. An ITU survey had revealed that approximately 60% of responding countries had no AI strategy, while 83% lacked AI regulations. AI would affect everyone but the degree to which its advantages could be harnessed depended on readiness to adapt to changes.

The UN was implementing actions in three areas. First, it was creating normative frameworks. The UN Interagency Working Group on Artificial Intelligence worked on instruments for AI and related areas that could be applied to AI governance efforts, and the ITU had published and was developing over 200 AI technical standards. Second, the UN was levelling the playing field between developing and least developed countries, many of which required support for capacity-building and infrastructure development. Existing UN work in those areas should be leveraged. The ITU compendium of UN Activities on Artificial Intelligence had demonstrated that the UN was leveraging approximately 300 AI projects for sustainable development. For instance, AI enabled the World Food Programme (WFP) to forecast food crises, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to monitor water productivity and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to map schools. The ITU, alongside the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), had established the Global Initiative on AI for Health. Third, the UN convened a range of experts, such as at the ITU AI for Global Good Summit, to work on AI issues.

AI was not the first technology that humans had tried to govern. The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and the WSIS+20 Review Process had revealed the importance of establishing analysis-based overarching normative frameworks, particularly for international human rights; of involving all stakeholders including the private sector, academia and civil society; of focusing on development and inclusiveness worldwide through capacity-building and other measures to ensure meaningful participation; and of tailoring appropriate governance frameworks to specific uses of AI, such as in lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS) and precision agriculture. The UN had already leveraged those lessons in the context of AI. Since it would not be possible to stop AI development, efforts should be made to harness it, mitigate its risks and ensure that it benefited everybody.

**Mr. P. Sibal** (Programme Specialist, Digital Policies and Digital Transformation Section, UNESCO) said that parliamentary engagement was an important opportunity to keep abreast of global developments. UNESCO worked on advocacy, raising awareness, setting standards, providing policy advice, capacity-building and ensuring international cooperation. The Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence outlined the values and principles around accountability, the ease of understanding and leaving no one behind. It provided countries with a readiness assessment tool and an ethical impact assessment tool.

It was important to define AI in any regulatory framework and to understand the AI lifecycle. Although there were many definitions, the UNESCO Recommendation defined AI as machines that could process data and information in a way that resembled intelligent behaviour and included aspects of reasoning, learning, perception, prediction and control. The global regulatory response should take into account that AI stakeholders were located worldwide. Regulations referred to a binding set of

rules that a specific body applied and that focused on enabling AI development rather than imposing limitations, prohibitions and obligations. Parliamentarians were key to regulation, and governments and states enabled AI by creating basic infrastructure and education systems. They deployed and used AI, which required different guidance, and developed and acquired AI systems.

Parliaments regulated and oversaw AI, and some legislation already indirectly regulated it. In the European Union (EU), the General Data Protection Regulation specifically referred to “automated decision-making systems”. Even if a country did not have AI legislation, Access to Information Laws could ensure transparency and require governments to disclose information about AI development. According to the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence, between 2016 and 2022, 31 countries had passed 123 laws referring to AI. There were specific initiatives in Africa and Latin America and the African Union would launch a continental AI strategy in May 2024.

There were seven approaches to regulating AI. First, the principles-based approach involved outlining principles on how AI could be governed without imposing any obligations or specific enforcement mechanisms. It was incumbent upon the actors within the AI lifecycle to align their actions with those principles. The UNESCO Recommendation was influencing national laws in that regard. Second, the standards-based approach involved allowing the private sector to create technical or legal standards to govern AI. The EU AI Act mandated European standardization organizations to create AI standards. The AI Standards Hub had identified some 300 AI-relevant standards addressing issues such as accountability, accuracy, performance, AI procurement, bias and discrimination. Third, the approach involving agile frameworks and regulatory sandboxes helped regulators, alongside the private sector, to trial AI tools in a safe environment and keep pace with technological developments. Fourth, the adaptation approach involved adapting existing frameworks. Sector-specific regulations in health care, education, finance and justice could apply to AI or require reviews. Fifth, the risk-based approach from the EU AI Act prioritized regulatory actions in accordance with risk assessments and distinguished between levels of risk. Unacceptable risks included the use of live biometric systems in the public sphere, which was forbidden. High-level risks dealt with specific monitoring, transparency and oversight systems. Lower-level risks involved more voluntary requirements. AI bills in Brazil, Chile and Colombia were already implementing that approach. Sixth, the rights-based approach contrasted the risk-based approach. Human rights were indivisible and universal and should not be weighed against risks. Margaret Mitchell, who had proposed the rights-based approach, identified stakeholder groups that could be negatively impacted in each stage of the AI lifecycle and the human rights that could be implicated. Corresponding regulatory tools would then be designed. Seventh, the command-and-control approach involved crime-related obligations and sanctions. California had implemented that approach in relation to deepfakes. There was no single correct approach; rather a combination could be applied.

Regarding best practices and recommendations, it was important to identify challenges to maximize the effect of laws, understand the AI lifecycle to ensure regulation at all stages, consider a range of regulatory tools, and explore context-specific regulation because measures in one country could not necessarily be replicated in another. It was imperative to include all stakeholders in AI governance and to monitor the impacts of regulations continuously to develop future regulations. It was important to bear human rights in mind, particularly in relation to children, and regulatory sandboxes could help in that regard.

**Mr. Tian Xuejun** (China) said that AI was developing rapidly, influencing economic and social development and human progress, and providing global opportunities. However, its misuse or abuse could undermine human dignity and equality, violate human rights and fundamental freedoms, aggravate discrimination and prejudice, jeopardize existing legal systems and profoundly impact governmental administration, democracy-building and social stability nationally and globally. In relation to AI, China was committed to building a community with a shared future, prioritizing people and ensuring that AI served the common good. It had announced various initiatives, including the Global AI Governance Initiative.

It was important to guarantee democratic participation and the right to information, enhance social organizations’ role in science and technology, and ensure society complied with AI-related ethical norms and regulations. Countries should establish and improve national AI ethical systems that enabled the participation of different parties.

AI development should be based on mutual respect, mutual benefit and equality. It was important to protect the right to development; all countries could develop and use AI. Global cooperation should be fostered to develop AI, share knowledge and promote open-source use. China opposed assigning ideological labels to certain countries, building exclusive blocs to prevent AI development, creating development barriers and disrupting the global AI supply chain through

technological monopolies and unilateral coercive measures. Privacy and data security should be safeguarded and China was against stealing, tampering with, disclosing, and illegally collecting and using personal information.

Regarding the rule of law, national and international efforts should work in harmony. All parties should heed studies on AI ethics and law; establish and reinforce AI systems that meet ethical standards, laws, regulations and policy; formulate an AI ethics guide; ensure ethical reviews and regulation in science and technology; and strengthen AI security assessments and control. Countries should work towards an international agreement on AI ethics and a universally recognized international AI governance framework and standards that respected the national AI governance.

All countries should address AI governance. China stood ready to work with all sides to focus on development, security and consensus-building, and to ensure that AI served democracy, the rule of law, sustainable development and human well-being.

**Ms. A. Alshaman** (Saudi Arabia) said that *Rebooting AI* argued that democracy was based on the availability of logical information and the ability to make the right decisions. If nobody distinguished right from wrong, it would spell the end of humanity. AI had produced considerable misinformation, but 28% of people – including youth – blindly trusted AI information, which was very dangerous. It was vital to keep pace with AI through agile regulations. Ethical and legal considerations should be taken into account, and there should be a strict framework to guarantee privacy and promote transparent data use. Efforts should concentrate on raising awareness and providing more training to ensure inclusivity in decision-making. Governments, rather than private companies, should oversee national and international AI agencies, which were necessary to mitigate the negative impacts of AI on society.

However, Saudi Arabia had leveraged AI to build smart cities, protect the environment, and develop sustainably in many countries. The Saudi Data and AI Authority regulated AI and enacted laws in related fields, such as data protection. According to the Global AI Index and the 2023 AI Index Report respectively, Saudi Arabia ranked first globally in terms of its governmental strategy and second globally for societal awareness of AI.

**Mr. V. Bahanda** (Malaysia) said that AI could improve election efficiency by analysing databases, identifying voting patterns, improving strategies, enhancing public service delivery and facilitating citizen participation, including through a virtual assistant chatbot. However, there were concerns that biased algorithms and AI-generated misinformation could manipulate democratic process and concentrate power within technology companies and governments. Although AI could enhance access to health care, education and other essential services, it could infringe human rights, such as through AI-based mass surveillance, predictive policing and the use of biased algorithms in decision-making. AI threatened accountability, transparency and fairness in the legal system. There were concerns about how to hold AI systems to account, particularly if they demonstrated bias within legal decision-making processes and did not comply with the rule of law. Regular audits of AI algorithms, and guidelines for fair and unbiased AI deployment, could mitigate that bias. He was confident that UNESCO and other international organizations could produce regulatory frameworks to help developing countries enact AI laws.

**Mr. F.H. Naek** (Pakistan) said that AI could benefit societies through enhanced productivity, health care, education and agriculture, but raised concerns regarding privacy, security, employment, consumer protection, freedom of expression and civil liberties. The AI revolution would change society profoundly and required a balanced approach. AI could worsen discrimination, systemic marginalization and inequality. In recognition of that risk, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe was exploring a legal AI framework that upheld human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Although AI could improve democratic participation, reduce corruption and enhance services, it posed challenges regarding transparency, accountability and disinformation. In 2023, the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication had launched its national AI policy to develop a knowledge-based economy in Pakistan and adopt AI responsibly. It outlined goals to increase public awareness, produce skilled human capital, integrate AI in education, and establish centres of excellence to advance socioeconomic development by 2028. Policies and laws should ensure that AI was beneficial, enhanced progress and improved quality of life, particularly in areas where AI could make decisions for humans.

**Ms. M. Al-Shammari** (Arab Parliament) said that it was important to discuss AI from a rights-based perspective. AI could promote, and solve problems related to, fundamental human rights but its misuse violated those rights, individual privacy and the rule of law. The draft resolution should

urge national parliaments to introduce legislation that accommodated AI, ensured safe use, protected human rights and enhanced public trust. In 2022, the Arab Parliament had developed an indicative law establishing regulatory AI frameworks and sanctioning violations of human rights or the rule of law. The draft resolution should encourage states to establish national AI policy-setting bodies, and parliaments to create AI committees. A code of conduct and ethical guide should be developed to help reap the benefits of AI without infringing human rights. International relations should be promoted to agree an international AI convention and ensure that AI was used for cooperation rather than conflict or competition.

**Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah** (Egypt) said that AI had many potential advantages but could lead to job losses and social and economic issues. It would impact political processes, human rights and the rule of law. Although AI could produce accurate data on the effectiveness of proposed or adopted policies and ensure policies met voters' needs, it threatened social stability. It could negatively impact polls on governmental performance and produce false information. AI tools could impact human rights and become controlling and limiting. Regarding the rule of law, AI could accelerate case analysis and legal proceedings. It was parliamentarians' duty to balance those issues within comprehensive AI legislation. Egypt had contributed to ethical AI guidelines in international organizations and forums, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), UNESCO and the G20, and it had consolidated ethical AI recommendations within the African Union and League of Arab States. It had established the National Council for Artificial Intelligence, which had drafted and implemented the 2021 national AI strategy, identified national AI priorities, suggested policies for legal, technical and economic AI frameworks, increased cooperation regionally and internationally and reviewed international AI protocols.

**Ms. A. Attalides** (Cyprus) said that data analysis and predictive models accelerated decision-making. However, algorithmic bias, election influencing and political manipulation raised concerns. Regarding human rights, AI had the potential to enhance access to information, health care and education but mass surveillance, privacy infringements and algorithmic bias threatened individual freedoms. Regarding the rule of law, AI could streamline legal processes, improve access to justice and enhance law enforcement. However, AI systems lacked accountability and could bias judicial decisions. There were ethical implications to autonomous decision-making. Addressing those challenges required a balanced approach that prioritized transparency, accountability and ethical AI development. Safeguarding democracy, human rights and the rule of law required a comprehensive regulatory framework and dialogue between policymakers, technology companies and society. The EU AI Act represented significant progress. It set transparency, accountability and human oversight requirements that mitigated AI risks while fostering innovation and competitiveness. Parliamentarians were key to approving and ensuring the implementation of measures promptly.

**Mr. A. Naderi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that digital technologies had become a focal point for governments and parliaments worldwide. It was therefore imperative that they adapted national legislation, structures and processes. International cooperation, technology transfers and knowledge-sharing were pivotal to that evolving landscape, and shaped the present and future. Parliamentarians played an increasingly important role. They must identify and address emerging technological capabilities, social challenges and citizens' needs, and adopt laws to protect citizens' dignity. To ensure that humans and AI could coexist, national and global strategies must be developed. To achieve good governance, the Islamic Republic of Iran prioritized the rule of law, public participation, justice and accountability.

The outcomes of AI-related discussions within the UN and its specialized agencies were important. Laws and regulations that might be implemented in some states should not become models for states. Instead, states should consider their past experiences and legislate new technologies according to their national context.

**Mr. J.K. Waweru** (Kenya) said that, regarding AI, human rights and democracy, Africa was proceeding cautiously. Equitable representation within the data that was fuelling the fourth industrial revolution was key. The location of data centres revealed the disenfranchisement of the southern hemisphere. Indigenous African knowledge, beliefs and culture were transmitted orally and were absent from the internet, where AI systems harvested data. The question was whether the absence of some religions, cultures, beliefs, tribes and languages on the internet would lead to their extinction. Kenya was establishing 1,450 digital innovation hubs nationwide to encourage people to contribute to the data that would be used to develop AI and machine learning. It had developed a robust privacy

and data protection law, would develop an AI policy, and was establishing data centres run on green energy. He encouraged those looking to invest in data centres in the Global South to consider Kenya, and correct data imbalance and inequality. Affirmative action was necessary to guarantee inclusivity and equity, ensure nobody was left behind and ensure that Africa was not exploited as it had been in the past.

**Ms. S.E. Lucas** (South Africa) said that AI could improve governmental functioning, increase citizen participation, address issues in health care and education, enhance public policy decision-making and improve resource management. However, concerns regarding data privacy, individual freedom and discrimination must be addressed. AI could deepen social inequality, compromise privacy rights, and impact fairness and accountability in decision-making. It was vital to establish clear ethical AI guidelines across society. Data governance rules and guidelines should underpin comprehensive AI regulation. Robust data protection laws and strict penalties for non-compliance were essential and South Africa had already enacted the Protection of Personal Information Act.

The cornerstones to ensuring ethical AI deployment were collaboration with experts, active dialogue and a commitment to public awareness. Knowledge-sharing on data governance ensured that technologies were deployed responsibly, transparently and ethically. Citizens must understand the value of their personal data and the risks of sharing them with third parties. Alongside digital education, programmes should provide young people with better opportunities. Parliamentarians were responsible for implementing policies that harnessed the benefits of AI, safeguarded fundamental rights and upheld democratic principles. Through unwavering dedication, cherished principles could be upheld in a future involving AI.

**Mr. M. Alshowaikh** (Bahrain) said that article 12 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and article 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, among others, enshrined the right to democracy and freedom, which were integral human rights, and provided protection from AI. Data – including personal information – and confidentiality were paramount in a digitalized world. Over the years, the UN General Assembly and the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) had paid closer attention to the right to privacy, especially in relation to countries and companies that increasingly relied on data processing. The representative of UNESCO had discussed the need for ethical rules and regulations to govern AI and prevent bias, discrimination, social injustice and the infringement of human rights and freedoms. According to the HRC, using AI that processed vast quantities of data may threaten the rights to freedom and privacy, especially when that AI could identify faces and predict behaviour. That AI should stop being used and sold until appropriate regulations were in place. Some countries exported AI to spy on other countries, which clearly violated freedoms. It was therefore necessary to develop AI in accordance with international humanitarian law; ensure accountability in data collection, storage and sharing; and establish partnerships to ensure transparent AI use and development. Human rights should be considered when collecting data. A UN consultative body on AI could help regulate and harmonize AI tools and instruments.

**Ms. K. Slassi** (Morocco) said that countries did not have the same AI knowledge or capabilities. It was important to question where the fear of AI originated. Were people afraid of the unknown or justifiably concerned that AI would exceed human intelligence, destabilize democracy, exacerbate inequalities, cede more control to technology companies and weaken governments? Currently, misinformation represented the greatest threat because it was so readily believed and could destabilize democracies. Although it was impossible to stop AI development, humans could mitigate its negative social and economic impacts by maintaining control and analysing data. Parliamentarians should provide governments with AI best practices and governments should ensure that scientific fields continued to innovate. In Morocco, legislative gaps were being filled and there were already laws to protect personal data, privacy and access to information. Universities educated young people on AI.

**Mr. Ito Tatsuya** (Japan) said that AI had facilitated the creation of disinformation, which spread instantaneously on social networks, and threatened democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Citizens would need better literacy skills to analyse content because technical and institutional measures would not be enough to stop disinformation and misinformation. However, proper AI use could solve social issues. To mitigate risks and promote positive technological development, it was important to establish agile international governance. Regarding the draft resolution, it was necessary to consider all regulatory approaches and the importance of education. Japan had promoted discussions to establish international AI governance and had established an organization in Japan to research measures to stop false information and implement safety assessments.



**Mr. S. Aldosari** (Qatar) said that, although technological advancements could promote democratic participation and increase transparency, AI could violate democracy, human rights and the rule of law. It was therefore important to study its domestic, regional and international impacts. National frameworks and legislations should regulate AI use. The Artificial Intelligence Committee in Qatar established mechanisms to implement AI. The Qatari national AI strategy was based on education, data access, employment business, research and ethics.

**Mr. M. Almheri** (United Arab Emirates) said that the importance of AI should be recognized. It affected all aspects of daily life and was developing rapidly. There should be awareness of its effect on democracy and human rights. Research should therefore focus on mitigating its negative impacts and leveraging its benefits.

His country had appointed an AI minister in 2017 and had launched pioneering projects and programmes through sandboxes. Parliaments were crucial to raising awareness of AI and ensuring AI was used properly. Algorithms should be beneficial and should mitigate threats to governments and citizens. To keep pace with developments, parliamentarians should work with civil society and the private sector to conclude an effective and agile international AI agreement. There should be mechanisms to prevent AI from overtaking human intelligence. Youth in particular should anticipate, rather than react to, AI developments.

**Ms. M. del C. Alva Prieto** (Peru) said that, although AI had benefited individuals' rights, it could harm society if certain social, labour and ethical factors were overlooked. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated that AI would affect approximately 40% of jobs worldwide. Moreover, AI undeniably infringed the rights to freedom of expression, privacy, equal treatment and legal protection, and states should tackle those challenges. The UN, the Council of Europe and the EU had promoted regulations on transparency and responsible AI use, as well as measures and regulations in countries such as Australia, China, Italy, Spain and Peru. Peru had participated in the Council of Europe negotiations on the Draft Framework Convention on AI, human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Although AI was a valuable tool for the health, security and education sectors, it should be used cautiously. EsHoy, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Peruvian Ministry for Labour and Promotion of Employment had found that 37% of Peruvian businesses were using AI in production processes. In 2023, the Peruvian Congress had enacted Law No. 31814 to promote the use of AI for national economic and social development of the country. It established principles for future AI regulations and developed the concept of AI and other relevant terminology. She had presented a legislative proposal to change the Penal Code to include the use of AI as an aggravating circumstance in criminal cases. Parliamentarians should keep abreast of developments and work to mitigate the negative effects of AI.

**Mr. P. Limjaroenrat** (Thailand) said that AI-related coercion and anomalies were affecting democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Thailand endeavoured to tackle AI risks and had implemented four AI-related actions. First, it had introduced the Personal Data Protection Act, the National AI Strategy and Action Plan (2022–2027) and six ethical AI principles. Second, it had established the AI Governance Guidelines for Executives to create a dynamic ecosystem and drive the next generation of growth. Third, the Digital Government Development Agency had established various guidelines. The State Audit Office had launched a prototype project using AI for performance audits. Fourth, Thailand had drafted bills to promote and support AI innovation and to deal with businesses using AI. A parliamentary ad hoc committee had been tasked with identifying AI advantages and risks. Given that technology evolved rapidly and was difficult to regulate, parliamentarians would need to strike a balance between the risks and opportunities that it presented.

**Mr. M.M. Mekeng** (Indonesia) said that, although AI could lead to technological breakthroughs and social and economic progress, it should not be taken for granted. Generative AI posed a particular risk to human rights. In Indonesia, it had been used to create fake videos of the President speaking in various languages, carry out voice scams and obtain the passwords to government websites. There were also concerns that AI could consolidate power over society, enhance surveillance and censorship, breach individual privacy and use biased algorithms.

The draft resolution should consider current multilateral AI norms and responses, including the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence and the OECD AI Principles. It should comprehensively highlight all areas of AI development, including LAWS. There should be no conditions on, or reductions in, technology and knowledge transfers regarding AI use in the military.

The draft resolution should highlight gaps in legislation, policy or regulations to address the ethical issues of AI use. The Indonesian National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence (2020–2045) had particularly focused on ethics and policy. Moreover, Indonesia had recently released a circular on AI ethics, which provided a reference for AI policy development in the public and private sectors. Regulations, such as the electronic information and transactions law and personal data protection law, accommodated AI, which was considered an electronic agent that had to comply with legal obligations. The draft resolution should ensure that ethics and human rights were considered throughout the AI lifecycle, and should encourage a multistakeholder approach and international collaboration for AI governance. The Center for AI Safety claimed that mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war, which demonstrated the urgency of discussing AI.

**Mr. K. Siachisumo** (Zambia) said that most AI technologies were data-driven and aimed to enhance human life. They handled tedious and complicated tasks and were capable of critical thinking and analysis. However, they also threatened the well-being of society; undermined democracy, human rights and the rule of law; and could reflect human biases. AI affected justice, privacy, freedom of expression, equality, the right to non-discrimination, and economic and social rights. Zambia had begun to implement AI to diagnose tuberculosis, implement e-policing video surveillance systems in certain cities, and provide support across private sector digital media platforms.

**Ms. A. Larouche** (Canada) said that AI could transform societies and was already used in various contexts to help with decision-making. As AI became more widespread, parliamentarians should weigh its advantages against the risks it posed to democracy, human rights and the rule of law. They should work alongside governments, international organizations, civil society, universities and technical organizations to ensure AI was developed and used in accordance with laws and policies. Although Canada did not have a law on AI, the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology was examining Bill C-27 which tackled the implementation of the Digital Charter, helped Canadians benefit from a digital and data-based economy, and aimed to establish a regulatory framework that protected the right to privacy, among others. If the bill were passed, it would obligate those responsible for AI systems to implement assessments and reduce the risk of bias. In 2017, the Pan-Canadian AI Strategy – the first strategy of its kind – had prioritized commercializing AI technology, capacity-building for IT infrastructure and establishing AI regulations. Women were particularly concerned about online violence and the use of AI to create deepfakes. Canada was discussing a bill in that area but it was important to strike a balance between freedom of expression and hate speech. Young people were concerned about how AI would affect their professional lives.

**Ms. G. Chakor** (Netherlands) said that recent technological developments had been rapid. However, AI could create deepfakes, spread fake news and control weapons systems. It was increasingly difficult to distinguish truths from falsehoods and parliamentarians were responsible for ensuring transparency. AI-generated images and texts involving copyrighted material should have watermarks. The Dutch House of Representatives had instructed the Cabinet to draft a law prohibiting certain firms from using deepfake technology and penalizing the use of AI to influence politics. Such measures protected the freedom of the press and the reliability of journalists as citizens became more distrustful. In the House of Representatives, the Committee for Digital Affairs had discussed ChatGPT and human rights, and had met with the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy.

**Ms. F. Oncu** (Türkiye) said that, as a person with a disability, AI had benefited her and improved accessibility. AI should be developed to benefit the 1.5 billion people worldwide with disabilities. However, at the international level, there had to be a strict mechanism to control AI and protect personal data, privacy and fundamental rights. There should be a binding regulation and sanctions to prevent AI from contributing to violence.

**Ms. A. Aghazada** (Azerbaijan) said that a future principles-based AI legal framework should consider rights and obligations that were proportionate to protecting citizens from the negative impacts of AI. It should also ensure the equal distribution of AI benefits. The framework should consider the risks and benefits of AI, balance the legitimate interests at stake, and differentiate between levels of risk. It should consider the potential use, impact, domain of application and stakeholders of AI technology; optimize the societal benefits of AI by assessing and mitigating risks; and ensure national authorities systematically reviewed domestic legislation to identify legal gaps and tackle AI threats. National audits should mitigate the impacts of non-compliance. Private actors, who increasingly provided critical digital infrastructure for the public sector, should align the design, development and deployment of AI with those priorities.

**Mr. J.T.S. Godonou** (Benin) said that there were fears that AI undermined democracy by manipulating public opinion. AI use in social media and online platforms facilitated the spread of false information and polarization. AI could influence and undermine elections by targeting specific voters and personalizing political messages. It could make certain jobs redundant, destabilize economies, widen wealth gaps and concentrate power in the hands of a few technology companies. It was vital to prevent companies and states from delegating decision-making to machines, which would create an algocracy and prevent humans from controlling AI development. Democracies that controlled AI would be better able to regulate it. The Beninese Parliament had already set out how to tackle AI issues and had established the Personal Data Protection Authority.

**Mr. M. Ur Rahman** (Bangladesh) said that the Rohingya – one million of whom had fled to southern Bangladesh following massacres in Myanmar – were an example of how an algorithm could amplify misinformation and breach human rights. Amnesty International had published reports on how the Facebook algorithm had stoked hatred in the leadup to those events. The misuse of generative AI systems and LAWS could exacerbate genocides. Biometric personal data mining should be regulated to prevent the use of AI against a particular group. Bangladesh required assistance from the ITU, UNESCO and the Standing Committee to formulate a national AI law.

**Ms. C.S.J. Pereira** (Singapore) said that many people with disabilities participated in community integration programmes and thrived. Social enterprises that had hired persons with disabilities had grown and employees led good and meaningful lives. However, those programmes lacked sufficient staff. In Singapore, efforts focused on providing staff with competitive salaries and good career progression, and on encouraging employers to hire persons with disabilities. Employers often needed to make adjustments to accommodate persons with disabilities and, in that regard, some had adopted AI technologies, demonstrating that AI could have benefits if used responsibly. The Singaporean Government provided assistance where necessary.

**Mr. A. Schäfer** (Germany) said that, in 2024, more than 60 countries would hold parliamentary elections. However, AI could interfere with the results and affect democracy. At the 149th IPU Assembly, it would be important to discuss national experiences during those elections.

**Ms. M. Ulenge** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that AI increasingly impacted consumers, and should respect and uphold consumer rights. Countries should equip populations with the skills to adopt new digital practices and analyse content in underlying systems, services and networks. In terms of growth and physical infrastructure, it was vital to assemble a digitally competent workforce. The Tanzanian Government would invest significantly in producing cyber-ready civil servants through AI training, 50 of whom would receive long-term training. Capacity-building was vital to ensuring that society protected itself and AI respected the rule of law.

**Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche** (Algeria) said that it was important to leverage AI to achieve the SDGs and socioeconomic development targets. The Algerian Government had established the National School of Artificial Intelligence, which provided internationally recognized diplomas, had entry requirements and produced AI engineers with the skills to develop innovative solutions in the energy, health and agricultural sectors, among others. AI incorporation in education would help tackle challenges and improve learning, in line with SDG 4. However, it was important to regulate the disadvantages of AI.

**Mr. O. Zhmerenetskyi** (Ukraine) said that the impact of AI depended on the intentions of the programmer and user. In the hands of totalitarian regimes, technological progress would present a similar threat as nuclear weapons. Peaceful states were preserving the truth while enemies fought against justice, human rights and equal opportunities. It was important to prevent the Russian Federation and other malicious regimes from using new technology to foster aggression and social polarization. Ukrainians had demonstrated their ability to master new technologies. Osavul, an AI start-up that helped the Ukrainian National Security and Defence Council and the Ministry of Defence identify Russian propaganda, could analyse social media posts more quickly than human analysts. It was vital to consider how to promote the advantages of AI and mitigate its risks. Since AI could not distinguish between fact and fiction, nor consider the ethics of its responses, it was humans' responsibility to ascertain the truth and use it to reveal the lies of authoritarian regimes.

**Mr. A. Gajadien** (Suriname) said that drafting privacy laws to safeguard personal information was crucial to AI regulation. However, a comprehensive AI legal framework should encompass other factors to ensure that AI was responsibly and ethically deployed, particularly in a global context. It was therefore important to strive for a global resolution.

**Ms. M. Rempel Garner** (Canada), co-Rapporteur, summing up the views expressed in the debate, said that almost every delegate had noted the positives and negatives of AI and the need for a resolution that mitigated risks, and safeguarded ethics and human rights laws while enabling innovation. Many delegates had emphasized the need to coordinate international work and enhance education and capacity-building across society. Many countries already had AI strategies, which was encouraging. She noted the need to protect democracies, prevent democracies from becoming oligocracies and stop a few multinational corporations from determining government policies. Many delegates had commented on the impact of AI on war, misinformation and traditional legal systems. She particularly appreciated Mr. Waweru's remarks on the exclusion of oral traditions from online data.

**Ms. N. Lugangira** (United Republic of Tanzania), co-Rapporteur, said that there was consensus regarding the importance using AI safely. Although over 100 countries had developed AI regulations, it was important to agree an overarching mechanism. She hoped that the discussion on the draft resolution would produce proposals for a global AI standard.

*The sitting rose at 12:25.*

#### **SITTING OF TUESDAY, 26 MARCH 2024**

(Morning)

*The sitting was called to order at 09:30 with Mr. A. Torosyan (Armenia), Vice-President of the Standing Committee, in the Chair.*

#### **Debate on *Sustainable actions to improve the life conditions of people with disabilities, including their chances for education and work opportunities***

**The Chair** said that the four panellists would make their opening remarks, following which there would be an interactive exchange with delegates. Delegates would then be invited to share recommendations on improving the living conditions of people with disabilities.

**Ms. G. Oforiwa Fefoame** (Chairperson of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)), panellist, said that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was a human rights treaty that 191 states had ratified. It established legally binding obligations to ensure the full inclusion of persons with disabilities. Its effective implementation – through close consultations with, and the involvement of, persons with disabilities – would end disability-based and intersecting forms of discrimination. Article 4.1(a) and (b) of the Convention established obligations relating to parliamentary work. In that regard, the CRPD had reviewed 138 initial and periodic State Party reports that indicated the need for parliaments to increase awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities and of parliamentarians' specific duties under the convention. The following required national capacity-building to increase parliamentary compliance with the Convention: (1) anti-discrimination legislative frameworks to further protect persons with disabilities against all forms of discrimination, including multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and the denial of reasonable accommodation; (2) mental health laws to eradicate coercion in mental health and provide mental health services in communities based on the free and informed consent of persons with disabilities; (3) laws on legal capacity to end substituted decision-making and establish decision-making that respected the autonomy, will and preferences of persons with disabilities; (4) family law to ensure that parents and children with disabilities were not separated because of their impairments; (5) legislation related to election participation, the right to vote and the right to be elected to public office to prevent the disenfranchisement of persons with disability based on impairment; (6) the removal of legislation allowing children with disabilities to be placed in institutions so that, when necessary, community-based foster families could provide care; and (7) the abolishment of legislation permitting forced abortions and sterilizations among women with disabilities. In 2003 and 2023, the IPU and the United Nations (UN) had published the first and second editions of *The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional*

*Protocol: Handbook for Parliamentarians.* The decision to create a similar handbook on the rights of persons with disabilities was timely and appropriate. She hoped that, through joint efforts, that handbook would be launched by 2026 to mark the 20th anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention.

**Ms. N. Shabani** (Disability focal point, Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)), panellist, said that, as highlighted in the UNICEF Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy (2022–2030), inclusive education was vital. The UNICEF vision fully aligned with Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and General comment No. 4 (2016). Inclusive education upheld the right to education and the human rights of children with disabilities, and it recognized that those children could contribute to society. According to the UNICEF Annual Report 2021, there were 240 million children with disabilities worldwide, 50% of whom were not in education. Those children also faced exclusion at home because of discrimination, stigma and parental shame. The global evaluation of disability inclusion and the ongoing evaluation of institutionalization in Europe and Central Asia revealed that, in some countries, 80% of institutionalized children had disabilities. That statistic demanded action. However, there were four challenges. First, although children with disabilities needed inclusive and accessible learning opportunities to prepare them for school and life, disability was still treated as a medical issue requiring specialist therapies and schools. Second, teachers in mainstream schools felt inadequately trained and supported to receive children with disabilities, and parents claimed that children with disabilities prevented other children from learning. Third, schools lacked the resources and autonomy to include the most vulnerable children. Fourth, significant stigma and discrimination at all levels prevented the participation and inclusion of children with disabilities in education.

The COVID-19 pandemic had created a digital divide with the introduction of digital learning platforms and plans that did not consider the needs of children with disabilities. Despite the tremendous potential of digital learning, it was not being leveraged and that divide persisted. Global UNICEF mapping showed that, within 84 countries, 22% of digital learning platforms were not accessible or inclusive of children with disabilities. One in 10 children with disabilities could not access assistive technology, which was a precondition for inclusion.

National legislation must clearly state and guarantee the right to education for all children with disabilities, and ban segregation and exclusion. Specialized schools and classes continued to absorb financial and human resources that could be reallocated to support inclusion in regular schools. Investments should focus on accessibility, assistive technology and school autonomy. Schools should receive resources to respond flexibly to inclusion challenges. Many additional factors affected children's inclusion, which required an individual approach. Political commitment was key to accelerating the inclusion of children with disabilities and inclusive education. The current discussion helped share evidence and best practices, and promote the benefits of inclusive education for all children, communities and societies.

**Mr. C. Lohr** (Switzerland), panellist, said that we should learn more about life with disabilities, make talent visible and focus on abilities rather than disabilities. People with disabilities must be empowered to increase their educational and professional opportunities. Families with disabled children deserved support, respect and appreciation; it was important to encourage them and show them future prospects. Empathy would facilitate the integration of people with disabilities. Politicians, teachers, religious leaders, and cultural and sports figures should strengthen and promote social acceptance. Similarly, cooperation with companies could build bridges.

He was among the 10,000 people who had been affected worldwide by the thalidomide scandal, which had caused malformations in him. His parents and brother had had to adapt and their support had enabled him to live a high-quality, normal and empowering life full of love and humour. He was not constantly preoccupied with his disability and he had attended a regular school where he had been challenged daily and not reduced to his disability. Despite benefiting from recent technological developments, he was fortunate to have understood that technology could not replace him. At the start of his political career, he had received support from a broad electorate and he had currently served 12 years in the National Council of Switzerland. He was grateful to have been able to contribute to the IPU for more than eight years in various countries and to receive respect. He promoted solidarity, equality and justice, and he hoped that the IPU would implement inclusion in its daily work. It was citizens' duty to work on their attitudes. Many political discussions, including at the IPU, focused on power but the path to inclusion required humanity, which should take precedence. Inclusion affected many people, including those who used glasses and hearing aids. He was particularly interested in educational measures, integration projects in the labour market and changes in basic attitudes to promote inclusive societies. All sides should cooperate and develop ideas in that regard.

**Mr. J.I. Pérez Bello** (Senior Human Rights Advisor, International Disability Alliance (IDA)), panellist, said that IDA brought together 14 global and regional organizations of people with disabilities. As a senior human rights advisor, he worked with organizations of people with disabilities within the States that had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to support revision processes on behalf of the CRPD.

National disability movements were influential and provided parliamentarians with important inputs for draft laws or monitoring committees. General comment No. 7 on Article 4.3 and 33.3 of the Convention obligated State Parties to consult and involve people with disabilities in discussions to draft and implement relevant laws and public policies, bearing in mind the cross-cutting nature of disability. States and national institutions must make additional efforts to include groups that were not yet fully fledged organizations but that represented people with disabilities, particularly psychosocial and mental disabilities. More participatory consultative processes would lead to more legitimate, sustainable and agreeable draft laws and initiatives. States should therefore take that obligation seriously and those that the CRPD had already reviewed should highlight the Committee's recommendations.

Since the adoption of the Convention, many countries – including Armenia, Colombia, Peru and Zambia – had made legislative progress in difficult areas, which demonstrated that participatory processes could be initiated and could improve existing legal frameworks. Regarding legal capacity and the right to work, that was paramount. However, at a time when many countries were cutting budgets, more resources should be allocated to persons with disabilities and inclusion policies, and tools should be available to assess those resources.

All children, including those with disabilities, had a right to inclusive education, which had significant and systemic implications. It was paramount that national organizations of people with disabilities provided clarity regarding inclusive education and that they considered General comment No. 4 on Article 24 of the Convention. Although those organizations were aware of the complexities of inclusive education and the competing interests of teachers' unions and people with disabilities, public discussions could be initiated through political will. There were specific issues that could be addressed – such as ensuring that qualifications were sufficient to find a job or enter further education – while wider reforms were pursued. Obviously, steps back should be avoided and, in some countries, cases involving the right to inclusive education had been brought to courts.

Discussions about the most appropriate employment policies were ongoing but solutions should be tailored to specific contexts. Discussions, in which the International Labour Organization (ILO) had participated, usually focused on whether the public and private sectors should introduce quotas and whether there should be measures instead of incentives in the private sector. Rather than remove measures that had facilitated access to employment for people with disabilities in over 100 countries, it was better to improve monitoring, increase sanctions for non-compliance and complement those measures with others such as tax sanctions and financial incentives for private companies. The ILO had worked with private sector actors to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities. It was important to continue monitoring and researching which measures were most effective and which people with disabilities benefited.

Since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, much work had been carried out at the discursive, legislative and international levels. However, much remained to be done. The Convention was a key reference in any discussion concerning the rights of people with disabilities and other related agendas were currently in development, such as the care and support agenda. IDA remained available for collaboration.

**Mr. F. Undurraga Gazitúa** (Chile) said that he had two observations. First, there were over 50 conflicts worldwide which, together with organized crime, generated different levels of disability. It was essential to provide those people with rehabilitation and include them in society. Second, the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) dealt with disabilities and it was time that the IPU established a secretariat to deal with that issue. UN actions were ineffective if countries did not introduce legislative measures and public policies.

**Mr. J.I. Pérez Bello** (Senior Human Rights Advisor, IDA), panellist, said that jurisprudence had been developed in relation to Article 11 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and ensuring protection and safety was a concern for national and non-governmental organizations working with people, particularly refugees, with disabilities. IDA had promoted including people with disabilities in discussions on international humanitarian law, refugee rights and disaster reduction. However, words did not always translate into actions, as had been demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Discussions on people inflicted with disabilities should not fall under the large umbrella of other issues. Disability prevention should be considered a separate issue within national health sector policies and should have a separate budget.

**Ms. G. Oforiwa Fefoame** (Chairperson of the CRPD), panellist, said that there were issues that could be explored together, particularly through the development of an IPU handbook on disability rights.

**Mr. L. Maguire** (Canada) asked the panellists how they saw artificial intelligence (AI) fitting into future developments for people with disabilities, and whether they had any further thoughts on support for children with disabilities and their parents.

**Mr. C. Lohr** (Switzerland), panellist, said that, although AI raised concerns, it should be leveraged to create a better world. Google International stood ready to work with people with disabilities to create projects for them. The IPU should create a working group on disability and a disability strategy because it was an issue that affected society as a whole.

**Ms. N. Shabani** (Disability focal point, UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia), panellist, said that AI could help to provide individualized education, assistive technology and even personal assistance. However, it was important to use AI in an enabling environment that included services, adequate support and a regulatory framework to prevent its unethical use.

Support for families with children with disabilities should begin in maternity wards because, in many countries, medical staff advised parents to abandon children with disabilities. Families should also receive information, psychosocial support and financial support to cover disability costs – such as services, transportation and food – because parents often sacrificed their careers to care for their children. That support should continue throughout the lives of children with disabilities.

**Ms. F. Oncu** (Türkiye) said that, in the context of digital transformation, people with disabilities could struggle to use electronic household devices. She wondered if there were any studies on how people with disabilities could use those devices and if it would be possible to introduce quotas for accessible products.

**Ms. G. Oforiwa Fefoame** (Chairperson of the CRPD), panellist, said that the question concerned advocacy, human rights and universal designs. The CRPD continued to advocate for accessible devices through discussions with State representatives, organizations of people with disabilities and device developers. Discussions with device users helped to inform those discussions. IPU assistance in that area was valuable because progress was slow.

In response to Mr. Maguire's question, the separation of children with disabilities from parents breached human rights. Early interventions were vital and it was particularly important to ensure that parents and children could access information. Services should be community-based so that children with disabilities would be accepted, welcomed into mainstream schools, and more easily integrated into the workplace. Despite the implementation of some good practices, more work was needed.

**Ms. N. Shabani** (Disability focal point, UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia), panellist, said that it was important to leverage support from the business and private sectors to build an inclusive culture and design inclusive products. However, devices and assistive technologies must be adapted to individuals, hence the importance of accompanying services and awareness.

**Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah** (Egypt) asked how international agreements could raise international social awareness of people with disabilities. Awareness was important for unifying efforts and disability awareness had increased in Egypt. The Egyptian Constitution enshrined many rights for people with disabilities. Egypt had a National Council for Persons with Disabilities and had launched a disability initiative.

**Ms. G. Oforiwa Fefoame** (Chairperson of the CRPD), panellist, said that the question concerned human rights and development. Parliamentarians should engage their States and ensure that, by the Summit of the Future in September 2024, disability was treated as a cross-cutting issue. Disability was a social and public issue requiring daily attention. Political will should be harnessed to remove barriers and create protocols.

**Mr. J.I. Pérez Bello** (Senior Human Rights Advisor, IDA), panellist, said that IDA had participated in WeThe15 to raise awareness among the general population. However, national actions – such as to overcome attitudinal barriers – almost exclusively determined the extent to which people with disabilities enjoyed their rights. Parliamentarians could question whether their parliaments included international sign language on their television channel and whether they facilitated the participation of people with disabilities in parliamentary events. Awareness-raising was most effective through person-to-person contact. Parliaments should introduce legislation to encourage the media to present people with disabilities positively, in line with Article 8 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. He recommended reading the *Report on awareness raising under article 8 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

**Mr. C. Lohr** (Switzerland), panellist, said that raising awareness was as important as promoting human rights. Although he agreed with introducing special rules for people with disabilities, it was important to change attitudes and promote equality. For 12 years, he had been the only parliamentarian with a disability in Switzerland. However, in March 2023, the Swiss Parliament had held a national convention of people with disabilities and, in the following national elections, three people with disabilities had been elected. Although people with disabilities came from a range of political backgrounds, they could fight for their rights together.

**The Chair** said that the remaining questions would be asked at once and the panellists would then answer them.

**Ms. A. Alshaman** (Saudi Arabia) said that women, particularly in the developing world, represented the majority of people with disabilities. She asked if there were any reports or research papers explaining that phenomenon.

In response to Mr. Lohr, awareness and education fostered positive attitudes towards people with disabilities, which should filter through to legislations and policies. Children with disabilities were four times more likely to suffer violence. Legislation should target people who were violent towards those children.

**Mr. N. Kwankwa** (South Africa) said that sign language had recently been recognized as the 12th official language of South Africa, which required resources to accommodate hearing impairments. He asked the panellists which obstacles they had encountered to ensuring integrated learning and inclusivity in education, particularly in relation to the different levels of disability and the legislative framework and resources that countries had to develop and deploy. He also wanted to know how countries had overcome those obstacles.

**Ms. D. Alzayed** (Bahrain) asked Ms. Oforiwa Fefoame and Ms. Shabani which programmes provided legal consultancy in order to empower the legal sector to uphold the rights of people with disabilities. She inquired as to what kind of support was available to clarify legislative provisions and ensure proper implementation, and what kinds of programmes could help women with disabilities to participate in legislative activities and work in parliaments, given that they had the will to do so.

**Mr. F.H. Naek** (Pakistan) asked Ms. Oforiwa Fefoame how the IPU and other stakeholders could engage and cooperate with regard to the General comments on the Convention, which were a useful resource for States.

**Ms. C.S.J. Pereira** (Singapore) said that the right intervention programmes, particularly in early childhood, helped people with disabilities to thrive. However, waiting lists for such programmes in schools were lengthy because of the lack of professional staff. The question was how to address that issue.

**Mr. T. Karikoga** (Zimbabwe) said that there were universal treaties that encouraged member States to allocate a percentage of their national budgets to their health ministries. He wondered if the IPU could make similar recommendations for those member States to allocate a percentage of their national budgets to disability programmes.

**Mr. M. Ur Rahman** (Bangladesh) said that his country had made progress through the education stipend programme for students with disabilities but there was a lack of trained staff, particularly for people with autism and mental disorders. He asked if the IDA or UNICEF could help train professionals to deal with children with mental disorders.



**Ms. M. Guerra Castillo** (Mexico) said that her country had passed the General Act on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities. The National Electoral Institute had recently decided that political parties should nominate eight people with disabilities as candidates in federal legislative elections. Despite initial resistance, affirmative action had produced positive results. She asked which countries could serve as examples in ensuring inclusion within the legislative branch of government, and which examples could be followed to further empower people with disabilities.

**Ms. S. Hjemdal** (Norway) asked whether the panellists could share best practices on implementing laws for people with disabilities.

**Ms. M.d.C. Alva Prieto** (Peru) said that Peru had introduced quotas for people with disabilities – 3% in the private sector and 5% in the public sector – but it was difficult to find suitably qualified candidates and those quotas were rarely achieved. Budgetary constraints limited the education that people with disabilities received, which prevented them accessing those positions. She asked Mr. Pérez Bello and Ms. Shabani what support could countries with limited budgets receive.

**Ms. G. Oforiwa Fefoame** (Chairperson of the CRPD), panellist, said that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had capacity-building units that collaborated with states and the CRPD. She encouraged delegates to contact the CRPD.

The stigma, negative attitudes and misconceptions that women with disabilities experienced throughout their lives dissuaded them from entering politics. Efforts should concentrate on building their self-confidence and self-awareness. A two-pronged approach should provide inclusive parliamentary budgets and budgets for organizations for people with disabilities to build the capacity of women with disabilities. Parliamentarians must ensure that parliamentary disability budgets focused on every aspect of life and not just health and education. Although states were responsible for the well-being and human rights of people with disabilities, lack of political will meant that there were few monitoring mechanisms. Charities, international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society often had to intervene.

**Ms. N. Shabani** (Disability focal point, UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia), panellist, said that it was necessary to shift from a medical to a human rights approach to address the gap between policy and implementation. Adequate resources, staff and training were necessary. It was important for services to be located near children, such as in schools, and Portugal had implemented such an approach.

Although there would never be enough staff specialists in certain areas, there were enough training programmes and materials, and they needed to be delivered continuously. They should be of sufficient quality and focus on evidence-based interventions. Early interventions facilitated the shift from a medical to a human rights approach. To help frontline workers provide those interventions, the possibility of lowering qualification criteria but increasing the quality of training was being explored.

It would always be difficult to allocate a percentage of the national budget to people with disabilities but it was also important to ensure that budgets funded the right interventions.

**Mr. J.I. Pérez Bello** (Senior Human Rights Advisor, IDA), panellist, said that Bahrain would soon receive the final observations of the CRPD, which would provide specific details concerning areas where legal work was required. Depending on their capacities, organizations of people with disabilities could seek advice and technical assistance from OHCHR.

It was important to empower women with disabilities so that they could form their own organizations and participate in disability-related movements.

In response to Mr. Naek, Pakistani organizations of people with disabilities had the technical capacity to consult the CRPD regarding the general comments to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Regarding the financial situation of OHCHR and the treaty bodies, States should ensure that national financial contributions arrived at the appropriate time and contributed to the work of the treaty bodies, enabling those bodies to make periodic recommendations. Parliamentarians should follow discussions between their States and those treaty bodies. States should have the best information available in order to ensure optimal results.

Ms. Guerra Castillo had raised an important point on inclusion. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights had published a report, *The right to political participation of persons with mental health problems and persons with intellectual disabilities*, on disability rights in European countries. The measures that the Mexican National Electoral Institute had introduced were interesting,

particularly if they were to become legal obligations. One could then cross-compare variables, such as gender and disability. Although politicians represented voters' interests, they did not always represent the interests of people with disabilities, and it was therefore essential that they consulted with organizations of people with disabilities.

**Mr. C. Lohr** (Switzerland), panellist, said that inclusion was important not just in politics but in culture, education, sports and all areas of life. Role models should shine a light on people with disabilities within society. Parliamentarians could also act as role models by bringing people together and supporting inclusion. More financial support was necessary in that area.

He was unsure whether more rules to ensure inclusion were necessary. Inclusion required support from all sides and dialogue was the first step to gaining that support.

**Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche** (Algeria) said that her country had mechanisms and regulations to protect people with disabilities in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. They ensured specialized education for children with disabilities, financial assistance including for transportation, social coverage, solidarity activities, and social and professional inclusion. The National Council for Persons with Disabilities drafted proposals to improve living conditions and monitored strategies and policies to protect human rights. Several laws targeted children with disabilities, ensuring that children with mental disabilities in particular had specialized schools. The Algerian Constitution ensured that children remained in school until age 16. Children with disabilities remained in school until age 18 and early interventions between the ages of 3 and 5 helped them to integrate into communities and mainstream schools. Unqualified people with disabilities could receive vocational training.

**Mr. S. Aldosari** (Qatar) said that parliamentarians were crucial to passing legislation to protect dignity and rights, to evaluating that legislation and ensuring the national budget would provide people with disabilities with a decent life. Parliaments were important for implementing international agreements and Qatar had been among the first States to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In 2028, Doha would host the 4th Global Disability Summit in cooperation with IDA. The Qatar National Vision 2030 ensured equality and justice for all. In Qatar, disability-related legislation enshrined the right to education, provided work and state-funded rehabilitation in the public and private sectors, facilitated access to assistive technology, provided opportunities to engage in suitable physical activity, and ensured access to housing, specialized facilities and public places and events. People with disabilities were included in disability-related decision-making. Qatar encouraged employers to include people with disabilities and provide them with the social skills to adapt and integrate into communities.

**Mr. P. Nanda** (India) said that the Indian Constitution guaranteed equality, freedom, justice and dignity for all individuals and mandated an inclusive society. Issues concerning people with disabilities were central to the national development agenda. India had introduced legislation, including the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, that ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, enshrined certain rights and recognized the need for measures to ensure people with disabilities lived dignified lives, enjoyed equal rights and did not experience harassment, discrimination or marginalization. The Act provided a 5% quota for students with disabilities in institutions of higher education and a 4% quota for government jobs. The National Action Plan for Skill Development of Persons with Disabilities promoted self-employment and the Accessible India Campaign ensured universal accessibility. The Government provided assistive technology to promote mobility and accessibility, and enhance education and employment, and the *suganya bharat* app facilitated the reporting of accessibility issues. The Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre had converted the school curriculum for children aged 6 to 10 and had developed a 10,000-word sign language dictionary. Care schemes, a national action plan and a rehabilitation scheme empowered persons with disabilities through education and skill development. A scheme specifically for children with disabilities provided support throughout school. Parliamentary discussions had focused on improving the living conditions of people with disabilities and urging the Government to increase disability insurance coverage. Inclusivity should create environments that celebrated the unique abilities and perspectives of people with disabilities.

**Mr. V. Bahanda** (Malaysia) said that Malaysia had ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2010, signed the *Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023–2032* and adopted the *Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for*

*Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.* The Malaysia plan of action for people with disabilities 2016–2022: way forward aligned with the national policy for persons with disabilities and outlined objectives such as ensuring equal participation in communities; guaranteeing equal rights, opportunities and access under national law; eliminating disability-based discrimination in education; and raising awareness. The national policy had enabled the identification of seven categories of disabilities and, as of December 2023, there were approximately 600,000 persons with disabilities in Malaysia. An app had been developed to improve the existing registration system and enhance service delivery. The 11th and 12th Malaysia Plans for 2016–2020 and 2021–2025 had established the Department for Persons with Disability, which collaborated with agencies to provide skills and training programmes to ensure no one was left behind, and help people with disabilities integrate into public service. Malaysia encouraged the participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making, such as through the appointment of a senator and as members of the National Council for Persons with Disabilities. The Government had allocated 1.2 billion Malaysian Ringgit to support people with disabilities who were bedridden. Parliamentarians were responsible for enacting laws and regulations to improve the lives of people with disabilities and ensuring that no one was left behind.

**Ms. Z. Musa** (Malaysia) asked how support systems of people with disabilities, such as family members, could be recognized legally and in parliaments.

**Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah** (Egypt) said that, in the interests of justice, equality and non-discrimination, Egypt paid close attention to people with disabilities, provided for their needs and ensured their participation in society. The Egyptian Constitution, the *Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS): Egypt Vision 2030* and Law no. 10 of 2018 implemented Article 4 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and helped uphold the rights of people with disabilities in all fields. The National Council for Persons with Disabilities oversaw disability-related organizations and eight members of the Egyptian Parliament had disabilities. Parliamentarians must uphold the rights of people with disabilities and raise awareness of the Convention to improve mechanisms and frameworks, and translate them into practical actions. Achieving equality in all areas and across society should be the top priority.

**Ms. F. Khamees** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the rights of people with disabilities to education and health care should be upheld through laws and national constitutions. People with disabilities should receive equal treatment, enjoy human rights and basic freedoms, and enjoy a decent life. The war had significantly increased the number of people with disabilities and the State endeavoured to meet their needs through strategies, action plans, policies and activities designed alongside civil society. The blockade and sanctions hampered access to medications; ending those measures would help Syrians, including those with disabilities, to live dignified lives and enjoy their rights. The Parliament had recently discussed a new law identifying the role of state institutions, alongside non-governmental and governmental organizations and experts, in supporting people with disabilities. It would promote the development, education and health needs of people with disabilities in accordance with international agreements and instruments. She hoped that the currently limited impact of UN activities targeting people with disabilities would increase. She requested UN experts' assistance in offering vocational training.

**Mr. C. Sathawornwichit** (Thailand) said that the implementation of the sixth National Plan on Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities underscored Thailand's commitment to equality, empowerment, service quality and discrimination eradication. Many projects had been implemented through the plan, affecting over two million people. The Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act of 2007 was being amended, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to ensure effectiveness and comprehensiveness. It specifically targeted education and employment by ensuring equal opportunities and non-discrimination. The Ministry of Education had worked to integrate people with disabilities into the education system by removing obstacles to learning, improving access to educational materials and adjusting teaching. Quotas ensured that people with disabilities could access jobs. Employers who did not fill those quotas had to contribute to the Fund for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. The fourth Educational Management Plan for Persons with Disabilities ensured equal and appropriate educational opportunities for all ages. The Thai Parliament had advocated for people with disabilities and raised awareness of unfair treatment and the importance of non-discrimination. Over the previous five years, the number of motions and questions in the House of Representatives concerning the well-being of people with disabilities had increased 30 times over. Those efforts underscored the commitment to social integration, self-reliance and sustainable living conditions for people with disabilities.

**Ms. M. Guerra Castillo** (Mexico) said that the Federal Electoral Tribunal had indeed passed a decision that imposed affirmative action on parties. There were 21 million people with disabilities in Mexico who had the right to representation. The decision was very beneficial and had ensured that the best people, including those from NGOs, could be nominated and could alter the circumstances of people with disabilities through laws. She was confident that the current discussions in her country would lead to the inclusion of that decision in electoral law. Affirmative action could also affect other groups and therefore impact society. Mexico was very advanced in terms of equal opportunities and professional, political and social inclusion. Parliamentarians with disabilities had raised awareness of certain issues and it was therefore imperative to ensure that people with disabilities could enter politics.

**Mr. M. Moussa** (Lebanon) said that the Lebanese Parliament had adopted a law on inclusion in 2002 and a law authorizing the Government to proceed with the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. However, it had only been possible to implement part of that legislation due to the financial and economic crises. The law from 2002 was currently undergoing amendments to eliminate loopholes and include new principles and provisions ahead of the ratification of the Convention. It was important to strike a balance between implementing legislation and raising awareness of disabilities. However, implementation would convince communities of the importance of changing attitudes. Lack of funding presented challenges.

He appreciated Mr. Lohr's comments about the need for a multisectoral and multilevel approach to inclusion. Everyone should endeavour to be more inclusive and, in that regard, discussions and awareness were key. Enabling people with disabilities to exercise their rights, which empowered communities and supported marginalized and vulnerable individuals, was an ongoing struggle. Organizations and stakeholders had ensured that that issue gained traction and it should remain a priority for all governments.

**Mr. M. Alshowaikh** (Bahrain) said that implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) required work and momentum. Although it specifically referred to people with disabilities, all of the marginalized and vulnerable groups in the 2030 Agenda included people with disabilities. The goals were interlinked and indivisible – as were human rights – and they were similar to those of the Convention. Regarding human rights, there were four pillars of development: work, education, health and transport. People with disabilities could not access decent work without proper education and health care. Similarly, accessible transport was essential for work, education and health care.

Bahrain believed in the importance of equal opportunities and citizens' well-being. People with disabilities were an integral part of society and contributed to the 2030 Agenda. The Bahraini Government had launched programmes and initiatives to ensure that people with disabilities were included in all sectors, including education, work and health. It had also adopted funding programmes to empower people with disabilities.

**Mr. T. Karikoga** (Zimbabwe) said that up to 1.4 million Zimbabweans had a disability. In 2021, the Parliament and the executive branch of Government had established the National Disability Policy to promote access to public places and socioeconomic opportunities. A national disability adviser had been appointed to coordinate activities and ensure the implementation of that policy. Guided by the National Social Protection Policy Framework, Article 775 of the *National Development Strategy 1* for the period 2021 to 2025 ensured equal opportunities, non-discrimination, empowerment and employment for people with disabilities, among others. The Parliament of Zimbabwe had allocated funds to oversee inclusion programmes, including those of the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare. The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission included a commission specifically for people with disabilities. The National Council of Disabled Persons of Zimbabwe represented organizations of people with disabilities and advocated for disability-related rights. The Zimbabwean school psychology services and special education department supported schools in ensuring inclusive education. According to the 2019 Primary and Secondary Education Statistics Report, there were 85,000 learners with disabilities in Zimbabwe. However, progress was being made in addressing needs. The Government had adopted an inclusive approach, which helped students and promoted tolerance within societies. Including persons with disabilities in professional settings enhanced their well-being and quality of life. Sections 2.2 and 83 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe supported people with disabilities regarding their employment, empowerment and self-reliance. There were tax incentives for private companies to employ people with disabilities.

**Mr. F.H. Naek** (Pakistan) said that, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), there were over a billion people with disabilities globally, all of whom faced health inequities and many of whom lacked legal protection. Pakistan adhered to the definition of disabilities of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and had developed its legislative framework to protect and promote disability rights. Pakistan had introduced a national policy for persons with disabilities, a national plan of action and a disability law, which stipulated that people with disabilities should represent 2% to 5% of the workforce in the public and private sectors. However, more consistent enforcement was necessary. The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons programme empowered people with disabilities through inclusive development. It was essential to advocate for the inclusion of people with disabilities in global human rights and sustainable development efforts, and to support organizations in ensuring the voices of people with disabilities were heard and valued. Parliamentarians were key to holding governments accountable and advocating for change, which highlighted the importance of legislative action to promote inclusivity. They advocated for funding and introduced appropriate strategic plans, policies, legislation and data-driven goals. Parliamentarians' interventions should be supported by appropriate laws, resources and oversight. Those initiatives emphasized the commitment to improving conditions for people with disabilities and the need for sustained government efforts to support the rights and social participation of people with disabilities.

**Ms. C. Mix Jiménez** (Chile) said that equal opportunities were a fundamental right. People with disabilities represented 15% of the global population and 17.6% of the Chilean population. That proportion increased depending on income, gender and age; 40% of women over age 65 from low-income backgrounds had a disability. For almost a decade, there had been a universal access law in Chile. There were inclusion policies in education and a law ensuring that companies with over 100 employees allocated 1% of positions to people with disabilities. However, lack of coverage, information, training and auditing meant that some companies preferred to pay a small fine than comply with the law, which hampered efforts to tackle discrimination. To ensure equity and benefit all members of society, efforts should focus on strengthening oversight of legal initiatives, training employers and teachers, raising awareness and incentivizing inclusivity within the private sector. The Chamber of Deputies received administrative support from a group of people with Down's syndrome.

**Ms. F. Oncu** (Türkiye) said that Türkiye, alongside the IPU Twelve Plus Group, would organize a panel in June 2024. The number of people with disabilities worldwide was increasing continuously. In Türkiye, action plans – such as for education, employment, health care and inclusive services – were updated every five years. Disability representation was important. Whereas people with severe disabilities required social support and care, those with less severe disabilities should obtain qualifications and employment. Education was therefore essential and should be specialized, helpful to families and accessible. In Türkiye, it was possible to home school children. During the COVID-19 pandemic, awareness-raising activities had been held and local governments and authorities had provided services in the homes of people with disabilities.

Disability was a global issue that affected everyone and went to the core of human rights. Through cooperation and joint efforts, it would be possible to establish an appropriate system. Many countries had already made significant progress regarding human rights, the rights of people with disabilities and representation but it was insufficient. All forms of civil representation should include a committee for people with disabilities and one representative with a disability.

**Ms. M.A. Ache** (Andorra) said that Andorran schools rejected the distinction between mainstream and specialized education to raise awareness of disability among students and normalize disability inclusion. To ensure inclusivity, schools tailored curricula, teaching methodologies and evaluation criteria to learners' needs. The Ministry of Education and Culture allocated significant funds for specialist teachers and state-of-the-art technologies to facilitate learning and ensure students with disabilities received individualized support. The budget for disability support in education was equal to the budgets for education, health and housing. Universal access to schools was also a priority to facilitate students' mobility.

**Ms. S. Codina** (Andorra) said that, with the help of disability-related organizations, the Parliament had held activities and open days to increase awareness of parliamentary work, particularly among youth and people with disabilities. Consequently, the activities had been more targeted, concrete, useful and effective. Parliamentarians should lead by example and represent all citizens; it was therefore essential to ensure accessibility to parliamentary work and public spaces.

**Ms. C. Féret** (France) said that France had implemented Law No. 2005-102 of 11 February 2005 on the equal rights and opportunities, participation and citizenship of people with disabilities, and through which a national disability conference was held every three years. The sixth such conference had been held in 2023 and had included 10 commitments in areas such as schooling, employment and accessibility.

Inclusive education was paramount and ensured that the needs of people with disabilities were met. It ensured that professionals recruited by the National Ministry for Education supported children with disabilities and that schools had specific teaching units for children with disabilities from primary to secondary education. Schools were brought together to share and coordinate professional interventions for children with disabilities. There was a national plan for children with autism, through which specialized units and classes had been provided. Social support was available for those children and their families to ensure that they could receive the best possible education.

**Mr. D. Barrett** (Technical Lead for Sensory Functions, Disability and Rehabilitation Unit, WHO) said that, according to the *Global report on health equity for persons with disabilities*, many of the 1.3 billion people with significant disabilities worldwide died up to 20 years earlier than the general population. They were twice as likely to develop health conditions, were often limited in their everyday functioning, and had been particularly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although it was important to focus on education and employment, the health sector was vital to people with disabilities and to upholding their right to health. WHO worked with governments to ensure that health systems did not discriminate against disabilities and to increase understanding of the situations of people with disabilities. It was also improving the relationship between health ministries and organizations of people with disabilities to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in decision-making. Disability should be considered in mainstream health investments. WHO was proud to support countries in including people with disabilities in governmental processes, in line with World Health Assembly resolution 74.8.

**Ms. M. Al-Shammari** (Arab Parliament) said that, according to UN statistics, 80% of people with disabilities lived in developing states. The war crimes and genocide that the occupying forces were inflicting on Gaza and Palestine were likely to increase that percentage. Governments and parliamentarians must enact legislation and provide the resources to ensure people with disabilities could access education and employment. It was important to assess national disability strategies continuously to uphold basic rights. Institutions should be committed to fulfilling their legal, ethical and humanitarian duties towards people with disabilities. Teachers should receive training on how to deal with children with disabilities and help them excel in their studies. Specialized training programmes could help people with disabilities obtain qualifications and integrate into the labour market. National action plans should be developed alongside relevant authorities to provide the necessary environment for people with disabilities to contribute to society. The media should present people with disabilities positively. Special attention should be paid to people with disabilities in conflict-affected areas.

**The Chair** said that, unfortunately, there was no time to return to the panellists. Following the two unjustified and consecutive absences of Mr. E. Uwizeyimana (Rwanda), who represented the African Group, from the sessions of the Bureau of the Standing Committee, he took it that the Standing Committee agreed to declare Mr. Uwizeyimana's position vacant in accordance with rule 10.2 of the rules of the Standing Committee. If so, an election would be held at the upcoming session of the Standing Committee.

*It was so agreed.*

*The sitting rose at 12:30.*

# Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

**SITTING OF TUESDAY, 26 MARCH 2024**

(Morning)

*The sitting was called to order at 09:05, with Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), President of the Committee, in the Chair.*

## **Adoption of the agenda (C-IV/148/A.1)**

*The agenda was adopted.*

## **Approval of the summary record of the Committee's session held at the 147th IPU Assembly in Luanda (October 2023)**

*The summary record was approved.*

## **Discussion on the new United Nations Youth Office: Ensuring a deeper engagement with young people**

**The President**, introducing the item, said that the discussion to ensue was intended to impart information about the mandate and operations of the new United Nations (UN) Youth Office, following which members would have the opportunity to comment from the viewpoint of frontline parliamentarians. He welcomed as guest speaker Dr. F. Paullier of Uruguay, who had been appointed as the very first UN Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) for Youth Affairs in October 2023.

**Dr. F. Paullier** (ASG for Youth Affairs), guest speaker, noting that he was new not only to his post but also to the United Nations, said that he looked forward to exchanging views with parliamentarians and hearing their perspective on the work of the new UN Youth Office established in December 2023 pursuant to UN General Assembly resolution 76/306, at the proposal of the UN Secretary-General in his report entitled *Our Common Agenda*. That support from Member States represented a great step forward for the global youth agenda and would enable the Office to strengthen political commitment for its activities. Providing a solid foundation for revitalizing and scaling up meaningful UN engagement with and for youth, the Office would push from within the core of the UN system to that end and focus on the world's youth generation, currently the largest ever. Its robust mandate to lead on engagement and advocacy for the advancement of youth issues across the UN covered such areas as peace and security, sustainable development and human rights, and was built on an institutional memory created thanks to over a decade of work led by the UN Secretary-General's two former Envoys on Youth, to whom he paid tribute.

The Office was continuing to forge ahead with the UN Youth Strategy, known as Youth 2030, launched in 2018 by the UN Secretary-General and currently being implemented by 55 UN organizations and 132 UN country teams, all with diverse mandates, in 162 countries. The Youth Office drove efforts to bring the UN closer to young people and vice versa, above all through innovative partnerships and initiatives. In addition to trust, meaningful youth engagement was about feeling part of institutional decision-making, about participating as a human right and about more effective approaches to issues affecting youth, such as unemployment and mental health, which could not be satisfactorily resolved without involving young people in the conversation. One of the Youth Office's key missions was to deliver on recommendations consistently highlighted by youth themselves, including those contained in the UN Secretary-General's Policy Brief 3 on meaningful youth engagement. The brief offered guiding principles for action by Member States, including in respect of decision-making at all levels by endorsing a global standard for such engagement and establishing youth consultative bodies in all countries. In that context, it was important to take into account national and local realities, and the diversity of youth, which clearly differed from one region or location to another.

In September 2024, the UN Summit of the Future would explore ways of strengthening multilateralism amid the global changes under way with a view to adopting a declaration, the Pact for the Future. In a section devoted to youth and future generations, the Pact would spell out the undertakings required to further meaningful youth engagement in local, national, regional and

international policy- and decision-making. He and his team were set on working with parliamentarians for a Pact that paved the way to that goal. The UN Youth Office was pivotal in the related discussion, which centred on trust, and looked to parliamentarians for political support and commitment to advancing meaningful youth engagement in their own countries and beyond.

**The President** said that a trust problem had indeed been revealed by the 2023 Edelman Trust Barometer's finding that, for the first time ever, citizens around the world trusted the private sector more than governments. That finding spoke to trust in terms of credibility and the relationship between parliamentarians and young people, who felt increasingly hopeless and helpless about effecting change for the future. In light of that worrisome trend, he asked Dr. Paullier for insight from the global perspective concerning good practices that parliamentarians could follow in their home countries for achieving meaningful youth engagement.

**Dr. F. Paullier** (ASG for Youth Affairs), guest speaker, citing examples in response, said that the Iraqi Government had partnered with the UN and others to establish a youth advisory group to support the review of its 2030 National Youth Vision, a youth-oriented, human rights-based and multisectoral road map for empowering and creating opportunities for young people in Iraq. In Brazil, an unprecedented public policy programme providing citizenship training and capacity-building for young people living in situations of extreme social vulnerability – the Pact for Youth Project – had been launched in conjunction with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In Canada, the Prime Minister's Youth Council composed of 16 to 24 year-olds provided non-partisan advice to the Government on key issues ranging from employment, access to education and community strengthening to climate change and clean growth. In Ghana, the Youth Climate Council worked with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to build young people's entrepreneurial skills and capacities as a contribution towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Lastly, through continuous advocacy efforts from youth-led organizations and networks, the European Union (EU) was advancing the implementation of its Youth Check, an assessment tool for measuring the impact of future policy on young people. Several EU countries were using the tool to ensure youth participation in the legislative process.

As reflected in those few examples, the common goal was the meaningful inclusion of young people in public processes, which entailed consultation, participation and accountability. With the UN Secretary-General's Policy Brief 3 serving as a useful guide, parliamentarians should work to re-establish trust in institutions, as it was not necessarily a matter of young people not wanting to involve themselves in politics. Rather, they were finding their way in such other spaces as the climate action and feminist movements. Making meaningful youth engagement a reality called for political commitment to actions such as those set out in the IPU resolution on youth participation in the democratic process, including youth quotas and lowering the age of eligibility to run for office, which the UN actively supported. He was keen to know how parliaments were promoting meaningful youth engagement locally and nationally and how the Youth Office could support them, through the IPU, in that endeavour.

**Ms. L. Crexell** (Argentina), Vice-President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, said that the political participation of young Argentines had increased significantly thanks to a quota system, although candidates had to be at least 25 years of age. Policies and programmes could perhaps be developed in coordination with the UN Youth Office and backed up by legislation to ensure continuity, despite changes of government. More experienced young parliamentarians could also perhaps play a mentoring role to help newcomers settle in and avoid being intimidated and co-opted by the big political players. Young people were best placed to voice and act on their generation's concerns, especially around issues of importance to their future, such as environment, climate change and energy transition. She would be interested to learn about the UN Youth Office's work agenda and how the IPU could best cooperate with the Office to equip young people for the future and accompany them on their journey.

**Dr. F. Paullier** (ASG for Youth Affairs), guest speaker, said that respect for the autonomy of regions, countries and localities was a sine qua non for those working for an organization with a global mandate and that generalizations were therefore inappropriate. UN Member States were, however, aiming specifically towards the Pact for the Future, which would provide a framework for working with governments on the commitments it contained. Concerning the UN Youth Office, it was still setting its work priorities but, during his three months in post, it had clearly identified building trust, primarily through meaningful participation, as a core need. One pathway to progress on the youth agenda was



to give continuity to Youth 2030, which prioritized such topics as employment and health in their various dimensions. A second topic was to rejuvenate the UN and a fundamental third topic was to involve young people in intergovernmental processes such as the Summit of the Future. The success of the UN Youth Office hinged on going together and going further. The intergenerational processes entailed took time but were the only way to genuine transformation.

**The President**, turning briefly to another matter, said that he wished to draw attention to the new IPU *Policy to prevent and address harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and other IPU events*, which was intended to ensure an inclusive, peaceful and safe working environment, free of harassment for all, and which drew on definitions and approaches used in the UN System *Code of Conduct*. All participants were encouraged to familiarize themselves with the *Policy*, which could be downloaded from the IPU website and which he saw as a development that brought the IPU up to speed with global trends in all sectors.

**Mr. D. Carden** (United Kingdom), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, resuming the discussion and expressing thanks to Dr. Paullier for his thorough engagement with the Forum, said that the establishment of the UN Youth Office was an exciting development, especially in view of future challenges and the need for young people's representation. Throughout the Forum's 10-year existence, young parliamentarians had actively participated with great commitment in IPU activities, including through its highly representative 12-member Board. The beauty of involving young parliamentarians in the UN youth agenda was that they represented whole communities and family members of all ages. The IPU and the UN Secretary-General's former Envoys on Youth had worked very well together, campaigning on the same issues and each equally eager to see even more parliamentarians aged under 30 years.

As President of the Board, he had worked to strengthen links between parliamentarians and civil society, with successful results demonstrated at the UN Climate Change Conference in Dubai, from which the former must take their cue in speaking for all young people, especially those needing a voice at events that they themselves were unable to attend. Bearing in mind, however, the disproportionately high youth unemployment rates with catastrophic effects on all continents, a fight for economic inclusion must also be waged. There was no future if young people were without decent work and incomes, unable to contribute to society and the economy.

**Ms. S. Almansoori** (United Arab Emirates) said that young people stood poised to lead in building a sustainable and peaceful future and in shaping innovation and development. Their conscious and effective participation in that journey would enhance understanding of their views and aspirations and of modern-day challenges, while their empowerment and active engagement in politics would pave the way for creative and impactful solutions. Their parliamentary presence, however, remained below expectations.

With young people's participation in UN initiatives, providing stimulus and boosting effectiveness, the Youth 2030 and UN Youth Office initiatives pointed to an encouraging commitment to bolstering their role in the efforts to achieve the SDGs and promote international peace and security. To expedite those efforts, the IPU should rapidly increase its technological cooperation with the UN. Deeply committed to strengthening the part of youth in addressing future challenges and contributing to scientific and technological advancement, her country placed them at the heart of its groundbreaking strategies for a prosperous future and appointed young people to leadership positions, including minister for youth. Young people must be fully empowered to participate and lead worldwide for the sake of a fair and sustainable future.

**Mr. A.K. Mittal** (India) said that, as important stakeholders, the current largest generation of young people in history – 90% of them living in developing countries – must be involved in shaping the collective destiny and be empowered to build an inclusive, sustainable and just future. The creation of the UN Youth Office evidenced the growing recognition of that undeniable reality. Aware of the critical role that its large, vibrant and diverse youth population played in its path to progress, India was investing heavily in upskilling its young people and working to provide quality education for all. The UN Youth Office aligned seamlessly with its national ethos and offered a platform for collaboration, for amplifying youth voices on the global stage, and for channelling the innovation and energy of youth towards addressing pressing challenges. Strongly committed to youth empowerment, India pledged its resources and expertise towards ensuring the success of the UN Youth Office, a landmark initiative for which it urged united support as an investment in the collective future.

**Mr. B. Albinmohamed** (Bahrain) said that challenges and priorities varied among countries whereas job market issues were generally common to all. The problem was that current school and university education was irrelevant to the future job market, where artificial intelligence (AI) and other new technologies were set to exacerbate existing unemployment problems. The business-as-usual attitude should be replaced by collective action involving all stakeholders, including parliaments, civil society and the private sector, to address that problem and smooth the employment transition under way.

**Dr. F. Paullier** (ASG for Youth Affairs), guest speaker, said that he welcomed the expressions of support as a vital part of the people-centred approach on which all intergovernmental processes should be based. In that vein, the UN Youth Office had been established primarily at the urging of young people in particular, in line with Security Council resolution 2250 (2015), which called for increased youth representation in decision-making.

The job market question was indeed a key priority for the Youth Office, which recognized that lack of employment opportunities started with education, and also implied a violation of human rights and denial of the capacity for personal fulfilment. The constantly evolving job situation was as much about community as economics and would be addressed by the Youth Office with UN system support. While in Geneva, he had engaged with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to explore how the Youth Office could best contribute towards tackling unemployment from the youth perspective. Neither a box-ticking exercise nor a matter of “youth-washing”, meaningful youth engagement in that context meant involving innovative young people, who understood the situation, in bringing about the necessary transformation. The Youth Office was accordingly building on previous work, including relevant recommendations from the Transforming Education Summit held in 2022, and was also collaborating with the Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Technology on ways of bringing the youth perspective into discussions around the impact of AI on employment and indeed governance, another major issue. The mental well-being of young people was a further crucial component of the same conversation, which he would be continuing to pursue with youth in all regions.

**Mr. S. Ty** (Cambodia) said that the UN had an increasingly important role to play in addressing the many challenges jeopardizing global peace. His country’s hard-earned peace in the wake of destruction and genocide was priceless and behind its socioeconomic development. Committed to peace and security, Cambodia had become an active contributor to UN peacekeeping troops around the world. It firmly believed that multilateralism and cooperation based on international law, mutual respect and understanding and non-interference in the internal affairs of others were essential for achieving global peace, security and prosperity, with parliamentary diplomacy also playing a crucial role. Cambodia fully supported the efforts of the UN Youth Office to deepen engagement with young people, who accounted for over one half of its population. Given their limited experience, however, the question was how they would be able to deal with complex global issues.

**Mr. M.M. Mekeng**, (Indonesia), joining in the support expressed for the UN Youth Office, said that its establishment underscored the global commitment to ensuring the youth contribution to shaping a just and sustainable world. The progress to date in rightfully placing the youth voice at the heart of the UN system resonated with *Our Common Agenda* in its articulation of the duty to act and think for the long term to deliver more for young people and succeeding generations, and to be better prepared for the challenges ahead. Sadly, however, not all young people enjoyed the equal right to participate in decision-making at all levels, let alone the fundamental right to freedom and safety, as those in Gaza who were living in fear of bombardment and in desperate humanitarian need. Human rights were all-inclusive and the unacceptable practice of double standards must stop.

Deepening meaningful youth engagement depended on prioritizing sustainable peace, without which the global development agenda was unattainable. As agents of change, young people could actively contribute through the UN system and the UN Youth Office in particular towards the achievement of shared goals. All youth without exception were entitled to enjoy freedom, peace and prosperity, with their meaningful and inclusive participation essential to building a better world for future generations.

**Ms. H. Alhelaissi** (Saudi Arabia) said that a sustainable future depended on the empowerment of a youth faced with increasing challenges, as recognized by her country, with its extremely large youth population. Young people, however, often treated youth empowerment – a pillar of Saudi Vision 2030 – as an entitlement. Along with intergenerational dialogue, participation was important for youth to build on existing gains and rectify the mistakes of their predecessors but without dismissing

the social and workplaces roles of older generations, who were all too frequently marginalized or put out to pasture. Her plea was for them not to be forgotten, especially after they had paved the way for young people by pushing them to better their education and lead in the rapidly changing world. Continuity was essential and demanded a smooth transition across society.

**Mr. O. Zhmerenetskyi** (Ukraine) said that, the Russian aggression notwithstanding, his country had effectively adapted the best global practices for institutional development to its own circumstances. During the war, its already active volunteer movement had mushroomed to assist, among others, army members, displaced persons, veterans and vulnerable groups, with benefactors providing billions in support. Young people featured large in those war efforts as well as in all political parties and various non-governmental organizations (NGOs), many eventually becoming parliamentarians with a direct influence on policy. To optimize youth engagement in shaping the future, his Parliament was conducting research to identify possible scenarios resulting from different policy options and stakeholder decisions. It had also developed a chatbot to enable those who met the demographic criteria to participate in the research.

**Ms. J. Tielen** (Netherlands), noting the mention of trust as a crucial factor in democracies, said that it was especially important to build trust in political processes among the youth who would shape the future of her small country, with its aging population. To that end, a government-funded organization organized various educational activities, including daily tours of the Netherlands Parliament, which were useful for acquainting young people with the political scene. Parliamentarians also organized an annual question-and-answer event for school students, who were furthermore invited four times annually to write in with their concerns with a view to action in response. Education was key to another criterion for building trust, that of being well informed. Worryingly, however, young people were being exposed to increasing amounts of disinformation, including AI-generated deep fakes, circulated via social media that gave false impressions of politics, with a potentially negative impact on young voters, as had happened in recent elections in her country. She wondered what the UN Youth Office might advise parliamentarians to do about fighting such disinformation.

**Mr. C.T. Frolick** (South Africa) said that the establishment of the UN Youth Office was a crucial step in championing youth causes and aspirations, and also signified recognition that youth voices were essential in shaping policies and actions that influenced the collective future. The projected rise in Africa's youth population called for further investment in socioeconomic development, especially in light of youth unemployment, the impact of AI and climate-induced disasters in developing and underdeveloped countries. Appropriate legislative frameworks must be put in place, as in his country, to ensure that youth felt that their presence made a difference.

The UN Youth Office should be staffed by suitably qualified individuals, taking into account equal geographical representation, diversity and inclusivity, to prevent political manipulation aimed at advancing the interests of certain Member States. It should also be viewed as complementary to existing youth-oriented initiatives. Youth should not be organized into structures that inhibited their originality and creativity, and should also be allowed to be disruptive in specific instances, such as in relation to the perpetuation of armed conflict, given that there could be no development without peace. Key elements of humanity, including trust and mutual respect, must be embedded in the Youth Office's work. Pleased to learn of the push for intergenerational dialogue, his delegation supported Dr. Paullier in his initiatives and wished him success.

**Dr. F. Paullier** (ASG for Youth Affairs), guest speaker, responding to the interventions, said that his Office was very much immersed in the UN youth, peace and security agenda and recognized the role of youth in peace processes. Young people were positively engaged in that agenda as their own experts, UN Security Council resolutions having changed the paradigm in that regard, and provided global frameworks for adapting to the new reality. Through its cooperation with the Netherlands Ambassador for Youth, Education and Work, the UN Youth Office received fundamental support, including in matters of disinformation and polarization, both of them factors in building institutional trust and both identified as critical global challenges.

Another issue concerned the creation of global spaces for effective youth participation, as the representation of young people in all their territorial, regional and indeed linguistic diversity remained a distant goal that would take time to achieve. Although a small cog in a big wheel, the UN Youth Office signified a commitment by Member States to embark on that trajectory. Evidently, he was not the voice of youth at the UN but was mandated to lead his team in driving progress on youth issues and promoting the establishment of more UN youth mechanisms, in cooperation with Member States as representatives of the youth voice.

**Ms. R. Barbarán Reyes** (Peru), speaking as her country's youngest parliamentarian, said that adults should also be valued alongside youth for their experience, energy and desire to participate in national transformation efforts. There was space enough for both adults and youth to occupy, including in the job market, without needing to compete. In Peru, young people were entitled by law to occupational training that counted as work experience, which improved their chances of recruitment when applying for jobs. Any increase in retirement age should be opposed, however, as it would reduce job openings for young people. In closing, she welcomed the widening of the conversation beyond the Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

**Ms. G. Hooper** (United Kingdom) said that, as an older person who struggled with new technology, she was grateful to the delegate from Saudi Arabia for remembering the older generation. Young people enjoyed the great advantage of being able to use technology almost automatically and were therefore able to benefit from all it offered. While possibly lacking in experience to fall back on, they had limitless information instantly available to them. Not all, however, had access to hardware and connectivity, in which connection Uruguay was to be congratulated on its provision of computers to all school students. Along with built-in safeguards against the risks associated with new technology, social media and AI, lateral thinking and consultation with young people were key in the development of regulatory systems. It was imperative to listen to young people, especially in countries with a high youth population. The IPU should encourage or require all delegations to its Assemblies to include a young person in the same way that non-single-sex delegations were required.

**Mr. M. Al Ansi Al Yafai** (Oman), hailing the establishment of the UN Youth Office, said that it would help to highlight the representation and role of youth, who were instrumental in promoting socioeconomic growth. His country was a front runner when it came to youth, to which it attached great importance, as evidenced by its annual Youth Day celebration and other youth-related events. Young Omanis participated in planning and policymaking, received training and education support in all spheres, including innovation, technology and scientific research, and contributed through their active employment to the country's development.

**Mr. A. Golroo** (Islamic Republic of Iran), describing the establishment of the UN Youth Office as a forward-looking strategy for action in a new world, said that the future belonged to young people, who were a source of energy and initiative for change. As underscored in its development plans, his country directed great attention to the role of youth in building the future at home and indeed beyond. Youth were closely involved in the country's many NGOs, a national youth employment database was in place, and youth activities were funded from the national budget. His country was ready to cooperate with the UN Youth Office to enhance the role and participation of youth in addressing global issues. In talk of youth, however, the dire situation of young Palestinians under occupation by the Zionist entity could not be ignored.

**Ms. S. Abbasi** (Pakistan) said that over one half of her country's large population were aged between 15 and 30 years and that recent elections had seen many young candidates enter parliament. Although sceptical of politics, they had done so to seek peace, economic development and equitable political structures. They equally sought to effect change through the arts, technology, entrepreneurship, education, management, sciences, health and industrial growth. Government interventions would be needed for a more equitable and inclusive society, but a more meaningful contribution of young people would help towards building a more resilient Pakistan.

**Ms. A. Larouche** (Canada) said that the work of the UN Youth Office was applaudable but the figures for young parliamentarians alone were a reminder of the progress yet to be attained. It was clear from their discussions that members of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians had concerns over a wide range of issues, including gender equality and climate change in particular. Unless the IPU strengthened its links with the UN, it would be difficult to follow up on international agreements and commitments on all such issues. Young people must be given the space to do exactly that and feel involved. It was therefore essential to continue working for their voice to be heard more loudly at the UN.

**Mr. U. Akhtar** (Bangladesh) said that young people had the force and energy to change the world, bring peace and keep the climate in order. In his country, it was mostly they who had fought the liberation struggle to achieve independence, while currently they were contributing to the fight for

emancipation of the economy, learning to become software engineers and provide outsourcing services, and receiving education and skills training thanks to village digitization. As a growing country with a demographic dividend, Bangladesh invited Dr. Paullier to consider its wish to partner with the UN Youth Office to ensure that its young people contributed effectively to progress domestically and in the wider world.

**Ms. S. Unnopporn** (Thailand) said that young Thai candidates had secured over 40% of parliamentary seats in the 2023 elections through use of social media platforms to engage with citizens on wide-ranging political and other issues. The positive was that young people were now more politically engaged, but the increasing amount of hate speech, fake news and vitriol bandied about on those platforms was deeply concerning. Young people's exposure to risks that came with living their lives online was toxic and unhealthy. The negatives of social media could have implications for national security and for youth development. She asked Dr. Paullier for comment.

**Dr. F. Paullier** (ASG for Youth Affairs), guest speaker, thanking participants for their interventions, said that their input and national experiences were extremely helpful for the new UN Youth Office. The previous speaker's remarks underlined the need to examine the social impact of technology on communities and mental well-being. He and his team were working on a global approach to those issues, which he had recently discussed with the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) and which would also be covered at the upcoming Summit of the Future, notably in relation to AI.

With a historic momentum currently driving the youth agenda, all stakeholders should prioritize the move from words to action. For parliamentarians, that meant using their legislative and oversight powers to ensure that young people and civil society organizations participated in furthering that agenda. The present youth generation was the largest ever, but in some regions the population would grow more youthful while in others it would age. An intergenerational approach was therefore key to the discussion. For that reason, the UN Youth Office was mandated, pursuant to UN General Assembly resolution 76/306, to promote and facilitate intergenerational and intercultural dialogue, collaboration and solidarity. Without that dialogue, the change that lay with the world's youth would be ineffective.

**The President**, thanking Dr. Paullier for his important insights, said that the other side of trust was hope, which parliamentarians must project and foster to help young people find their way forward and feel that all was not lost. Young people were smart, connected and full of ideas and were needed alongside concerted global efforts to continue the advancement of youth issues.

*The sitting rose at 11:00.*

## SITTING OF TUESDAY, 26 MARCH 2024

(Afternoon)

*The sitting was called to order at 14:50, with Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), President of the Committee, in the Chair.*

**The President** drew attention to the new IPU *Policy to prevent and address harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and other IPU events*, which was intended to ensure an inclusive, peaceful and safe working environment, free of harassment for all, and which drew on definitions and approaches used in the United Nations (UN) System *Code of Conduct*. All participants were encouraged to familiarize themselves with the *Policy*, which could be downloaded from the IPU website and which he saw as a development that brought the IPU up to speed with global trends in all sectors.

### Discussion on the United Nations humanitarian work: How sustainable is it?

**The President**, introducing the item, said that its topic was in keeping with one of the Committee's declared focus areas, and addressed the important and timely issue of the transparency and effectiveness of the UN budget. Serious discussions were taking place about the UN and its funding, highlighted by the current hiring freeze and cost-saving measures introduced to deal with the reality of the financial shortfalls. Estimates of the need for humanitarian assistance in 2024 raised

questions about the sustainability of UN humanitarian work. He looked forward to a dialogue among participants and the four panellists, representing the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the World Food Programme (WFP), the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Middle East (UNRWA) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), who would give presentations.

**Ms. G. Connell** (Chief, Assessment Planning and Monitoring Branch (APMB), OCHA), panellist, in her remarks, said that the gravity of the role of parliamentarians in their home countries and the importance of their decisions taken as representatives of their people were well understood. Through her work on the ground, she could personally attest to the incredible value of the money that they invested in the UN response system, currently under strain. Humanitarian need was at its very highest, with 1 in every 73 of the world's inhabitants, including 1 in 5 children, forcibly displaced and many countries at the frontline of the global climate crisis experiencing extreme weather events. In all such situations, the UN and its partners were there, irrespective of risk, to deliver life-saving assistance to those in need.

In 2024, the call was for US\$ 46.4 billion to deliver such assistance to almost 300 million people, among them 180.5 million dependent on life-or-death funding of local and community-based organizations and international non-governmental organizations as well as the UN system. The UN had recently faced tough decisions, recognizing that countries had their own challenges and priorities, and that galvanizing humanitarian assistance was difficult. The solidarity encapsulated in the delivery of food, water, shelter and sanitation was, however, now more needed than ever.

The UN system was constantly challenging itself and its development partners to do better by exploring the most efficient means of delivery, whether cash, in-kind supplies or a multi-agency assistance package. Humanitarians saved lives and worked to uphold the dignity of those affected by crisis, hoping that they would live to see better days and a different future. Without political and development action to that end, humanitarians would continue to be seen delivering assistance on the ground to save lives.

**Mr. G.C. Cirri** (Director, Geneva Global Office, WFP), panellist, said that his modest ambition was to garner full support for the humanitarian endeavour of the WFP and its partners at an especially critical juncture. The unprecedented scale of the current humanitarian crisis was borne out by alarming statistics. An estimated 309 million people across 72 countries were grappling with acute food insecurity owing to a volatile combination of conflicts, extreme climate events and economic shocks. Without immediate intervention, 42.3 million people were at imminent risk of slipping into emergency levels of food insecurity. Most affected were the highly vulnerable, in particular women and children, with the number of under-5s suffering from life-threatening wasting projected to rise to over 45 million.

Operating with an extensive network of over 20,000 staff in over 120 countries, the WFP was at the forefront of addressing such challenges through an approach grounded in the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence essential for ensuring the safety of its personnel and partners, and in effective aid delivery. Compelling reasons for sustained commitment to the international humanitarian system included the humanitarian imperative, preventive efficiency, and the part played by humanitarian assistance in fostering stabilization and social cohesion, enhancing strategic foreign and security policy, and reflecting global values and identity. That commitment was worth the cost entailed.

His concluding appeal was for parliamentarians to champion increased humanitarian funding and leverage their influence to foster peace in conflict-affected regions. Their support was critical to ensuring the necessary operational resources and to tackling the root causes of hunger through concerted diplomatic efforts towards peace and stability. Their action had the power to save lives and forge a path to a world where food security was a reality for all.

**Ms. M. Lorenzo** (Director, Representative Office for Europe, UNRWA), panellist, said that the unprecedented situation of famine and despair in Gaza – a reminder of what happened when crises were forgotten – was predictable and preventable. With political will, the war could stop immediately, whereas without action, one half of the population in Gaza was expected to face catastrophic hunger owing to the crisis level of food insecurity, in stark contrast to 30 years earlier, when Gaza had been a high middle-income country.

As underscored by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Israel had the responsibility to enable humanitarian operations across Gaza by ensuring safety, facilitating access to all areas, and preserving law and order. Since the recent ICJ ruling, however, humanitarian assistance in Gaza had halved, with UNRWA prevented from delivering aid in northern Gaza, convoys directly targeted and

severely delayed at security checkpoints, and aid workers harassed. The classification of life-saving medical items as dual use was another grave concern, as it was crucial for such items to reach people across Gaza unimpeded.

Those obstacles to the work of UNRWA and other UN agencies were also jeopardizing any viable transition plan. Consideration should be given to what it would take to restore public services and to the need to strengthen humanitarian organizations like UNRWA, which had previously provided similar type services that only an administration could provide were UNRWA ever replaced. UNRWA, moreover, symbolized the right of return, and a just and lasting political solution for Palestinians and the region, Israel included. It firmly called on parliamentarians to protect multilateralism, support peace and security in the region, and champion the rights of Palestinians, including the right to self-determination. They should amplify those messages in parliament and, most importantly, to the public, whose solidarity towards those in Gaza, who felt abandoned, was critical.

**Mr. M. Manly** (Head, Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service, UNHCR), panellist, accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that the UNHCR mandate to protect refugees and resolve their problems was global in nature and complemented that of UNRWA, which had sole responsibility for Palestine refugees within its area of operations. In the world's largest refugee situations, almost all those seeking safety came from low- and middle-income countries and pointed to recent situations of conflict and persecution. They also represented the vestiges of conflict, highlighting the struggle to find peaceful durable solutions to conflicts begun decades previously, as with Afghanistan. Currently, over 114 million people were forcibly displaced, either externally or internally, with the UNHCR operating wherever they were located.

Concerning challenges faced by the UNHCR as a humanitarian and protection agency, in 2023 it had dealt with a record 43 emergencies in 28 countries and was seeing a global increase in the number of forcibly displaced persons. Its budget had also continued to increase, reaching almost US\$ 11 billion in 2023, only one half of it funded, meaning there was a growing gap between needs and response. In common with fellow agencies, the UNHCR was funded largely through voluntary contributions and not the UN regular budget, which might provide under 1% of the funds at its disposal. It had been increasingly reliant on a small number of country donors, to which it was very grateful, and had luckily received larger amounts from the private sector, notably individuals making monthly contributions. Several donors provided flexible funding, which was especially important in emergencies and forgotten crises, as it could be efficiently used where most needed.

The UNHCR would readily clarify to parliamentarians how its funds were used and what difference they made around the world. Adequate funding enabled it to complete work that it would otherwise be unable to do, which would have unfortunate humanitarian consequences.

**The President** thanked the panellists for their presentations and invited participants to provide a parliamentary perspective on the topic.

**Ms. H.R. Khar** (Pakistan), describing the happenings in Gaza as shocking, said that humanity could not continue to create conflicts and ever rising numbers of needy people only to seek more ways to fund humanitarian assistance in response. No matter how broken, underfunded or inefficient, the multilateral UN system was the only one in place and the most credible to date. It was pointless to work for more efficiency if a solution was already elusive, despite best efforts, when a country decided to go rogue, deaf to calls for compliance with international law and international humanitarian law (IHL).

Her region had been left to deal with the aftermath of a protracted conflict, including an ongoing refugee crisis, and the same cross-generational impact would be seen after current conflicts ended. The international system had become undemocratic and could never build credibility and public trust. As long as eloquent words and good intentions were not acted upon, the wrongs would continue.

**Ms. S. Almansoori** (United Arab Emirates) said that it was more important than ever to uphold human values and moral principles in working together to address the crises affecting increasing numbers of people and to strengthen preparedness for the future. Efforts must be made to foster peace and solidarity, protect lives and assist the needy and most vulnerable; enhance coordination with partners; promote women's and youth participation in decision-making; and use modern technology to build sustainability and local resilience. Her country had worked with UNRWA to provide numerous forms of aid in Gaza. All must stand united in support of the endeavour to forge a future of peace, justice and prosperity for all.

**Mr. A. Golroo** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that, despite the public outcry over the massacre of Palestinians in Gaza by the occupying regime, the establishment of a ceasefire and secure humanitarian corridors had been thwarted by the decision of a single State to veto the related Security Council resolution. Without reform of the asymmetric structure of the UN Security Council that perpetuated such disasters and their devastating consequences, it would be impossible to preserve the important achievements made during the previous century in international law, which must be upheld. Failure to provide humanitarian support to the oppressed people of Gaza would be a failure of human rights in view of the gross violations committed with impunity by a fake State and its occupying forces and, with respect to their crimes, the double standards at play in the application of international law.

By contrast, the delivery of relief and humanitarian support in natural disasters had improved in recent years, including thanks to technology and information-sharing. His country proudly joined in such efforts, especially within its own region, and looked forward to further technology transfer to developing countries in particular for disaster response purposes.

**Ms. S. Attia** (Egypt) said that her country, in consistency with its full support for UN humanitarian efforts, was working closely with the UN system to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza, where its supply convoys provided a lifeline and a glimmer of hope. The international community must assume its responsibilities to create an enabling environment for the sustainability of already difficult humanitarian work in a world beset by ever more complex and deadly crises and conflicts.

The IPU should consider establishing an impartial committee to identify humanitarian violations, implement the outputs of the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission, and encourage the formation of a general committee or informal group of parliamentarians interested in IHL to motivate or oversee related parliamentary work. Adequate funding must also be allocated for addressing the root causes of social tensions, promoting long-term solutions to humanitarian emergencies, working for peace and sustainable development, and strengthening the human rights culture. In calling for peace, dialogue and moderation, parliamentarians must furthermore reject violence, intolerance and extremism, especially in local communities and within their own corridors. There could be no reform of the global humanitarian system without parliamentary involvement.

**Mr. B. Albinmohamed** (Bahrain) said that the world was less than rosy but would be worse without the much-appreciated work of UN agencies. Although the system was dysfunctional and had failed those who most needed it, the alternative of chaos and anarchy was far more frightening. It was essential to keep faith in its institutions and their personnel while working to fix it so that it could deliver on its promises in a safe and fairer world for all.

**Ms. M. Lorenzo** (Director, Representative Office for Europe, UNRWA), panellist, said in response to interventions that the violation of all well-established international humanitarian rules in Gaza was indeed shocking and diminished the credibility of the global community. The normalization of the unbearable scenes in Gaza must end. Above all, the delivery of assistance to Gaza entailed adherence to the IHL framework. The killing of UNRWA personnel and the targeting of UN premises and aid convoys were unacceptable. A principled human rights approach was a prerequisite for addressing human-made crises, which only political processes based on dialogue could resolve. The most difficult undertaking would be to rebuild trust among those in Gaza, the West Bank and Israel, who were traumatized, afraid of one another and viewed coexistence as an opportunity lost. It was vital for global citizens to contribute towards the restoration of trust.

**Ms. G. Connell** (Chief, APMB, OCHA), panellist, said that the profound challenges for humanity stretched beyond a single crisis to many others around the world that were less spoken about. One such challenge was how to give equal value to all human life, which was the job of humanitarians. They could not offset political failure but could help people to survive it. If even the tiniest proportion of the massive spending on defence were redirected to humanitarian response efforts, many more people would survive. Parliamentarians must continue calling for an end to conflict. With humanitarian appeals lasting 10 years on average, the cross-generational impact of crises was abundantly clear. The very least to be done in addition to keeping people alive was to ensure their dignity and offer them a path to a future.

**Mr. K. Ait Mik** (Morocco) said that the increasing severity of humanitarian crises was disturbing and compounded the consequences of climate change and migration. International humanitarian organizations must invent new mechanisms for guaranteeing the sustainability of their operations,



especially in emergency situations, while simultaneously enhancing their effectiveness and transparency. Oversight and assessment mechanisms should also ensure that humanitarian aid reached the target groups without being diverted or otherwise exploited. Neutrality, impartiality and independence were fundamental principles in humanitarian work, along with protection for humanitarian organizations, including medical teams. As part of promoting sustainable humanitarian action, countries should step up their contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund. His country's provision of emergency food aid to victims in Gaza attested to its own humanitarian commitment.

**Ms. T. Samrejvanich** (Thailand) said that her country strongly opposed the withholding of access to the basic necessities for life as a weapon of war and appealed for universal support to enable UNRWA to discharge its mandate in a safe, efficient and timely manner. To that end, a ceasefire was critical. In its own region, Thailand was working closely with stakeholders to alleviate civilian suffering in the conflict in Myanmar by establishing a humanitarian corridor. It would also continue its bilateral, regional and multilateral efforts to address urgent humanitarian challenges elsewhere.

**Mr. O. Zhmerenetskyi** (Ukraine) said that the war in his country affected food-insecure countries worldwide, thanks to the artificial famine created by the blockade of Ukrainian grain exports used by the Russian Federation as leverage against vulnerable countries. Ukraine had nonetheless succeeded in partially unlocking grain transportation by sea and looked to the international community essentially to resolve those food problems by accelerating the process of forcing the Russians into peace. In food production alone, the cost of the Russian aggression was in the many billions. To save them from Russian manipulation, vulnerable countries should be informed of who was to blame.

**Mr. C.T. Frolick** (South Africa) said that the killing of UNRWA personnel by the aggressive occupier in Palestine was a loss for the global community. It was essential to continue championing policies that discouraged the politicization of humanitarian aid as well as such counterproductive knee-jerk reactions as the withdrawal of funding from UN agencies. A public better informed through continued awareness-raising about the principles and values underpinning humanitarian work would be more likely to support and advocate for sustained humanitarian assistance efforts.

Those efforts should continue unhindered in Gaza and elsewhere to address the dire consequences faced by inhabitants, with parliaments examining actions by their countries to prolong war or to assist peace and humanitarian efforts. Budgets that perpetuated the arming of occupiers for aggressive purposes posed a diabolical conundrum around the hypocrisy of supplying arms alongside minimal humanitarian relief. Such hypocrisy should concern all parliamentarians.

**Mr. J. Laouhingamaye Dingaomaibe** (Chad) said that his desert country, which had declared a food emergency, was affected by internal farmer-herder conflicts as well as by armed conflicts in neighbouring countries, which left refugees and internally displaced persons vying with local inhabitants for the little arable land available. The international community should direct attention to such conflicts rather than focusing only on other and abandoning the likes of Chad, where creeping desertification was destroying its forests. No one, including parliamentarians, spoke of those issues, each of which put pressure on the national budget and had adverse global effects. Global efforts were aimed at tackling the effects of crises but not the causes. If the causes were addressed, the effects would be too.

**Mr. M.M. Kapichila** (Malawi) said that humanitarian challenges faced by his country had included food insecurity, health crises and natural disasters, which the UN had been actively involved in addressing in addition to promoting sustainable development. Thanks to UN efforts countrywide, communication, information-sharing and joint planning among humanitarian clusters had been facilitated to promote a more coordinated and efficient response to crises and emergencies. UN projects aligned with the SDGs were also being implemented in collaboration with government, local communities and stakeholders, with joint needs assessments conducted with local partners to inform targeted resource allocation.

**Mr. P. Akamba** (Uganda) said that his country hosted the highest number of refugees in Africa and that the increasing pressure from refugee crises on the UN humanitarian apparatus demanded the prioritization of a sustainable solution and conflict reduction measures. Parliamentarians must raise awareness of the need to integrate refugees into local communities, where they could earn a

living and contribute to the cost of public services. Uganda was working to provide opportunities on that basis for its refugees but was finding it difficult. Parliamentarians must furthermore consistently speak out against aggression, war and conflict, all of which resulted in refugees, and seek a lasting solution to the problem.

**Mr. A.A. Dara** (Indonesia), expressing his country's unwavering support for the people of Palestine and their legitimate right to full sovereignty, peace and security, said that the suspension of funding for UN humanitarian agencies operating in Palestine, notably UNRWA, was deeply worrying. After brutally killing UNRWA staff and damaging UNRWA facilities across Gaza, Israel was now accusing UNRWA of supporting Hamas. Built with donations from his people in solidarity with Palestinians, the Indonesian Hospital in Gaza had been severely damaged in unforgivable Israeli attacks constituting an attack on humanity and a flagrant violation of the Geneva Conventions.

Set to triple its contributions to UNRWA, Indonesia called on all IPU Members to provide all possible humanitarian support to ease the Palestinian pain. The international community could not remain at the mercy of the few and stand by helplessly watching the Israeli atrocities and killing in Gaza, now compounded by a starvation campaign. All those unfolding errors and evil attacks must stop to allow the Palestinian people to live in peace and enjoy their basic human rights, in particular the right to dignity and freedom from fear and terror.

**Ms. C. Dao née Macoura** (Côte d'Ivoire), congratulating the UN on all its work to help the world's people, said that, in 2023, her country had suffered spillover effects from the terrorism plaguing its northern neighbours and had provided those fleeing into its territory with the necessities of life. Why the international community took no action in such situations was perplexing. Current efforts to resolve crises failed to treat the causes, including in particular the manufacture and sale of arms to all and sundry. There would be no change unless that problem was addressed.

**Mr. A.K. Mittal** (India) said that, with its rich heritage and age-old philosophy of the world as one family, his country had consistently helped other nations in need. Its deepening engagement with the UN was based on its commitment to multilateralism, bilateralism and cooperation as keys to achieving shared goals and overcoming common challenges. Its humanitarian endeavours were grounded in UN principles, with an emphasis on humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and a commitment to upholding IHL. In partnership with UN agencies, India had proactively engaged in providing humanitarian assistance to countries in its region and beyond. Its vaccine-sharing during the COVID-19 pandemic also pointed to its dedication to promoting universal health and well-being. Through concerted actions, the foundation of a better and resilient world could be laid.

**Mr. M. Green** (Canada), said that the newly issued report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, entitled *Anatomy of a Genocide*, had concluded from its analysis that there were reasonable grounds to believe that the threshold indicating Israel's commission of genocide was met. Furthermore, the starvation of civilian populations was strictly prohibited under the Geneva Conventions. Having visited UNRWA facilities in Jordan, he recognized how, in addition to Gaza, UNRWA was supporting humanitarian relief on the ground in the occupied West Bank and elsewhere in the region. Panellists might wish to reflect on how the report might affect or trigger obligations by UN Member States to take more seriously the interim positions of the South African delegation, particularly in relation to arms embargos, collective punishment, UNRWA funding and the inability to provide food to a population being actively starved by Israel.

**Mr. M. Manly** (Head, Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service, UNHCR), panellist, responding to the interventions, said that the expressions of support were especially appreciated, as to operate as a neutral, impartial humanitarian actor in very complex environments was not always easy. Almost everywhere was affected by major armed conflict or serious human rights issues and, in turn, by forced displacement. The reaffirmations of support for multilateralism were heartening but humanitarian values must also be persistently reaffirmed. As to effects and causes of humanitarian crises, parts of the UN system responded to the effects while others, including human rights mechanisms, to the causes. The solution and starting point to a better future was, however, for the parties to conflict to lay down arms and for the aggressor to take responsibility for its actions.

In addition to donors, full credit was due to States delivering a global public good as hosts of large refugee populations, as humanitarian action in respect of refugees only worked if countries were willing to give safe haven to those forced to flee troubles. From the longer-term standpoint, swifter

action was required from development partners and international financial institutions to address and improve situations on the ground for the sake of both refugees and host communities. The trend begun in that direction needed reinforcement.

**Ms. M. Lorenzo** (Director, Representative Office for Europe, UNRWA), panellist, expressing thanks for the appreciation voiced from the floor, said that roughly one quarter of her colleagues in Gaza were still working every day, despite their exhaustion and all else, in the exceptional situation of no one being able to flee. The non-politicization of aid was an important point. The UNRWA Commissioner-General had recently been prevented from entering Gaza, effectively meaning that the Member States he represented were likewise barred from entry. Any other agency could in future face the same existential threat as UNRWA. It was consequently vital to support multilateralism and also to help combat disinformation aimed at discrediting the work of humanitarian actors on the ground. UNRWA was not equipped to fight that fight alone and must remain focused on what really mattered, which was people in Gaza, including the hostages.

In respect of genocide, the expectation was that a post-war inquiry body would hold all parties to account for their actions, in the same way as UNRWA was being requested to account for horrific allegations against it. Parliamentarians should urgently engage in humanitarian diplomacy and also alert their constituents to the reality of the situation in Gaza, bringing them to understand that such situations affected them and everyone else.

**Mr. G.C. Cirri** (Director, Geneva Global Office, WFP), panellist, welcoming the support expressed, said the main ask was not for funding but for help in finding solutions to the many raging conflicts responsible for the current unprecedented humanitarian crisis. The WFP was the world's largest humanitarian agency but its budget for combating food insecurity was equivalent to the budget for the Canton of Geneva, which hinted at the magnitude of its needs for alleviating suffering. It was fully cognizant of the Geneva Conventions and welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 2417 (2018) on protection of civilians in armed conflict as well as the continuous information available concerning especially problematic situations.

**Ms. G. Connell** (Chief, APMB, OCHA), panellist, said that the words of solidarity and strong commitment to international law were extremely gratifying and that it was important to continue expressing them, particularly in light of the horrifying violations occurring in many conflicts and crises. Although unable to address root causes directly, humanitarian agencies would never relent from their daily urging of those in power to tackle them. All those having stood with UNRWA throughout the crisis in Gaza could not be thanked enough. UNRWA was the lifeline for Gaza and the strongest backbone of the humanitarian operation there. Parliamentarians, whose voices mattered, must vitally appeal to countries that had not yet done so to follow the example of those that had reinstated funding to UNRWA. No organization able to provide needs-based assistance should have its funding cut.

The IPU Members exemplified the incredible multilateralism and solidarity at the heart of humanitarian action and should see the humanitarian arm of the UN as an extension of governments, people and communities. It was for parliamentarians to use their indispensable voices to stress the importance of humanitarianism and take its spirit forward.

**The President**, thanking the panellists for their work and commitment to delivering in difficult times, said that parliamentarians would surely communicate their messages and continue to support that work.

### **Parliamentary motion on Security Council reform**

(C-IV/148/5-P.1)

**The President**, drawing attention to a draft parliamentary motion on Security Council reform set out in document C-IV/148/5-P.1, recalled that such reform was one of the Committee's agreed areas of focus aimed at streamlining its work and better integrating its activities into the IPU-UN partnership. The Committee had also agreed to adopt motions, as opposed to resolutions, on topics relating to its mandate for presentation to the Assembly and inclusion in its records. Such motions were to be considered without extensive discussion and without amendment.

**Mr. Aoyagi Hitoshi** (Japan), commenting on the text and observing that the UN Security Council was clearly dysfunctional, said that he heartily welcomed the draft motion, which was in line with earlier recommendations of his to the Bureau. IPU Members should immediately take the important actions described in paragraphs 1 and 3 of the draft motion. His additional proposal was for the IPU to establish a mechanism for monitoring progress.

Japan had consistently advocated an increase in both permanent and non-permanent Security Council Members to better reflect the state of the world, along with restrictions on use of the veto power, which aggravated division, so as to restore trust. Japan had also constantly reiterated the need to enhance transparency by improving non-permanent Members' access to Security Council discussions. The IPU must act to take forward the process of setting goals to be met by the time of the Summit of the Future in September 2024 and before the 80th UN anniversary.

**The President** said that, owing to time constraints, any further comments would unfortunately need to be submitted in writing. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the draft motion on reform of the UN Security Council.

*It was so decided.*

### **Elections to the Bureau of the Standing Committee**

**Ms. P. Torsney** (Head of the Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations in New York) said that two candidates had been nominated for election to the Bureau of the Standing Committee, namely, Mr. H. Arshakyan of Armenia for the Eurasia Group and Mr. M. Salinas of Paraguay for the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean.

**The President** said he took it that the Committee wished to elect those two candidates.

*It was so decided.*

*The sitting rose at 16:45.*

## Forum of Women Parliamentarians

### SITTING OF SATURDAY, 23 MARCH 2024

(Morning)

*The sitting was called to order at 10:40 with Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche (Algeria), First Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, in the Chair.*

**The Chair**, expressing her condolences to the families of the victims of the Moscow terror attacks, said that Ms. López Castro (Mexico), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, could not attend the current session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians because she was running for election in Mexico. She wished her luck.

**Dr. T. Ackson** (IPU President), thanking the Forum for its work to elect a female IPU President and congratulating the women who had won elections in the previous year, said that some parliaments had been more inclusive than others. Work would continue to focus on including women and other underrepresented groups because it was important to see women in decision-making.

There were wars and crises worldwide – which had unacceptable consequences for women, girls and the most vulnerable – and an uninhibited war narrative. The gender perspective that the Forum of Women Parliamentarians promoted within IPU deliberations was therefore more important than ever and vital to finding effective and sustainable solutions. Wars and conflicts continued to lead to a backlash against women's rights and empowerment, the exclusion of girls from education, the perpetration of gender-based and sexual violence, and the spread of hunger, disease and death. That cycle had to be broken. Only women's empowerment and gender equality in all sectors, particularly parliaments, could achieve sustainable peace. According to *Women in parliament 2023*, only 26.9% of parliamentarians worldwide were women, which represented an increase of 0.4 percentage points since 2022. The introduction and enforcement of women's quotas represented progress. Social norms that hampered women's equal participation needed to be addressed courageously and comprehensively. Substantial financial resources should support that work in order to ensure effective implementation, meet women's and girls' needs, and turn current economic losses into future societal gains. Inclusive governance drove better outcomes and more peaceful and fairer societies, which benefited everyone. Parliaments should promote women's inclusion and leadership in all sectors and she was pleased that the afternoon's debate of the Forum would focus on how to improve gender parity in the military and technology sectors, and on how to counter gender bias in artificial intelligence (AI) systems.

**The Chair** said that the Forum of Women Parliamentarians relied on the IPU President's strong participation and support.

**Mr. M. Chungong** (IPU Secretary General) said that he normally listened at the sessions of the Forum of Women Parliaments but, following his colleagues' insistence, he had agreed to speak. Dr. Ackson's election demonstrated that the IPU was putting words into action. The IPU was making progress in terms of representation and Members' ability to contribute to deliberations, particularly through the new sexual harassment prevention policy. Although the IPU Executive Committee had achieved gender parity, the IPU Gender Partnership Group had noticed that, according to registrations for the 148th IPU Assembly that had been received up until the previous day, only 36% of participants were women. The record was 38%. Moreover, out of the 133 delegations consisting of two or more members, 12 were composed of only men and three were composed of only women.

He saluted women's participation in overhauling the IPU rules and statutes. A working group that included members of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians and Forum of Young Parliamentarians was due to meet at the current Assembly to review submissions and prepare proposals for presentation at the 149th IPU Assembly. He recognized that many institutions had supported work to promote gender equality, including the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee), International Gender Champions (IGC), Generation Equality Forum and UN Women. Work should continue to promote justice and gender equality in decision-making.

**Adoption of the agenda**  
(FEM/37/A.1-rev)

*The agenda was adopted.*

**Activities to advance gender equality**

**(a) The work of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and its deliberations at the sessions held in Luanda on 23 October 2023 and in Geneva on 23 March 2024**

**Ms. S. Sirivejchapun** (Thailand) presented the report on the work of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, which had met in October 2023 in Luanda, Angola, and in Geneva, Switzerland, earlier that day. She said that it had been agreed that the Forum of Women Parliamentarians would discuss the draft resolution on *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence* from a gender perspective. The Bureau had chosen the topic of the panel discussion for that afternoon – *Women peacebuilders advancing sustainable peace*. It paid tribute to the women fighting for peace and alleviating the suffering of war and conflict victims worldwide, and the Bureau had wanted to support their efforts. The parity debate, which would take place later that week, would be an opportunity for men and women to discuss how to ensure equality in all fields and women's economic participation. It was absolutely necessary to continue removing legal and cultural barriers to women's economic participation and empowerment but there were concerning signs of reform fatigue. The cost of women's disempowerment in economies was too high, especially with only six years to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). The IPU, alongside the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) and Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), was conducting its third regional study on sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments, which focused on the Asia Pacific region. She urged women parliamentarians from the Asia Pacific region to participate.

**(b) The work and recommendations of the Gender Partnership Group**

**The Chair** said that Mr. Chungong had already provided all the information and statistics related to the current item.

**(c) IPU activities for the promotion of gender equality**

**Ms. Z. Hilal** (Secretary of the Forum and Manager of the IPU Gender Partnership Programme) said that the women in parliament reports were published annually and analysed election results. The proportion of women in parliament had increased by 0.4 percentage points to 26.9% and six countries had achieved gender parity in their lower houses of parliament, including Rwanda. Although the proportion of women in parliament had increased by 0.6 percentage points in 2021 and by 0.4 percentage points in 2022 progress in women's participation was stagnating and had decreased over time.

The report contained a section for each global region. The Americas had the highest share of women parliamentarians (31.5%, whereas the global average was 26.9%) and sub-Saharan Africa had achieved the largest increase in women's representation (3.9%). However, there was no progress in the Pacific, the Middle East and North Africa.

Women represented 23.8% of Speakers of Parliament and the number of women in leadership positions had increased by 1.1 percentage point since 2022. In countries such as the Bahamas, Belgium, Belize, Germany and Mexico, there was a woman Speaker in each parliamentary chamber. In 2023, Cambodia and Côte d'Ivoire had elected their first women Speakers. However, women chaired less than 30% of parliamentary committees worldwide and they were more likely to chair gender equality committees than defence or finance committees. In 2023, countries with quotas had elected 28.8% of women whereas countries without quotas had elected 23.2% women. However, quotas should be well designed and required strong enforcement mechanisms. Compared to the first-past-the-post system, proportional representation and mixed election systems improved women's representation.

In 2023, women candidates in countries including Liberia, New Zealand, Poland and Thailand were particular targets for gender-based violence and disinformation. Many parliamentarians in countries such as Australia, France and the United Kingdom had spoken out about their experiences. However, in 2024, some parliaments – including those in Australia, Benin, Iceland and Ireland – had acknowledged the issue and stepped-up action. It was hoped that every parliament would follow suit and the Forum of Women Parliamentarians stood ready to provide support.

In 2023, there had been a worrying increase in women leaving politics. At its previous session, the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians had held a discussion on that topic, which had produced recommendations. They included ensuring peer-to-peer support to build resilience, increasing cross-party and cross-border solidarity among women, ensuring better representation of women, adopting parliamentary codes of conduct to prevent harassment, and adapting parliaments to help parliamentarians manage care responsibilities.

**The Chair** said that the report provided in-depth analysis and she encouraged parliamentarians to use and disseminate it.

**Ms. V. Riotton** (France) said that, on 12 March 2024, she had participated in the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the United Nations (UN) headquarters in New York. Stakeholders, together with 113 parliamentarians from 38 countries, had attended. The purpose of the CSW was to bring together States, governments and civil society. The joint IPU and UN Women side event, *Gender-sensitive parliaments: Advancing gender equality to end poverty*, had focused on the importance of parliaments in introducing innovative policies to meet the needs of women and girls living in poverty. First, discriminatory provisions should be removed through legislative reforms. Laws should be analysed from a gender perspective and their implementation should be ensured. Second, it was imperative to introduce gendered budgets that provided a framework to ensure that economic, fiscal and social policies were favourable to women. Third, it was important to promote gender-sensitive parliaments to ensure reforms were carried out and ensure women could participate equally in decision-making. In that regard, gender equality laws and parliamentary quotas were necessary. Fourth, gender-sensitive parliaments should include grassroots organizations and a diverse range of civil society groups to combat poverty effectively.

The IPU had hosted two other events at the UN. The first event had been organized alongside the CEDAW Committee, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership of the Generation Equality Forum, International Gender Champions and various States. It had focused on the importance of gender parity in decision-making to promote peace and security. The second event had promoted a new women's leadership programme supported by the European Union. The IPU would work closely with UN Women, International IDEA, and local governments to change deep-seated social norms and achieve genuine parity. Partner organizations had held discussions with civil society representatives, particularly young women, on effective strategies to achieving gender parity.

It had been pleasing to see the impact of IPU work within the UN bodies dedicated to gender equality. There was an anti-choice and anti-rights movement that restricted women's rights and should be stopped. The IPU should work on the sources of its financing.

**The Chair** said that the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), alongside UN Women and the International Labour Organization (ILO), had hosted an online conference entitled *The role of parliamentarians in accelerating the achievement of women's economic empowerment under SDG 5 in the Arab region: Focus on care policies* from 31 January to 1 February 2024. It aimed to catalyse action and renew commitment to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. The President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians had opened the conference, alongside representatives of the host organizations. The First Vice-President and the Second Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians had chaired the first and second days respectively. The meeting had included 35 parliamentarians – 29 women and 6 men – from 18 Arab countries and 55 observers. Discussions had focused on how equal care led to women's economic empowerment. ESCWA, the ILO and UN Women stood ready to support endeavours to achieve women's empowerment and genuine equality in care. Parliamentarians should stand united in their resolve to overcome challenges, seize opportunities and create a more inclusive and equitable world.

**Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah** (Egypt), Second Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, said that a webinar entitled *Preventing and responding to violence against women in parliaments* had been held on 22 November 2023 to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The 88 participants had included 50 parliamentarians – 41 women and 9 men – from 25 African countries. The webinar had followed up on a study entitled *Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Africa* that the IPU and African Parliamentary Union (APU) had carried out in 2021. Participants had highlighted the impact of gender-based violence on women's participation in politics and the achievement of inclusive parliaments and democracy. They

had shared experiences from their own parliaments and had discussed solutions. Twelve African parliaments and four interparliamentary organizations had reported on parliamentary actions and measures to prevent and respond to gender-based violence. Since the publication of the study, those actions had included policies and codes of conduct on sexism and harassment, and procedures for supporting victims, handling complaints and imposing sanctions. The discussions had also highlighted the importance of women's caucuses for sharing experiences and providing support. She hoped that the movement would spread to other African parliaments.

**The Chair** said that she was pleased that parliamentarians were seeking legal solutions to combat violence against women in parliaments.

### **Contribution to the work of the 148th IPU Assembly from a gender perspective**

**The Chair** said that the Forum of Women Parliamentarians would discuss the draft resolution entitled *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence* from a gender perspective in order to make it more inclusive of women and girls, and ensure it met their needs. Amendments would be submitted to the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security. Short presentations would be delivered, followed by a debate in plenary. Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah (Egypt) would chair the debate while Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia) would serve as Rapporteur.

*It was so decided.*

**Ms. L. Crexell** (Argentina) said that Ms. M. Stolbizer (Argentina), on whose behalf she was speaking, and Mr. C. Lacroix (Belgium) had been designated co-Rapporteurs of the draft resolution at the meeting of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security at the 146th IPU Assembly. Technology and artificial intelligence (AI) should be used to benefit humanity and maintain global peace, but their potential for misuse raised concerns. Ms. Stolbizer and Mr. Lacroix had worked hard throughout the year to produce the best resolution possible and provide a regulatory framework for countries to legislate and prevent catastrophe.

**Mr. C. Lacroix** (Belgium), co-Rapporteur, said that there was awareness that lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS) would be able to identify and kill a human target autonomously. They already could in some cases. AI development could therefore lead to a world in which an algorithm-based machine could decide a human's fate. Algorithms were often based on black box models, which were reserved for scientific or military work. However, it was clear that those models repeated human errors, as demonstrated through facial recognition technology. LAWS might have a gender bias towards targeting men who might be armed; they might also develop to perpetrate sexual and gender-based violence against women. In the worst-case scenario, AI might control weapons designed to perpetrate mass rape amongst entire populations, particularly women and girls. It was therefore essential to provide a gender perspective within the draft resolution. However, certain countries had proposed amendments that removed that reference to gender-based discrimination. Ms. Crexell and he must ensure that the gender perspective remained. AI could be very effective in war, but it lacked empathy, compassion, conscience and emotion. Moreover, it had an in-built gender bias. It was therefore essential that parliaments worldwide adopted measures to regulate LAWS.

*A video on gender and military AI was shown.*

**Ms. S. Mohan** (Associate Researcher, Gender and Disarmament, and Security and Technology programmes, UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDR)) said that the notion of militarized masculinity translated into masculinized militaries. AI was not neutral; it internalized and could catastrophically enhance gender biases across societies, program them into AI systems or ignore them in outputs. The dearth of women working in science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM), and information and communications technologies, hindered the mainstreaming of gender issues. According to UNIDR research, women represented 8% of software professionals, between 0.3% and 20% of military personnel in countries worldwide, and only a fifth of diplomats in specialized disarmament forums on LAWS. Consequently, LAWS were conceived, developed, deployed and governed in a gender vacuum. Gender was considered a soft security issue and an ethical, rather than a core technological, concern. It was therefore important to identify gender gaps and fill them throughout the life cycle of LAWS. IPU work on gender equality, including in relation to LAWS, was noteworthy.



Gender biases in AI systems could result from flawed datasets, the algorithmic processing of those datasets through machine learning models, or human developers who annotated and supervised AI systems. If humans did not correct those datasets, the bias would appear in output. A study from Stanford University of publicly available information across 133 datasets had revealed that 44% exhibited gender bias and 26% exhibited gender and racial biases. Gender Shades, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Lab study, had shown that 99% of software that used AI facial recognition systems recognized white male faces, but only 67% recognized darker female faces. The harmful effects of those biases were visible in civilian life, such as the Apple credit card algorithm that had provided significantly higher credit ratings to men. Such systems on the battlefield could have very harmful effects, such as target profiling based on gender and misidentifying civilian women as non-human objects. It was therefore important to ensure that public offices, including national statistics offices, invested in gender disaggregated datasets. They should use explainable and responsible AI systems and ensure that the human developers of those systems received gender-sensitization training. There were noticeable gaps in weapons review processes worldwide. Most of those reviews were carried out under Article 36 of the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, which did not specifically refer to gender. However, since States implemented weapon review processes, they could ensure they were gender-sensitive. Since 2017, the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of LAWS (GGE on LAWS) had continuously discussed social and gender biases within LAWS. An overarching feminist foreign policy could also raise awareness of and prioritize gender issues across the board, including regarding LAWS. National action plans, implemented as part of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) (UNSCR 1325), introduced policy measures on LAWS and gender processes. Interdisciplinary evaluations and the employment of diverse teams were also important.

*Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah (Egypt)*, Second Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, *took the Chair*.

**The Chair** invited the Forum to consider, from a gender perspective, the draft resolution to be discussed by the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, entitled *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence*.

The aim of the debate was to propose gender-based amendments to the draft resolution and support amendments that had already been proposed if they reflected the Forum's concerns. The Standing Committee would then discuss those amendments.

### Debate

**Ms. P. Maharani** (Indonesia) said that women and girls were significantly affected by the turbulent times and should not be left behind as digital technologies developed. AI presented development opportunities and challenges and Indonesia had formulated its national AI strategy to harness its potential. When promoting AI development, one must consider how to close digital gaps, reap the benefits of AI, mitigate risks and challenges, and enhance global digital and AI governance.

The unregulated use of LAWS presented ethical, humanitarian and security challenges. In war zones, women and children were particularly at risk. There should therefore be an international arrangement to protect them. Major AI powers should limit the spread of LAWS and a legally binding instrument should prohibit or regulate the use of those weapon systems. There was the concern that non-State actors could deploy homemade autonomous weapons by using civilian devices for military purposes.

Despite work towards women's empowerment and equality, women and children remained the most vulnerable and affected in conflicts, such as in Ukraine. In Gaza, 67% of victims were women and children. The global community must therefore invest further in the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Women leaders must take action, encourage women's leadership in the peace process and actively engage in AI development. Parliaments must ensure that women participate in decision-making.

**Ms. Yoshikawa Yumi** (Japan) said that, according to Human Rights Watch, it would not be long before LAWS could select human targets without human intervention. The Research Committee on Foreign Affairs and National Security in the Japanese House of Councillors had been investigating the impact and implications of LAWS, which were the third revolution in warfare following gunpowder and nuclear weapons. The situations in Ukraine and Gaza, as well as previous wars such as in Japan, had demonstrated that vulnerable women and children suffered the most. Despite attempts to establish

LAWS legislation and regulatory frameworks, and tackle international humanitarian law (IHL) challenges, differences in opinion persisted and hampered efforts to conclude a legally binding document. The IPU was an important platform for ensuring that unbiased discussions could take place.

**Ms. S.E. Lucas** (South Africa) said that it was imperative to include a gender perspective when discussing the social and humanitarian implications of LAWS. Armed conflicts often disproportionately affected women and girls and marginalized communities. It was therefore essential to understand how autonomous weapon systems intersected with existing gender dynamics to prevent them from exacerbating existing challenges. The impacts of deploying autonomous weapon systems on women's security and access to essential resources, and on overall power dynamics in conflict zones, must be considered. Integrating a gender perspective in discussions and regulatory frameworks could account for women's and marginalized groups' needs and vulnerabilities, foster a more inclusive environment, and ensure a comprehensive and equitable response to the social and humanitarian impacts of autonomous weapon systems.

**Ms. Li Yuping** (China) said that guaranteeing women's political participation was important and furthered human civilization, peace and development. In China, there were 790 female representatives in the National People's Congress, which represented a 1.64% increase since the previous Congress. Female representatives had fully participated in social and global governance, and they favoured using AI to serve the common good, peace and security. The legal framework in China supported women's participation and women had received training to improve their political participation. Communication efforts had focused on raising awareness of gender equality, promoting equal political participation and encouraging women to become involved in public affairs. Women were essential to national development and those efforts would help women worldwide to reach their full potential and contribute to social progress.

**Ms. M. Alshehhi** (United Arab Emirates) said that parliamentarians were responsible for raising awareness of the importance of women's role as peacekeepers. The Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak Women, Peace and Security Initiative had been launched alongside the UN. It aimed to promote international collaboration in order to build local, regional and international capacities in the areas of women, peace and security. The Initiative contributed to creating an empowering environment for women, maintaining peace and security internationally, and supporting decision makers in the Arab world and international community to build women's capacities in peace processes.

**Ms. A. Attalides** (Cyprus) said that, as conflicts and humanitarian crises continued to ravage populations and hinder prosperity in many areas of the world, the disproportionate and unique impact on women should be addressed. Leaders should guarantee women's equal and substantive participation in peace processes. The Cypriot House of Representatives had recently adopted a resolution stressing the need to highlight women's role in conflict prevention and resolution, and in peacebuilding processes. It had also welcomed the adoption of the National Action Plan 2021–2025 for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325, "Women, Peace and Security". Taking as an example the conflict between Türkiye and Cyprus, she explained that women from both communities did not want to simply be victims; instead, they wanted a seat at the negotiating table and they were desperate for peace talks to resume and produce a just and viable solution. They dreamt of rebuilding their country, securing peace for their children, and bringing together both sides for negotiations.

**Ms. H. Ramzy Faye** (Bahrain) said that autonomous weapon systems raised concerns because it was unclear how they could be used. Discussions must focus on the direct and indirect impacts on civilians – particularly women and children – and how the military could use those systems, which could become autonomous from any human control. It was difficult to predict how the systems would behave, which raised concerns about how they could function within the limits of international and humanitarian law and according to human rights principles. There were also concerns that the data entered into the systems might prejudice against women. Therefore, an efficient international response was urgently needed. Parliaments should enhance legislative frameworks, discuss the necessary policies and mechanisms, and encourage those issues to be addressed. There should be more accountability and work towards preventing civilians, especially women, from being targeted in armed conflicts.

**Ms. D. Alzayed** (Bahrain) said that, given the difficulty of adopting general legislation on autonomous weapon systems, legislation would always be subject to change. There should therefore be a legislative decision allowing for more flexibility. Sanctions for disrespecting equality principles should be stricter. Parliamentarians should have national AI strategies and budgets. The Parliament of Bahrain was drafting a specific proposal on AI and it hoped to establish an appropriate AI framework.

**Ms. C. Mix Jiménez** (Chile) said that parliaments should introduce legal frameworks to incorporate the experiences of women – in all their diversity – into predictive and automated models. Such experiences would complement existing databases and prevent the spread of race- and class-based prejudices that were currently being incorporated into AI. Women should be included in research and development. In Latin America, women led only 18% of research teams and 3% of software development teams. Legislation should manage the data fed into machine learning to prevent the spread of stigmas that might hinder women's career progression in the military and prevent civilian deaths. Taking women's knowledge and experiences into account was crucial to ensuring they were not left behind.

**Ms. Z. Musa** (Malaysia) said that autonomous weapons and AI selected and engaged targets without meaningful human control, which had significant humanitarian consequences, perpetuated gender-based violence and increased inequality. Emerging technologies, including facial and vocal recognition, were less likely to recognize women, people of colour and people with disabilities. Therefore, the use of autonomous weapons put those groups at greater risk. The law should prohibit the development, production and use of autonomous weapons that used profiling to target people and led to discrimination. It should also ensure that there was always meaningful human intervention in the use of autonomous weapon systems. AI must be used for peace and security, and women must be included in its development.

**Ms. S. Sirivejchapun** (Thailand) said that there were concerns that LAWS could use generative AI to respond to women's voices or recognize women's faces, which affected their safety, security and ability to live their lives. Opposing the development and use of LAWS was crucial to protecting human rights and dignity. Thailand supported ensuring that a gender perspective, based on UNSCR 1325, was adopted. There was an urgent need for pre-emptive national laws that ensured meaningful human control over the use of force, and national parliaments should urge governments to conclude a legally binding international instrument to prohibit fully autonomous weapon systems and ensure compliance with international humanitarian law. STEM education should be promoted for women and girls. According to a UNESCO publication, *Cracking the code: girls' and women's education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics*, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) included a specific target for countries to enhance access to STEM education in order to reduce gender disparities. Parliaments should engage women in managing the impacts and risks of automation, and AI on lives and livelihoods.

**Ms. G. Chakor** (Netherlands) said that diverse representation mattered because it helped instigate meaningful change and address the needs and concerns of all members of society. There had been recent cases of AI technology being used to create pornographic deepfakes of well-known Dutch women, including parliamentarians. That misuse of AI technology, which was illegal in the Netherlands, was morally condemnable and represented despicable acts of manipulation and violation. The Dutch Government was addressing the issue through sexual offences legislation that was set to be approved in the Senate. AI technology could not continue to victimize women systematically. The creation and dissemination of the deepfakes not only violated individuals' dignity and privacy, but perpetuated harmful stereotypes and undermined the integrity of society. The question was how those actions could be condemned and how AI technology could be prevented from manipulating and undermining women in positions of power and influence.

**Ms. N.M. Mayorga Delgado** (Mexico) said that AI regulation, and new technologies that considered cultural and gender perspectives, should be promoted. In addition to protecting vulnerable groups and promoting sustainable development, it was essential to ensure everyone benefited from AI and that inequity and inequality were not exacerbated, including in the military field. New technologies would disrupt the labour market and could worsen gender inequality. In Mexico, since there was no national policy on AI and gender, it was essential to establish mechanisms to ensure that AI promoted gender equality and women's human rights. Although Mexico had laws against violence in the digital sphere, it did not have any to prevent AI from perpetrating acts of violence. It was useful to hear how developing countries in particular had legislated and worked on AI and schools should educate children about AI.

**Ms. P. Appiagyei** (Ghana) said that the women's parliamentary caucus in Ghana was crucial to recognizing and addressing the impact of AI on democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Parliament contributed to shaping policies that leveraged the benefits of AI and mitigated its negative impacts. It had adopted legislative frameworks and regulations, established oversight powers over committees and agencies, hosted public awareness and engagement programmes, and collaborated with stakeholders and international organizations. The Ministry of Communications and Digitalization – alongside Smart Africa, GIZ FAIR Forward and The Future Society – had formulated the Republic of Ghana National Artificial Intelligence Strategy 2023–2033, which would be presented to the cabinet. Progress had been made in establishing a legal regime that regulated AI deployment and use while respecting human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Articles 12 and 33 of the Constitution of Ghana guaranteed citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms, including those associated with the use and the potential misuse of AI resulting in the breach of human rights. The Select Committee on Communications oversaw the implementation of the National Cyber Security Policy and Strategy, and the Select Committee on Defence and Interior oversaw internal and external security in Ghana. They would address AI security challenges. Parliamentarians engaged with the public in person and on social media to enhance awareness, facilitate dialogue and obtain feedback on AI legislative measures.

**Ms. A. Al Ismaili** (Oman) said that she had found the Secretary General's speech encouraging because he had said "your voice will be heard". She wanted to use her voice to call for humanity. Women and children accounted for 70% of the 31,000 deaths that had been recorded in Gaza. The Forum of Women Parliamentarians should call for a fair resolution for Gazans.

**Ms. D.E.C. Ahyi** (Benin) said that, since 2019, the number of female parliamentarians in Benin had increased from 7 to 29 as a result of parliamentarians political will and engagement. A legislative reform had ensured that women were included on legislative election lists. The women from the party that had gained the most votes were elected. The 29 women parliamentarians formed a women's parliamentary caucus, fostered interest in public affairs among young Beninese women, and would continue to legislate in favour of increased women's representation in decision-making bodies.

**Ms. M.T. Mosena** (Lesotho) said that women offered different perspectives on military AI development. They contributed to more comprehensive and effective solutions, identified and mitigated biases, and helped ensure that AI technologies were ethical, fair and equitable. The interventions of the members of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians should highlight divergences from the norm and help counter the perception of the military as a male institution. Diversity within the development of military AI systems could ensure better decision-making processes and gender mainstreaming was therefore necessary, particularly in STEM subjects. Laws, systems and unrestrictive cultural norms would help women to secure leadership positions. Meanwhile, women's parliamentary caucuses could further women's leadership in all areas. Women's involvement in developing military AI, especially in light of the national action plans implemented as part of UNSCR 1325, could ensure ethical and humanitarian principles were upheld. Women rarely led parliamentary committees in male-dominated areas and parliaments should therefore ensure women were present in committees related to military interventions. In Lesotho, women represented 16% of the military and the first ever woman had been promoted to the rank of Major General.

**Ms. A. Larouche** (Canada) said that she found the ongoing inequalities between men and women disheartening. In Canada, women were perceived as less biased and more productive in their work on parliamentary studies, which justified women's involvement in peace processes. The Canadian Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development found that women were often used as weapons of war, which justified swifter action and increased funds to protect women. Women climate change refugees were often raped and suffered other forms of violence.

She was pleased to note that the draft resolution referred to UNSCR 1325 and she supported the call for countries and international organizations to adopt measures to ensure the inclusion of a gender and multidimensional perspective in debates on autonomous weapons systems. Although AI benefited all of society, more attention should be paid to its potential perpetuation of sexism and other forms of discrimination and it was necessary to formulate protection procedures, policies and safeguards. Conflicts had a gendered impact and Canada continued to support the GGE on LAWS. Participating countries gathered data and opinions on gender and emerging technologies, particularly LAWS. Systems that did not apply the fundamental IHL principle of distinction should never be used. More women should work on those technologies and the Canadian Standing Committee on the Status of Women was currently exploring why there were not more women involved in STEM.

**Ms. L. Saint-Paul** (France) said that the use of AI in multiple areas, including defence, stoked rational and irrational fears. The development of LAWS posed unprecedented ethical and legal challenges. It was essential to ensure that they were not biased, which might lead to the targeting of certain populations. The position of France on LAWS was clear and based on three principles set out in the French strategy on defence AI: (1) respect of international law, particularly IHL; (2) sufficient human control at all times within weapon systems; and (3) constant human control when running and using those weapon systems. France maintained that position in its negotiations on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) in order to produce an effective regulatory framework for LAWS. Parliamentarians should follow those discussions closely to protect populations.

**Ms. C.S.J. Pereira** (Singapore) said that, in June 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, many families – including disadvantaged families – had been separated from elderly relatives. Social media, AI and technology had helped neighbours to step in and care for elderly residents. Consequently, the community – irrespective of race, language, religion or culture – had grown closer. It was important that technology, AI and social media complemented the work that women carried out.

**Ms. M.F. Lay** (Timor-Leste) said that the Parliament of Timor-Leste had decided to take more concrete action, particularly in the legal field, regarding AI. It was important to be clear about the challenges that AI, particularly autonomous weapon systems, presented. The purpose of AI was not to act without human intervention. It was developers' responsibility to establish rules ensuring that AI technologies were ethical. There needed to be criteria and systems to ensure human responsibility in the implementation and military use of technology, particularly in critical situations. It was important to establish international legislation on AI, as well as rules concerning responsibility, transparency and the principles of international law. Dialogue was essential to collectively overcoming challenges related to autonomous weapon systems and AI.

**Ms. S. Al-Jufairi** (Arab Parliament) said that the draft resolution was essential, particularly from a gender perspective on the humanitarian and social impacts of autonomous weapon systems and AI, and in the context of UNSCR 1325. It was important to prohibit the use of LAWS, given their potential for destruction. They relied on AI and targeted certain populations, including women, which was discriminatory. According to the UN, women should participate equally in multilateral meetings but that was currently not the case. They should participate in the negotiations to agree a new international instrument prohibiting and restricting the use of autonomous weapon systems by 2026 and she hoped that the draft resolution would be more detailed.

*The sitting was adjourned at 13:10 and resumed at 14:35.*

#### **Panel discussion on *Women peacebuilders advancing sustainable peace***

**The Chair** said that the panel discussion topic was very important. It had been selected to shed light on the WPS agenda and to complement the theme of the general debate, *Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding*. The Bureau had wanted to recognize women's key role in negotiating with and mediating between armed groups and governments to secure food and medicines for the most vulnerable, in helping displaced people and providing support to victims of conflict-related gender-based and sexual violence. The discussion should explore how parliamentarians could improve the implementation of the WPS agenda and support women peacebuilders.

**Ms. P. Patten** (UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict), panellist, said that global security was in a dire state. Millions of women and girls suffered the consequences of men's wars – in Haiti and Sudan, sexual violence terrorized and traumatized them; in Afghanistan, they were denied basic rights; following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, they were at increased risk of human trafficking; in the Middle East, they represented many of the victims of the Hamas attacks and over half of the victims of the relentless Gaza bombings. The number of people forced to flee conflict and persecution had surpassed 110 million and more than 600 million women and girls lived in conflict-affected countries. Global military expenditure had exceeded US\$ 2.2 trillion. Nearly 25 years after the adoption of UNSCR 1325, women's full, equal and meaningful participation in peacebuilding remained aspirational and peace processes remained almost exclusively male. In 2022, only one of 18 peace agreements had been signed by a representative of a women's group. In five UN-led or

co-led peace processes, women's representation had decreased from 23% in 2020 to 16% in 2022. Women were almost completely absent from peace processes led by Member States or other organizations. However, their participation should be non-negotiable.

Greater militarization and weakened democracy were leading to less civic space for women, a virulent backlash against gender equality, more reprisals against women's rights defenders and journalists, and decreased funding for women's civil society organizations. Although 70% to 90% of incidents of conflict-related sexual violence involved a weapon, women represented less than a third of participants in arms control forums. They remained marginalized in military decision-making. Impunity for war crimes committed against women remained the norm and accountability the exception. Threats, misogynistic attacks and calls for violence were emerging in largely ungoverned digital spaces, compounding patterns of conflict-related sexual violence and hampering women's safe participation in public life.

That backdrop should renew the urgency to implement the WPS agenda, the pioneers of which had understood the link between equality, social stability and durable peace. UNSCR 1325 set out a transformative solution. It affirmed that, since no conflict was gender-neutral, no response could be gender-blind. Power and resources should be rebalanced. Women demanded concrete actions and progress, and parliamentarians were key to implementing solutions, ensuring women's inclusion in peace and security decision-making, and guaranteeing their participation in political and civic life. In that regard, fair representation was necessary in national and local governments, cabinets and parliaments. Parliaments must forge partnerships with civil society and women's organizations, which often represented women in regions where international actors were absent. Women knew the locations of humanitarian corridors and negotiated access to them; they had always been present at the grassroots level and local communities trusted them. However, many actors perceived their contributions as new. It was therefore increasingly important to bridge the gap between women's work and the policy level. Women's work on operational and policy responses was essential to criminalizing the use of sexual violence as a war tactic; ensuring that actors in the security sector were legally required to be gender responsive; guaranteeing women's participation in peacemaking, security and reconciliation processes; and amplifying survivors' rights, needs and aspirations as stakeholders within, and co-creators of, solutions.

The UN Security Council had established a robust normative framework consisting of 10 resolutions on women, peace and security, five of which specifically addressed sexual violence. They recognized sexual crimes as a threat to collective security, an impediment to restoring peace, and a crime of concern to the international community. However, the 2023 annual report of the UN Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence highlighted the gap between words and actions. Since 2022, there had been a 49% increase in UN-verified cases of sexual violence. Empowering women's organizations and politically active women, including those on the frontlines, could close that gap, provided that they were protected from reprisals.

The upcoming 25th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 provided new momentum to recognize gender equality and women's empowerment as central to sustainable progress, in line with the 2030 Agenda. The Summit of the Future in 2024 presented an opportunity to make progress in implementing the WPS agenda; reform and revitalize multilateralism with the New Agenda for Peace; and shape responses to global challenges. Energy, commitment and focus should translate into tangible changes on the ground and in women's lives. It was time for women to ensure that their interests and needs were considered.

**The Chair** said that she denounced the violence in Gaza and called for humanitarian practices.

**Ms. A. Quiñones** (Head of Human Rights and Development, UN Women Liaison Office in Geneva), panellist, said that despite progress in women's participation, women remained largely excluded from formal peace processes and negotiations. In 2022, women had participated as negotiators or delegates in four out of five UN-led or co-led peace processes. The Colombian peace process had demonstrated how to integrate women's organizations and voices at different levels and had ensured specialized justice for peace, in which sexual violence could not be part of an amnesty. For over 50 years, women's organizations had struggled for the recognition of women's rights to ensure peace and justice. At the UN Security Council, only 46% of invited speakers were women, compared to an average of 19% between 2013 and 2017. UN Women was a key partner for women's organizations, including the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund and grassroots organizations. It was vital to ensure awareness of national developments at the regional and global levels – such as through IPU Assemblies and UN Security Council meetings – and UN Women stood ready to help in that regard.

Armed conflicts were increasing and, in 2022, there had been a 50% increase in women and girls in conflict-affected contexts. They were at greater risk of gender-based violence, which continued to be used as a weapon of war. The UN Human Rights Council international commissions of inquiry documented violence against women and girls in all conflict settings to seek justice and change. The prevention of sexual violence was crucial to creating a society that included women, enhanced their visions and potential, and supported their participation in all areas. The UN Women Ukraine Country Office had helped design strategies to prevent conflict-related sexual violence and promote women's economic participation for post-war reconstruction.

Peacebuilding and recovery required a gender-focused approach. UN Women supported gender-sensitive reforms in the security sector to demobilize and reintegrate ex-combatants. It also strengthened the capacity of national security systems to investigate and prosecute cases of conflict-related sexual violence. In Guatemala, indigenous women had obtained 18 reparation measures after years of seeking justice for conflict-related sexual violence and slavery. Although the sentence had been passed in 2016, it had taken considerable time to ensure that institutions implemented a whole-of-government approach to those reparation measures.

The Generation Equality Forum was working to meet the commitments made through the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Among the key features of the global Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action (WPS-HA) were monitoring and accountability because there were gaps between commitments made at the local, national and international levels. The Compact also focused on coordinating solutions, promoting greater access and visibility, and promoting women's rights and gender equality in conflict and humanitarian settings.

It was important to have fully funded National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security. Many countries were implementing their third such plan and UN Women was learning lessons from their implementation. Handling cases of sexual violence, including women in rebuilding States and ensuring women's participation in labour markets enhanced peace. Women – including indigenous women, women of African descent, women with disabilities – were increasingly demanding that their voices be heard and they required specific approaches.

Until recently, little attention had been paid to women's participation as negotiators and facilitators, or their financial security and access to resources, but a more holistic approach was being implemented. UN Women had already provided funding to over 100 organizations worldwide to increase women's and girls' participation in negotiations, document issues in conflict settings and ensure sustainable peace. Human rights defenders were increasingly experiencing persecution and civil spaces were closing down. Parliamentarians therefore had to struggle to maintain spaces for all women and girls. At the 68th session of the CSW, a set of conclusions had been agreed to invest in women and accelerate progress. Parliaments must ensure that those conclusions translated into action. As discussed during International Women's Day and at the CSW, increasing women's leaderships and meaningful participation in peacebuilding was crucial to ensuring long-lasting peace and rebuilding new societies.

**Mr. T. Greminger** (Executive Director, Geneva Centre for Security Policy), panellist, said that the world was at an inflection point as it experienced the most significant rise in inter-State conflicts since the Second World War. It was no coincidence that a regression in women's human rights had accompanied that development. The politics surrounding how to cooperate and ensure security were gendered. He firmly believed in multilateralism, dialogue and the need to overcome differences. The WPS agenda had fostered progress – particularly in countries that had developed WPS national action plans – and had amplified voices from civil society at the highest levels of governance. However, polarization, insecurity and mistrust between and within States meant that those in power did not always listen. With resources allocated to arms development and militarization, development and human rights were not priorities.

Despite the Beijing Platform for Action, progress was not inevitable. Sexism, discrimination and gender-based violence persisted, including against groups. *The Prosecutor v. Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz Ag Mohamed Ag Mahmoud*, in which the International Criminal Court had litigated the crime against humanity of gender persecution, illustrated the gravity of the situation. The New Agenda for Peace called on leaders to step up. Ahead of the Summit of the Future in 2024 and alongside the Secretary-General of Women International League for Peace and Freedom, he would establish an impact group with three aims. First, it would facilitate dialogue and strengthen international cooperation between Member States, international organizations and civil society to prioritize the WPS agenda. Second, it would support the implementation of the global Compact on Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action and encourage actors and States to become signatories. Third, it would develop evidence-based recommendations and policy language that promoted a human-rights-based approach to conflict prevention, and it would integrate stakeholders' perspectives.

The Geneva Centre for Security Policy supported women leaders across sectors. It provided leadership practices and worked to overcome gendered structural barriers. There needed to be systemic change which involved building trust, addressing fears and upholding human rights and the rule of law. It was especially important to address fears among younger generations, particularly men as they were becoming more conservative. A recent Gallup poll suggested that younger generations were increasingly divided along gender lines. The increase in inter-State conflicts, and men's historical defensive and protective role, may have contributed to that trend and leaders must forge a credible path forward.

**Ms. M.V. Cabrera-Balleza** (CEO, Global Network of Women Peacebuilders (GNWP)), panellist, speaking via video link, said that there were many reasons why women peacebuilders and women's rights organizations should collaborate. Women peacebuilders had access to on-the-ground information and to survivors of violent conflicts and humanitarian emergencies within their communities. In some cases, women peacebuilders were also survivors. Including their voices in decision-making benefited parliamentarians, local communities and the wider population. The information that they provided improved policies and the implementation of the WPS agenda. Parliamentarians then translated that information into laws and policies, and worked with women peacebuilders and civil society to ensure implementation. Parliamentarians had direct access to governmental processes and systems, and could therefore advise women peacebuilders and civil society on how to advocate effectively.

Global mechanisms were important. GNPW worked with the Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action Compact, which was intersectional and intergenerational. It emphasized the importance of localizing the WPS agenda, and worked with a range of signatories – civil society, governments, the private sector, research institutions and private foundations – across different regions. She was proud to co-Chair the Compact alongside the Government of Norway through the GNWP, which was also one of the initiators of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund. From the outset, GNWP had demanded that women's organizations and people working in humanitarian emergencies contribute to the Fund's management and ensure that it prioritized grassroots women's organizations. She thanked UN Women for the support it had provided to the GNWP. The Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network was a group of Member States that implemented the WPS agenda nationally alongside civil society and parliamentarians.

All of those platforms honed messaging ahead of the Summit of the Future in 2024 and the New Agenda for Peace. Although many representatives of the UN, multilateral institutions, government leaders and parliamentarians expressed support for women civil society leaders, human rights defenders and peacebuilders, they rarely took action or addressed shrinking civic space. For instance, it was increasingly difficult to obtain accreditation from the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) or attend important UN policy discussions. Parliamentarians must therefore support women peacebuilders and civil society, and facilitate participation in decision-making.

It was also important to hold families accountable because they often prevented women – especially victims of sexual violence and other forms of violence, marginalization and discrimination – from speaking out. Parliaments and governments should help in that regard. Parliamentarians were crucial to demonstrating and supporting women's leadership. Platforms for regular engagements with, and exchanges between, women peacebuilders and other civil society actors should be created.

**Ms. O. Monteiro** (PeaceWomen Across the Globe) said in a pre-recorded video message that she had organized dozens of Women's Peace Tables across Indonesia, which enabled women to discuss peace in new ways – such as through art performances and workshops for the survivors of violence – and explore how to increase diversity in peace processes both near policymaking centres and in remote areas.

**Ms. T. Namachanja Wanjala** (Shalom Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation) said in a pre-recorded video message that she worked in the conflict-affected region of Mount Elgon, where the community had been traumatized and left hopeless and helpless. Her Organization focused on healing that trauma – particularly among women, youth and elders – through group sessions in which participants shared their painful experiences. Those sessions enabled women to mourn, grieve and deal with their emotional wounds, and find a new sense of hope, resilience and energy. Outside of those sessions, women had carried out income-generating activities to improve their livelihoods and had mobilized themselves into violence-prevention groups. During the previous Kenyan general election, they had accompanied campaign lorries that spread messages of peace. Many conflicts, particularly in Mount Elgon, originated from revenge. However, healing trauma could prevent that need for revenge and leaders should therefore support such initiatives within communities, where conflicts were most prevalent.



## Debate

**Ms. I. Sviatenko** (Russian Federation) said that the terrorist attack that had occurred near Moscow, many of the victims of which were women and children, had shocked the world. The tragedy demonstrated the need to continue promoting international cooperation and to eliminate terrorism without political agendas or double standards.

*A minute's silence was held in memory of the victims of the terrorist attacks.*

In the Russian Federation, women were considered the custodians of peace and traditional values, which were essential in any human civilization. In the context of current processes, special attention was paid to the role women played in shaping the New Agenda for Peace and promoting social change. The Russian Federation favoured working with international civil society organization and exchanging best practices to eliminate violence against women and children. It created favourable environments for women peacebuilders and for grassroots and civil society activists to work. She invited women parliamentarians to participate in the upcoming Eurasian Women's Forum, which promoted dialogue and international cooperation.

**Ms. S. Balmik** (India) said that India was dedicated to promoting peace, prosperity and women's empowerment, and implementing the WPS agenda. Despite women's pivotal role in conflict resolution and post-conflict reconstruction, and progress in implementing the WPS agenda, women remained underrepresented in peace processes and reconstruction efforts. India had deployed an all-female unit to Liberia and there were 108 Indian women peacekeepers worldwide, including in Congo, Sudan and the Golan Heights. India championed gender equality, as demonstrated through the Women's Reservation Bill. Sustainable peace required women's meaningful participation in peace processes. India worked towards a more peaceful and inclusive world to address gender-based violence.

**Ms. Nguyen Van Chi** (Viet Nam) said that, despite UNSCR 1325, women and children remained most vulnerable in an increasingly complex and unstable security environment. Gender inequality still hindered women's progress. Lawmakers should consider women and children in peace initiatives, post-conflict reconstruction processes, non-traditional security and development policies. Women should have the knowledge and skills to participate more in policymaking and ensure more comprehensive, sustainable and appropriate policies. The international community should maintain the political will to implement the WSP agenda, which was closely linked to the goals of the 2030 Agenda. In 2020, Viet Nam had organized an international conference commemorating the 20th anniversary of UNSCR 1325 and had passed the Hanoi Commitment to Action, which urged countries to design WPS national action plans. The global community should foster women's development, which was key to sustainable development.

**Ms. M. Ulenge** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that discussions concerning sustainable peace and security should consider technology. Future wars between humankind and technology were expected and it was therefore essential that security systems – such as in hospitals – could withstand cyberattacks to protect the most vulnerable, including women and children. Robust maritime security systems were needed to prevent the trafficking of women and children. To achieve peace and security, it was vital to ensure that women were included in digital transformation, including digital security and digital innovation.

**Ms. S. Almansoori** (United Arab Emirates) said that it was important to include women in decisions that concerned them because they represented 50% of the global population. Their experiences and expertise enriched discussions and improved legislation. Women were particularly vulnerable to conflict-related violence and their participation in peace discussions would help prevent and respond to such violence. Education was particularly important to promoting peace and security, and spreading tolerance among future generations. Parliamentarians could influence curricula and increase awareness of women's role in raising a peaceful generation. The United Arab Emirates had launched a programme alongside the UN to provide peace and security training to over 500 women and increase their representation in those fields.

**Ms. K. Soerjani** (Suriname) said that fake news influenced, deceived, inflamed, divided and weakened societies and could easily be used for personal and especially political gain. Women were particularly vulnerable to online intimidation and violence, both of which should be combatted. Words were insufficient; actions were needed to raise awareness of fake news.

She was pleased that the IPU was dealing with the issues of autonomous weapon systems and AI through the draft resolution. Parliamentarians were responsible for upholding human rights and IHL. They could not ignore the dangers of autonomous weapon systems. Governments could collaborate to make legislation and policy that mitigated the risks associated with those systems. Parliaments should help in that regard.

**Ms. M.-N. Battistel** (France) said that, over the previous two years, women had received the Nobel Peace Prize, which demonstrated the importance of discussing women's role in peacebuilding. Although they faced threats, women parliamentarians should represent citizens worldwide whose rights were infringed. Almost 25 years after the adoption of UNSCR 1325, women and girls remained particularly vulnerable to violence, especially in conflict- and terrorism-related settings, and were often excluded from crisis resolution, stability and rebuilding mechanisms. The use of sexual violence in conflicts and as a weapon of war violated international law. France had hosted the 2024 Women Speakers' Summit, which Dr. Ackson had attended in her role as Speaker of the National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania. Participants had agreed that the prevention of violence against women and girls was essential and required more work. Humanity would benefit from protecting women and girls during and after conflicts, from including them in conflict resolution and strengthening their rights.

**Ms. G. Mussagy** (Mozambique) said that Mozambique recognized the importance of women's participation in conflict prevention and peacekeeping. In accordance with UNSCR 1325, her Government and civil society had therefore helped to increase women's and girls' participation in peace processes. Mozambique was among the 170 countries that had approved a WPS national action plan and recognized the importance of considering women's and girls' specific needs during and after armed conflicts. However, challenges persisted. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were key to healing wounds, and Mozambique favoured laws and policies that punished and eradicated violence against women across society.

**Ms. S. Khasayeva** (Azerbaijan) said that relying on women's ability to understand different perspectives and communicate could accelerate peacebuilding processes. In the past, women had significantly contributed to peacebuilding processes by providing humanitarian aid and supporting victims of violence. They also emphasized the importance of peaceful coexistence by appealing to cultural and religious values. Progress towards gender equality had increased their opportunities to work towards peace. Women's presence in social and political spheres, particularly in parliaments, and their opportunities to speak on significant platforms should be increased.

It was unfortunate that disagreements between countries persisted and could lead to armed conflicts. The people of Azerbaijan, including Azerbaijani women, had witnessed and suffered the horrors of war. They tried to heal from that conflict and strove for a better future. Their desire for peace extended to the wider region and the world.

**Ms. S. Kheng** (Cambodia) said that, although Cambodia did not yet have a WPS national action plan, it was committed to implementing UNSCR 1325. Cambodia had increased the number of women in leadership and, since 2011, it had implemented three national action plans to prevent violence against women. Since 2006, Cambodia had deployed over 9,000 peacekeepers – including 800 women – to UN humanitarian, demining and peacekeeping operations in 10 countries. Demining was particularly important in Cambodia and gender had been mainstreamed in the Cambodia National Mine Action Strategy 2018–2025 to better serve communities. In 2019, Phnom Penh had hosted the first regional symposium on implementing the WPS agenda in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and, in 2021, a regional study on women, peace and security had been launched. In December 2022, Cambodia had chaired the ASEAN Summit during which the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women, Peace and Security had been adopted. The Localisation Toolkit and Guidelines for the said Plan had been launched in Cambodia to develop a national action plan, implement regional policy, and respond to regional peace and security challenges.

Awareness and understanding of the WPS agenda was crucial. However, challenges persisted in that regard. Only dialogue and synergies would lead to a comprehensive WPS national action plan.

**Ms. F.A. Masiko** (South Africa) said that women continued to bear the brunt of armed conflicts and their personal, economic, civil and political security was persistently weakened. The 2023 report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security illustrated that women's meaningful participation as mediators, negotiators and signatories was undermined in several countries, despite repeated calls for change. Women who did participate faced increasing security risks, including through digital technologies. Despite progress, women also continued to be underrepresented in broad-based national dialogues. It was therefore crucial to consider that report in the leadup to the 25th anniversary of the adoption of UNSCR 1325.

Parliaments were critical to promoting and enacting legislation that ensured gender parity in national dialogues and women's meaningful participation in decision-making. South Africa had adopted its WPS national action plan which supported conflict resolution through women's meaningful involvement as local peacemakers. The Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation provided training and capacity-building for women and youth to participate meaningfully in peace processes at the continental and local levels. Women in combat positions represented 20% of the South African National Defence Force. Parliamentarians must ensure the implementation of WPS national action plans.

**Ms. N. Boulhan Houssein** (Djibouti) said that women were crucial to peace, ensured stability and security, and represented the pillars of African families and societies. Their voices and contributions should be recognized in decision-making. However, alongside children, they were particularly vulnerable in conflicts. Women parliamentarians must implement UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions, and recognize the link between women's participation and sustainable peace. Implementing the resolution involved including women in peace processes, mediation, conflict prevention and post-conflict rebuilding. Parliamentarians must tackle the causes of conflicts, such as gender inequality, gender-based violence and the marginalization of women. Women's economic independence, access to education and healthcare, and political participation were key to ensuring long-term security and stability. Djibouti had implemented a WPS national action plan and women represented a quarter of the National Assembly, which demonstrated its commitment to increasing women's participation in decision-making.

**Ms. S. Xayachack** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that the Forum was meeting at a critical time in which complex changes threatened global peace. Against that backdrop, women's participation was paramount. In addition to providing care within families, women contributed significantly to socioeconomic development and helped build sustainable peace. In her country, women had borne the consequences of the decades-long war. The clearance of unexploded ordnance, which required sustainable funding and long-term commitment, had become the 18th national SDG. It would ensure the safety and livelihoods of agricultural workers, particularly women, in remote areas. The Bureau of Women Parliamentarians should foster greater participation in negotiation processes to address challenges and promote sustainable regional and global peace.

**Ms. O. Otakhonova** (Uzbekistan) said that the theme of the session was topical. Uzbekistan had been among the first countries to support UNSCR 1325 and it had adopted the Uzbekistan-2030 Strategy, which aligned with the SDGs. Ensuring gender equality was a priority and there were therefore measures to involve women in all levels of decision-making. Women accounted for 32% of parliamentarians in Uzbekistan and a recent law stipulated that women should represent 40% of political candidate nominations.

Reintegrating people, including women and children, who had been exposed to extremist ideas was a priority for the Uzbek Government. Women were actively providing social and psychological assistance in that regard and all repatriates had successfully re-entered communities. Uzbekistan, alongside many countries in the region, favoured swift action to ensure the well-being of the Afghan people; it continued to provide humanitarian aid and trained Afghan citizens in Termez. Uzbekistan remained committed to seeing the Afghan Interim Government comply with the international community's demands that it form an inclusive government and respect women's and girls' rights to education and work. In that regard, it supported the early unfreezing of Afghanistan Central Bank's financial assets abroad.

It was encouraging that peace and security had been discussed at the Dialogue of Women of Central Asia, which had become an effective platform for promoting gender equality and supporting women. Women were willing and able to contribute to peacebuilding nationally and internationally.

**Ms. D. Gulmanova** (Turkmenistan) said that her country consistently implemented a socially oriented and effective gender policy, the legal basis for which was the national Constitution that guaranteed social security, equal rights and freedoms, and equal opportunities. There were opportunities for women to increase their social, economic and labour activities. Consequently, they were widely represented in the legislative, executive and judicial bodies of government, as well as in political parties and the economy. The National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2021–2025 was being implemented. In 2022, Turkmenistan had chaired the Dialogue of Women of Central Asia, and it worked with international organizations and participating countries to ensure gender equality, peaceful and sustainable development, environmental protection, support for women's entrepreneurship, and women's social protection within state policies and legislation. Turkmenistan was a UN-Women Executive Board member for the period 2022–2024. It recognized the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and had acceded to the main international documents in relation to SDG 5. It stood ready to cooperate further by ensuring gender equality, supporting women's work and providing social benefits.

**Ms. C. Mix Jiménez** (Chile) said that UNSCR 1325 provided a roadmap to protect women in armed conflicts, recognized their vulnerability in conflict settings and promoted their participation in peacebuilding. It was therefore necessary to amplify women's voices in peace negotiations, the drafting of agreements and post-conflict planning. The security and legal sectors should strengthen their capacity to uphold due process, particularly regarding cases of sexual violence.

Chile had implemented some good initiatives, such as in the Araucanía region of Chile where a programme had been launched to empower Mapuche women and develop networks to protect them from violence. However, during the dictatorship, some 20,000 children had been taken from low-income families and adopted in the United States. Governments and parliaments should promote accountability, safeguard reparations and provide protection to women who demanded it. There should be a commitment to protect all women in conflict-settings.

**Ms. S. Sirivejchapun** (Thailand) said that upholding the WPS agenda was a cross-cutting issue that required action, including from the military, police, human rights, education, economic, religious and peacebuilding sectors. Parliamentary committees dealt with those sectors. Parliamentarians could ensure that state agencies and civil society organizations had adequate funding to advance the WPS agenda, and they should oversee the use of that budget. UNSCR 1325 recognized the impact of conflict on women, women's peacebuilding role and their fundamental rights. Ensuring women's rights was fundamental to achieving sustainable peace and women should therefore be empowered to enhance their participation in politics, the economy and across society.

**Ms. S.-M. Dinică** (Romania) said that the WPS agenda was key to the New Agenda for Peace ahead of the Summit of the Future in 2024. As part of the Romanian national strategy to increase women's participation and mainstream gender in defence and security policies, Romanian women participated in the field missions of international organizations, including the UN. They were key to addressing local communities' needs and understanding families' and vulnerable groups' everyday challenges.

In 2023, Romania had co-chaired the Women, Peace and Security Focal Points Network, which addressed implementation gaps regarding UN Security Council resolutions and improved the coordination of funding and assistance programmes. Members of the Romanian parliamentary committees for human rights and defence had provided support in that regard and had focused on women in cybersecurity. Women parliamentarians and specialized parliamentary bodies should work closely with national women, peace and security focal points.

**Ms. H. Ramzy Fayez** (Bahrain) said that women peacebuilders were facing many cultural, political and social obstacles and dangers. Women faced threats when they participated in political debates and there was little awareness of the importance of women's participation in peacebuilding. There was a lack of resources to support women in peacebuilding. To support sustained efforts to help women participate in peacebuilding, parliamentarians should adopt legislation and policies to protect women in conflict-affected areas and promote their participation in decision-making. They should create specific legal and financial mechanisms to empower women's peacebuilding. They should also provide logistical and educational training, and promote dialogue between male and female parliamentarians.

**Ms. M. Saleh** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that women were marginalized from birth and endeavoured to prove themselves. Since the beginning of the war in her country, women had tried to find a peaceful resolution. As leaders, they provided vital support to ensuring peace. UNSCR 1325,

and a further nine resolutions, highlighted the importance of women's participation in preventing wars, conflicts and sexual violence. Syrian women had promoted UNSCR 1325 and, in 2016, the Parliament had introduced a 30% quota for women parliamentarians. In 2015, 19 Syrian women had addressed the UN Security Council.

**Ms. M. Cederfelt** (Sweden) said that there was an increasing lack of security and stability globally. Women's participation was necessary to ensuring sustainable peace because their experiences differed to those of men. Words must develop into actions, statistics, and changes in traditions and customs. Although women represented the majority of university students studying prestigious subjects, it was important to remember those working in the frontline, such as nurses and teachers, in order to ensure that all women were viewed as capable and to increase women's presence in peace negotiations.

**Ms. F. Cham** (the Gambia) said that peacebuilding that excluded women would only have a limited impact. She agreed with the delegate from the United Republic of Tanzania on cybersecurity. The Gambia had recently passed a cybersecurity bill and it was hoped that a cybercrime bill would soon follow. There was currently a bill before the Parliament to amend a law that had been passed in 2015 to ban female genital mutilation. The Select Committee on Gender, Children and Social Welfare and Select Committee on Health, Refugees, Disaster and Humanitarian Relief were examining that bill, against which many people had protested. UN Women and the UN Development Programme worked with the Gambian Parliament to support gender equality.

**Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah** (Egypt) said that parliamentarians were responsible for adopting laws that enabled women to manage and prevent conflicts and crises. The gender imbalance in decision-making positions must be addressed, particularly through national legislation, to ensure a brighter future. Women were entitled to make decisions affecting their future and their participation in politics, national governance, peace processes, negotiations and post-conflict rebuilding should be encouraged. Given the importance of the WPS agenda, Egypt promoted women's participation in peace negotiations. It was among the 10 countries that participated most in UN peacekeeping operations and missions, and it was also a State Party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The Ministry of Interior ensured that peacekeeping soldiers received training on women's empowerment and gender equality, and that military and peacekeeping training covered those topics. Egypt had been among the first countries to join the *Circle of Leadership on the prevention of and response to sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations operations*.

**Ms. G. Hooper** (United Kingdom) said that she had witnessed the ends of the Second World War and the Cold War and remembered the sense of joy at the prospect of a peaceful future. However, the world had regressed. Parliamentarians enjoyed a public role and exerted influence. It was particularly important to highlight and support women peacebuilders in nations in conflict, and women must participate in peace negotiations. It was important to look to the future and to support SDG 16. Education was vital to ensuring that young people recognized the importance of sustainability and diversity, and women parliamentarians were important in that regard. The current discussion was vital to finding solutions that could be implemented in accordance with the WPS agenda.

**Ms. A. Vidot** (Seychelles) said that her country, despite being small, was affected by conflicts worldwide and there was work to do regarding peace and security. The Women's Parliamentary Caucus frequently engaged with peacemakers from NGOs to ensure support for women's empowerment and gender-sensitive matters, and to tackle gender-based violence. Following the interventions that she had heard, she was confident that parliamentarians in the Seychelles could do more for women peacebuilders who had yet to engage with the Parliament in their work to ensure sustainable peace, especially for vulnerable groups. She recognized the efforts of the 11 registered peacebuilding organizations in the Seychelles that advocated for more women peacebuilders. Six of those organizations provided support to victims of gender-based violence. The Seychelles could do more for those peacebuilding groups, for example through a governmental partnership programme to support their work in raising awareness of human rights and strengthening the parliament and judiciary.

**Ms. M.A. Lopes Sarmiento** (Timor-Leste) said that, as a post-conflict country, Timor-Leste had adopted UNSCR 1325, acknowledging women's important contribution to promoting peace and sustainable development. Timor-Leste had been the third Southeast Asian country to develop a

national WPS action plan. The first stage, which UN Women had helped to implement, had focused on enhancing women's participation and leadership in decisions, on protection against violence and promotion of gender-sensitive conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The second stage aimed to promote women's full, equal and significant participation in peacebuilding, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and humanitarian responses to disasters, and to expand women's role in security, justice and governance. Women represented 33.8% of the members of Parliament, the largest proportion in Southeast Asia. The IPU Member Parliaments should adopt national action plans to promote and guarantee women's participation and leadership in decisions that ensured sustainable peace.

**Ms. M.T. Mosena** (Lesotho) said that parliamentarians should make laws that enabled peacekeeping, allocate gender-sensitive peacekeeping budgets, and play an oversight role to ensure peaceful nations and influence policy to meet commitments. She appreciated the sense of urgency to develop peacekeeping mechanisms – such as WPS national action plans – and the presence of female parliamentarians helped in that regard. Parliamentarians and presiding officers must be seen to be hands-on in their countries. Given the support that the Geneva Center for Security Policy was already providing to women in humanitarian responses, she asked Mr. Greminger how the Center ensured that it paid equal attention to the growing sense of insecurity among young men. She asked Ms. Quiñones and Mr. Greminger how parliamentarians furthered their organizations' objectives and advanced women leaders' peacekeeping; how their interaction translated into results; and, regarding national initiatives, if they interacted with individual parliamentarians, parliaments led by presiding officers, or governments through line ministries.

**Ms. E. Azad** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that women played an important national and international role in ensuring global peace and security. Their presence influenced developments and determined their success. The world needed their activity and dynamism more than ever to prevent conflicts and crises.

The Islamic Republic of Iran strove to uphold women's rights in relation to their personal development, social life and central role within families. Regarding equal opportunities for women and men, it provided special protections for women. In doing so, it ensured women's ability to foster social stability.

The current tragic situation of women in Gaza hampered women's inclusion in peace and security. Parliamentarians had the duty to represent those women's voices in international forums and demand the protection of their rights, which benefited women worldwide and secured their irreplaceable role for future generations. Ignoring the crimes committed against Palestinian women would tarnish the world's human rights record and haunt all nations.

Achieving international peace and security was possible with the fair and non-discriminatory participation of all women worldwide. Unilateral, coercive and illegal measures – such as imposing sanctions on medicines and medical equipment and obstructing the transfer of educational technologies – prevented women in developing countries from enjoying their rights and should be stopped promptly.

**Ms. S. Mikayilova** (Azerbaijan) said that the 2023 gender equality agenda was encouraging but progressing slowly. The more women became involved in different levels of governmental decision-making, the greater the positive impacts. Women, who were the most affected in conflicts, played an incredible peacebuilding role. That soft power was a valuable tool in eliminating the tragic consequences of conflict and war. Peace and security were fragile worldwide, and many of the victims of violence were women. Azerbaijan had endured war and Azerbaijani women were very active in demining.

The recent terrorist attack in Moscow was a heinous crime, many of the victims of which were women and children. The international community should unite against terrorism and women parliamentarians should raise their voices for security.

**Ms. M. Kiener Nellen** (Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, PNND) said that she had with her a pink paper crane, symbolizing peace, that a young woman peacebuilder from Japan had brought to Switzerland and to other locations worldwide. She had later died of cancer resulting from radiation exposure. In light of that symbol of peace, the production of nuclear weapons should cease. The PNND and the IPU had published an online parliamentary handbook on disarmament that addressed the use of force in cyber space and contained a section on disarmament for future generations.

**Ms. S. Al-Jufairi** (Arab Parliament) said that, as emphasized in UNSCR 1325, women were able to build peace alongside men and should have a seat at the negotiating table. The resolution had recognized women's conflict-resolution and peacebuilding role for the first time. According to UN data, various post-war peace agreements did not consider women's needs, which should be rectified to ensure that women had the same opportunities as men to represent their country in international forums.

Past and current data demonstrated that women were particularly vulnerable in wars and conflicts. She paid tribute to Palestinian women in Gaza and suggested issuing a special statement condemning the war against the Palestinian people.

**Ms. M. Dia** (Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)) said that decisive action must be taken to support essential health interventions for women, children and adolescents during conflicts. Gender-responsive primary health care systems should be strengthened to protect the most vulnerable and ensure future resilience to crises and health emergencies. It was crucial to invest in nutrition for women, children and adolescents.

Implementing best practices and sharing women peacebuilders' testimonies promoted women's meaningful participation in peacebuilding, highlighted women's impact within communities and advocated for women's inclusion in informal peacebuilding processes as a necessity for long-term success. Actions should be gender-transformative and should analyse the causes and drivers of conflict from a gender perspective to ensure gender-sensitive humanitarian development and address gender inequalities.

Strategies that considered the specific needs of women and vulnerable groups – including literacy levels – in political processes should be implemented. The enforcement of nomination rules regarding women candidates, and campaign finance rules on gender equality, should be ensured. It was essential to accelerate the prioritization, financing and implementation of comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services in emergency responses and national universal health care plans.

#### **Report on the discussion on a draft resolution on the agenda of the 148th Assembly**

**Ms. L. Reynolds** (Australia), Rapporteur for the draft resolution entitled *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence*, said that discussions had focused on concerns regarding LAWS and the disproportionate impact of armed conflict and autonomous weapon systems on women and children. It was disappointing that little attention had been paid to existing algorithmic biases, including the gender bias, which could aggravate existing gender inequalities. Parliamentarians must act to eliminate those biases. Women must be more actively involved in AI development and decision-making regarding development regulation and LAWS. Given the lack of women in software development and the military forces, education systems should be changed and gender norms should be challenged. Comprehensive and culture-specific gender approaches should be adopted to ensure gender-sensitivity training was embedded in AI algorithms and datasets. Autonomous weapon systems that would run counter to IHL and threaten human rights and dignity should be banned. States should cooperate to conclude a legal instrument prohibiting the production and use of LAWS. Women should participate meaningfully in peace processes and security efforts to ensure they were not used as weapons of war.

The draft resolution that the co-Rapporteurs of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security had presented already addressed some of those concerns, including the adoption of measures to ensure a gender and intersectional perspective based on UNSCR 1325 in discussions on laws and military strategies. That perspective must remain in the final resolution. Based on the main points of the current discussion, stronger and more comprehensive gender-related amendments would be drafted for submission to the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security.

**The Chair** said that she took it that the Forum wished to adopt the report of the Rapporteur.

*It was so decided.*

#### **Elections to the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians**

**Ms. Z. Hilal**, speaking in her capacity as Secretary of the Forum, said that there were two vacant positions on the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians: one for the representative of the African Group whose term would end in March 2025, and one for the representative of the Arab Group

whose term would end in March 2027. The Secretariat had received one candidature for the representative of the African Group from Ms. Z. Mashaba (Eswatini) but none for the representative of the Arab Group. The position would therefore remain vacant.

**The Chair** invited delegates to vote on whether to nominate Ms. Mashaba to the position of representative of the African Group.

*The nomination was approved.*

**Ms. C. López Castro** (Mexico), speaking in her capacity as President of the IPU Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, in a pre-recorded video message, said that as she campaigned in the Mexican senatorial elections, she drew strength from other women parliamentarians' successes. However, recent IPU data on women in parliament demonstrated that progress was too slow. Her campaign reminded her of the difficulties that women encountered and the value of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians in supporting women worldwide. She hoped that, as of 2025, an annual IPU conference of women parliamentarians would be held and that the first host country would be Mexico. Measures to promote equal parliamentary participation were important and Mexico had worked hard to introduce parity quotas. She hoped that similar measures could be implemented worldwide.

*The sitting rose at 17:30.*



## Forum of Young Parliamentarians

### SITTING OF SUNDAY, 24 MARCH

(Afternoon)

*The sitting was called to order at 14:40 with Mr. D. Carden (United Kingdom), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, in the Chair.*

#### Adoption of the agenda

(FYP/148/A.1-rev)

*The agenda was adopted.*

#### Opening remarks

**The President** said that hundreds of millions of young people worldwide lived in horrific circumstances and faced human rights abuses due to war and conflict. Long-term inaccessibility of education and job opportunities increased hopelessness and desperation in post-war societies. In 2017, discussions at two IPU regional meetings of young parliamentarians in Africa and the Asia Pacific had focused on the need for young parliamentarians to respond democratically to challenges, and ensure preventative and security measures complied with human rights and international law. Unresolved conflicts, few socioeconomic opportunities, poor governance, marginalization and discrimination had led to violence and tensions that threatened security and stability. By actively participating in parliamentary diplomacy and providing fresh perspectives, ideas and hope, young parliamentarians could break cycles of violence.

**Dr. T. Ackson** (IPU President) said that, since the founding of the IPU, global threats had evolved and parliamentarians' resolve to tackle them should increase accordingly. Young parliamentarians in particular should collaborate because conflict imperilled their current and future circumstances. They were, however, excluded from decision-making. Truly sustainable peace must be based on the inclusion of youth and women. Parliamentarians must champion inclusivity and young parliamentarians must seize every opportunity to elevate young people's voices, especially during conflicts.

Young parliamentarians in particular could highlight the sexual violence that millions of women had suffered and the need to protect them. They could help provide safe spaces during wars, medical and psychological support, economic opportunities, and accountability through special tribunals and investigations. Youth participation in politics, which was not a privilege, was vital to preventing sexual violence and protecting rights. She stood ready to collaborate, support and enhance youth participation and empowerment at the IPU and parliaments worldwide.

**The Secretary General** said that he was committed to ensuring that the Forum of Young Parliamentarians continued to thrive. In recent Assemblies, young parliamentarians were regularly making up over 25% of delegates and rejuvenating the IPU. He was pleased that the IPU President shared his determination to strengthen the Forum and reflect young parliamentarians' views in IPU processes. Ignoring those views would harm the IPU. Efforts by Dr. Paullier, the United Nations (UN) Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, to engage with parliaments were commendable. That involvement could only improve IPU decision-making in the area of youth. UN Security Council resolution 2250 on youth, peace and security was an important reference for young MPs, and they should be involved in peace processes and their implementation. Including youth in peace processes would improve representation and help implement outcomes, including legislation and resources.

Few institutions represented youth as strongly as the IPU. Other organizations should involve young people in multilateral processes and the UN should apply its approach to gender equality and work with the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs to ensure proper youth representation. Quotas were useful for increasing youth representation in parliaments. Young parliamentarians should be fully empowered through parliamentary governing structures and able to reach their full potential. The IPU should help parliaments experiencing difficulties in order to develop young parliamentarians' skills. The success of incentives for delegations to include young people at IPU Assemblies was encouraging. Although the Forum's target was for 25% of delegates to be young people, there was no reason we should not aim higher towards 50%.

### Updates on youth participation

**Mr. H. Ebrahim** (Bahrain) said that the Bahraini Parliament was a beacon of progress that pledged to integrate young people. Their energy and innovative perspective were indispensable for prosperity and governance. Pledge 5 of the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign referred to equipping youth with the skills, knowledge and confidence for political work. The Bahrain Youth Parliament presented an opportunity to participate in parliamentary committee meetings and debates, and gain insights into policymaking and parliamentarians' lives. School and university visits to Parliament fostered political literacy and encouraged young citizens to consider parliamentary work. To empower future leaders and strengthen democracies, parliaments should introduce youth membership, enable youth participation, integrate education, promote access, develop skills, offer internships and maintain open dialogue.

**Ms. M.A.B. Suansing** (Philippines) said that approximately 60% of Filipinos were under the age of 35. However, the average age in the House of Representatives was 51 and only 31.5% of representatives were under age 45. According to the Constitution of the Philippines, members of the Senate and House of Representatives must respectively be aged 35 and over and 25 and over. Although unemployment was at its lowest rate for two decades, 11.6% of youth were still unemployed. Despite their potential and drive, young Filipinos were disillusioned and marginalized. Their representation and engagement would help ensure the long-term sustainability of democratic institutions.

**Ms. F.A. Masiko** (South Africa) said that youth participation in her country had not changed since 2019. The upcoming national and provincial government elections may lead to change due to greater youth participation. However, youth were generally excluded from politics and overlooked as political candidates, which limited their control over their futures. Nevertheless, many young people were interested in politics and civil engagement, and had created youth platforms to express political views, enhance diversity and increase inclusivity. Those platforms would help young parliamentarians to gather views and reflect them in policies. The South African Parliament had almost finished establishing a youth caucus and it was hoped that, following the elections, newly elected young parliamentarians would finish the process.

**Mr. M.A. Ouerghi** (Tunisia) said that 55% of parliamentarians in Tunisia were under age 45. A new electoral law had been passed stipulating that elections should be held in smaller constituencies, which would improve cooperation, coordination and communication between candidates and voters without increasing campaign costs. Few young parliamentarians had the means to run large election campaigns. Young people were pleased with the new young parliamentarians.

**Mr. A.A. Anwar** (Pakistan) said that inclusivity was enshrined in Article 3 of the Pakistani Constitution. The minimum age for parliamentarians in Pakistan was 25, which aligned with the global average. In 2024, the youngest ever parliamentarian, aged 25, had been elected. There were many other young people in the Parliament. The National Assembly of Pakistan had established a Young Parliamentarian Forum, comprised of 142 members, to enhance youth participation. Women had been encouraged to participate in politics, quotas had been introduced, and the Women's Parliamentary Caucus had instigated political change. Anti-discrimination laws had been introduced to improve outreach. The Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services had been holding discussions with social actors on improving inclusivity in education, ensuring interfaith harmony, implementing human rights in private businesses and enterprises, and implementing women's inheritance rights. It was important to continue developing inclusive policies to enhance participation and eliminate discrimination. The Parliament was committed to transparency and paid attention to the public, media and civil society.

**Mr. M. Ur Rahman** (Bangladesh) said that 30% of the Bangladeshi population was aged 15 to 29. More youth and women had participated and won in the January 2024 election. Youth leaders were primarily concerned with education, job creation, the climate and inclusivity. IPU capacity-building could empower young parliamentarians to tackle global issues. The IPU provided a platform for young parliamentarians to share ideas and concerns.

**Mr. P. Baró** (Andorra) said that, following the amendment to the law on the National Youth Forum of Andorra, those under age 35 were considered young. To vote or run for election, the only requirement was to be age 18. The current 39-year-old Speaker of the General Council was the

youngest in Andorran history. A quarter of the legislature was under age 35. A youth agreement had been passed unanimously. According to parliamentary regulations, young people must represent 25% of the members of decision-making bodies and of the candidates on electoral lists. Only young people could create laws on issues affecting the future, such as climate change, conflict and water scarcity. Tackling young people's lack of political interest should be prioritized.

**Ms. N. Elghazawy** (Egypt) said that it was impossible to develop sustainably and ensure a better future without including youth in development plans. Young women parliamentarians in the IPU had amended legislation and the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign had helped. Efforts should be made to include more youth in parliaments worldwide, and to set parliamentary quotas for women and youth. There should be a platform to improve communication between youth. They should receive capacity-building training and their presence in politics should be ensured.

Egypt was among 25 countries to support the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign. In the Egyptian Parliament, youth accounted for 25% of parliamentarians. Many regulations had been implemented through youth conferences. There were programmes to qualify youth to be future leaders and dedicated commissions had been established with 32% youth who had leading positions. Egypt had adopted the World Youth Forum to facilitate knowledge exchanges.

**Ms. S. Unnoppon** (Thailand) said that youth represented 42% of the Thai House of Representatives, which exceeded the global average of 31.8% and marked a 62% increase in youth representation since the previous election. Youth organizations and movements had flourished and many Thai political parties had recruited young candidates and first-time voters. It was hoped that new young representatives would amplify young peoples' voices and guarantee their rights. In the National Assembly, the Young Parliamentarians Caucus of Thailand had been established in 2020 to advance youth inclusion and decision-making, and the Thai Parliament had established caucus rules. The caucus stood ready to collaborate with the IPU Secretariat. Young Thai parliamentarians had engaged in IPU activities, including the Empowerment Series for Young Parliamentarians and the Ninth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians. Following the conference, the Thai Parliament had welcomed Mr. Carden (United Kingdom) to discuss how to increase partnerships between Thailand and the IPU and advance the youth agenda.

**Mr. S. Özboyacı** (Türkiye) said that societies that protected, valued and invested in their youth were confident about the future. Türkiye had the youngest population in Europe, with 15% aged 15 to 24. Significant progress had been made in the long-standing aim to work with young people to shape their future. Regulations had been implemented to increase youth representation in politics. In 2017, the minimum age to run for election had been lowered from 25 to 18 in order to match the voting age. In 2018, a 22-year-old parliamentarian had been elected and the current youngest parliamentarian was aged 23. The Grand National Assembly had 128 members aged under 45. During the parliamentary elections, many young parliamentarians had developed policies to benefit their constituencies; he had signed 22 draft bills and was eager to support the youth political agenda. Young people were more visible than ever in Parliament and public life, and they helped to meet youth demands. Youth empowerment required decisive action.

**Ms. A. Vidot** (Seychelles) said that, from age 18, any Seychellean could vote or run for office. However, without proportionate seats, it would be difficult to increase the number of young and women parliamentarians; the next opportunity to do so would be at the upcoming election in 2025. The National Assembly had recently welcomed a 33-year-old woman parliamentarian. There were three female parliamentarians below age 40 and seven male parliamentarians below age 45. However, there was a lack of political will to introduce quotas. It was challenging for young parliamentarians and the Women's Parliamentary Caucus to convince the majority (25 male parliamentarians, including the Speaker, Deputy Speaker and two caucus leaders) to consider quotas. The National Assembly would appreciate receiving best practices and advice regarding how parliaments had successfully implemented quotas.

**Mr. K.U. Ritter Ocampo** (Mexico) said that Mexico supported young people's active participation in legislative positions, which was crucial to youth representation in decision-making. Young people's fresh, innovative and progressive views could revitalize and enrich Mexican politics. Their political participation promoted more inclusive and future-oriented policies, and would create a more fair, equal and empathetic future. Therefore, Mexico had reduced the minimum age to become a deputy from 21 to 18, and the minimum age to become Secretary of State from 30 to 25. Since 18 was considered the legal age of majority, those aged 18 and above should be able to exercise their political rights.

**Mr. O.A. Alao Akala** (Nigeria) said that he chaired the House of Representatives Committee on Youths in Parliament and the Young Parliamentarians Forum. A third of the National Assembly was under age 45 and the youngest member was age 26. However, only 5 out of 109 senators were under age 45, a situation which he hoped would improve.

Nigeria was diverse, with over 250 tribes and 200 languages. Youth were key to ensuring unity and pushing forward bills and motions that reshaped their country and improved young people's economic circumstances. Stringent rules prevented many from gaining professional experience. There had been progress in amending relevant laws but further improvements could be made.

**Mr. S. Pariyar** (Nepal) said that, in the House of Representatives, 22.91% of representatives were under age 45. In the upper house, 5.08% of representatives were under age 45. Nepal had a long history of ensuring youth representation in politics. His party, Nepali Congress, had many young members participating in the House of Representatives. Although issues remained, there was a national debate and consensus on how to include more youth in the Nepali Parliament and decision-making. He hoped that Nepal would continue to receive knowledge from and host activities with the IPU. Although youth worldwide faced issues concerning unemployment and social security, in Nepal, progress had been made in the political arena.

**Ms. A. Larouche** (Canada) said that it was challenging to recruit youth into Canadian politics and it was important to consider the financial barriers to running for election. There had recently been a debate about lowering the voting age from 18 to 16 and, although there had been no change, the issue would return. It was important to identify the most significant issues for youth, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and its impacts, particularly on professions. The IPU had recognized that the incorporation of AI in political, economic and social spheres presented risks, in particular to democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Similarly, youth were concerned about automation, especially in weapons systems. In that regard, the Canadian Government had worked with the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). Regarding the environment, the IPU draft resolution on *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity* could refer to the Loss and Damage Fund. Cyberviolence discouraged youth from entering politics and a law was being drafted to tackle that issue.

**Mr. W. Soto** (Peru) said that it was difficult for youth to become parliamentarians, despite the importance of the role and size of the global youth population. It was vital that parliaments and political parties gave youth opportunities, which was not currently always the case. He had found his own election campaign costly and difficult, despite the "one-person, one-vote" system. Much depended on the actions young parliamentarians, congresspeople and senators took to create change and help young people enter politics. For example, he had worked on a draft law to reinstate the bicameral system in Congress. The Tenth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians would be crucial for young parliamentarians, as youth leaders, to organize themselves.

**Ms. N.L. Madzara** (Zimbabwe) said that she was proud to be among the first parliamentarians appointed through the youth quota system introduced in 2023. Ten parliamentary seats were reserved for parliamentarians aged under 35 and there was a quota for women. Youth represented 40% of parliamentarians, and the number of young ministers had increased from 4 to 11. The parliamentary youth caucus advocated for young people's needs. The Zimbabwean Government continued to support youth through initiatives in various sectors, thereby fostering interest in national democratic processes and increasing political awareness.

**Mr. R. Suleiman** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that youth represented 40% of the National Assembly, which had recently passed bills on general elections and political parties. They would greatly improve youth participation in the upcoming elections and he expected the percentage of youth in the Tanzanian Parliament to increase.

**The President** said that the contributions had been fascinating and work to promote youth participation in parliaments should continue. The IPU's success in increasing youth participation in Conferences of the Parties (COPs) and climate-related work was commendable. In May 2023, a briefing on climate negotiations had been held for young parliamentarians. At COP28, the IPU had organized its first blue-zone event – *How can women and young MPs make the difference in climate*

*governance*?. Over 60 parliamentarians, representatives of civil society and international organizations, had attended. Parliaments' role in promoting youth negotiators in official government delegations to COP had been emphasized and the IPU had started working more closely with youth groups in that regard.

Since the 147th IPU Assembly, work had continued to promote and implement the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign and some 1,500 changemakers had pledged their support. The IPU had continued to support parliaments, such as the Parliament of Chile, in launching the campaign and implementing its pledges. It would continue that work and had been implementing Pledge 4 through the Empowerment Series for Young Parliamentarians. In November 2023 and March 2024 respectively, a total of 57 participants from 26 countries had attended a workshop on leadership and communication and a briefing on equal care for equal representation. Similarly to previous Assemblies, it was hoped that 100 new parliamentarians and 10 parliamentary Speakers would sign up to the campaign. From 12 to 14 September 2024, the Tenth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians would take place in Yerevan, Armenia.

### Contribution to the work of the 148th Assembly

**The President** said that the discussion would focus on providing a youth perspective on the General Debate theme, *Parliamentary diplomacy: building bridges for peace and understanding*.

**Dr. F. Paullier** (UN Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs) said that, since the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 2250 (2015), the youth, peace and security agenda had gained momentum and there had been encouraging developments in the narratives about, and approaches towards, young people in the context of peace and security. Work was underway to translate the resolution principles into tangible actions. Several countries had lobbied to implement the resolution at the regional, cross-country and national levels. Others – such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Egypt, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan and Timor Leste – were developing national youth, peace and security action plans. Those efforts marked progress towards achieving the objectives of the youth, peace and security agenda but much work remained. The recent report of the UN Secretary-General on youth, peace and security had emphasized the need for recommendations to make youth participation in UN decision-making processes more meaningful, diverse and effective. However, according to the UN Secretary-General's policy brief on meaningful youth engagement in policymaking and decision-making processes, youth were barely visible in those processes. The members of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians were the exception and were key allies in tackling those issues. Meaningful youth engagement went hand-in-hand with the institutionalization of the youth, peace and security agenda at all levels. Currently, only 2.8% of parliamentarians were under age 30 – although half the global population was in that age group, which was most impacted by political decisions – and about 1% of those parliamentarians were women, who faced structural barriers. With many elections due in 2024, it was crucial to ensure youth representation in public life.

To support young people's political participation, young parliamentarians could: (1) support the youth, peace and security agenda within parliamentary commissions, and monitor the national implementation of agenda-related policies; (2) support the creation of parliamentary youth bodies, including mechanisms ensuring that youth are systematically consulted in parliamentary deliberations; (3) advocate for the adoption of national action plans, roadmaps and frameworks, and the establishment of coalitions on youth, peace and security with specific budgetary allocations; and (4) continue to promote the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign. The UN had also worked closely with the IPU on the *Not Too Young to Run* and *Be Seen Be Heard* campaigns. All three campaigns advocated for aligning the age at which one could run for office with the voting age and called for young women's participation in politics. The new United Nations Youth Office, which was supported by all countries, created momentum to further support IPU and UN work on youth issues but it was important to consider gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity and disability. Promoting peace, preventing violence and defending human rights could no longer come at the price of young people's lives and security. Institutions and peacebuilding efforts had to be inclusive of all young people in order to ensure sustainability and gain trust, particularly in fragile contexts where youth represented the majority of the population and bore the brunt of crises. It was hoped that strategies could be collectively developed to enable the international community to build on the strengths of today's young people and work with them as partners and not beneficiaries of policies.

**The President** said that Dr. Paullier was the first Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, which demonstrated a change in the UN approach to youth. Dr. Paullier would have the Forum's full support during his tenure in office.

**Mr. L. Kocharyan** (Armenia) expressed his condolences to the families of the victims of the terrorist attack in the Russian Federation. He went on to say that it had been six months since Azerbaijan had attacked and seized Nagorno-Karabakh, following a 10-month blockade that had caused mass starvation, deprivation, illness and death. Over 120,000 Armenians had been forced to flee. Those events had evoked painful memories from his childhood. The people of Nagorno-Karabakh had a profound connection to their homeland and a rich cultural heritage, demonstrated through centuries-old historical evidence. They were determined to return, set their political future, and democratically self-govern. According to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, they had the absolute right to return. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) had ruled that Azerbaijan must ensure that Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians could return in a safe, unimpeded and expeditious manner. The European Parliament had adopted a resolution calling on Azerbaijan to genuinely engage in a comprehensive and transparent dialogue with the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians to ensure respect for their rights and guarantee their security, including their right to live in their homes in dignity and safety under an international presence. Facilitating their return, with international protection and guarantees, was not only a matter of justice and human rights, but essential to ensuring regional peace, stability and reconciliation. It should be included in a peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan, and it required the international community to uphold the principles of international law and protect the dignity and rights of those affected.

**Mr. D. Keorapetse** (Botswana) said that democracy presupposed that rulers were chosen through the rules, and that rulers must always uphold the rules. Democracies, particularly in Africa, should strengthen themselves by exchanging power between parties and leaders, and developing strong independent institutions. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, the only full democracy in southern Africa was Mauritius. Democratic polities must be more accountable, transparent and representative. In Botswana, although one could vote and run for office – except the office of president – as of age 18, fewer than five parliamentarians out of 65 were aged under 45 and only seven were women. Youth and women must participate in public policymaking. Democratization was a constant process, and implementing electoral systems that improved youth representation furthered that process. Some 60% of the Botswanan population were young people. Despite progress in the areas of free education and healthcare, disease prevention and vaccination, literacy, and internet and mobile phone access, the youth unemployment rate was 34.4% and many young people were underpaid. It was therefore necessary to legislate to help youth participate in decision-making bodies.

**Ms. S. Mwamba** (Zambia) said that parliaments' peace-building role was emphasized in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16. Parliaments could use legislative oversight, budget approval and their representative functions to ensure that citizens lived safely and peacefully and enjoyed equal opportunities. Depending on their ability to promote accountability, the rule of law, and inclusive, participatory and transparent government systems, parliaments could use diplomacy to foster international cooperation, facilitate political dialogue and influence foreign policy decisions at all levels. Parliamentarians could be critical to promoting peace and preventing conflict. They could foster bilateral and multilateral ties, strengthen relationships between nations, promote conflict resolution and mediation, act as impartial mediators between conflicting parties, and promote human rights and democratic values. Democratic governments were generally more stable. Participation in international foreign activities familiarized parliamentarians with international issues, including those related to peace and conflict resolution. Election observation missions helped strengthen the credibility of elections.

**Mr. F. Nkurunziza** (Burundi) said that there was an undeniable link between youth participation in high-level decision-making bodies and the promotion of peace and understanding worldwide. Young people were excluded from high-level decision-making bodies despite representing a large majority of the global and Burundian population, which undermined democracies and solutions to social issues. Youth leaders were powerless to stop the selfish exploitation, waste and destruction of resources, which plunged future generations into poverty and stoked conflicts. Including youth in public affairs, particularly through parliaments, would undoubtedly create more hope.

**Ms. A. Larouche** (Canada) said that conflicts and wars had a gendered impact. Women and youth faced prejudice that exacerbated existing inequalities yet they could play an important role in strengthening peace processes. The UN *Women Peace and Security Agenda* had noted women's ongoing exclusion from those processes, even though their participation was vital. The Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security had called for the dismantling of the power structures that increased gender inequality and hindered women's and young people's participation in politics and public life. Other issues, such as increased gender discrimination, the effects of climate change on vulnerable and marginalized groups (including women and indigenous women), and the violence and abuse women politicians suffered, hindered the implementation of the Agenda. It was important to consider the prejudice that women faced online.

**Ms. M. Ulenge** (United Republic of Tanzania), referring to the draft resolution entitled *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and AI*, said that youth should be more engaged multilaterally in security systems and digital transformation. The pillars of digital transformation were security, innovation, entrepreneurship, access to devices and skills. Across the United Republic of Tanzania, the Government was establishing information and communications technologies hubs to streamline young people's ideas to relevant enterprises. Discussions about peace and security must include technology because of the risk of war between humankind and technology. Young parliamentarians must learn about security systems and build resilience to cyberattacks, including within future autonomous weapon systems.

**Mr. S.S.H.J. Amaral** (Timor Leste) said that there should be awareness of the enormous technological, ethical and humanitarian challenges that AI and autonomous weapon systems presented. It was essential to ensure significant human control over those systems, determine clear rules of military operation, ensure accountability and rule out the use of those weapons in critical situations. Progress must be made towards international legislation and an international treaty dealing with accountability, transparency, and conformity with international and humanitarian law when using those systems.

Timor Leste continued to aim to limit global warming to 1.5°C, which it considered a common responsibility. It defended the principle of equality and common but different responsibilities depending on abilities. It had recently upgraded its nationally determined contribution for 2022–2030.

*Ms. E.T. Muteka (Namibia) took the Chair as the youngest Member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians present.*

**Ms. C. Tjirare** (Namibia) said that she was descended from the OvaHerero and Nama tribes that were almost wiped out. The international community should share her outrage and support the fight for reparations to compensate the loss of the tribes' ancestral land and resources. She supported peace efforts across Africa and worldwide, and therefore stood with Palestine in their fight for freedom.

**Ms. M. Pelliccioni** (San Marino) said that San Marino had the third highest youth representation in its Parliament in the world. It had always championed youth rights and had been among the first countries to sign up to the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign. A project had been launched in middle and elementary schools to immerse students in parliamentary life and introduce them to drafting and promoting amendments to improve their schools. In light of the upcoming national election, it was important to remember youth projects. Only through the energy of young people could real change be made to regenerate politics and bring the world to a safer reality.

**Mr. A. Malik** (Pakistan) said that perhaps the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, under the auspices of the IPU, could facilitate meetings between countries in conflict, such as Armenia and Azerbaijan, to promote peace and build bridges. Despite issues with some of its neighbouring countries, Pakistan had always favoured peaceful and equal international relations.

**Ms. T. Samrejvanich** (Thailand) said that considering youth rights and welfare enhanced sustainable peace, as recognized in UN Security Council resolution 2250 (2015). Young people represented the largest ever global population group. They often suffered during conflicts (many were refugees or had been displaced), pandemics and economic downturns. Lack of hope for a peaceful future and an inability to ensure children's safety and welfare put the future at risk. Youth should therefore be safeguarded and given hope so that they would foster peaceful change and progress.

**Ms. A. Mohan** (Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)) said that the Global Forum for Adolescents, which she represented, was one of the largest platforms for youth. It had been the first to establish a constituency group for adolescents and youth. Over the previous four years, it had launched the *1.8 Billion Young People for Change* global campaign. Young parliamentarians should advocate for more youth-related financing and policies and engage with youth organizations in their respective countries to amplify young people's voices. They should also ensure that youth participation, spaces and programmes were part of national agendas and debates. Young parliamentarians should hold their governments to account for their youth-related actions because the cost of not investing in youth amounted to US\$ 20.5 trillion. At the Summit of the Future in 2024, Dr. Paullier should promote the youth agenda and set the scene for after 2030.

*Mr. D. Carden (United Kingdom), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, took the Chair.*

**Dr. K. Almazidou** (World Health Organization (WHO) Youth Council) said that the WHO Youth Council represented youth across 22 organizations and was the first structure of its kind. Its priorities included mental health, climate change, noncommunicable diseases, a pandemic agreement, youth leadership, accountability for global health and universal health coverage (UHC). The WHO Youth Council invited the Forum of Young Parliamentarians to identify opportunities to collaborate. In her capacity as co-Chair of the Youth Council Working Group on UHC, she would deliver a letter to the WHO Director-General and the IPU Secretary General calling on parliaments to legislate for and invest in UHC.

**Mr. S. Ismayilov** (Azerbaijan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that Azerbaijan had an area called Karabakh and East Zangezur, not Nagorno-Karabakh. Countries worldwide recognized the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Over 30 years, Armenia had acquired more than 20% of Azerbaijani territory and the UN had adopted four resolutions concerning that occupation. He had been born in Armenia but was Azerbaijani. Those like him wanted to go home but could not.

**The President** said that the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security would consider the draft resolution entitled *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence*, and the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development would consider the draft resolution entitled *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity*. He acknowledged the two Rapporteurs who had been appointed to draft a youth overview report on the draft resolutions and invited them to take the floor.

**Mr. W. Soto** (Peru), Rapporteur for the draft resolution entitled *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence*, said that the youth overview report highlighted the importance of youth participation worldwide in building a peaceful, just and safe future, particularly in light of constant technological development. Progress in AI and autonomous weapon systems presented significant peace and security challenges. The risk of losing control over important decisions that could lead to human rights violations, suffering and devastation for civilians in armed conflicts had to be mitigated. An international agreement, youth participation, and policies and regulations could address the lack of transparency in developing and deploying autonomous systems, and could ensure those activities were done responsibly. Interdisciplinary ethical committees should establish guidelines and regulations to protect human rights and promote the responsible use of those systems internationally. Governments, civil society and young people should discuss how to develop ethical and effective regulations. It was essential to increase public awareness of the impact of autonomous systems, foster an informed debate, and create a culture of responsibility and ethics. Youth were committed to dealing with the social and humanitarian impacts of autonomous weapons systems and AI, which should be reflected in policies and international agreements.

**Ms. M.A.B. Suansing** (Philippines) said that it was necessary to advocate for education and awareness of LAWS, and schools and universities should foster understanding of LAWS and their ethical ramifications. The term "advocate" in the draft resolution emphasized the urgency of that education, highlighted the importance of educating future generations and empowered youth to engage in the discussion. Social media could be critical to raising public awareness of the dangers of LAWS and mobilizing support for global prohibition. Parliaments should support and amplify youth-led



awareness-raising social media campaigns and allocate resources to develop social media strategies alongside youth advocates and organizations. Parliaments must provide concrete support to ensure the success of campaigns. The focus was on advocating for global prohibition of LAWS, thereby reflecting the urgency of the issue for youth.

**Ms. F.A. Masiko** (South Africa) said that ethics and strategic policy discussions were important to developing and deploying LAWS. Young parliamentarians were crucial to shaping ethical and legal LAWS frameworks, and ensuring LAWS adhered to international humanitarian law and human rights norms. They must advocate for the responsible development and deployment of LAWS, which could help ensure stringent regulations governed the use of LAWS. Youth could provide fresh perspectives in policy discussions, and could inform responsible policies and regulations.

**Ms. P. Aguirre** (Ecuador) said that Ecuador was at war against terrorism and organized crime. One person was killed every 69 minutes and many victims had been young politicians, including the youngest mayor of Ecuador, Brigitte Garcia. As president of the oversight committee within the National Assembly of Ecuador – a position that Ms. Garcia had held – she had received 15 threats of death and violence. She feared that the 148th IPU Assembly might be her last and that she would be remembered as a statistic at the 149th Assembly, as was the case for 10 politicians –including young politicians – who had been murdered during the previous year for speaking out against injustice. Although Ecuador had passed a law ensuring 25% of parliamentarians in the National Assembly were aged 18 to 29, representation was not enough. Discovering the links between organized crime and politics endangered one's life. The international community must open its eyes and stand by Ecuador. Security measures, including greater presence of the police and army on the streets, would not achieve anything without serious global efforts to combat drug and human trafficking and to dismantle the tax havens where ill-gotten funds were stored.

**The President** expressed solidarity with Ms. Aguirre, who was fearless.

**Ms. J. Ovekova** (Turkmenistan) said that youth determined state development, and could ensure a sustainable and stable future. In the words of the UN Secretary-General, “peace, economic dynamism, social justice, tolerance – all this and more, today and tomorrow, depends on tapping into the power of youth”. The Government of Turkmenistan was working to protect youth rights and freedoms, and to provide social protection and state support. Political, legal, socioeconomic and cultural management, together with youth engagement, ensured a bright future for youth. Turkmenistan had passed a law on State youth policy and implemented its State youth programme for 2021–2025. The latter had encouraged youth to develop solutions to regional and international issues, work towards the SDGs, and help implement large-scale and long-term programmes alongside international organizations, including the UN. The Strategy for International Cooperation of the Youth of Turkmenistan for 2023–2030 had been approved to increase young people's role in state administration and intensify cooperation with young parliamentarians from other countries. A young parliamentarians' group had been established. Turkmenistan regularly hosted events, including international forums and scientific conferences to facilitate knowledge exchanges among youth.

**The President** said that the discussion would shift to the draft resolution on *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity*.

**Ms. M.A.B. Suansing** (Philippines) said that it was important to use research, development and financial mechanisms to ensure an affordable and accessible energy transition for all countries. The energy transition required smart grids and distributed energy systems, which relied on digital controls and communication networks. Cybersecurity was essential to building resilient infrastructure and demanded a holistic approach to building and protecting critical energy infrastructure. Cyberattacks could disrupt power generation and distribution, and cause widespread blackouts and economic damage. The resolution's acknowledgement of cybersecurity emphasized the need to build resilience into clean energy systems. Measures could include security protocols, data encryption and system redundancy. It was important to recognize that developing countries, small island developing States, least developed countries and indigenous communities disproportionately suffered the effects of climate change, despite having contributed the least to greenhouse gas emissions. Developed countries should provide targeted financial and technological support to those groups. She hoped that the discourse on climate justice could be elevated.

**Mr. A. Tongjaisod** (Thailand) said that there was a need for a clean energy mix, including low emissions and alternative energy sources, and for support towards achieving a green energy transition and implementing the SDGs. With a view to national development, the biocircular economy and accountable management of national resources and the environment had been promoted. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment had decreased greenhouse gas emissions and made progress on carbon credits with multisectoral cooperation. At the global level, Thailand prioritized the COP framework, maximized the adaptation of the Paris Agreement, and sought bilateral and multilateral collaboration. The Department of Climate Change and Environment had been established as a focal point for integrating partnerships between government authorities and international organizations. Youth parliamentarians should ensure that climate negotiations included their opinions and demands.

**Ms. F.A. Masiko** (South Africa) said that climate action and the accessibility of green energy represented critical global challenges. Young parliamentarians were pivotal to fostering partnerships and change. Actions that could lead to progress included: advocating for sustainable policies that prioritized accessibility and affordability; fostering partnerships between renewable energy companies, local communities and international organizations; and increasing awareness of the benefits of clean energy.

#### **Q&A session: Putting the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* and *Not Too Young to Run* campaigns into action**

**The President** said that the discussion would focus on Pledge 2 of the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign: aligning the age of eligibility with that of voting.

**Dr. F. Paullier** (UN Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs) said that the youth agenda had been a priority for the UN for years and predated the UN Youth Office which was the result of advocacy from various stakeholders. The involvement of Member States in its establishment was a sign of progress, enabled the UN Youth Office to engage in intergovernmental processes and represented an opportunity to prioritize youth issues in the UN. Threats to multilateralism emphasized the need for a strong organization where young people felt included in decision-making. Participation was a human right and the UN Youth Council therefore included meaningful youth engagement in its mandate. That engagement involved addressing youth issues – such as unemployment – alongside young people and listening to their different perspectives. The UN Youth Office also wanted to address mental health. It was hoped that the UN Youth Office and the IPU could continue to collaborate and work on the youth agenda.

**Ms. S. Falaknaz** (United Arab Emirates) said that her country supported youth participation in all sectors. Education and mentorship were key to encouraging youth to become young parliamentarians. The Emirati Children's Parliament had been established to enable children aged 8 to 15 to hold elections and run their own Parliament. Although it had no oversight function, the Children's Parliament had 40 seats and held committee meetings that the Government attended. Even though education differed between countries, the IPU should focus on the road map for young people to become young parliamentarians and to lower the minimum age to run for election.

**Mr. P.P. Kemper Thiede** (Paraguay), in his pre-recorded video, said that his Parliament had implemented the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign and had sought ways to increase youth representation and leadership through laws, policies and budgets. Following a promotional campaign, a draft law had been passed in both chambers of Congress to reduce the age at which one could become mayor and councillor from 25 to 22, and 23 to 20 respectively, which would affect the 2026 municipal elections. In the previous elections, 31% of voters had been aged 18 to 29. Youth participation should continue to be promoted, and parliamentarians should mentor and legislate in young people's favour.

#### **Preparations for the 149th Assembly (October 2024)**

**The President** said that the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights would discuss a draft resolution on the impact of AI on democracy, human rights and the rule of law at the 149th IPU Assembly. Mr. F. Fakafanua (Tonga) would prepare a youth overview report.

*It was so agreed.*

*The sitting rose at 17:30.*

## High-level meeting

### *The crisis of multilateralism: Root causes and possible solutions*

MONDAY, 25 MARCH 2024

(Morning)

*The event was called to order at 11:05, with Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, as Moderator.*

**The Moderator**, welcoming participants to the event, said that he first wished to draw attention to the new IPU *Policy to prevent and address harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and other IPU events*, which was intended to ensure an inclusive, peaceful and safe working environment, free of harassment for all, and which drew on definitions and approaches used in the UN System *Code of Conduct*. All participants were encouraged to familiarize themselves with the *Policy*, which could be downloaded from the IPU website and which he saw as a development that brought the IPU up to speed with global trends in all sectors.

The present high-level event had been organized by the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs over which he now presided. While not part of the official preparatory process for the upcoming Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, it would enable a first reflection on key steps for strengthening multilateralism and on ways in which parliaments could and should help to achieve that goal. It would also contribute a perspective on the United Nations (UN) Summit of the Future, scheduled for September 2024 and described as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to strengthen multilateralism. The UN Secretary-General was impressively open and honest about the challenges facing the UN and multilateralism itself. He invited Dr. Ackson, President of the IPU, to make opening remarks, which would be followed by keynote statements from the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) and the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Participants would then have the opportunity to react, with a focus on the root causes of the crisis, possible solutions and suggestions for improvement, keeping in mind the young people worried about their future.

**Dr. T. Ackson** (United Republic of Tanzania), President of the IPU, said in her opening remarks that her short but memorable meeting with the UN Secretary-General, in February 2024, had left her with the firm impression that the UN was at a turning point and needed engagement with all stakeholders to ensure its sustainability. The genuine fear in New York and capitals around the world was that the UN would become irrelevant unless made more effective. Rightly or wrongly, many doubted its effectiveness and multilateralism in general. The strong UN record of support for countries was all too often obscured by reports of political impasse in negotiations, failure to implement agreed commitments and the double standards sometimes observed, which were a particular concern. Notwithstanding the democratic principle of one country one vote and the tremendous challenges of the day, the sad and ironic reality was that others must yield to the most powerful, with little recourse to well-meaning Member States. Now more than ever, a multilateral system was needed to deliver on its promises of justice, development and peace in an interdependent world, where a go-it-alone attitude was delusional and counterproductive.

The first factor contributing to the malaise in international relations was the general weakening of democracy worldwide, which was sowing mistrust in institutions at all levels. The second was that the manner of globalization had left too many behind. Much work by many would be needed to restore faith in multilateralism, with parliamentarians playing a key role through their legislative, oversight and budgetary powers to ensure that global commitments were implemented. The capacity to exercise those powers must also be strengthened and parliaments made more representative of women, youth and the most vulnerable in particular.

Against that backdrop, she looked forward to a frank and fruitful discussion as to whether current UN reforms were adequate to fix the multilateral system, what other measures were needed to restore trust in that system, and how parliaments could help to enhance the effectiveness of the UN and multilateralism. In addition to informing her own thinking and that of the IPU, the ideas generated would feed into the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament.

**The Moderator** thanked the IPU President for having set the context for the discussion with her remarks and questions.

**Ms. T. Valovaya** (Director-General, UNOG), keynote speaker, said that Geneva, the cradle of modern multilateralism where the League of Nations had been established, was the right place to ask such questions. Despite the challenges of the First World War and the influenza pandemic, the creators of that first multilateralism institution had made a huge investment in building the amazing Palais des Nations, which stood as living proof of their belief in multilateralism. It was often not realized how many elements of the UN, formed in response to the Second World War, were drawn from the League of Nations. The fact that the system built in 1945 was no longer fit for purpose in the contemporary world was behind the crisis in multilateralism. Only if transformed could it provide solutions to modern-day challenges that were multiplying annually.

The current world was one in which countries mistrusted one another, citizens mistrusted their governments, and local communities mistrusted minorities. It was also one of growing inequalities among and within countries, of geopolitical tensions unprecedented since 1945, and of conflict, war and terror attacks that had become almost everyday events. It was fighting climate change, remained unfit for sustainable development, and was home to billions of mostly young people who had lost faith in the system. At the same time, however, the findings of the global consultation conducted in 2020 by the UN to mark its 75th anniversary had revealed that some 80% of the millions of respondents still believed in multilateralism as the only answer. To fulfil its huge mandate of trust from the world's citizens whom it served, the UN needed to fine-tune the multilateralism system and had a vision for bringing about the necessary transformation.

In his report entitled "Our Common Agenda", which formed the basis of preparations for the upcoming Summit of the Future, the UN Secretary-General stated that the new multilateral system should be more networked and inclusive. Indeed, inclusivity was extremely important, taking into consideration that all 193 UN Member States had an equal voice in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, although that was unfortunately not yet a reality. The voices of small island States were critical, for example, in discussions of climate change to which their contribution was negligible and yet they were the first to suffer its effects.

Multilateralism was not all about sovereign nations, however, as there were now many more actors in the international arena, among them civil society, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academia, professionals, women's organizations and young people. Those actors were key UN partners providing the support needed for positive outcomes and dispensing the specialist advice required to promote good decision-making. The question around inclusive multilateralism was about how to give everyone a voice and a place at the table, in which regard the UN partnership with the IPU was crucial. Representing the world's ordinary citizens, the IPU had been in existence for longer than the UN, witnessed the change in the multilateral system, and made itself fit for the evolving world. The present event offered the prospect of finding solutions to put forward at the Summit of the Future and turn the UN into a fit-for-purpose multilateral organization of relevance into the future.

**Ms. R. Grynspan** (Secretary-General, UNCTAD) said that, as the bridge between the global and the local, and between the halls of power and the lives of the people it represented, the IPU had the power to translate international commitments into solid actions that made a difference to those lives. It was also a vital link in the chain of global governance, which, in order to address the crisis in multilateralism, must be updated to keep pace with rapid change and prevent the huge tensions and complex challenges that it prompted. Change also brought opportunities, however, as exemplified by the economic and political decentralization stemming from the rise of the Global South and its large emerging economies, holding for many countries the important promise of inclusion in global supply chains and structural transformation. Forums such as the G20, G7 and BRICS could also strengthen – not weaken – multilateralism, while multilateral development banks, in the networked multilateralism advocated by the UN Secretary-General, could scale up public and private investment in regions, as necessary, to promote achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The major risk was that fragmentation might ensue instead of decentralization, which in fact required expansion of the centre and, therefore, further coordination to ensure that existing universality, as reflected in the UN and its General Assembly, remained intact. For that reason, the Security Council reform agenda, together with peace and security, artificial intelligence (AI) governance, the international financial architecture, the Summit of the Future and the UN Secretary-General's *SDG Stimulus to Deliver Agenda 2030*, were central to discussions on the crisis of

multilateralism. A universally agreed rules-based international trading system was now more vital than ever, as was a truly representative governance at the Bretton Woods institutions, which, having little changed since their creation, was altogether disproportionate to the present number of countries in the world.

Such essential international reforms would nonetheless fail without support on the ground and from the world's parliaments. In the biggest year of elections in history, it should be asked how many would be won by candidates seeking to defend multilateralism and how many of those reforms were part of the international debate. Parliamentarians had the responsibility and power to bring the issues concerned to the heart of their constituencies, and to convey the importance of attaining the SDGs and reinvigorating the efforts to achieve them on time, bearing in mind that only 15% were on track and that growth patterns were diverging. It was fundamental to educate and inspire citizens, especially youth and especially in light of the triple deficit of growth, trust and hope, and to remind them that isolationism was a dead end and a dangerous illusion in an interconnected world.

The shared future depended on the ability to work together and revitalize the idea of a global community. Choices made now would shape that future for generations to come and should be made in favour of cooperation and inclusion, a multilateralism fit for purpose in the twenty-first century, and a future in which all voices were heard and human potential found its fullest expression. Without restoration of hope, no one would mobilize for the future. Much had happened for the good over the preceding 70 years and must be replicated through the leadership and voice that reform of the multilateral system would bring.

**The Moderator** thanked both keynote speakers for their inspiring perspectives, which had provided much food for thought, and invited comments from the floor after informing participants that Ms. Valovaya had another engagement to attend but would be available during the lunch period to answer questions.

**Mr. F. Fakafanua** (Tonga), speaking for young parliamentarians like himself, said that there was increasing competition for young people's time and attention. Many countries, above all in the developing world, had very young populations but their participation in the democratic process was low because they lacked faith in that process. Youth were lacking in hope and disengaged from multilateralism, as they saw no results yet faced multiple disasters on the environmental and economic fronts. He wondered what the future of the UN might be, how young people could be engaged in multilateralism, and how future challenges might be addressed.

**Mr. M. Rezakhah** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the unprecedented complex challenges and threats now besieging the world were amplified in scale and scope by emerging and advanced technologies, requiring comprehensive solutions based on participation and multilateralism. The UN *raison d'être* was to champion the latter and combat unilateralism, which destroyed friendly relations and ignored the fundamental UN goal of strengthening international peace and security and developing such relations. Multilateralism was, by contrast, a platform for dialogue, cooperation and shared responsibility in the face of difficult challenges but was currently ineffective.

In addition to affecting the well-being and basic human rights of those in the targeted nations, ongoing illegal unilateral actions threatened the future of humanity and should not be overlooked. The United States Of America Government had unfortunately been attempting to destroy multilateralism and thereby undermine international order and stability. There was no choice, however, but to strengthen and support multilateralism in the interest of cooperation to overcome global challenges. The current discussion would hopefully lay the groundwork for advancing common goals and promoting peace, stability and development.

**Ms. R. Grynspan** (Secretary-General, UNCTAD), agreeing with the first contributor that youth disengagement from politics was a major concern and driven by the perception of lack of results, said that part of the answer was to revive politics, bring young people into the political arena and create more space for intergenerational dialogue. Achievements and challenges should also be considered from a historical perspective and young people educated to understand that perseverance, and not short-termism, was the route to change. It was essential to listen more to the young generations to grasp their new reality and equally important to recognize that they were the present. Their voice was needed and they must be involved in decision-making.

The possibility of fragmentation raised in the comments of the second contributor had to be taken very seriously. According to the International Monetary Fund, fragmentation of the international trade and financial system would lead to a 7% loss in global gross domestic product, equivalent to two

pandemic shocks, which underscored the need to expand the centre for more inclusivity and pursue constructive solutions-driven dialogue for better results. No coalition of the willing, often spoken about, could deal with universal issues best resolved by universal agreement, as in a universal rules-based order. The alternative of navigating the complexity and chaos involved in seeking to comply with countless sets of rules was beyond most countries and led to exclusion. Such issues must therefore be addressed by the one universal framework available.

**Mr. M. Chungong** (Secretary General of the IPU), joining the discussion, said that multilateralism was extremely important and would be imperilled unless urgently addressed. Although imperfect, it could be fixed through more effective and efficient practices better attuned to the aspirations of the people of the UN. In its political project to work with the UN to articulate the values of multilateralism, the IPU had made considerable progress in bringing parliaments, which represented those same people, closer to that Organization. It now participated as an observer in the UN General Assembly, which over the years had, moreover, stressed the importance of engagement with parliaments. The IPU was eager for the UN to take the reciprocal step of bringing its dialogues and conversations to national parliaments for them to help in implementing the outcomes. In short, the political project was aimed at mutual benefit.

Despite the inroads made in taking parliaments to the UN, mostly bureaucratic but sometimes political obstacles remained owing to lack of understanding as to the place of parliaments at the UN. The IPU's message had always been that parliaments were not there to negotiate treaties but to inform UN deliberative processes with a view to outcomes that reflected the genuine interests of the people. Parliaments recognized the UN as the foremost multilateral institution but also knew that it needed strengthening through reform to make multilateralism more democratic and more inclusive of all components of society. It was essential to practice integrated multilateralism by involving the many new stakeholders that had emerged since the establishment of the UN in an intergenerational dialogue, without which it would be impossible to grapple with, for example, their technological and scientific creations. As true champions of multilateralism, parliaments and parliamentarians could give impetus to that approach, while for its part the IPU was committed to a multilateralism that was better shaped and designed to meet the aspirations of the peoples.

**Mr. H. Singh** (India) said that his country believed in peaceful cooperation and that its participation over decades in events, movements and processes of global significance were testament to its firm support of the multilateral system which it approached with combined norms of sovereignty and equitable representation. At every recent milestone moment in multilateral diplomacy, the desire for reform had been vigorously expressed at the highest levels, with leaders of both developed and developing countries calling for a revamped multilateral system.

Recent examples of Indian multilateral values at work included its supply of millions of COVID-19 vaccines to the world during the pandemic, its hosting of two editions of the Voice of Global South Summit, and its G20 presidency during which the African Union was accorded permanent member status, amplifying the African voice in the G20 setting. India hoped that those examples would inspire comprehensive reforms by older multilateral organizations such as the UN to reflect contemporary reality. As the mother of democracy, India's belief in dialogue and democratic principles had remained unwavering. Multilateralism must be made more representative and responsive.

**Ms. N.B.K. Mutti** (Zambia) said that, after decades of globalization and integration, the world again appeared to be fragmenting, perhaps best epitomized by, among others, the return of geopolitics, protectionism, unilateral sanctions, and even military and economic coercion, shaking the multilateral system to its foundations. The part played by parliamentarians in multilateralism could not be overemphasized, given their role in parliamentary diplomacy, which meant engaging in dialogue.

In addition to talking, however, dialogue meant listening. At the current and preceding Assemblies, participants had continued to speak at cross purposes over the emergency item and without listening to one another, which had sealed its fate and defeated the aim of a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza and release of the hostages. The UN had done a marvellous job of appointing women to high-level positions but she wondered what it was doing to promote women's involvement in national decision-making. In light of women's propensity to listen more carefully than men, more of them must be given a place at the negotiating table so that problems could be resolved and unnecessary war and confrontation avoided.

**Mr. J. Fakhro** (Bahrain), fully agreeing that people were talking and not listening, said that the previous day's debacle over the emergency item was the worst ever example set by the IPU. The same had happened in Angola and he hoped for no repeat at the 149th Assembly. Practices instituted

in 1945 when the UN was created, such as exercise of the power of veto by five major countries and favouritism towards large and rich nations at the expense of the small and poor, were now redundant. For multilateralism to survive, all those practices must be radically changed, collaboration and law enforcement increased, and the selfishness of large countries stopped.

The world's most powerful country had left the membership of numerous UN organizations and there was silence over the killing of more than 30,000 Palestinian civilians, with no one willing to condemn Israel. In any conversation about peace and the future, the starting point must be to see the world in black and white, not grey. Before pointing fingers at the UN, the IPU should change its own rules to prevent any future loss of a vote on the emergency item because a single delegation did not participate. The two-thirds majority rule was no better than the veto rule in the Security Council and should be amended in the interest of proper decision-making to require instead a simple majority.

**Ms. H. Alahmadi** (Saudi Arabia), observing that no one wanted to see the UN or similar organizations fail, said that solutions could be found with goodwill and hard work. Intergenerational dialogue and the revival of politics were important but it must be asked why there was such rampant disappointment in all politics among young people. Possibly it was because decision-making was too lengthy or participation too limited or focus on certain issues too little. Rather than assumptions being made about a country based on its system of government, the conversation should be about how good governance was applied and how it delivered on the promise of human rights. The procedures whereby institutions conducted public affairs, managed public resources and guaranteed those rights should be reviewed and there should be a more profound discussion around accountability, the rule of law, responsiveness and inclusivity. A positive focus on local governance would promote hope in younger generations and foster multilateral cooperation.

Peace was not an absence of war but a way of finding future sustainable peace. When discussing important issues of shared concern, the tendency was to forget that not everyone was on the same page. Some countries prioritized food security over climate change, for instance, and until such discrepancies were recognized, the discussion would not progress. In sum, the first step was to resolve domestic matters before moving on to multilateral cooperation.

**Mr. P. Suntiaphada** (Thailand) said that, functioning as it did in the shadow of a constitution introduced by a military junta, the Thai Parliament remained silent on events taking place in the multilateral context, such as the situation in neighbouring Myanmar. The Thai people were crying out for change but local politics, as in the country's deep south, remained in the way. In short, there was no involvement in any local or international dialogue. The previous day, however, his delegation had participated for the first time in the voting on an emergency item as opposed to abstaining, which was an encouraging sign of the desire to engage in matters of global concern.

It was time to accept that multilateralism and global governance needed to be reformed to give developing countries more say within the system, with partnership helping to promote a shift away from inward focus and the sense that challenges were being fought alone. For their part, parliaments must continue to raise the voice of the people in the global context to communicate the diversity of views and stand up for the marginalized and vulnerable.

**The Moderator**, reflecting on lessons drawn from past work-related gatherings he had attended, said that the aim of policy- and other decision-makers should be in the direction of a destination rather than the destination itself, as the pace of change was accelerating so fast that the destination was unpredictable. To change the multilateral order in that shifting context was a challenge. Concerning young people, their feeling was that they were repeatedly told about the magnitude of the challenge without ever being given the magnitude of the opportunity. Hope through opportunity should instead be the message to the younger generation, who expected instant gratification, whereas change was incremental.

**Ms. R. Grynspan** (Secretary-General, UNCTAD), again responding to interventions, said that the world would end in a worse place without change in the multilateral system, its imperfection notwithstanding. Along with the SDGs, multilateralism was too big to fail. It would take constructive efforts to make it better by walking in the direction of the end goal, which chimed with the notion of hope. It was true that young people felt disappointed and that no one was listening but the causes must be properly analysed from different perspectives in order to co-create solutions for incremental change in the system. People had to live differently while at the same time working collectively to that end, which meant finding new belief in their ability to do so.

The Summit of the Future would show movement and ambition towards the goal, failing which it would send a terrible signal of lack of hope for systemic change. In that regard, her major worry was complacency, as there was no invisible hand to take care of the challenges. People and development – not markets – were in crisis, with countries facing impossible choices. Many were spending more on debt servicing than on health and education, fundamental to all, yet no measures were being taken to change that reality. In addition to complacency was the blame game played in the face of such systemic shocks as the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis and climate change, which needed systemic answers through collective action.

The world was in a trap from which it must escape by looking at the reality and acting accordingly. For that to happen, leadership was key and would have to come from parliaments and UN Member States, which bore the responsibility to shape a better world governance system.

**Mr. D. Ram** (Netherlands) said that his country had a proud 100-year tradition of a democratic coalition government, which relied on cooperation and listening to be able to function. With the changing world order bringing many challenges, his country supported reform to make the UN more democratic, based on the rule of law and equal partnership. It wanted to start a new chapter of such partnership with all countries, including in trade and development aid. In the IPU context, he invited the Secretary General to reflect on the opportunities also brought by the shifting international order.

**Ms. R. Grynspan** (Secretary-General, UNCTAD) said that the point was fairly made as those opportunities were huge, including from open regionalism, which facilitated international economic transactions within regions, and from the digital economy, which had already done much for health and education. The real challenge lay in closing the participation and access gaps and, in the case of the digital, in seeking to expand it from consumption alone to include production, thereby building the diversification needed in developing countries especially. As long as they remained commodity dependent, those countries would never themselves create the decent jobs expected by new and more educated generations. The challenges associated with the energy transition to promote a more environmentally sustainable planet could also be harnessed to diversify industry and the productive matrix, which would allow for real development and wealth-sharing.

A supportive international system allowing all such opportunities to flourish was vital. Countries had to invest in their people, practise good governance, fight corruption and apply the rule of law. Even so, they could be derailed by systemic shocks, which was where national and international solidarity, cooperation and coordination came in as part of the solution, with the global economy and systemic good governance also playing their role. Multilateralism was crucial in bringing all opportunities to fruition, with no one left behind, through trade of all kinds and scaled-up investment in the UN. For both challenges and opportunities, the key lay in collective action nationally, regionally and internationally.

**Mr. A. Farrugia** (Malta), emphasizing that small and large countries were equally important, said that his own small country had always maintained resilience with regard to certain topics on the agenda. At the UN, its initiatives had included the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, put forward in the 1960s, although not adopted until 1982. Over 30 years previously, it had also proposed to put climate change on the agenda of the General Assembly, which had made it a laughing stock over a subject that was no longer a laughing matter. During its Presidency of the Security Council in February 2023, its primary focus had again been on climate change as well as on the role of literacy in conflict. As the failure to agree on an emergency item had shown, there were many barriers to mutual understanding to be overcome. The question was whether revisiting the Charter of the United Nations written in 1945 was a solution to current crises or whether it was a matter of building understanding among countries, both large and small. With its Constitution based on peace, Malta, for example, did not actively participate in any defence alliance. While it might be criticized for that in the light of nearby conflicts, the point was that it chose to concentrate instead on mutual understanding.

**The Moderator** thanked the keynote speakers for sharing their insights and experience and expressed appreciation to all those who had participated in the event. The timely discussion would feed into the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament and inform the Summit of the Future.

*The event ended at 13:05.*



## Parity debate

### *Eliminating discrimination, transforming economic losses into gains*

TUESDAY, 26 MARCH 2024

(Morning)

*The debate was called to order at 11:35 with Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche (Algeria), First Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, as the Moderator.*

**The Moderator** said that discrimination against women was estimated to cost some US\$ 12 trillion globally. Furthermore, nearly 2.4 billion women of working age lived in economies that did not grant them the same rights as men. Recalling the IPU resolution concerning the financial inclusion of women as a driver of development adopted by the 136th Assembly in 2017 and the Kigali Declaration on *Gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments as drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful world*, she said that parliaments had an important role to play in ensuring gender equality in law and amending discriminatory legislation. The discussion would focus on the importance of removing all legal and cultural barriers to enable women to have full financial independence and showcase good practices.

**The IPU Secretary General**, speaking in a recorded video address, said that the adoption of legislation by parliaments that lifted barriers to women's economic empowerment was key for achieving sustainable development. Many parliaments were now including more women, including in leadership positions, and delivering more gender-equal laws. The next important step forward was to implement those laws so that women could enjoy equal rights in practice. He drew attention to the *Women, Business and the Law 2024* report by the World Bank (WB) which provided examples of policy instruments and mechanisms that could be used to enforce laws.

**Ms. J.C. Braunmiller** (Senior Private Sector Development Specialist, WB), speaking via video link, said that, while transport policies were often gender neutral, public transport was not. Inadequate transit opportunities exposed women to potentially dangerous situations and could impact their choices regarding job opportunities. Features such as the installation of safety cameras and a maximum capacity that had been implemented in Jordan in 2021 were expected to significantly boost the use of public transportation and therefore increase women's employment opportunities. Most women around the world did not have those options and continued to face multiple challenges, and there was work to be done to ensure that women had the same economic prospects as men.

For the past 15 years, the *Women, Business and the Law* report had analysed laws affecting women's lives through their careers. The 2024 report had included two new indicators concerning protection from gender-based violence and provision of childcare services, and had also looked at implementation measures and the extent to which countries were putting laws into practice. It had included surveys of experts in some countries to measure perceptions of the implementation and effectiveness of the law.

The resulting new index showed that the legal gender gap was much wider than previously thought. Women had only two-thirds of the legal rights of men; they enjoyed barely a third of the legal protection they needed from domestic violence, sexual harassment, child marriage and femicide; and did on average 2.4 hours more unpaid care work a day than men. Although none of the 190 countries surveyed using the new index had achieved legal equality for women, 18 countries of different income levels in all regions of the world except South Asia had made progress towards that goal. All countries, even those with gender equal laws, faced a substantial implementation gap with respect to the supportive frameworks index, with only 40% of supportive frameworks in place globally. Of the 92 countries found to have laws that addressed sexual harassment, only 29 had established specialized procedures to efficiently handle such cases. The opinions of experts had helped to identify legal gaps.

Eliminating gender gaps in employment and entrepreneurship could raise the global domestic product by more than 20% over the next decade. In countries where greater gender equality was provided by law, women were more empowered. A comprehensive set of actions was required to close

gender gaps, and parliamentarians had a key role to play, including by: reforming laws and removing discrimination; introducing mechanisms to support meaningful implementation of the law; raising awareness and changing behaviours and perceptions. The data in the *Women, Business and the Law 2024* report could be used to identify the law and policy gaps in each country.

**Ms. E. Eghobamien-Mshelia** (Vice-Chair, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women), speaking via video link, provided a brief overview of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) that was one of the most broadly endorsed human rights treaties, having been ratified by approximately 90% of UN Members. It had 16 operational articles, and Articles 3 and 7 which addressed, respectively, women's full development in all spheres and role in the political and public life were particularly relevant to the discussion.

**Ms. M.T. Mosena** (Lesotho) said that peace and diplomacy had been key tenets of Lesotho's nation building over the previous 200 years, and the Constitution provided for fundamental human rights, freedom and equality in all sectors of society.

The nexus between the elimination of discrimination and economic development could not be overemphasized. Although her Government had ratified CEDAW in 1995, its principles had not been applied to all laws, and discrimination against women in economic and social life had continued. Although the political will to amend legislation to remove discrimination and gender inequalities existed and had been a priority, laws subordinating women to men remained part of society in Lesotho. In 2022 almost two-thirds of citizens had identified gender-based violence as the most important women's rights issue for Lesotho. The Parliament had continued to put women's empowerment at the centre of the country's economic development agenda.

She concluded by noting that gender discrimination should be considered as a war waged against minorities and vulnerable groups.

**Mr. L.S. Phohleli** (Lesotho) described the various laws passed by the Parliament since 2006 to advance women's rights and economic empowerment in Lesotho, including on abolishing the minority status of married women, enabling women to hold property in their names, countering domestic violence and economic abuse, providing for paid maternity leave and abolishing male primogeniture.

**Ms. M. Aljaghoub** (Jordan) said that a number of political and administrative reforms focusing on the role of women, youth and persons with special needs had been implemented in her country. The Constitution had recently been amended to provide that women should have equal opportunities and be protected from all forms of discrimination. The age for parliamentary participation had been lowered to 30 years. Legislation had been passed stipulating that women should make up at least 20% of political parties and should assume leadership positions. A ministerial committee had also been established to empower women and a strategy for women in Jordan had been developed.

Her country was committed to all relevant international conventions and had recently amended the labour law to permit flexible working hours and make it easier for mothers to enter the labour market. The way in which legislation was implemented was particularly important.

**A delegate from Romania** said that her country had worked hard to improve equality between men and women and to develop legislation to combat violence against women and encourage partnerships. More remained to be done, however, and efforts were being made to introduce gender quotas in Parliament to increase the representation of women who currently made up less than 20 % of parliamentarians despite constituting over half of the population. While the women parliamentarians and international organizations were supportive of that endeavour, some male parliamentarians were not, and she asked what specific actions could be taken to ensure that the gender quota was met.

**Ms. H.R. Siafa** (Sierra Leone) said that legislation had been introduced in Sierra Leone to prohibit gender-based discrimination in employment. Employers were required to ensure that at least 30% of the workforce were women, and that a certain percentage of them were in leadership positions. Maternity leave was to be paid to all female employees for at least 14 weeks. Employees were to receive equal remuneration for work of equal value, and have equal opportunities for training and education. Financial institutions had been instructed to improve access to financial services and products for women.

She concluded by noting that action to bridge the gender disparity gap had been identified as one of the fastest means of demonstrating attainment of development indicators.

**Mr. E. George** (Sierra Leone), noting the importance of political will, said that parliamentarians in Sierra Leone stood ready to support women, and several laws had been enacted to that end. While proportional representation was allowing women to enter the Sierra Leone Parliament without discrimination, their financing was an issue that needed to be addressed and he called on the IPU to continue to support women in the country. A tougher stance was being taken on rape, with those convicted receiving life imprisonment.

**Ms. S. Balmik** (India) said that her country placed women at the centre of its development agenda and implemented a holistic strategy for women's empowerment. It was taking steps to combat dowry and domestic violence and workplace harassment, and strengthen maternity leave policies. As a result, there had been a notable rise in the female labour force and initiatives such as self-help groups were leading to more empowered rural women and entrepreneurship.

Political reforms had been implemented to ensure greater female representation and legislation had recently been passed providing that one third of seats in the House of the People and the legislative assemblies were to be reserved for women. Significant strides were being made in poverty reduction through various initiatives and the expansion of financial inclusion programmes. Parliamentarians had a duty to safeguard the interests of all, especially women and girls, and to ensure the development of all sectors of society.

**Ms. T. Losche** (Suriname) said that her Parliament had been trying to offer women a platform for years. Her country was striving to empower women and men, and protect both genders from discrimination. Although the focus had traditionally been on male and female professions, women in Suriname were using their knowledge and experience to take their rightful place in society.

**Ms. G.N. Katjingisia** (Namibia) said that the Constitution of Namibia contained provisions providing for gender equality and a gender policy action plan had been adopted in 1997. The *Women, Business and the Law 2021* report had scored Namibia 86.3 out of 100, which was higher than the average score in sub-Saharan Africa. Improvements to certain laws concerning women after having children and entering business had been recommended, and legislative reforms had been undertaken to ensure that women did not lose income and received full benefits. School attendance by girls had also been improved.

Some political parties were also following the principle of equal representation of women implemented by the ruling party, and the representation of women in Parliament had increased significantly. Gender parity had been achieved in the National Assembly and women were occupying a number of ministerial roles. Efforts were required to ensure that the number of women parliamentarians continued to rise and that the Electoral Act used quotas to increase the number of female and indigenous women candidates, and prohibit cyberbullying. Women's political participation was not only a fundamental human right but a key for sustainable development and democracy.

**Ms. D. Alzayed** (Bahrain) said that her country had worked hard to ensure gender equality and parity and to fight gender discrimination in all its forms. The Supreme Council for Women had been established to empower women, and a national plan for the advancement of Bahraini women was being implemented. A special budget to respond to the needs of women had been included in the national budget. She thanked male parliamentarians for their support, including with respect to the political empowerment of women, and noted that many committees were now being chaired by women.

Different religions, traditions, customs and values of States, as well as the perspective of women themselves, must be taken into consideration when addressing the issue of gender parity.

**A delegate from Bahrain** said that the focus should be on giving women equal opportunities to men and on competencies, rather than on percentages. Women in Bahrain participated in the private and government sectors, held ministerial positions and were members of the Shura Council. Legislation giving opportunities to women should be passed by parliaments and he described some of the laws passed in Bahrain to support women and their involvement in decision-making.

**Mr. A.-E. Ntugu Nsa** (Equatorial Guinea) said that male parliamentarians in his country offered unconditional support and finance for legislative initiatives concerning women. The laws in Equatorial Guinea provided for gender equality and equal rights for men and women, including on holding public positions, and the President of the Senate was a woman. His country was a State Party to CEDAW. His Government continued to attach priority to recognizing the role of women in society and had established a women's department that had subsequently been elevated to a ministry. Women made up 35% of parliamentarians and the Senate had been considering a draft law on gender violence.

**Ms. A. Mele Colifa** (Equatorial Guinea) said that, in order to turn economic losses into gains, significant progress had been made in developing a legal framework and policies to meet international commitments undertaken on women's rights. Women's involvement in decision-making processes had increased significantly in recent decades. At the national level, policies on women's empowerment and gender equality had been established, and a corresponding multisectoral plan of action had been developed to enable women to realize their full rights, including in respect of access to education and training.

**Ms. T. Vardanyan** (Armenia) said that women, who made up 54% of the population in Armenia, could have an obvious impact on economic development and equal opportunities had to be given to all members of society. Armenia had previously improved its domestic legislation, including by establishing a law on paid paternity leave. It had since made further significant progress, such as through the law on protecting women from sexual harassment in employment, and was one of two economies in Europe and Central Asia to score above 90 in the *Women, Business and the Law 2024* report. Legislation and reforms were important tools for parliamentarians to provide equal opportunities for women's economic activity.

**Mr. H. Arshakyan** (Armenia) said that in recent years, Armenia had implemented reforms and amended the labour code to enhance women's rights. A significant amendment had been introduced in 2019 to prohibit discrimination, making it unlawful to consider job applications on any basis other than practical skills and professional qualifications.

While the quota for women parliamentarians in the National Assembly was 30%, the actual figure stood at 34%. The electoral code provided for certain safeguards to ensure that the quota was met.

**Ms. N.O. Acora** (Uganda) said that the current Parliament in Uganda consisted of 146 women from each district in the country and of 14 directly elected parliamentarians. Women made up approximately 48% of the cabinet, including the Prime Minister.

Many poverty alleviation programmes were being implemented in the country. The most recent, the parish development model, aimed to increase household income and 70% of its beneficiaries were women. A project had recently been launched through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to provide grants to women in business to lift them from poverty. Various other projects, including a women's empowerment project, were also being undertaken.

**A delegate from Kenya** said that the 2010 Constitution provided for equality in Kenya. Historical injustices had to be addressed and affirmative action had been taken to ensure that the number of women in Parliament had increased. Several laws had been passed to ensure equality, equity and the elimination of harmful cultural practices against women. A gender ministry had been established and a special advisor to the President appointed. Each sector was required by law to ensure that information collected was disaggregated by gender, age and disability. Budgetary provision should be made for gender inclusion and special funds had been created for marginalized groups. A women's caucus had been established in Parliament and funds were provided for parliamentarians to undertake gender-specific actions.

Although much had been done, implementation gaps remained. Men were trying to circumvent regulations offering one third of procurement contracts to women and attempts were being made to dilute some legislative provisions.

**Ms. T. Samrejvanich** (Thailand), noting that social attitude was important in helping to elevate the status of women and ensure gender equality, said that Thailand was implementing a landmark 2023–2027 plan of action on women's development. It sought to ensure that women and girls could realize their full potential, were treated equally and fairly, and were protected from all forms of violence. Numerous measures to enhance women's economic participation had been implemented, with the concept of female entrepreneurship introduced at primary school level. Public agencies and civil societies were offering training courses to empower women in the economic and business arena, and development centres had been set up. Legislation providing for longer maternity leave was before Parliament.

**A delegate from Morocco** said that women all over the world faced similar challenges. In her country the social situation of women was being changed through legislation, education and employment. Laws had been passed to increase access to primary education, thus raising literacy

levels and combating early marriage. Youth economic empowerment initiatives had been promoted, and at least 30% of the beneficiaries were women and girls. While many laws had been changed in the country, problems remained, including cultural stereotypes that encouraged some to continue to discriminate against women.

Parliamentarians had a role to play in developing legislation, raising awareness of cultural differences and ensuring that all public policies took gender equality into consideration.

**Ms. L.M. Merkesdal** (Norway) said that women's involvement in the workforce and gender equality strengthened the economy, education, health care and efforts to combat climate change. Actions to foster higher levels of education would ensure that women had the same skills as men and would be able to access various roles, reduce marginalization and create a more stable society. Men should create inclusive spaces for women and criticize behaviour towards women that they would not accept themselves. Mutual respect was the first step, and diverse genders and races had to be represented. Women must also support one another.

**Ms. J. Tobaiwa** (Zimbabwe) said that her country had made strides towards empowering women while boosting its economy and the 2018 Constitution had provided for a number of key measures to promote the development of women, while protecting them from exploitation. The extension of the quota system had seen an increase in the number of women in Parliament and local authorities. Her Government was offering financial support to women in business and agriculture and in Parliament the women's caucus was at the centre of women's issues.

**Mr. F. Fakafanua** (Tonga) said that women made up less than 10% of elected officials in the Pacific region. His Government had recognized the importance of promoting gender equality to achieve sustainable development. Recalling that only six women had been elected in Tonga over the past 76 years, he said that the 2001 national policy on gender and development had been revised in 2014 to emphasize the need to increase women's leadership and equitable political representation. However, a recent survey showed that more eligible female than male voters considered that leadership roles, particularly in Parliament, were best suited to men. Thus, the majority of existing male parliamentary representatives did not have the democratic mandate to implement special measures for women, and that challenge was compounded by a lack of motivation from the voters in Tonga.

Information on how empowering women and ensuring equal participation in legislative bodies could unlock economic potential was raising awareness as to the potential of women in leadership. He thanked the IPU and the World Bank for their support and information, which parliamentarians could take back to their countries.

**Ms. S.R. Dato Haji Abdul Rahman** (Secretary General, ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)) said that empowering women in politics could lead to greater economic inclusion and independence, contributing to broader social development goals. In 1998, AIPA had established the Women Parliamentarians of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (WAIPA) as a platform to promote women's participation in decision-making processes at the regional and national levels. The resolution on enhancing ASEAN resilience through women leadership and gender-responsive parliaments adopted at the 44th AIPA General Assembly the previous year had initiated the development of a draft plan of action and implementation framework to create an enabling environment and empower women in politics. The draft plan set out specific implementation activities until 2030 to address issues and challenges related to women's political participation in the region and sought to strengthen the capacity of women parliamentarians and foster intergenerational collaboration. It was likely to be adopted at the 45th AIPA General Assembly later in 2024.

**Ms. J.C. Braunmiller** (Senior Private Sector Development Specialist, WB), speaking via video link, said that, where the political leadership was not convinced of the benefits of gender equality and reform, research data could be used to show why bringing women into the economy was important for growth and stability, and to promote policy and legal reform. There was often a domino effect in regions when one country had successfully implemented a reform on gender equality as others would follow.

**The Moderator** thanked all participants for their valuable contributions.

*The debate ended at 13:20.*

## Panel discussion

### *Addressing strategic and existential threats through common security and the rule of law*

SUNDAY, 24 MARCH 2024

(Afternoon)

*The event was called to order at 13:05 with Mr. A. Ware (Global Coordinator, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND)) as the Moderator.*

**The Moderator** said that the panel discussion, which had been organized by the IPU in cooperation with PNND and the World Future Council, sought to follow up from the adoption of the Luanda Declaration at the 147th IPU Assembly. It would address the role of parliamentarians in international conflict resolution, peace and disarmament, sustainable future and in various international bodies at a time of numerous serious conflicts.

Disarmament should not be seen in a vacuum, but in the context of security and sustainable development. Such an approach was consistent with that taken by the United Nations Secretary-General in the 2018 *Agenda for Disarmament* and in his *New Agenda for Peace*, which were key elements to be considered in the UN Summit of the Future. Common security offered a means for countries to achieve security without diminishing that of others, and the rule of law was a tool that could be used to help achieve that win-win approach.

**Ms. A. Filip** (IPU Director of the Division for Member Parliaments and External Relations) said that in order to strengthen the United Nations (UN) and multilateralism, parliaments and parliamentarians must be able to play their rightful role and be part of the solution, including by bringing their voice to deliberations at the UN and by translating commitments made into national reality. Since the adoption of the *United Nations Millennium Declaration*, in which heads of State and Government had resolved to strengthen further cooperation between the UN and national parliaments through the IPU, in various fields, including peace and security, economic and social development, human rights and democracy and gender issues, the IPU had sought to provide a parliamentary dimension to the main UN processes. It organized various annual events at the UN, including a parliamentary hearing during the UN General Assembly, a parliamentary meeting at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), and a parliamentary forum at the High-level Political Forum.

While parliaments had a responsibility to ensure that commitments made were integrated into national legislation, she noted that they were often ahead of the curve and actually prompted the development of international legally binding instruments, citing the Convention on Cluster Munitions as an example. The last World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in 2021 had adopted a declaration on parliamentary leadership for more effective multilateralism, underscoring that respect for international law was the bedrock of a world order based on solidarity and cooperation and that violations of international law must not be tolerated. In the Luanda Declaration, parliamentarians had reaffirmed their strong belief in the rule of law, at both the national and international level and had encouraged more frequent use of the International Court of Justice.

**The Moderator** introduced the speakers.

**Ms. M. Kiener Nellen** (Board member, PNND), panellist, said that legal instruments and the judiciary could defend the weaker and offer equality of treatment and fair rules of proceedings to smaller countries in cases against larger countries, including the so-called “superpowers”. She drew attention in that regard to the South China Sea Arbitration case brought by the Philippines against the People’s Republic of China in 2013 and to a case brought by Nicaragua against the United States of America. Although the smaller countries had won their cases, the larger countries had failed to recognize the rulings. Given the many war zones and conflicts in the world, she appealed for an extension of the competence of international jurisdictions and for more pressure on the States that had so far failed to recognize those jurisdictions. She drew attention to the *Handbook on accepting the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice* and to the joint statement on *Common Security and Nuclear Weapons: How to replace the current reliance on nuclear weapons with sustainable security for all*, which were listed on the PNND website.

She concluded by noting that the concept of deterrence, including in the nuclear context, alluded to an implicit threat. While at the individual level, a threat was addressed through the criminal code by means of punishment, at the international level, however, threats by one country were met with threats by other countries and the spectre of the use of nuclear weapons. Another means of responding to threats must be found by promoting acceptance of jurisdictions, arbitration and mediation, and she encouraged efforts by parliamentarians to that end.

**Ms. R. Shoot** (Executive Director, Citizens for Global Action), panellist, said that the UN Summit of the Future had been hailed as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to mend eroded trust and demonstrate that international cooperation could effectively tackle current challenges. It would also consider how to deliver on existing aspirations and goals through the “Pact for the Future” outcome document, a zero draft of which had been circulated earlier in the year by the facilitators. However, from a rule of law perspective, there was a cognitive dissonance between the stated ambitions of the Summit and the pact, and reality. Unfortunately, as currently articulated, the zero draft failed to mention how conflicts could be resolved through peaceful means and omitted essential constituencies, such as courts and parliamentarians. The global collective security architecture had to be renovated, including by maximizing the efficacy of existing judicial institutions and introducing new operational tools, and parliamentarians had a critical role to play in that regard. The pact should advance the aspirations of the Luanda Declaration rather than watering down the commitments it contained.

Civil society had been working on a people’s pact for the future, in which it argued that the UN Summit of the Future should compel States to avail themselves fully with existing and potential new judicial institutions and processes to resolve disputes through peaceful means, and ensure accountability for violations of international law. It also considered that all UN Member States should accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, not just the 74 States that had already done so. Unless all Member States fully supported the International Criminal Court, a true end to impunity would not be possible. The people’s pact also contemplated the establishment of new judicial institutions, including an international anti-corruption court and a climate court.

In order to advance those objectives, parliamentarians must: urge their governments to make bolder commitments in the “Pact for the Future”; educate the public about the importance of issues discussed at the Summit and of the need for greater collective action; engage with civil society and encourage its involvement in the Summit process; take legislative action even before the Summit; exercise their oversight function to ensure that the commitments made at the Summit of the Future were implemented effectively. Parliamentarians had a critical role to play in strengthening the rule of law and international justice at the Summit of the Future, and beyond.

**Mr. N. Gunasekera** (Member, World Future Council), panellist, said that international law was an instrument of peace. Outlining the process since the First Hague Conference in 1899 that had culminated in the establishment of the International Court of Justice, he said that the Court had almost 101 years of experience in dealing with the peaceful settlement of disputes, and had even issued its Advisory Opinion on the legality of the use of nuclear weapons. All States, irrespective of their size, were considered equal in that forum, and that was a collective achievement. The previous week over 80 UN Member States, spearheaded by a group of Pacific island States, had submitted written submissions to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion on climate change. The UN Summit of the Future was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to change the way of taking action and ensure that the current generation lived up to its commitment to preserve the earth for the future. No decisions by parliamentarians had any significance unless they considered past, present and future generations and there should be an envoy of future generations in every parliament.

### Questions and interventions

**Mr. P. Nanda** (India) said that the UN Summit of the Future presented a critical opportunity to agree on multilateral solutions for a better tomorrow and to strengthen global governance. There was a growing disparity between the potential of the collective security system and reality, and parliamentarians should intensify their collaborative efforts to develop strategies to prevent and address the drivers of violence and conflict. The strengthening of national infrastructures for peace could reinforce State institutions, foster social cohesion and uphold the rule of law, which had been instrumental in shaping democracy in his country.

As a staunch supporter of the UN, India was in favour of action to restructure the Security Council to reflect current geopolitical realities and enhance credibility. Noting the linkage between the climate crisis, peace and security, he said that parliamentarians should unite to safeguard democracy and confront existential threats through common security and the rule of law, fostering sustainable and inclusive development for all.

**Mr. M. Green** (Canada) said that the world was on the precipice of climate, economic and democratic collapse. With international law subjected to the whim of superpowers, the situation was not one of the rule of law but rule by law. Should peace and democracy not prevail, a nuclear catastrophe could be imminent. Parliamentarians should reflect on what was at stake when certain States were allowed to operate with absolute impunity vis-à-vis international law and international humanitarian law.

**Mr. O. Zhmerenetskyi** (Ukraine) said that the inability of the UN to stop conflict and international crimes gave rise to a dangerous situation. States were fearful of acting effectively and in a timely manner to stop the actions of one nuclear power that had been recognized as acts of aggression by the General Assembly. Notwithstanding the Memorandum on security assurances in connection with Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Russian Federation had seized Ukrainian territory and was blackmailing the international community with nuclear weapons. Countries were now choosing to develop nuclear weapons to ensure their own security.

Cases before the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice often took years to be heard and the ruling could often not be enforced without the use of force against the aggressor State, which was usually blocked. A mechanism providing for a joint response to paralyse the aggressor's war machine and provide the necessary assistance to the invaded country should also be found. The aggressor State should also immediately lose its power of veto in the Security Council.

**Ms. A. Larouche** (Canada) said that common security was a right, yet the growing risk of nuclear war was an actual existential threat, as the current conflict in Ukraine showed. Recalling an event organized by the Canadian Parliament the previous spring, she said that parliamentarians should use past events, including in Nagasaki and Chornobyl, to raise awareness of the risks presented by nuclear weapons and technology to humanity, and encourage their governments to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

**A delegate from Zambia** said that, under the rule of law, everyone should enjoy equal protection and the arbitrary use of power should be prevented. The challenge was to have effective judicial protection and access to justice through an independent, impartial court. He asked what was being done to strengthen the work of the International Criminal Court to ensure that its decisions were accepted by all, and what multilateral instruments were being developed that would be binding on all States Parties and ensure that those in violation could be brought to justice.

**Mr. B. Albinmohamed** (Bahrain) said that States needed to be stable and functional to tackle existential threats effectively. In areas of conflict, however, some States were dysfunctional and existential threats could spill over and become global threats. Serious consideration should be given to developing mechanisms to ensure the more meaningful implementation and enforcement of the rule of law.

**Mr. J. Djoliseng'ekeli** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that there were other existential threats in addition to nuclear weapons. Countries that should be devoting resources to their development were having to use them to maintain armies to tackle wars and conflicts, including with neighbours. He drew attention in that regard to the situation between his country and its neighbour, Rwanda, which had caused some seven million displaced persons and food insecurity in certain parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The IPU should analyse all strategic and existential threats to achieve common security. States, including Rwanda, should be encouraged to refrain from sowing disorder in neighbouring countries.

**Ms. M. Groff** (Climate Governance Commission) said that she was helping to design a new international anti-corruption court and would be pleased to work with others in advancing international rule of law issues. She had been heartened to hear how parliamentarians understood the gravity of current circumstances and how international law was the backbone of international society. She hoped that such sentiments would be recognized in the outcome document of the UN Summit of the Future. Noting that the 2005 World Summit Outcome had provided a very strong statement on the international rule of law, she said that it was important not to simply reiterate previous statements. Strong steps forward were required on enforcement of the judgements of the International Court of Justice and on strengthening various institutions. She drew attention to a rule of law package for the



international community being developed by the Development and Peace Foundation that made a number of proposals, including on upgrading the International Court of Justice which had now been outpaced by more modern courts. The majority of States wanted to advance international rule of law and there were substantial opportunities for parliamentarians to assist in that work.

**A delegate from Rwanda**, responding to comments from the delegate from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, said that the allegations made should be dismissed. The source of insecurity in that country stemmed from a lack of political will to address the root causes of the conflict, and the Government's ongoing collaboration with illegal armed groups. The solution to the conflict in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo should be achieved through dialogue. Rwanda had always reiterated its steadfast commitment to regional peace initiatives and urged the Democratic Republic of the Congo to refrain from a blame game.

**Mr. Z. Zakarias** (Romania) said that confidence in the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice was important, in particular for smaller countries such as his own, as a means of avoiding and preventing the escalation of conflict. However, a tool needed to be found to ensure that all countries implemented the Court's decisions instead of resorting to the use of force.

**Mr. C. Ritchie** (Civil society representative), drawing attention to the zero draft of the *Pact for the Future*, said that consultation with the peoples of the world, including parliamentarians and civil society, was essential. There were nine instances in the text highlighting the need to implement commitments, yet surely it was a given that governments would actually implement the commitments they had made. It would not be sufficient for the Summit of the Future to simply repeat the need to undertake what had already been agreed in the past.

**The Moderator**, responding to the comments from Canada, said that nuclear weapons and climate change were key existential threats. According to the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, the Doomsday Clock had been set at 90 seconds to midnight, indicating the high risk of catastrophic consequences to the world from such threats. While the G20 Bali Leaders' Declaration had indicated that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons was inadmissible, that position had yet to be translated into policy. The non-use of nuclear weapons needed to be made into a universally accepted law. He invited parliamentarians to consult the PNND website, which included information on numerous initiatives concerning nuclear risk reduction and disarmament.

**Mr. N. Gunasekera** (Member, World Future Council), panellist, said that war could no longer be the means of resolving disputes. All those in public office had a sacred duty to ensure that international law was properly implemented. There were many cases of the International Court of Justice ruling in favour of the smaller, less powerful State. Recourse to the International Court of Justice worked and served the so-called powerful States, as peace was in the interests of all. Parliamentarians should hold the Luanda Declaration as a framework for action and take stock of the achievements reached in the next 12 months.

**Ms. R. Shoot** (Executive Director, Citizens for Global Action), panellist, said that the objective was to achieve peace through legal and judicial means rather than through conflict. The United States of America had indicated that it would not initially comply with the decision of the International Court of Justice in the 1984 case brought by Nicaragua. However, policy had subsequently been changed, attesting to the fundamental role of parliamentarians not only in implementing legal decisions but in moving from solidarity to accountability.

With regard to the situation in Ukraine, there were multiple instruments aimed at achieving accountability, including the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice and the International Centre for the Prosecution of the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine.

In the *New Agenda for Peace*, the United Nations Secretary-General alluded to a deep sense of unease in international judicial institutions and international order more generally. Complementarity and cooperation were required to achieve the potential of existing and new judicial institutions.

There was a role for States that had not ratified the Rome Statute or cooperation agreements, and she drew attention to the cooperation of the United States of America in the conviction at the International Criminal Court of the leader of the Union of Congolese Patriots. Countries could also accept the call for compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. Other international instruments to be ratified included the rich body of international humanitarian law and instruments on nuclear-related and chemical and biological weapons. It was hoped that a new treaty on autonomous

weaponry would be contemplated at the UN Summit of the Future. That event was a tipping point, and governments, parliamentarians and civil society should work together to achieve its lofty goals, the substance of which was perhaps currently lacking.

**Ms. M. Kiener Nellen** (Board member, PNND), panellist, highlighted the importance of the independence of the judiciary and of the need for safeguards against armament lobbyists. In order to ensure peace, measures were needed to eliminate nuclear armaments, and she called for parliamentary oversight to that end.

**The Moderator** recalled that the revised Swiss Federal Act on War Materials to stop the financing of illegal weapons had come into force in 2013.

**Ms. A. Filip** (IPU Director of the Division for Member Parliaments and External Relations) said that it was important for parliamentarians to keep their eye on the ball with respect to the Summit of the Future since the stakes were too high to fail. An ambitious outcome was needed. Yet, there was currently no mention of the rule of law or of parliaments in the draft of the *Pact for the Future*. Over recent years there had been an erosion of international law with the Security Council unable to prevent violations and humanitarian catastrophes. The IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs would be passing a motion on the reform of the Security Council. Such a reform should be undertaken in a democratic, inclusive and transparent manner and the influence of parliamentarians in that undertaking should not be underestimated. There was also an ambition to ensure that the voice of parliamentarians was heard at the UN Summit of the Future.

*The event ended at 14:45.*

## Panel discussion on interfaith dialogue

### *Building bridges through interfaith dialogue for more peaceful and inclusive societies*

**MONDAY, 25 MARCH 2024**

(Afternoon)

*The event was called to order at 14:10 by Mr. M. Wiener (Human Rights Officer, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)) as the Moderator.*

**Mr. M. Omar** (Senior Adviser to the IPU Secretary General), panellist, recalled that the IPU was the oldest political multilateral organization and had been established for the purpose of dialogue for peace. However, all the organizations created in the intervening 135 years had failed to bring peace. Although religion was an issue that permeated many areas of society, it was removed from politics. However, the international community had realized that it could not hide from religion and that in order to ensure the well-being of humanity, dialogue must encompass politics and religion as well as politics and science.

He had been attending interfaith dialogue events since 1991, and despite the 372 meetings held, bloodshed was continuing. The IPU had wanted to remain outside religion, yet in its work on countering terrorism since 2015, it had discovered that religion was invoked in recruitment and killing. It was impossible to escape the impact of religion in society; human rights were being violated and people were being marginalized in the name of religion. The IPU Secretary General had been receptive to engaging in dialogue on religion and the Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue held in Marrakesh in June 2023 had been very successful. The discussion about religion and politics should focus on the rule of law and coexistence, and the important issue of equality.

**The Moderator** said that the discussion would build on the 2023 Marrakesh Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue. It would examine achievements and challenges in the parliamentary efforts to promote interfaith dialogue in light of the fundamental task of parliaments to uphold the rule of law and promote human rights for all without distinction.

Politicians and religious leaders had a crucial role to play in speaking out against disrespect and intolerance, not only of their own communities but also of any group subjected to attack. They should also make clear that violence could not be justified by prior provocation. Peer-to-peer learning and awareness-raising could promote respect and understanding across religions and beliefs and uphold the dignity of all.

In his most recent report on combating intolerance against persons based on religion or belief, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had quoted elements of the Marrakesh Communiqué and had referred to the Faith for Rights framework, the co-authors of which were on the panel. Commitment 10 of the 18 commitments on Faith for Rights, which had been formulated in response to the 2012 Rabat Plan of Action, was particularly pertinent, pledging not to give credence to exclusionary interpretations claiming religious grounds to instrumentalize religions and beliefs to incite hatred and violence.

He introduced the panellists.

**Mr. A. Abaddi** (Secretary General of the Mohammadia League of Religious Scholars), panellist, speaking via video link, said that the Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue held in Marrakesh in June 2023 had addressed a type of human rights known as “solidarity rights”, where rights and duties merged. Convictions, which were necessary to address the duties dimension, would not be built through political discourse alone but through deeper campaigning at the conscious and emotional levels. The current global trust disorder had generated an escalation into weaponry in the order of US\$ 17 trillion annually at a time when global cooperation was required, including to derive the benefits of artificial intelligence, while retaining rich global identities and cultures. The international community needed to learn once again how to live as an extended family. The global interfaith meeting in Rome in 2025 would seek a new level of joint action between politicians and parliamentarians on

the one hand, and politicians and religious leaders on the other. Functional and measurable indicators and criteria were required to facilitate evaluation and improvement of joint action. Continuous and sustainable cooperation was also needed. While the most difficult stage had been crossed the previous year, sound follow-up methods had to be developed and it was hoped that the discussion and work at the IPU would help to generate the views and conceptual dimensions to facilitate that task.

**Ms. N. Ghanea** (United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief), panellist, said that all delegations present were from jurisdictions that had obligations in terms of freedom of religion or belief stemming from the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. As every human rights instrument upheld the principle of non-discrimination, there could be no discrimination on any basis, including religion or belief. There was also particular protection for the universality of freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief for everybody, on an equal basis. It was not the State's prerogative to determine what constituted a religion and who did or did not have human rights.

Religion should not be weaponized or used to justify violations of human rights, humanity, dignity or equality. If parliamentarians became aware of violations of freedom of religion or belief in grassroots society, they could invite the special rapporteurs to intervene and request the State to respond to concerns as well as to encourage their constituents to use national channels to put an end to such violations. Parliamentarians could also request the Special Rapporteur to visit their countries to consider the situation with regard to freedom of religion or belief and share emerging challenges and difficulties in the report to the UN Human Rights Council to be addressed within a human rights framework.

Parliamentarians had a crucial role in ensuring non-discrimination, equality and a sense of belonging by all in their jurisdictions. Hatred was a scourge in all societies and failure to take seriously the absence of equality and a sense of belonging was likely to create further tension. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion was a tool for social understanding and peace and the foundation of a healthy society.

In terms of red flags to consider, she asked when was the last time and even if human rights committees in parliaments addressed freedom of religion or belief issues; whether diverse religions and beliefs were represented in parliaments; whether a representative from a religious minority had ever been invited to the opening of parliament; and whether parliaments were addressing elements of discrimination in laws, regulations and practices. Minorities and constituents should be involved in questions and discussions concerning them to ensure equality and non-discrimination. The parameters of hate speech laws should also be reviewed to ensure compliance with human rights.

**Mr. P.F. Casini** (Italy), panellist, said that efforts to foster interfaith dialogue and freedom of religion had always been a priority for parliaments. Dialogue was an essential tool for highlighting and reconciling differences. At the global level, however, there was a contradiction given the constant search for dialogue between the great religions on the one hand, and the fact that many conflicts were sectarian in nature on the other.

The leaders of the great religions had realized that dialogue was the only tool for building peaceful and inclusive societies. However, less than a year since the first Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue in Marrakesh, the international arena appeared even more divided and confrontational with religious persecution still causing bloodshed and threatening entire communities in many parts of the world. Religious freedom was the litmus test of all other rights.

The second Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue to be held in Rome in 2025 would provide an opportunity to reflect on the need for peace, and create an environment of hope and trust as a sign of reconciliation between peoples. The Italian Parliament recognized the importance of dialogue between institutions and religious communities and was proud to host the event. Such exchanges between diverse religions offered a means to combat intolerance, safeguard and strengthen fundamental rights and freedoms and promote more just and cohesive societies.

**Ms. M. Al-Shammari** (Arab Parliament), panellist, commended the IPU for addressing the relation between religion and politics. Interfaith dialogue was not simply a dialogue between religions but also a dialogue within the same faith between extremist and modern ideologies to build bridges. The issue of interfaith dialogue was addressed in numerous organizations and an absence of prejudice, common understanding and coordination were required. Societies were governed by the rule of law, and problems arose when interfaith dialogue was accorded greater importance than it should be.

The right to freedom of religion and faith was enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its importance should be reiterated. Any practices targeting individuals based on faith, such as the Qur'an burnings, Islamophobia and antisemitism, must be stopped.

Interfaith dialogue should be considered from a human rights perspective, namely the right to freedom of religion and need to protect the individual's rights. Human rights legislation should be renewed, and parliamentarians should encourage their governments to reconsider current texts and ensure alignment with developments at the international and regional levels. The IPU had an important role in promoting an interfaith dialogue and should be proud of its efforts.

She drew attention to initiatives in her country to promote an open dialogue with Islamic denominations. The real goal of an interfaith dialogue lay not in the dialogue itself but in finding a means of coexistence for societies, communities and States. A clear definition of coexistence and the development of relevant legislation were required, and she concluded by noting the work of the King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence in Bahrain.

**Ms. S. Markiewicz** (Interfaith Consultant, IPU), panellist, having recalled that over 100 States included the word "God" in their constitutional texts and that four out of five people worldwide had a religious affiliation, said that parliamentarians needed to be aware of the importance of religion. Despite their generally different mandates, parliaments and religions could be allies for common causes and come together to address shared challenges. The IPU had been asked to look into the issue of promoting interfaith dialogue. It had produced the first part of a parliamentary report on religion and belief, exploring the institutional engagement of parliaments with different aspects of religion and belief. The second part of the report was being prepared and would take a more thematic approach, focusing on issues such as hatred based on religion or belief. Although women were generally not religious leaders, an effort had been made by the IPU to encourage gender parity in the panels at the first Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue in Marrakesh in June 2023. The second such conference would be held in Rome in 2025. The IPU also sought to engage meaningfully with the global community that could inform parliaments of the role of religion and beliefs.

**Mr. M. Omar** (Senior Adviser to the IPU Secretary General) said that the right to believe was a strong right that should be realized. Certain groups appeared to be starting to lose trust in human rights because of double standards being applied. However, the IPU considered that the existing framework, which had been put in place some time ago, provided a useful foundation.

### Interactive debate

**Ms. M.-T. Pictet-Althann** (Sovereign Order of Malta) said that, in order to de-escalate tensions, parliamentarians and religious leaders must work together to promote faith literacy and combat extremism through interfaith dialogue, thus building a culture of understanding and peace. She asked what outcome could be expected from the second parliamentary conference on interfaith dialogue to be held in Rome in 2025, and how the promotion of interfaith dialogue by parliamentarians could be more effective in addressing and combating religious persecution.

**Mr. A.I. Al Mannai** (Executive Director, King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence) said that, while there had been considerable activity in interfaith dialogue and extremely useful initiatives to build bridges, including between Islamic sects, faith and belief played a part of a much larger ecosystem that needed to work together to achieve a specific goal. Legislators, government officials and the judiciary needed to cooperate to promote the implementation of the Marrakesh Communiqué and the Manama Declaration. Peoples' rights to religion, freedom of speech and dignity must be preserved in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

**Ms. S. Haddad** (Representative of the Bahá'í International Community's United Nations Office in Geneva) said that interfaith dialogue would have no benefit if it did not raise awareness and lead to action on implementation of the rule of law and on non-discrimination on the basis of citizenship. In order to provide the foundation for a peaceful and inclusive society, all citizens, irrespective of gender, ethnicity and religion, needed to be treated equally before the law. Furthermore, when assessing their constitutions and human rights strategies, countries should use terminology that did not create discrimination. She asked whether the results of the Parliamentary Conference in Marrakesh had resulted in the rule of law being implemented at a national level and how interfaith dialogue could be more focused and coordinated among organizations and parliamentarians.

**Ms. L. Gumerova** (Russian Federation) thanked parliamentarians for their words of support and condolences to the families of the victims of the heinous terrorist attack in Moscow.

She agreed that an interfaith dialogue was not sufficient; tangible results were needed and parliamentarians needed to improve national legislation. Under the recently amended Constitution of the Russian Federation, there was no official religion and all religious organizations were considered equal under the law. The Presidential Council for Cooperation with Religious Associations provided a platform for representatives of various religions to talk directly with the President. She drew attention to several interfaith and inter-ethnic bodies established in her country to enable all traditional religions to contribute to decision-making processes.

**Mr. E. Allahverdiyev** (Azerbaijan) said that his country had rich multicultural traditions and did not discriminate on the basis of nationality or religion. Outlining the religious makeup of Azerbaijan, he said that all ethnic groups were equally represented in public administration and civil society, and no restrictions were placed on their participation in elections. The Constitution provided for the rights and freedoms of all irrespective of ethnicity, race, religion and language. Religious tolerance and coexistence of different ethnic groups in peace and security were of great importance for peaceful and inclusive societies. With its religious, national and cultural diversity, Azerbaijan could serve as a model for the world and stood ready to share its experience.

**Ms. E. Azad** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the efforts of religious leaders were required to bring sustainable peace to the world. The Constitution of her country recognized various religions, including Judaism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism, all of which were represented in the national Parliament. The development and promotion of religious ideologies could help to reduce extremism and tackle terrorism by promoting greater awareness and tolerance of the beliefs of others. Crimes, such as the burning of the Qur'an in certain countries, the destruction of Christian and Muslim holy sites in the State of Palestine and the actions of the Zionist regime against the Muslim population, had no roots in humanity. The elected representatives of participating delegations should condemn such crimes and demand that their perpetrators and supporters were brought to trial.

**Mr. A.K. Mittal** (India) said that interfaith dialogue aimed to build a society of respect and tolerance, create mutual acceptance among the followers of different religions and serve as a guide for peaceful coexistence. Noting that equality and freedom of religion and belief were fundamental human rights enshrined in international law, he said that his country, which had given birth to several world religions, had a long and rich history of interfaith harmony. The six minority communities recognized by the Constitution were accorded special support under various government schemes. Countries should learn from the experience of others and engage in meaningful dialogue to strive towards a more inclusive and just world in which the rights and dignity of every individual were protected and respected.

**Ms. K. Slassi** (Morocco) said that, as a country of multiple civilizations, religions and cultures, Morocco had been proud to host the Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue in June 2023. While intrafaith dialogue would succeed only by ignoring differences, interfaith dialogue had to recognize and acknowledge differences. Common ground between all religions should be found in the form of equality, justice, freedom and the ability to coexist. Parliamentarians should encourage their governments to adopt educational systems that promoted respect, analytical thinking and acceptance of others.

**Mr. A. Suwanmongkol** (Thailand), noting the religious diversity in the Thai Parliament, said that the Constitution of Thailand provided for the fundamental freedom to worship for all citizens and prohibited unjust discrimination based on religious identity or belief. As a parliamentarian in a multi-faith constituency, he recognized the importance of interfaith dialogue in building a peaceful society. Different faiths should not be an obstacle to mutual respect and the recognition of a shared humanity with a common objective of bringing peace to society.

**Mr. T. Karikoga** (Zimbabwe) said that parliaments were key players in promoting the peaceful coexistence of peoples of different faiths, in particular by passing legislation to guarantee freedom of religion or belief, promoting equal rights for all religious communities, countering hate speech and promoting a culture of tolerance and understanding. However, hate speech and discrimination from stereotypical attitudes that fuelled religious biases remained a challenge to efforts to promote peaceful coexistence, tolerance and dialogue. Parliamentarians played a vital role in de-escalating tensions rooted in perceived differences in religion and beliefs.

**Ms. F. Oncu** (Türkiye) said that the numerous attacks in various parts of the world against the Qur'an demonstrated the alarming level of hatred towards Islam. Such attacks, which targeted and humiliated Muslims, should not be tolerated. She asked what steps needed to be taken by national parliaments to combat Islamophobia.

**Ms. F. Khamees** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that her country had had a long history of peaceful coexistence among different faiths, but extremism had taken hold among communities and religion had been used as a pretext for the conflict in the country. The conflict had, however, not achieved its purpose of dividing the Syrian Arab Republic into smaller States. Religions should promote love, tolerance and acceptance and not be used to fuel conflict. Parliamentarians should create legislation to ensure coexistence among different faiths.

**Ms. S. Mwamba** (Zambia) said that parliamentarians and religious leaders had much in common and served the same people. Parliamentarians could contribute by bringing people of different faiths together for dialogue to break down barriers, challenge misconceptions and prejudices, and foster empathy and understanding. Interfaith dialogue highlighted the core values shared by many religions and could serve as a foundation for cooperation and community building, foster a shared sense of responsibility and belonging and pave the way for more peaceful and inclusive societies.

**Mr. R. Callus** (Malta) said that the international community and politicians needed to prepare themselves to address new challenges associated with artificial intelligence, including the possibility of videos purporting to be from religious leaders inciting conflict. The parliamentary conference in Rome should discuss the challenges that artificial intelligence would pose to the interfaith dialogue. Politicians had a responsibility not to let radicalism grow by failing to mention the issue publicly.

**Ms. H. Fayez** (Bahrain) said that the common values shared by the main faiths could be used to facilitate a dialogue and build societies based on tolerance and peace. Legislators and religious leaders had a shared responsibility towards communities. Interfaith dialogue was very important in promoting solidarity and cooperation to address challenges. Her country was considered a model for peaceful coexistence between different cultures and religions, and she described some of the initiatives it had undertaken to promote tolerance and openness.

**Ms. H. Alhelaissi** (Saudi Arabia) said that meetings on interfaith dialogue, while an excellent initiative, would be futile if they did not yield concrete outcomes. There was a need to identify the reasons behind the increase in religious intolerance, hate crimes and violence. The shift from a world of multipolarity to a more unipolar one was dangerous. Ignorance towards different faiths and cultures must be remedied through education. Children should grow up in an environment that promoted tolerance and respect.

**Mr. H.A. Al-Ahmar** (Yemen) said that it was important for such meetings to be realistic and for participants to be honest about the situation in their countries. He agreed that steps should be taken to address the increase in Islamophobia throughout the world. Different beliefs and faiths must be respected.

**Mr. P.F. Casini** (Italy), panellist, said that the debate had shown a common will to fight against intolerance. However, it had also highlighted a contradiction: speakers had indicated that freedom of religion was ensured in their countries, yet intolerance persisted in the world. The common right to practice all religions had to be guaranteed, and he hoped that the second parliamentary conference on interfaith dialogue in Rome in 2025 would adopt tangible decisions.

**Ms. M. Al-Shammari** (Arab Parliament), panellist, thanked the parliamentarians for their openness. Once human rights terminology and laws had been updated, legislators in all countries of the world had a responsibility to ensure that human rights concepts and terminologies were included across the entire school curriculum.

**Ms. N. Ghanea** (United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief), panellist, agreed that the role of parliamentarians was to break down barriers, challenge misunderstanding and focus on core values. While it was important to acknowledge and accept differences, there were always common values and shared understanding on which to build. While parliamentarians might

consider that the freedom of religion or belief was robust in their countries, she urged them to consider the actual impact of their constitutions, not simply the language, and the fate of those escaping religious persecution. Parliamentarians must not exploit religion and build their political careers by taking advantage of religious hatred and discrimination. She and many others continued to condemn acts of violence and desecration of the Qur'an. Education and prevention should begin at an early age since it was much more important than criminalization. In order to counteract religious persecution, parliamentarians should widen participation in their parliaments, connect the grassroots to the national and international arenas, and ensure that parliamentary committees met with disenfranchised minorities when visiting other countries.

**Mr. M. Omar** (Senior Adviser to the IPU Secretary General), panellist, alluding to the situation facing the Bahá'is, called for an end to hypocrisy and a focus on commonalities rather than on differences. Parliamentarians had more freedom to talk than diplomats and should talk for humanity.

*The event ended at 16:25.*



## Panel discussion

### *Protecting minority rights: Towards comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation*

TUESDAY, 26 MARCH 2024

(Morning)

*The event was called to order at 11:45 with Ms. Y.A. Braendle-Amolo (Zoi Environment Network) as Moderator.*

**The Moderator** said that, in December 2023, the world marked the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its proclamation that all humans were born free and equal in dignity and rights. The Declaration provided that human rights must be afforded to all peoples without discrimination and that everyone was equal before the law and entitled to equal protection. Yet, it was estimated that more than half of the countries in the world still did not have laws that guaranteed effective protection from all forms of discrimination.

In December 2022, the United Nations had published, for the first time, a clear, comprehensive and authoritative guide for States on the laws they must pass to meet all their obligations on equality and non-discrimination. The guide entitled *Protecting Minority Rights: A Practical Guide to Developing Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Legislation* had been put together by the UN Human Rights Office and the Equal Rights Trust. It recalled the obligation under international law for all States to enact and implement comprehensive anti-discrimination and equality laws and provided clear instructions on the necessary elements of those laws. On Human Rights Day 2022, a group of more than 30 independent human rights experts had urged States to use the practical guide as a catalyst to action. Similarly, on Human Rights Day 2023, 10 national equality organizations and coalitions from across the globe had issued a call for a decade of action on equality and non-discrimination.

In the last two decades, there had been growing global consensus on the need for comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation. Comprehensive equality laws had been adopted in an increasing number of States, including Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Republic of Moldova, South Africa, and the United Kingdom, and were being developed in others, with laws pending adoption in 10 parliaments globally.

The panel discussion would explore the role of parliaments and parliamentarians in developing, enacting and implementing comprehensive anti-discrimination laws. The discussion would include voices from countries that had successfully undertaken equality law reforms as well as from those where work in that regard was underway. The perspectives of the authors of the practical guide would also be presented in relation to the work being done to support governments, parliaments and equality activists in bringing national legal frameworks into line with international law. The discussion had four objectives: (1) to raise parliamentary awareness of the need for and the essential components of comprehensive anti-discrimination laws; (2) to share good practices on parliamentary processes for adopting comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and the impacts of adopting such laws; (3) to discuss common challenges and problems in legislating in those areas and enhance understanding of potential situations; and (4) to discuss the role of the IPU in possible follow-up activities to support progress in the area. She introduced the first two panellists, Mr. J. Fitzgerald (Director, Equal Rights Trust) and Mr. C. Cahn (Human Rights Officer, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)), who were the authors of the practical guide.

**Mr. J. Fitzgerald** (Director, Equal Rights Trust), panellist, said that the adoption of comprehensive anti-discrimination laws was essential to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of participation. It was also at the centre of the work of the Equal Rights Trust, which focused on supporting national actors, equality activists, parliamentarians and human rights institutions to develop, enact, implement and enforce comprehensive anti-discrimination. While the law was never, on its own, a sufficient condition for eliminating inequality, it was an absolutely necessary precondition and foundation for creating an equal world. There was a critical need to recognize that the adoption of comprehensive anti-discrimination laws was necessary if States were to meet their obligations under international law and achieve the ambition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to leave no one behind.

In January 2020, he had travelled to Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan, together with Mr. Cahn from the OHCHR, to help the Government respond to recommendations made by the Universal Periodic Review to develop and enact comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation. Three broad questions had surfaced in meetings with the Government of Kyrgyzstan. First, the Government did not understand why comprehensive anti-discrimination laws were necessary when it already had a Constitution which prohibited discrimination on various grounds as well as specific legislation providing for the equal rights of women, the protection of persons with disabilities and non-discrimination in the workplace. Second, it was unclear to the Government under what international treaty the obligation to enact comprehensive anti-discrimination law existed. Third, there was little understanding of comprehensive anti-discrimination itself, its essential features and how it compared to specific anti-discrimination laws and other kinds of laws altogether.

It had been at that point that the Equal Rights Trust and the OHCHR had decided to jointly develop guidance on the subject of comprehensive anti-discrimination law. The idea had been to fuse the power and influence of the UN as a convening body with huge international reach with the expertise and contacts of the Equal Rights Trust. At the time, it had been thought that the project would take about a year and would result in a guide of 50 to 100 pages. In the end, the process had taken three years and had resulted in a guide of more than 200 pages with close to 1,000 footnotes referencing dozens of different sources of international, regional and national law.

Acknowledging the three core questions that had arisen in Bishkek, broadly speaking the practical guide had three aims: (1) to clarify and underline that compliance with international law in the area in question necessitated the adoption of dedicated comprehensive anti-discrimination law; (2) to provide detailed and specific guidance on the necessary content of those laws, if they were to comply with international law and be both comprehensive and effective in practice; and (3) to synthesize and systematize international legal standards on equality and non-discrimination, recognizing the diversity of terms, practice and interpretations within and between international and regional systems. The idea was to create a guide that was clear for the user but founded on existing principles and interpretations of international law.

The right to non-discrimination was the only human right that featured in every single one of the UN human rights conventions and had therefore been interpreted in slightly different ways by different bodies. It was essential to harmonize those interpretations and give States one clear set of guidance. If States enacted laws in compliance with the practical guide, they would then be in compliance with non-discrimination obligations under the full panoply of UN and regional human rights instruments. The guide was a catalyst to action, a call for reform, a roadmap for those involved in the process of reform and an encyclopaedia bringing together all the different standards and interpretations.

The authors of the practical guide had wanted the development process to be as inclusive and collaborative as possible, drawing together the best experience and expertise available within the UN, civil society, academia, the legal profession and governments from around the world. The process had focused, on the one hand, on very extensive legal research, and on the other hand, on intense, broad and repeated consultation.

The legal research had consisted of an exhaustive examination of international legal standards alongside an examination of regional standards and national laws in more than 40 different countries. Researchers had looked at the interpretation of laws by treaty bodies and courts and the development of legal principles.

The consultations had begun with the establishment of an advisory committee of 12 experts drawn from different regions of the world, including former and current UN Special Rapporteurs, members of the judiciary, practicing lawyers, representatives of independent equality bodies and academic legal experts. The committee had advised and steered the project from its inception all the way through to the final review. The next step had been to consult more widely, issuing a call for evidence, including to civil society, through the OHCHR and the Equal Rights Trust. Another set of global consultations had then taken place looking at different complex and contentious issues within the field. Lastly, as the drafts of the guide itself had been developed, they had been shared with an ever-growing group of independent experts from within the UN system, international civil society and academia. Over a series of three to four evolving iterations of the guide, more than 50 different independent experts working with and on behalf of all marginalized communities in every corner of the globe had been consulted.

The authors had decided to follow the process of deep legal research matched with extensive global consultation to address the three questions raised in Bishkek in the most comprehensive, clear and definitive way possible. It was his hope that the guide was both encyclopaedic in nature and practical and user-friendly.

*A video about the necessity of adopting non-discrimination and equality laws was played.*

**Mr. C. Cahn** (Human Rights Officer, OHCHR), panellist, accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that the practical guide was organized into six parts: (1) State obligations to enact comprehensive anti-discrimination law; (2) content of comprehensive anti-discrimination law; (3) protecting minority rights; (4) discriminatory violence and hate crime; (5) discrimination and expression; and (6) promoting diversity and equality.

Part one on State obligations to enact comprehensive anti-discrimination law addressed the question of why anti-discrimination laws were necessary for a State to meet its human rights obligations, demonstrating that without a good legal system banning discrimination, people could not access remedy. Part two on the content of comprehensive anti-discrimination law was where the mechanical machinery of the laws themselves was mapped out – a section that comprised half of the guide. The other four parts looked at how anti-discrimination laws related to other areas of human rights law, namely minority rights, the tipping of the scales from unequal treatment to violence, the line between freedom of expression and discrimination, including the issue of hate speech, and, lastly, obligations to promote equality and diversity.

He drew attention to part two on the content of comprehensive anti-discrimination law which had a number of subsections. One subsection was called *Rights to Equality and Non-Discrimination*, which described the personal and material scope of the right to non-discrimination as well as the forms of discrimination or prohibited conduct that existed. “Personal scope” related to the grounds on which discrimination was banned under international law. There were 37 such grounds, including race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and age. “Material scope” related to the areas of life covered by anti-discrimination laws, such as employment, housing, health care, justice, participation and voting.

“Prohibited conduct” were acts that constituted discrimination. Setting out prohibited conduct was one of the most important functions of anti-discrimination laws as it domesticated abstract and frequently polarizing discussions about discrimination into defined legal questions. Acts of discrimination could be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination occurred when someone with a specific characteristic was treated less favourably than others. Indirect discrimination occurred when a supposedly neutral rule or policy had a disparate impact on a particular group. For example, Canada had been forced to change a rule that required Canadian Mounted Police officers to wear a hat because it had been inadvertently discriminating against Sikhs who wore turbans for religious reasons. An additional five forms of discrimination were mapped out in the practical guide, including ground-based harassment and victimization. An example of ground-based harassment was telling an unwanted joke about the colour of a colleague’s skin while victimization related to an act of revenge against someone for complaining about discrimination.

Another subsection of part two was *Remedy*, referring to the idea of providing effective sanctions for discrimination. Many countries had made discrimination a crime under law, which was important in demonstrating a zero-tolerance approach to the problem. However, discrimination was often hard to prove to meet a criminal law standard and very few cases had been successfully adjudicated against discriminators. As such, discrimination had become an issue of civil and administrative law rather than criminal law and was more likely to result in fines rather than prison service. In addition to sanctions awarding damages to victims, there were also societal remedies, such as a public apology.

In general, efforts had been made to make the practical guide accessible. There was an executive summary of the entire publication as well as summaries of each section. Illustrative boxes, which contained key information, including examples from national practice, jurisprudence and specific issues in anti-discrimination law, had also been incorporated.

Comprehensive anti-discrimination law appealed to States for a number of reasons. Firstly, it absolutely served people. For instance, in Belgium, which had adopted its law in 1995, as many as 18,000 people per year were bringing forward cases. Secondly, by adopting comprehensive anti-discrimination laws, States were fulfilling their human rights obligations under each of the nine core UN human rights treaties, all of which covered the right to non-discrimination, thus making their work much more efficient. Overall, there was a consensus in favour of comprehensive anti-discrimination law around the world and a movement towards adopting such laws.

The practical guide was being translated into different languages, including Russian, Portuguese, Japanese, Korean, Arabic, French, Spanish and Chinese. He was available to engage with parliamentarians for deeper discussions.

**The Moderator** introduced the next panellist, Mr. N. Kwankwa (South Africa), founder of the African Parliamentarians Association for Human Rights (AfriPAHR), an organization which sought to foster collective leadership for the realization of the rights of the disadvantaged throughout Africa.

Drawing attention to the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4, which had been adopted by the South African Parliament in 2000 and was widely regarded as one of the most expansive comprehensive anti-discrimination laws in the world, she asked Mr. Kwankwa to clarify what prompted his Parliament to adopt the law.

**Mr. N. Kwankwa** (South Africa), founder of AfriPAHR, panellist, said that the adoption of the law had to do with South Africa's very painful and divided past of colonialism and apartheid. The leaders of the country's struggle for freedom, including Nelson Mandela, had fought for certain values, such as the eradication of all forms of discrimination and oppression. During the transition to democracy, it had become clear that those values needed to be realized through legislation seeking to transform South Africa as a country. The process to develop that legislation had begun in 1994 and had resulted in the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 adopted in 2000.

**The Moderator** asked what impact the law had had on South African society in terms of reducing discrimination.

**Mr. N. Kwankwa** (South Africa), founder of AfriPAHR, panellist, said that the fight to eradicate discrimination was a work in progress and vigilance was required even with legislation and enforcement mechanisms in place. The institutions supporting constitutional democracy under the Constitution of South Africa, such as the Commission for Gender Equality and the Human Rights Commission, did what was expected of them when complaints were raised. The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 sought to give effect to Chapter 2 of the Constitution which contained the Bill of Rights.

**A delegate from India** said that a speaker in the video played by Mr. Fitzgerald had claimed that India did not have a single civil law that addressed equality and discrimination – a claim that was not entirely accurate. Indeed, the Constitution of India provided for a complete equality code. Examples of such provisions were article 14 which protected equality, article 16 which prohibited discrimination in public employment and article 25 which protected all minority rights, including religious minority rights. The Constitution also contained sections on direct and indirect discrimination, remedies and adjudication.

The speaker in the video had referred to the Equality (Prohibition of Discrimination) Bill 2021 which sought to prohibit discrimination in India on the basis of 24 protected characteristics, such as caste, religion and gender. The Bill was not before the Parliament and might therefore be a private bill or a bill being developed by an activist group. However, there was no need for such a bill since the Constitution of India already provided protection against discrimination and was possibly even more comprehensive than the bill itself.

**Mr. N. Kwankwa** (South Africa), founder of AfriPAHR, panellist, said that different systems worked in different contexts with no one-size-fits-all approach. However, in his experience, national constitutions tended to capture the principle but not the detail. The detail required to make the principle a reality was in the supporting legislation. Often, provisions aiming to protect minority rights were captured in law, especially in constitutions and legislation, but were not implemented in practice. In fact, many implementing regulations contradicted the letter and the spirit of the legislation itself. Members of parliament must monitor the implementation of equality and non-discrimination laws and make proposals to keep moving forward.

The practical guide was an opportunity for countries, including South Africa, to review their legislation, identify gaps and ensure compliance with their international obligations on equality and non-discrimination. While measures to combat discrimination should have been taken earlier, the publication of the practical guide represented progress to be celebrated and capitalized upon.

**Ms. M. Guerra Castillo** (Mexico) said that Mexico had achieved gender parity in both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate with men and women each representing 50% of members. After a long fight and many debates along the way, gender quotas had been introduced in 2014 which had subsequently led to complete parity.

Noting that everybody should have the right to representation, she pointed out that the Chamber of Deputies was very diverse in its composition with 65 members from minority groups, including 36 indigenous members, a number of members of Afro-Mexican descent, 11 migrant members, 8 members with disabilities and 4 members from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) community. The Mexican Parliament had advanced significantly thanks to the participation of the above minority groups, which had been very active in Parliament, bringing unique perspectives and revolutionizing the laws and policies in place.

It was not enough to enshrine the principle of non-discrimination in a constitution. The principle must be implemented across all sectors of society – a task that could be done with the support of minority groups. Affirmative action must be taken to give minority groups access to power. It was the only way to bring true transformation.

**Mr. J. Hill** (Australia) said that the representation of women in the Australian Government currently stood at 53% which had taken 20 to 30 years to achieve. Australia was a very diverse country whose population came from more than 150 countries, spoke more than 200 languages and practiced more than 100 different faiths.

The panellists should clarify how to reconcile competing rights and protections within a comprehensive anti-discrimination law. Australia had failed for 10 to 15 years to pass a law giving national protection from religious discrimination although such laws did already exist at the State level. It had come to light that a national law could be used as either a sword or a shield. The law, if a shield, would allow people to freely practice their religion but had the potential to become a sword that afforded people extra rights to discriminate. For example, some religious institutions, if allowed to practice their faith, might refuse to employ people who were divorced. Two different sets of rights were at odds in that situation.

**The Moderator** said that she envied Australia for being at a level of competing rights since many rights were still lacking in her country, Switzerland.

**Mr. C. Cahn** (Human Rights Officer, OHCHR), panellist, said that the questions described by the delegate from Australia were extremely granular and did not have an absolute answer. The answers would be in the details of the case. As a result, it was better to have an adjudicator, rather than a parliament, dealing with such questions, which was another reason why comprehensive anti-discrimination laws were needed.

**The Moderator** drew attention to a case of racial profiling in Switzerland, namely that of Mohamed Wa Baile, a black Swiss citizen. Mr. Wa Baile had been subjected to an identity check on the way to work in Zurich but had refused to identify himself since he had not been given a reason why the identity check was taking place. Although Mr. Wa Baile had won his case in court, which had recognized that his rights had indeed been violated, the case had not been judged as an instance of racial profiling. Nine years later, the case had been taken to the European Court of Human Rights, which had ruled against the initial judgment claiming that the incident was in fact a case of racial profiling. It was one of the few cases of racial profiling in Switzerland that had had a positive result. The reason why it was so difficult to win such cases or have them be named for what they truly were was because Switzerland did not have a comprehensive anti-discrimination law.

**Mr. J. Fitzgerald** (Director, Equal Rights Trust), panellist, said that the issues raised were another reason why dedicated comprehensive anti-discrimination law was necessary. Responding to the delegate from India, he said that the constitution set down principles, legislation set down how those principles were applied, and the courts interpreted those principles. Legislation could bridge the gap between the constitutional principle and the application by the courts.

There would unavoidably be difficult questions of balancing rights. Freedom of religion could indeed clash with other rights, such as women's rights and the right to non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. The only way to deal with those issues was on a case by case basis by the courts. However, the courts needed clear guidelines. The practical guide set out an appropriate test for justification of otherwise discriminatory conduct.

**A delegate from Norway** said that Norway had conducted a major review of its anti-discrimination legislation in 2017 and passed a new equality and anti-discrimination act in 2018, which strengthened the independent tribunal so that cases did not have to go through the court system. Given the ever-changing context, the panellists should clarify what kinds of systems or instruments should be put in place to enable parliamentarians to keep their equality and anti-discrimination legislation up-to-date.

**The Moderator**, speaking in her capacity as panellist, said that Switzerland had put together a group of lawyers, lobbyists, civil rights activists and representatives of multinational organizations to review the country's anti-discrimination law, which was currently not comprehensive. The group was working on putting together a holistic legal framework to protect against all forms of discrimination as well as a set of implementation and enforcement instruments. It was currently in the process of writing the text and would present it to parliamentarians for adoption once finished.

Current laws in Switzerland did not provide sufficient protection against discrimination. It was true that article 8.2 of the Constitution provided a broad prohibition of discrimination with a non-exhaustive list of dimensions, but it was largely undisputed that the prohibition could only be effective in implementation and enforcement under certain conditions, namely through good legal provisions. There were, however, gaps, weaknesses and deficiencies in substantive law in Switzerland and the new legal framework was an opportunity to remedy those shortcomings. The legal framework would cover a plethora of issues, including scope of discrimination, rights to non-discrimination and representation.

She introduced the final panellist, Ms. S.S. Chaudhury (Bangladesh) who would present the comprehensive anti-discrimination bill currently being drafted in Bangladesh. If enacted, Bangladesh would become the first country in South Asia to have adopted such comprehensive equality legislation.

**Ms. S.S. Chaudhury** (Bangladesh), panellist, said that the Constitution of Bangladesh contained a very strong framework against discrimination and inequality. Under article 27, all citizens were equal before the law and entitled to equal protection. Under article 28, the State must not discriminate against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. Under article 31, every citizen had the inalienable right to enjoy protection of law and to be treated in accordance with law. The preamble of the Constitution clearly stated that the overall aim of the State was to build a society free from exploitation and discrimination where equality, rule of law, fundamental freedoms, human rights and justice would be secured for all. The rights of minorities were also protected under the Constitution in line with the principles of cultural and religious pluralism and diversity.

Moreover, Bangladesh was in the process of drafting a separate comprehensive anti-discrimination law. The question had come up as to why a separate law was necessary given that the Constitution itself provided a strong framework against discrimination and that enforcement mechanisms were also in place by way of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court, as per article 102 of the Constitution. The reason the law was needed was to translate the broader concepts and rights outlined in the Constitution into detailed, specific and actionable steps. Anti-discrimination law helped citizens claim their right to equality and equal protection of law, as guaranteed under the Constitution.

It was reiterated in the draft law that anti-discrimination law helped to stop discrimination in all areas of life, whether, economic, social or political, eradicate poverty and inequality, bring about harmony and unity in diversity, and enhance tolerance. She called on delegates to strengthen their efforts towards creating a more equal world.

**The Moderator** asked Ms. Chaudhury to clarify the prospects of Bangladesh's comprehensive anti-discrimination law.

**Ms. S.S. Chaudhury** (Bangladesh), panellist, said that the law was currently being drafted and was expected to come to Parliament soon. Once in Parliament, it would go to the relevant standing committee to be scrutinized, studied and discussed. A report would then be sent to Parliament and parliamentarians would proceed to enact the law.

A number of questions about the law would need to be resolved in Parliament. Firstly, in light of the "comprehensive" nature of the law, parliamentarians would be required to consider whether all the different forms of discrimination could be exhausted in one piece of legislation. Secondly, the question of penalty provisions was also likely to come up and whether not having them would make the law less enforceable or effective. Lastly, further discussion may be needed as to why the law did not address the discrimination faced by women in their personal lives.

**A delegate from Bangladesh** said that Ms. Chaudhury was playing a very important role in advancing the rights of women and minorities in Bangladesh and had recently been elected Speaker of Parliament for the fourth time.

**Mr. C. Cahn** (Human Rights Officer, OHCHR), panellist, said that he was at the disposal of parliamentarians and hoped that the discussions would continue.

**Mr. J. Fitzgerald** (Director, Equal Rights Trust), panellist, said that the practical guide was not for the authors but for legislators to use in the adoption of laws. He left the door open for further discussions and support.

*The event ended at 13:30.*

## Panel discussion

### *Climate change and conflict: How can parliaments ensure health during times of crises?*

Tuesday, 26 March 2024

(Afternoon)

*The event was called to order at 14:30 with Mr. F. Ndugulile (United Republic of Tanzania) as the Moderator.*

**The Moderator** said that the negative social and economic impacts of climate shocks, diminishing natural resources and insecurities undermined the health and well-being of those living in many countries affected by climate change and conflict. Better health for all would not be possible without addressing climate change in conflict situations. He hoped that the discussion would help to identify strategies and opportunities to tackle climate change, conflict and health in a more integrated way.

**Ms. E. Villalobos Prats** (Capacity Building and Country Support Lead, Climate Change and Health Unit, World Health Organization (WHO)), panellist, said that the WHO was working to support countries in understanding and addressing the wide range of health impacts from climate change, including on health-care systems, functions and facilities. It was also trying to influence the decisions of other sectors responsible for most of the greenhouse gas emissions.

The health impacts of climate change were not only direct, such as those from extreme weather events, but were also mediated through changes, including in the availability of water, the quality of air and food, and changes in the distribution and ecology of vectors. Those not covered by a social protection system, such as displaced persons and those working in informal sectors would also likely have different health outcomes.

The WHO had been working in the area of climate change for over 30 years. In order to assist countries, it had developed six building blocks of consistency, including on leadership and governance and on ensuring a sufficient and skilled health workforce. It was encouraging countries to integrate climate and weather information within existing surveillance systems to achieve a better understanding of the hazards posed by climate variability. The WHO was also supporting countries in developing a research agenda and in ensuring better preparedness for the potential impacts of climate change, including by predicting outbreaks of infectious diseases. Countries with weak health systems were less likely to be prepared for an increased disease burden as a result of changes in temperature, humidity and rainfall. The WHO was working with countries on accessing funding support.

Deleterious effects on human health had been defined as an adverse effect of climate change in the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and under Article 4.1 (f), Parties committed to take into account the public health implications of their climate change adaptation and mitigation policies. The WHO was trying to push for Parties to report on progress made in that regard as part of their commitments under the Convention.

The WHO was promoting the health argument to encourage increased ambition in climate discussions and the quantification of health co-benefits of climate action since the economic benefits of human health, if factored into the cost of mitigation, were estimated to be greater than the anticipated investment in climate change.

It was important to build on commitments made by countries. The last three sessions of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP) had culminated in the COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health, which had now been endorsed by 149 countries. In order to ensure that priorities were translated into action, the United Kingdom, together with the WHO, had established the Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health.

**Dr. L. Gogvadze** (Lead for health climate, migration and risk communication, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)), panellist, said that disasters or conflict situations exacerbated by climate change often lacked attention and he was pleased that the matter had been highlighted at COP28. More organizations were now paying greater attention to how communities could become more resilient to climate change and better prepared for climate-related disasters.

People in conflict situations were already among the most vulnerable, ill-prepared for environmental challenges and required support. Stakeholders had to come together at the community, system and policy levels. Evidence and data were needed, and it would take time to change perceptions, behaviours and policies.

The IFRC, together with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), had developed the Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations that provided guidance for the humanitarian sector. The IFRC's 16 million community volunteers provided an early warning network. The identification of potentially vulnerable groups that could be more affected by crisis or disasters would ensure prompt action when required.

There was a collective obligation to ensure equitable access to services before, during and after a disaster. Front-line workers were key in building climate-resilient community health systems. Actions of all stakeholders during public health emergencies should be aligned with laws, policies and plans, and strategies and plans should be reviewed and updated in coordination with various partners.

**Ms. H. Muheed** (Youth Advocacy Network, Sri Lanka; Adolescent and Youth Constituency Secretary, Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)), panellist, speaking via video link, said that the climate crisis was one of the single biggest health threats facing humanity. It disproportionately affected women, children and adolescents, and had reversed progress in global health over the previous five decades and increased inequality. In the current context, those most impacted by climate change contributed the least to it. Communities facing marginalization and those living in humanitarian and fragile settings were highly vulnerable to health risks from climate change, and age and gender also played an important role.

There was a growing body of evidence regarding the strong links between climate and conflict in developing countries. Changes in temperature and precipitation could increase the likelihood of conflict and violence. She noted that the civil war in the Syrian Arab Republic had been preceded by an extraordinary drought that had caused 75% of farms to fail and had triggered a wave of migrants searching for jobs in urban areas, leading to instability in the country. The instability caused by the famine in South Sudan had also threatened to fuel conflict.

Young people would continue to inherit the burden of climate change, which threatened all areas of adolescent well-being. Almost every young person in the world was exposed to at least one climate and environmental hazard. In her own country, Sri Lanka, over 85% of young people lived in rural areas and worked in climate dependent industries disproportionately impacted by climate-related consequences. Some 66% of young people in the country viewed climate change as the most significant future challenge. Over half of the respondents in a recent survey had cited uncertainty and high risk as reasons for not choosing agriculture as a primary livelihood. However, youth participation in climate response in the country was limited because of institutional and educational barriers. Awareness of the causes and consequences of climate change among Sri Lankan youth was alarmingly low, with over 60% of persons aged between 15 and 24 surveyed in 2021 unable to adequately explain the causes and consequences of climate change and global warming. The worrying lack of policy measures designed to involve young people curbed youth engagement in climate projects, action and governance.

Climate change was not gender neutral. Women and girls were more likely than men to be killed during climate-related natural disasters, as had been the case in the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. The changing climate also affected maternal and newborn health, and extreme weather events disrupted access to essential sexual and reproductive health services.

Of 119 nationally determined contributions reviewed in 2020, only 30 countries had made reference to sexual and reproductive health and rights. Very few countries had articulated the clear need for health systems strengthening or transformative action in their national climate plans. Furthermore, specific regional differences had been identified in the way in which indices acknowledged the importance of sexual and reproductive health-related issues in national climate policies.

The PMNCH had coordinated the Global Forum for Adolescents in 2023, which had demanded a recognition of the disproportionate impact of climate change on the younger generation, government commitments to adolescent well-being in the context of the climate crisis and meaningful engagement in climate response. The PMNCH had also coordinated the development of an advocacy brief on how to prioritize women, children and young people facing the climate crisis, which set out a number of recommendations on strengthening the health-care system, building resilience to climate-related health risks, integrating policies on women, children and adolescent health into climate policies, and enhancing early warning systems to include climate-related health indicators.



She concluded by highlighting the need for: mental health support at the national level to counter climate anxiety; the provision of nutritional support for pregnant and lactating women during periods of food insecurity; and for action to prioritize community engagement and meaningfully involve adolescents and young people in policy development.

**Mr. W.P. Bako** (Burkina Faso), panellist, said that his country faced many challenges, as a result of climate change and the security situation. The increased climate variability, which led to prolonged periods of drought and irregular precipitation, was affecting the agricultural sector that provided the main source of income for the majority of the population. The reduced harvests were threatening food security and exacerbating poverty; hundreds of thousands of hectares of productive land were being lost each year.

Burkina Faso was also facing a security crisis and experiencing repeated terrorist attacks by unidentified groups that were causing significant loss of life and mass displacement, particularly in the Sahel region and north of the country. Furthermore, demographic and agricultural factors were leading to a reduction in soil quality and desertification, and soil erosion and deforestation were being exacerbated by climate change. The inefficient use of limited water resources in agriculture was also another challenge.

Climate change also had repercussions for human health: extreme weather events were causing death and an increase in certain diseases; the displacement of the rural population was leading to social tension; and a lack of food security could cause malnutrition and even famine. The increase in the health-care crisis linked to climate change was affecting the country's overburdened and fragile health system.

Burkina Faso was implementing adaptation strategies, including through soil conservation programmes and irrigation development, the sustainable management of natural resources and economic diversification. Further efforts and international assistance were required to increase resilience and promote sustainable development. Parliamentarians should therefore take the following steps: develop policies and legislation; ensure the allocation of financial resources for health systems to address challenges associated with climate change and conflicts, and exercise their oversight function in that regard; raise awareness of the need for urgent action with respect to climate change, conflict and health; promote international cooperation on climate change matters; and encourage the signature of relevant international agreements and the sharing of best practices.

Although the challenges associated with climate change, security and health were great, parliamentarians had the responsibility to find solutions to ensure a better life for their constituents.

**Mr. H. Ebrahim** (Bahrain) said that parliaments played a pivotal role in addressing climate change and in raising awareness of its impact and dangers. They should promulgate laws and policies that encouraged investment in sustainable technologies, and promote the adoption of green technologies. They should also support research and development and allocate funding for the implementation of new environmental policies. Parliaments could serve as a link between the national and international agenda, and encourage the implementation of relevant international conventions and agreements.

**Mr. W. William** (Seychelles) said that access to information was a problem. He asked whether, globally, there was sufficient access to data on ecocide, geoengineering and pollution to encourage preventive actions. He also asked how countries could be encouraged to stop working in silos so that the evidence base could be harmonized, and whether the political will existed to mainstream climate action in national programmes, including in Sri Lanka.

**Ms. J. Sabao** (Zambia) said that her country had lost over one million hectares of grain because of a severe drought, and a national disaster had been declared two weeks previously. She asked how the international community was going to come to the aid of Zambia as a least developed country that was in need of assistance.

**Mr. K. Tontisirin** (Thailand), noting that climate change would affect food security, asked whether any guidelines or toolkits existed for countries to monitor risk areas and to prepare to deal with climate change and conflict. As climate change was likely to have greater consequences in countries with weak health systems, he asked what minimum level of basic health services was required.

**A delegate from India** asked whether any countries had developed practical solutions to deal with health crises directly related to climate change.

**Ms. B.O. Kjerstad** (Norway) asked how parliamentarians could help to improve local food production through improved water efficiency and promote the development of drought-resistant crops.

**The Moderator** invited the panellists to respond to the questions.

**Ms. H. Muheed** (Youth Advocacy Network, Sri Lanka; Adolescent and Youth Constituency Secretary, PMNCH), panellist, speaking via video link, said that there was a lack of political will, particularly given the low number of parliamentarians from the younger generation that was bearing the brunt of the impact of climate change. While climate change had been mainstreamed into policies, action and support plans in Sri Lanka, more remained to be done in terms of resource allocation and prioritization of active implementation.

**Ms. E. Villalobos Prats** (Capacity Building and Country Support Lead, Climate Change and Health Unit, WHO), panellist, said that while there was not enough data available for the population to understand the risks and act, there was sufficient information on certain issues, such as air and water quality, that could be used by the population to take action. More remained to be done, including on ensuring that data on emissions was as transparent as possible.

When the WHO supported countries in building climate-resilient or low-carbon sustainable health systems, the first priority was to ensure that health systems were providing the quality of care that the population deserved. A well-performing health system would set more ambitious goals than one that was performing less well. As to supporting countries in crisis, she said that Zambia and the Seychelles were part of the Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health. The WHO was not a funding agency and tried to work with its focal points in countries to ensure access to the support required.

There were many examples of good practices and toolkits developed by countries concerning integrated climate and health surveillance, and climate resilient and low-carbon health-care facilities, which she would be pleased to share. Some countries that faced acute problems relating to water availability had done interesting work on the treatment of wastewater for use in irrigation practices, but some issues relating to religious and political considerations had yet to be resolved.

**Dr. L. Gogvadze** (Lead for health climate, migration and risk communication, IFRC), panellist, said that community engagement was vital. Science must be linked to real life, and translated into practical steps and easily understood terminology. It was important to be transparent and to learn from one another and from community-based health projects, including those backed by the Norwegian Red Cross that was a staunch supporter of climate and health initiatives. Countries and organizations could not continue to work in silos and must find the most effective platform for cooperation. The IFRC was aware of the challenges in Zambia and resource mobilization efforts had been focused on cholera outbreaks. He highlighted the importance of universal health coverage.

**Mr. W.P. Bako** (Burkina Faso), panellist, thanked the IFRC for its efforts in Burkina Faso to assist those who had been displaced in the current security crisis. Improved seeds had been of great benefit to farmers in his country and had resulted in over a 40% increase in crop yield. Research was continuing to develop seeds that would produce crops outside the rainy season. Many crops produced in the rainy season were lost because of the lack of a conservation system. Efforts were being made to establish processing units to conserve the produce, which he hoped could be put in place with international assistance.

An emergency assistance committee was responsible for developing an emergency preparedness and response plan in collaboration with relevant ministerial departments. It was also building a culture of prevention in the population by raising awareness and changing behaviours to deal with challenges related to climate change.

**The Moderator** invited each panellist to make one request to participants.

**Ms. H. Muheed** (Youth Advocacy Network, Sri Lanka; Adolescent and Youth Constituency Secretary, PMNCH), panellist, speaking via video link, said that young people in all their diversities should be given positions on decision-making bodies and have decision-making powers.

**Dr. L. Gogvadze** (Lead for health climate, migration and risk communication, IFRC), panellist, called for countries to act now, not in the future.

**Mr. W.P. Bako** (Burkina Faso), panellist, said that parliamentarians should encourage the development of laws that would help to preserve nature, take into account the dangers of climate change and provide assurances regarding health care and resilience. Ministries should be given sufficient financial resources to protect the population. International partners should assist States in their efforts to preserve nature and address climate change.

**Ms. E. Villalobos Prats** (Capacity Building and Country Support Lead, Climate Change and Health Unit, WHO), panellist, said that if parliamentarians had any influence on budgetary allocation, they should seek to ensure sufficient resources for the ministry of health. Countries that had ratified the UNFCCC had committed to considering the health implications of all their adaptation and mitigation policies, and all sectors should be responsible for protecting the health of their populations.

**A delegate from the Seychelles**, noting the importance of fish for the food security of small island nations, said that the effects of climate change on the ocean should also be taken into account.

**The Moderator** said that, although the impact of climate change was well known, there was no consensus on how to tackle the issue. Challenges persisted: small and less wealthy nations were particularly affected, and the funding pattern was changing with countries looking inwards to address their own priorities. He looked forward to further discussions on the matter and thanked the panellists and participants for their input.

*The event ended at 16:00.*

## Workshop

# Strengthening climate legislation: Practical tools for parliamentarians

MONDAY, 25 MARCH 2024

(Afternoon)

*The workshop was called to order at 13:10 with Ms. A. Ellis (Senior Director, Global Partnerships and Networks, Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory, Arizona State University), as Moderator.*

**The Moderator** said that there was a narrowing window during which parliamentarians could prompt crucial change and highlighted the IPU *Parliaments for the Planet* campaign. A toolkit was being finalized to help parliaments align with and promote the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 13.

Mr. Marc Benioff (CEO of Salesforce) and Mr. Henk Rogers (founder of Tetris) were funding the attendance of one minister or parliamentarian committed to achieving 100% renewable energy by 2045, one civil society leader (preferably a young person or a woman) and one head of a utility at a biannual conference in Hawaii. Over seven years, Hawaii had increased its renewable energy from 5% to 40%.

*A video showcasing the Climate TRACE tool was shown.*

**Mr. M. Gray** (Co-Founder and CEO of TransitionZero and founding member of Climate TRACE) accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that Climate TRACE helped to monitor greenhouse gas emissions and understand their origin, whereas the TransitionZero tool helped plan for the future.

Climate TRACE was a growing coalition of non-profit organizations that independently tracked greenhouse gas emissions. It had been established in 2019 to understand whether satellite imagery and machine learning could estimate the productivity and emissions from coal-fired power plants in China. Backing from Mr. Al Gore had enabled the scaling up of that work. Governments often lacked the capacity to gather emissions data and data therefore became outdated or remained incomplete. However, Climate TRACE brought together hundreds of data scientists, data engineers and climate scientists who provided up-to-date data. The Climate TRACE website used data collected in 2023 and had a map with emissions estimates from some 400 million assets. Searches could be toggled by country, company and asset. Parliamentarians would find it particularly useful for: (1) supporting greenhouse gas emissions reporting to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat; (2) preparing for international climate regulations, including the European Union Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism; and (3) checking pollution estimates from major emitters.

Better, more accessible and more transparent data would increase climate finance. TransitionZero had developed an energy transition planning tool to understand necessary future developments and their cost. It was free, accessible, based on open-source science and set for release in May 2024. It would help governments in the Global South access the cheapest electricity without paying expensive consultancy fees.

**The Moderator** said that the tool was transformational because it saved governments and parliaments time and money.

*A video showcasing the Climate Change Laws of the World database was shown.*

**Ms. T. Chan** (Policy Analyst, Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, London School of Economics), accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation and speaking via video link, said that the Climate Change Laws of the World database – which contained over 5,000 laws, policies and UNFCCC submissions – had been built on a decade's worth of manual data collection by the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the

Environment and institutional partners. Since 2023, Climate Policy Radar had enhanced that work with machine learning technology. Database searches in English would produce results in all languages to facilitate access to information, and it was hoped that the database interface would become available in other languages.

When entering a particular concept as a search term into the database, it was possible to include related phrases to the results, which was useful because some concepts – such as public participation – had multiple descriptions. Results could also be filtered by the country, region or year of the document's publication. Search results, or the whole database, could be downloaded for offline use.

The database contained country profiles and it was possible to search for documents exclusively from a particular country. Users could toggle between a particular country's legislation, policies, executive policies and UNFCCC submissions. Each country profile included a section on national climate targets and a link to the law or policy document. Work was underway with Climate Policy Radar to identify those targets automatically.

Recent work at the Institute had focused on 26 climate framework laws – including the European Climate Law – and understanding of how countries were integrating net zero targets into laws. Currently, many countries were setting strategies, achieving medium-term targets (such as 2030 targets) and establishing the national narrative. However, they placed less emphasis on coordination, mainstreaming across sectors, and independent knowledge, evidence and advice. The analysis that the database facilitated could influence the impacts of climate laws in national jurisdictions.

*Impacts of climate framework laws: lessons from Germany, Ireland and New Zealand*, which was based on 70 interviews carried out over a year, was an attempt to understand how laws were most impactful in terms of governance, political debate and policies. Interviewees highlighted targets and carbon budgets; public sector mandates; planning and policy responses; and reporting, assessments and reviews as the positive legal innovations within their climate laws. For example, public authorities in Ireland had a mandate to consider national climate targets in their day-to-day decision-making.

**The Moderator** said the database was an incredibly useful resource.

**Ms. M. Bolshakova** (Regional Coordinator for Environmental Law and Governance, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Europe Office), accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that UNEP had been working with countries on environmental law for some 20 years, including through the Montevideo Environmental Law Programme. The UNEP Law and Environment Assistance Platform (UNEP-LEAP) provided technical assistance to national governments that were developing environmental or climate-related acts. National focal points for the Montevideo Environmental Law Programme submitted assistance requests to UNEP-LEAP. The assistance included sharing experience from other countries and legislation models.

UNEP-LEAP provided access to resources, toolkits, publications and country profiles. Alongside the Commonwealth Secretariat, the UNFCCC and the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, UNEP was also developing a database to help countries working on legislation to look at legislative acts in a priority sector. Although similar to the Climate Change Laws of the World database, it was more sector-specific and covered four areas: (1) overarching climate legislation; (2) energy sector legislation; (3) urban planning; and (4) agriculture and fisheries. Users could search using keywords or by sector or country, among other categories. Work was underway on the UNEP database to include more legislation (such as the legislation included in the Climate Change Laws of the World database), revise the taxonomy to reflect developments in national legislation, and share good practices and lessons learned.

The *Global Climate Litigation Report: 2023 Status Review* explored how litigation informed climate policy nationally and regionally through the cases brought to tribunals and courts. It was an area that was developing rapidly. The *2022 Global Status Report for Buildings and Construction* looked at a selection of countries and specific case studies within them. It also provided findings and recommendations on improving the sustainability of legislation in the construction sector.

**Mr. C. Meisner** (Senior Environmental Economist in the Middle East and North Africa Region (MENA), World Bank), speaking via video link and accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that despite the World Bank's long-standing work on climate change, it was only in recent years that that work had become more actionable. Two years earlier, the World Bank had launched the Country Climate and Development Reports (CCDRs) and it had produced reports for 48 countries. That figure was set to increase to almost 100 over the coming years. At the time of COP28,

the CCDRs had covered 42 countries – most of which were low- or middle-income – and therefore had represented 56% of the global population, 73% of gross domestic product (GDP) and 66% of emissions. Development and resilience-building were mutually reinforcing. CCDRs helped to identify development objectives that were at risk from the effects of climate change, and to introduce adaptation and mitigation strategies around those development objectives. However, adaptation investments would not reverse the climate impact that a country had made; they had to be coupled with global emissions reductions. The private sector had a significant role to play but its participation in climate action was currently limited because of the lack of supportive legal frameworks and financial solutions.

In the CCDRs, the World Bank also provided sector-by-sector plans of how national economies needed to adapt to climate change and build resilience while maintaining their development objectives. Many of the growth pathways in those plans tallied with growth projections, reduced poverty and could even foster faster growth, which was an important finding. However, countries also needed a supportive and enabling environment, appropriate macroeconomic conditions, strong policies, a transition pathway, a financial sector and support from higher-income countries. Globally, there could be a potential 75% reduction in emissions by 2050 and faster economic growth. However, there could be significant impacts on national GDP and consumption, hence the importance of the transition. The consequences for the labour market and reskilling also needed to be managed. Social security, as well as sectoral and regional transition road maps, were necessary. The private sector fostered innovation and technology but a lack of incentives – such as access to financial markets, return on investment, financial sector management reforms and green taxonomies – and issues with credit markets and foreign exchange market risks, limited its impact in the energy transition. The share of investments in GDP was high in lower-income countries due to infrastructure gaps, whereas higher-income countries needed to work on policy. There was an equal need for mitigation and resilience-building actions. Understanding the determinants of private sector involvement in low-emission development, and increasing that private sector development, defined many of the short-term CCDR recommendations.

It was not only important to raise funds for new investments, but also to repurpose current funds, such as distortionary subsidies in the energy, water and agricultural sectors. Many subsidies had been aimed at helping lower-income groups and a transition path was required. A whole-of-economy approach – including better land management, forest conservation and agricultural intensification – in five of the seven CCDR countries with tropical forests could reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions by 2.7 gigatonnes per year by 2050 (6% of global emissions) and increase forested areas by some 63 million hectares.

**The Moderator** said that, having worked as an economist at the World Bank, she was familiar with the datapoint from Deloitte that a business-as-usual approach would incur a cost of US\$ 175 trillion. According to the International Organization for Migration, some two billion people would be displaced or refugees by the end of the century. The International Monetary Fund estimated that the removal of implicit and explicit fossil fuel subsidies would generate a 34% decrease in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. The global target was 43%. Legislators had immense power in that regard. Work was underway to reform the World Trade Organization rules to ensure that subsidies aligned with sustainability and climate action, and she highlighted the Villars Framework for a Sustainable Trade System.

**Mr. T. Crowther** (Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Systems Science, ETH Zürich) said that the Holocene period – the previous 11,000 years – had been one of the most stable on Earth because of the complexity of biodiversity, which stored carbon, formed clouds and created the conditions for a liveable planet. Although difficult to understand and track, the loss of biodiversity underpinned other global threats and impacted climate regulation, agricultural efficiency, water security, pandemic prevention and the global economy.

A few years earlier, he had been part of a study exploring the scale of the global forest system. Models had revealed that there were three trillion trees worldwide and that, in the absence of human development, that figure would be double. In areas with little human activity, there were 0.9 billion hectares of land where trees would naturally exist, which presented an opportunity for climate development and action. It had been believed that that space could accommodate one trillion trees, which could store 205 gigatonnes of carbon once they had reached full maturity. The idea of planting a trillion trees had gained momentum through media attention, the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and governmental and corporate pledges. Consequently, many monocultures had been planted to avoid cutting emissions, which had set back the biodiversity movement, created

controversy, and led to headlines focusing on the risks of restoration. In response, hundreds of ecologists worldwide had gathered data on trees, which had advanced understanding of global carbon storage and led to the discovery that those areas with little human activity actually had the potential to store 226 gigatonnes of carbon. However, carbon storage was only possible in biodiverse settings because monocultures stored less than half the carbon of diverse ecosystems. Scientific feedback on those findings had been positive and the media had emphasized the importance of biodiversity.

Climate and biodiversity targets were interlinked, and consensus was vital to achieving them. It was essential to prioritize biodiversity protection, end deforestation, and invest in people – including local communities, indigenous populations and farmers – to restore biodiversity and use nature to advance development. Entire ecosystems – which included humans – needed to be revitalized. The next step of the consensus-building scientific approach, Restor, had been designed alongside Google to track biodiversity targets. Landowners could outline their land on a map; immediately receive data about its biodiversity, carbon and water; and show their carbon footprint. Restor enabled consumers to scan and see the environmental impact of products, and to ensure that they supported farmers, indigenous peoples and local communities rather than intermediaries. There were thousands of initiatives worldwide, representing 155 million hectares of protected land. The Food and Agriculture Organization, which was responsible for the Convention on Biological Diversity reporting, had used Restor to track biodiversity commitments nationally. By clicking on a specific country, users could view data on land use, restoration and conservation activities, carbon storage levels, and changes in deforestation levels. The platform also provided an opportunity to share success stories, such as the Payments for Environmental Services Programme in Costa Rica, which had restored biodiversity, increased economic security and growth, and linked Costa Rican identity with the level of biodiversity. Nature and people thriving together led to large-scale ecological recovery.

**The Moderator** invited participants to put questions to the presenters.

**A delegate from Bahrain** said that it was excellent that the tool included legislation from around the world. However, she had noticed that data for her country needed updating. Legislation did not always align with on-the-ground developments, and she wanted to know how that was handled, and how important it was to train judges and lawyers on climate and environmental issues. The court ruling in the Netherlands that a certain company must pay to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions would encourage other countries to make similar decisions. It was difficult for companies to adapt to climate change. The Arab Gulf states had expertise in climate legislation and should be represented and heard at the IPU.

**A delegate from Saudi Arabia** said that legislation was strictly and unprecedentedly applied in his country. Despite existing initiatives and over US\$ 100 billion of investment in five years, desertification remained an issue because climate change was outside of legislators' control. Legislation should be passed at the global level because some countries applied legislation more strictly than others and issues such as deforestation persisted.

**A representative of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)** said that there was a need for policies, strategies and plans to ensure sufficient budgets were available to implement legislation. Many African countries had to choose between servicing debts and investing in present and future needs. It was necessary to provide a new global financial mechanism to fund effective legislative implementation. He asked if there were any evidence-based solutions in that regard.

**Ms. M. Bolshakova** (Regional Coordinator for Environmental Law and Governance, UNEP Europe Office), addressing the questions from the delegates from Saudi Arabia and Bahrain simultaneously, said that efforts were made to keep abreast of legislative changes. The Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment relied on what countries reported to the UNFCCC, and UNEP carried out research and invited focal points to provide updates. However, those approaches relied on countries being aware of changes. It was important to determine at what point legislation needed updating, particularly in relation to global commitments. The UN could not enforce national legislation. Therefore, capacity-building for judges and legal professionals to understand and follow the enforcement of laws was essential.

**The Moderator** said that she would provide the details of judges who were addressing the issue of training.

**Ms. T. Chan** (Policy Analyst, Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, London School of Economics) said that the European Union Forum of Judges for the Environment had focused on climate change litigation and laws. The Climate Change Laws of the World database was updated regularly and it was very helpful when countries flagged legislative amendments. Executive policies were agreed more quickly than legislation, and a recent research project had focused on the importance of achieving cross-party support for legislation. The Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment regularly looked at UNFCCC submissions, particularly nationally determined contributions, to see which national and domestic policies were being implemented.

**Mr. C. Meisner** (Senior Environmental Economist in MENA, World Bank) said that work had focused on understanding how much was needed to meet development and climate-impact needs, and finding funds. The private sector must contribute in that regard because the public sector could not finance all climate-related investments. Building more efficient institutions to ensure legislation was enacted more efficiently required cross-sectoral work. Various tools were available, such as the CCDRs and functional reviews to increase administrative efficiency in managing climate impacts.

**A delegate** asked whether UNEP was able to keep up with the demand for technical assistance and what would be needed to support States to have learning hubs across sectors. She also asked if the World Bank was aware of any countries that were implementing the subsidy transition pathway, which could provide models for other countries.

**A delegate** said that it was necessary to classify countries according to their level of development because developing countries might not prioritize climate actions. International organizations should consider alternatives for them. Academic studies, with the help of international organizations, should be carried out to study the impact of droughts, dust storms, dams and desertification on ecosystems.

**A delegate** said that it was essential to restore and protect biodiversity to cope with climate challenges. She asked if national parliaments should introduce a law stipulating that fossil fuel producers must announce a timeline for their transition to clean energy. International financial institutions should include green investment on their agendas and new tax mechanisms should be introduced to facilitate that investment.

**Mr. T. Crowther** (Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Systems Science, ETH Zürich) said that local landowners should be championed for those changes and rewarded financially. Subsidies should go towards regenerative practices. The biggest driver of degradation was inequitable wealth distribution, which created cycles of poverty. However, diverting funds towards local land stewards helped them to find more sustainable solutions. People must be empowered to restore ecosystems, which generated value and benefited everyone.

**Ms. M. Bolshakova** (Regional Coordinator for Environmental Law and Governance, UNEP Europe Office) said that UNEP had a global network of focal points within the Montevideo programme, which determined priorities for several years. Although UNEP endeavoured to respond to every request, it had to prioritize and it would provide examples from other countries to encourage peer learning.

**Mr. C. Meisner** (Senior Environmental Economist in MENA, World Bank) said that subsidy transition pathways had to be tailored to specific countries and that the World Bank was working on them.

*The workshop ended at 14:35.*



## Workshop

### *Human security: Equipping parliamentarians for peacebuilding and conflict prevention*

*Organized in cooperation with the World Academy of Art and Science (WAAS)*

**MONDAY, 25 MARCH 2024**

(Afternoon)

*The event was called to order at 15:10 by Ms. L. Marzal (IPU Senior Programme Officer), who acted as Moderator.*

*A video on human security was played.*

**Mr. G. Jacobs** (President and CEO, World Academy of Art and Science (WAAS)), panellist, accompanying his report with a digital slide presentation and providing an overview of the history of the WAAS, said that while there had been much technological progress and increased prosperity over the last few decades, people's sense of insecurity seemed to be rising, owing to, among other factors, the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East. Consideration must be given as to why the notion of building security had not produced the expected outcome. There was uncertainty regarding the meaning of security, which initially referred to strong military preparedness, yet the majority of existing problems could not be resolved by weapons.

The inseparable relationship between the security of people, the planet and nations should be examined. To that end, the WAAS and the United Nations had launched the *Human Security for All (HS4A)* campaign, which focused on addressing people's problems, given that achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was disrupted by conflicts, as money was being allocated for military operations instead of basic human security needs. The SDGs were abstract for many actors, whereas human security provided a people-based perspective of the SDGs.

Expounding on various stakeholders' efforts to advance human security, he emphasized that parliamentarians were closest to the people and had the responsibility and power to have maximum impact on them. Collaboration between the WAAS and the IPU was therefore a key part of the HS4A campaign aimed at advising MPs on how they could more effectively contribute individually and collectively to meet human security needs. Human security consisted of empowering not a select few, but everyone, and subsequently reaping the benefits when those empowered could in turn advocate for human security for others.

**Mr. J. Granoff** (Fellow, WAAS), panellist, speaking via video link from New York and accompanying his report with a digital slide presentation, said that a State could not be secure if its people and the environment were not secure. At the 2012 UN General Assembly, all UN Member States had agreed on the importance of human security to address the disconnect between the aspirations for and reality of security. A subsequent report by the UN Secretary-General had highlighted the usefulness of a global and local approach, outlined programmes and national policies incorporating human security, and stressed the importance of removing silos when addressing issues, as human security and the issues of the day were inextricably linked. Parliamentarians could also consult a report by the United Nations Development Programme entitled *New threats to human security in the Anthropocene*, which outlined how other countries had implemented effective programmes within the framework of human security. Human security was a necessary, virtuous and practical tool to allow States to address problems, all of which had global and local implications. He looked forward to working with the IPU to establish a more practical application of human security.

**The Moderator** said that, in light of Mr. Granoff's remarks on MPs' desire to be realistic and make concrete progress, she wished to thank Ms. Gomashie, an MP from Ghana, for attending. Ms. Gomashie had been co-Rapporteur of the 2022 IPU resolution entitled *Rethinking and reframing the approach to peace processes with a view to fostering lasting peace*, which dealt heavily with human security.

**Mr. D. Kiniger-Passigli** (Vice-President, WAAS), panellist, accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that, just as the HS4A campaign aimed to reinforce capacities, the IPU's cooperation with the WAAS was intended to foster learning from one another's expertise. He hoped to present human security as a paradigm, a vision for cooperation and mutual understanding, and an approach that could be relatively easily applied and understood by the general public. Recalling the progress of human security and the international policies adopted in that regard over the past few decades, he hoped that peacebuilding was still possible by adopting a different approach based on the protection of human rights, which was the cornerstone of human security and reflected the legitimate concern of ordinary people for security in their daily lives. That approach had been adopted by many countries and organizations, which showed that the human security agenda was still valid, despite its benefits often being overlooked. Parliamentarians had to carry on the legacy of key players in human security who had advocated for adopting an integrated approach to address issues such as deep-rooted causes of conflict, economic despair, social injustice and political oppression, as well as protecting and empowering people to enable them to take an active role in making their lives and communities more secure. Human security provided a sense of direction across several dimensions, the newest of which was technology, and could re-establish a positive social contract with the electorate. Elected representatives might wish to adopt the human security approach because all of its advantages gave a sense of progress, emancipation and people's wellbeing and dignity. The WAAS was prepared to assist parliamentarians in adopting the human security approach.

**The Moderator** said that the IPU was working to develop an inventory of tools, as set out in operative paragraph 20 of the 2022 IPU resolution entitled *Rethinking and reframing the approach to peace processes with a view to fostering lasting peace*. To that end, the IPU was facilitating the sharing of experiences and trying to empower MPs to do their work and in turn empower their colleagues. Since the workshop on human security was part of the efforts to develop an inventory of tools, Member Parliaments' feedback was key. She asked parliamentarians to share ideas on the extent to which the human security approach could be utilized to increase the effectiveness and impact of parliamentary decision-making.

**Mr. D.P. Naughten** (Ireland), Chair of the IPU Working Group on Science and Technology, said that the Working Group had been addressing human security in recent months and grappling with exploiting the huge potential of science and innovation, the use of which presented inequalities between the Global North and South and within countries, in terms of access to practical, innovative solutions to day-to-day issues. Looking at science and technology from a human rights perspective, the Working Group believed that all people, regardless of their background, had the right to access such solutions and that human security was fundamental to addressing that issue. The guidance document agreed upon that morning in the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights could assist MPs in engaging with the science and technology community to find such solutions for parliamentarians and their constituents. He expressed the hope that that approach would form part of the IPU's overall process in making human security and the potential benefits of science more universal.

**Mr. A. Duforest** (IPU Consultant on Peace and Security) said that the aim of the workshop was to provide an approach applicable to parliamentarians and constituents, and discuss the problems constituents faced and formulate solutions within the framework of human security, resulting in the cross-fertilization of solutions and the connection of problems. The human security approach was key, as parliamentarians were the bridge between the people and the executive. It was his hope that parliamentarians would adopt that approach to better understand and provide solutions for the issues constituents faced.

**Mr. S.N. Reddy** (India) said that technology was going to pose one of the greatest challenges to human security. While technology could create a divide, it could also strengthen equality, which his country was working towards through digital transformation. While some dimensions of human security seemed to contradict one another, they were also complementary. Human security must work alongside and independently of national security. His Government was implementing external efforts, by digitally empowering other countries in the Global South, and internal efforts, by bridging the Global North-South divide within the country. All countries should work towards carrying out internal and external efforts. In the current Anthropocene era, people should be agents of change instead of victims, considering that humans themselves were the source of human security issues. Parliamentarians could adopt India's approach, whereby everyone worked together towards progress

for all. The State needed to play a more important enabling role in bridging divides, for example through digital platforms that were accessible to all, and to build security in a manner devoid of preferential treatment. India was prepared to share all its technology with any country in need.

**The Moderator** said that India's efforts to empower and protect people together was key to human security. She agreed that the State and MPs were responsible for providing a framework for policies, which parliamentarians should keep in mind.

**Ms. F. Belhirsch** (Netherlands) said that one of the bases of human security was solidarity, which was being eroded as more right-wing parties came to power. That was concerning, as many elections were set to be held that year. Human security applied only to certain groups or constituents. Thought must be given as to how human security could be used to keep solidarity alive.

**Mr. G. Jacobs** (President and CEO, WAAS), panellist, recognizing the importance of the points raised by the delegate from the Netherlands, said that human security was a partial solution to the increased polarization in society resulting from rising insecurity.

**Ms. A. Larouche** (Canada), speaking as a social democrat and expressing her full support for human security, said that it was difficult to envision strengthening human security, as no common ground for dialogue could be found amid the global rise to power of the right wing, polarization, extremism, capitalism, the potential job loss and profiteering resulting from artificial intelligence, social inequalities and unequal opportunities.

**Mr. D. Kiniger-Passigli** (Vice-President, WAAS), panellist, said that while the remarks made by Ms. Larouche were true, the aim of the workshop was not to politicize the issue but to find the best way to strengthen solidarity as a universal need, not specific to the right or left, given that peace and security were important to all countries.

**Ms. A. Larouche** (Canada), in reference to her previous statement, said that the extreme left would also be affected. The trend of the day was individualism rather than a spirit of community, which, in light of climate change events, refugee influxes and the North-South divide, led certain countries to reserve resources for themselves.

**Mr. A. Alharbi** (Saudi Arabia), expressing agreement with the definitions of human security presented, said that, under Sharia law, which his country applied, the legislation provided for the protection of religion, the soul, the mind, the family and money, to safeguard human and national security. The world gave too much attention to national security, as opposed to human security. In reference to the war in Gaza and other wars which did not involve two national armies, one should speak not of a ceasefire but of human security. He commended the Indian Government for addressing the human security needs of its large population.

**Mr. O.M. Amutike** (Zambia), highlighting the impacts of drought in his country, said that for the poor in society, the most proximate threat to security was poverty itself. His Government's Constituency Development Fund empowered MPs by providing them with a large sum of money to deal with affected constituents directly, especially as MPs were the people's easiest access point to Government services, and facilitating grants and low-interest-rate micro-loans to women and youth to alleviate suffering and allow people to sustain themselves.

**Ms. R. Saint-Germain** (Canada), in response to the statement made by Mr. Alharbi, asked in which dimension of human security the Saudi Arabian Government would place respecting human rights and equal opportunities regardless of gender and sex, which was key to human security.

**The Moderator** said that that issue was interesting and could be discussed in further detail on another occasion, which she hoped could be organized soon. In her view, respecting human rights and equal opportunities regardless of gender and sex should fall under the political, personal and community dimensions of human security.

**Ms. A.D. Gomashie** (Ghana) said that while the wars occurring around the world were not taking place in her constituency or country, they still affected the daily lives of her constituents, which was a view that parliamentarians should adopt. Human security issues needed to be

compartmentalized. Work within the IPU should not be a platform for national agendas; rather, parliamentarians should have an impact on the work of other countries, without which the world would not be a safer place.

**Mr. J. Djoliseng'ekeli** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that he commended the IPU for integrating human security as a new paradigm of restoring international peace and security. It was interesting to see that the aim of security was to holistically safeguard human rights. Parliamentarians needed to be equipped in that regard. Their objective should go beyond targeting parliamentarians to transmit the holistic global vision for human security to militaries and all other authorities in society because even as technology advanced, women and children still suffered during wars. Real questions should be asked to finally determine the specific tools needed for change. It was important to consider whether a change of paradigm truly had an impact on wars and security and how to optimize parliamentarians' capacity to change the way in which wars operated.

**Mr. M.V. Dlamini** (Eswatini) said that more time was needed for such discussions to produce specific outcomes. Thought must be given as to whether technology, which had become inexpensive, was being leveraged to its full potential, for example to avoid the risks associated with climate change. There was a huge divide in countries' understanding of technology, which needed to be closed and should already be improved, as the world had become one.

**Mr. A. Duforest** (IPU Consultant on Peace and Security) said that, while human security might seem incompatible with capitalism and war, it was compatible with humans, the constituents. Since constituents varied from one country to another, it was important to understand their specific needs, which was possible through the lens of human security, in order to produce solutions. The IPU and the WAAS had created online courses that summarized and contextualized the application of human security. Parliamentarians were encouraged to consult the courses and share them with their colleagues, including parliamentarians from opposing parties, as human security was non-partisan. The human security focus groups would allow parliamentarians to exchange with experts, practitioners, other parliamentarians and civil society. He assured participants that the discussions on human security would be centred on the people, who were represented by parliamentarians.

**Mr. D. Kiniger-Passigli** (Vice-President, WAAS), panellist, said that it was not possible to reach a conclusion on a matter that had just started being discussed. The online training modules developed by the IPU and the WAAS represented just half of the work, since they needed to be peer-reviewed by parliamentarians, who had to state whether they agreed with that approach. MPs needed a practical, solution-oriented tool to understand the dimensions of human security, consider policies and bring about solutions and were urged to provide their feedback to refine the tool.

**Mr. G. Jacobs** (President and CEO, WAAS), panellist, said that the work to develop practical, useful tools for parliamentarians had only just begun. The panel had wished to start by explaining the importance of human security, but its ultimate goal was to ensure that all people everywhere had access to knowledge on human security. Input from Member Parliaments was therefore necessary, which could be shared in the focus groups, where the IPU and the WAAS could work with parliamentarians to provide them with effective instruments. Thanking those present for their feedback, he highlighted that human security was linked not only to food or finance, but to the global dilemma, as there was rising insecurity at a time when there were unprecedented resources and capacities to meet human security needs. Focus must be placed on solving problems to create the stability needed for peace.

*The event ended at 16:40.*

## Workshop on artificial intelligence (AI)

Organized in cooperation with UNESCO, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Internet Governance Forum (IGF)

**MONDAY, 25 MARCH 2024**

(Afternoon)

The event was called to order at 16:30 by Ms. N. Lugangira (United Republic of Tanzania).

**Ms. N. Lugangira** (United Republic of Tanzania), co-Rapporteur, said that she was grateful that the IPU President could be present despite her busy schedule, and provided a brief overview of the efforts carried out in preparation for the workshop, such as webinars, which had also benefited from the President's active participation. In light of the importance for such discussions to be ongoing, an IPU Artificial Intelligence (AI) caucus had been launched, which she invited parliamentarians to join.

**Dr. T. Ackson** (President of the IPU) thanked the co-Rapporteurs for their commendable efforts and the parliamentarians for their participation in the AI workshop. She stressed the importance of the workshop in light of how the world was advancing and of the Organization's efforts to prepare a resolution on the theme *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*. The issues raised by parliamentarians and AI experts at the online preparatory workshops had been pertinent, particularly the latest developments in the field of AI and its positive and negative impacts. She noted parliamentarians' concerns about the impact of AI on human rights and democracy and how to protect the masses from the negative impacts, for example on social media platforms. Parliamentarians could not let technology continue on the same trajectory knowing its possible negative impacts on democracy, the protection of which was the responsibility of parliamentarians and the IPU.

The IPU, the parliament of parliaments, was a forum in which parliaments could learn from one another. Countries had shared their experiences that morning during the preparatory debate on the resolution in the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, which demonstrated the impetus behind the AI agenda. She hoped that a foundation, based on parliamentarians' shared experiences, would be laid for the IPU to adopt a resolution and for governments to start drafting national legislation on AI. She wished the co-Rapporteurs the very best in incorporating all ideas shared in the workshop and assured parliamentarians that all their insights would be taken into consideration in preparing the resolution.

**Ms. M. Rempel Garner** (Canada), co-Rapporteur, said that the panel was grateful for the interest, support and leadership of the IPU President in the important field of AI, which would ensure that the IPU delivered a strong and constructive response. She expressed the panel's hope for a lively and collaborative discussion and invited Mr. Naughten, Chair of the IPU Working Group on Science and Technology, to share his thoughts on obtaining advice from the scientific community on the interface between parliaments and AI.

**Mr. D.P. Naughten** (Ireland), Chair of the IPU Working Group on Science and Technology, said that the Working Group had been assessing how it could engage with the scientific and technical community and had developed a guidance document, which would be circulated among Member Parliaments. One approach adopted by the Group had been to carry out case studies, such as in Egypt, where roundtable discussions on AI had been held with experts in the field, followed by the private sector, international organizations, and lastly legal experts and Government representatives. The Group's experience showed that reaching out to countries' scientific communities as an initial point of contact provided a broad perspective. Ultimately, a multi-stakeholder view was necessary to develop a specific policy approach to AI. Parliamentarians were focused on the ethical use of AI and safeguarding individual rights, which was important. It was likewise important for parliaments to engage with the scientific community on an ongoing basis, since the advice, science and challenges related to AI were changing. Given that such issues were complex, parliamentarians should ask experts to simplify them to ensure robust policies and legislation.

**Ms. M. Rempel Garner** (Canada), co-Rapporteur, said that she wished to commend Mr. Naughten and the Working Group on Science and Technology for their efforts to ensure that parliamentarians had access to the best scientific resources so that each legislature benefited from evidence-based policymaking. She invited Ms. Lugangira, co-Rapporteur, to share her experience on her entry into the field of AI.

**Ms. N. Lugangira** (United Republic of Tanzania), co-Rapporteur, said that AI was a source of online gender-based violence. Many women in politics were subject to a great deal of online abuse, which limited their online presence. Given that AI increased the risk of misinformation and deep fakes, women in politics were unfortunately sexualized, which generated even higher levels of gender-biased data on which AI operated and further increased the risk of gender-based violence. Parliamentarians should evaluate how their data protection policies governed or created loopholes for AI, whether AI was recognized under such policies and how legal action could be taken by victims of sexualization or other forms of abuse caused by AI. The workshop presented an opportunity to determine how existing laws should be reviewed to provide for those criteria and how parliamentarians could learn from one another. Each country was trying to create its own legislation, but AI had no borders; a globally accepted standard for AI alongside local standards should therefore be considered.

**Ms. M. Rempel Garner** (Canada), co-Rapporteur, said that AI affected a wide range of areas. She had addressed several questions to her Parliament, namely concerning how parliamentarians could gain the knowledge needed to understand AI, the technical advances and the major stakeholders; the relevant impacts on society; how parliamentarians could use their diversity to address such issues; and how parliamentarians of different political persuasions could come together to address those issues in a safe environment that was not bound by politics. She shared the example of her country's Parliamentary Caucus on Emerging Technology, a multi-partisan group that held confidential meetings, led by co-chairs from each of Canada's political parties, to solicit feedback from a diverse membership on experts to consult on discussion topics and counter-arguments to issues raised by lobbyists, for example.

There was merit to establishing non-regulatory measures alongside regulatory measures, which generally involved a lengthier implementation process. Parliamentarians should consider whether they could give citizens more tools to understand how images had been created, as similar global efforts were already underway, such as by the Content Authenticity Initiative. Global regulatory and non-regulatory frameworks would be beneficial because, as each parliamentarian returned to their respective political caucus to discuss their policy positions, there would be a base of common understanding. Her country's efforts fostered collaboration and multi-partisan consensus on how to address some such issues and align itself with practices in the international community, an approach that the AI workshops were intended to implement in the IPU. Through parliamentarians sharing their perspectives on AI globally at the IPU, the desire for internationally coordinated ethics-based rules for AI would be fulfilled not by companies but by parliamentarians. Providing further details on her country's efforts, she invited parliamentarians to share their countries' best practices.

**Ms. D. Alzayed** (Bahrain) said that she was grateful for the IPU's support in organizing forums with experts to assist her country. Since establishing legal provisions on AI was beneficial but difficult, an international standard was necessary. In addition to international cooperation and programmes in the field of AI, there should be a national AI strategy, State funding and training for parliamentarians on how to draft provisions. It was important to train judges and lawyers to provide legal counsel and enter into lawsuits involving the unlawful use of AI. She agreed that the misuse of AI would impact women's participation in politics. Her country's High Committee for Women empowered women politically based on national and international expertise, training them to deal with the associated pressure, technology, information and AI. Funding was necessary for such programmes to be sustainable, and she was grateful for her country's progress on that front.

**Mr. J.K. Waweru** (Kenya) said that the IPU President's active participation in the discussions on technology was commendable. Lawmakers should ensure that AI did not become a seasonal and fleeting buzzword, but rather a topic of sustained conversation. When making laws on AI, parliamentarians should consider existing laws to avoid frantically attempting to create an array of new laws, especially as the existing laws pointed to broader human issues, such as non-discrimination, and could be used to address AI. There should be increased responsibility, with developers on the one hand assuming their self-regulation responsibilities and, more importantly, advanced nations on the other carrying out their duties to avoid discrimination and the exacerbation of inequalities. He agreed with the IPU President that existing basic principles could form a platform for AI discussions so that there was no need to start from scratch.

**Ms. M. Rempel Garner** (Canada), co-Rapporteur, said that the group chat launched for the IPU Artificial Intelligence (AI) caucus would be an ideal forum for sustained, robust AI discussions in preparation for the 149th Assembly.

**Mr. F. Fakafanua** (Tonga) said that the possibility of watermarking and making metadata readable should be considered to identify the source of content. While AI was being discussed in the civilian sphere, it was also being weaponized by various State- and non-State actors. Given that there was no treaty or agency within the global framework to regulate AI, there were no means of knowing whether boundaries were being set, AI was being sandboxed and technology would not be used against citizens in normal cyberspace. An expert's perspective on the possibility to regulate AI was welcome. The Secretariat should provide feedback on the progress made in regard to the AI recommendations put forward at the end of the previous year. Parliamentarians from small island developing States, such as his country, did not have the capacity to rely on their countries' science and technology experts, as had been suggested by the panel, and therefore needed to be pointed in the right direction to enable them to regulate AI.

**Mr. D.P. Naughten** (Ireland), Chair of the IPU Working Group on Science and Technology, recognizing that accessing expert advice was a challenge for smaller countries, said that the Working Group and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) were working to publish a list of resources so that parliamentarians, particularly from smaller countries, were not dependent solely on the scientific community within their own countries.

**Mr. H. Kamboni** (Zambia) said that his country did not have a policy dedicated specifically to AI but used several existing policies to adequately address AI-related issues and protect human rights, while ensuring that AI operated effectively. AI users needed to know how their content could result in false publication, cyber-attacks, cyber-harassment and the unauthorized use of data. Addressing the social and humanitarian impacts of AI required a multidimensional approach, through collaboration between governments, international organizations, the private sector and civil society to ensure the responsible and ethical development and use of AI, as there were no relevant legally binding agreements. The discussions to be held in the AI caucus would pave the way forward to implement efforts in the interest of all.

**Ms. M. Rempel Garner** (Canada), co-Rapporteur, in response to the delegate from Tonga, said that watermarking, also known as provenance, would facilitate determining whether and in what way AI had been used to alter a digital resource. Recalling the efforts of the Content Authenticity Initiative, she highlighted the usefulness of a standard for provenance and the need for a standards body to establish an ethical framework for AI, an approach to which many AI companies were vehemently opposed. Many organizations were working to guarantee equitable access to expert information from scientific communities. There should be capacity-building efforts around the world to ensure that all countries had their own experts to shed light on their cultural contexts and laws in global settings, which could be provided for in the upcoming resolution. In a field in which the corporate sector outpaced parliamentarians in knowledge, research and expansion, parliamentarians should ensure that they were the ones making the rules instead of adopting rules made by others.

**Ms. N. Lugangira** (United Republic of Tanzania), co-Rapporteur, acknowledging that all countries had data-protection and other technology-related legislation, said that parliamentarians needed to examine existing legislation to determine whether it adequately addressed AI issues. Highlighting how her country's judiciary had used AI to improve its services, she underscored that civil servants and judiciaries needed a better understanding of AI. Globally accepted minimum standards for AI were crucial. AI was owned by big technology companies whose strong financial standing made it difficult for the Global South to negotiate with them. Such companies also extracted and monetized data from the Global South, thus undermining data sovereignty. Their practices should be reviewed and the appropriate legislation adopted.

**A delegate** said that the workshop had not met her expectations of providing specific solutions to AI issues, such as regulations that parliamentarians could implement. Countries were at different stages in regulating AI and therefore needed to know what specific legal or regulatory frameworks the IPU could offer in that regard.

**Mr. D.P. Naughten** (Ireland), Chair of the IPU Working Group on Science and Technology, said that guidance to parliamentarians would be provided in the resolution. The Working Group had agreed on a draft Ethical Charter, which would provide a template for regulating AI and other forms of technology as well as guidance on engaging with experts. He invited Programme Specialist at UNESCO Mr. Sibal to introduce the AI policy cycle.

**Mr. P. Sibal** (Programme Specialist, UNESCO) accompanying his remarks with a video on steps to develop inclusive AI policies and recalling Ms. Lugangira's remarks on the challenges AI posed to female parliamentarians, said that recent UNESCO studies showed that AI indeed presented a gender bias in large language models and that many women faced online threats during the course of their work.

**Mr. D.P. Naughten** (Ireland), Chair of the IPU Working Group on Science and Technology, expressing thanks for Mr. Sibal's presentation, invited Associate Programme Officer at the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) Ms. Bal to make a contribution.

**Ms. C. Bal** (Associate Programme Officer, IGF) accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation, thanked the facilitators of the AI workshops for their efforts and parliamentarians for their valuable insights. She provided a brief overview of the IGF and its efforts, most notably to adopt a global multi-stakeholder approach to implement its expert-based Policy Network on Artificial Intelligence, which had published recommendations on global AI governance to protect the environment and human rights. Parliamentarians were invited to join the Policy Network. The IGF carried out national, regional and youth initiatives and initiatives to build capacity in, among others, the Global South, schools, parliaments and, soon thereafter, judiciaries. Participating in the IGF would allow parliamentarians to stay up to date on the latest developments in AI and other internet governance issues and network with various stakeholders.

**Mr. V. Vojtko** (Czechia), lamenting how difficult it was to distinguish between AI-generated and non-AI-generated content, said that he was thankful for the Content Authenticity Initiative, which had a challenging task, given that the existing data formats used by information technology specialists were inadequate for the work the Initiative hoped to carry out. A policy response was needed, such as qualifying content made exclusively by humans as authentic, and any other content as AI-generated. Clarity was needed as to whether social media was included in ongoing AI initiatives, whether the algorithms of social media sites could be changed to ensure authentic content and whether efforts were being made to ensure that big technology companies would apply such rules in the European Union (EU) and in smaller countries, where such monitoring would be even more challenging.

**Mr. P. Sibal** (Programme Specialist, UNESCO) said that initiatives were in place for social media platforms with regard to regulating hate speech and the transparency of their algorithms. UNESCO had developed guidelines for the governance of digital platforms in line with the EU's Digital Services Act. Those were, however, voluntary mechanisms and would be difficult to adopt as law. If the EU, with the might of its single market, encountered challenges in that regard, persuasion was needed. In connection with technology-based regulation, such as regulating watermarks, laws involving specific technologies ran the risk of becoming outdated. A balance must be struck to reap the benefits of AI.

**Mr. D.P. Naughten** (Ireland), Chair of the IPU Working Group on Science and Technology, thanking Mr. Sibal for his insight, asked parliamentarians which tools they needed to advance the issue of AI within their parliaments.

**Mr. J. Buttmer** (Ireland), thanking Mr. Naughten for his leadership role in ensuring that Ireland was well equipped, said that the parliamentary community had a certain reticence about principle-based approaches to legislation as this had failed during the 2008 global financial crisis. He hoped that the same approaches would not be applied to legislation on AI.

**A delegate** said that there was an urgent need for collaborative forums to develop policies, in the form of in-person meetings or online repositories housing all relevant knowledge and developments and accessible to parliamentarians at all times. The forums could involve collaboration among parliamentarians, or between parliamentarians and experts, developers or other stakeholders outside the scientific community.



**Mr. D.P. Naughten** (Ireland), Chair of the IPU Working Group on Science and Technology, said that the suggested collaborative forum was similar to SHERLOC, the United Nations portal for sharing electronic resources on laws and crimes, but could look at AI and broader technology issues. He invited parliamentarians to provide further feedback on whether their countries were prepared to make progress on AI and, if not, which tools were required.

**Mr. M. Ur Rahman** (Bangladesh), highlighting his Government's efforts to draft a law on AI and its use, said that a repository of policies and laws from other countries could be useful, as his Government could consider such policies and build on them to make its own laws.

**Ms. N. Lugangira** (United Republic of Tanzania), co-Rapporteur, asked parliamentarians whether it would be beneficial to hold a webinar on different countries' experiences in legislating and regulating AI.

**Ms. M. Rempel Garner** (Canada), co-Rapporteur, asked parliamentarians to share the topics they wished to be addressed. Regarding a knowledge repository, as suggested by the delegate from Bangladesh, her country implemented an informal repository whereby she and her colleagues used a cloud-based platform to gather information from academics, corporate lobbyists and major news items and then share it with caucus members. The IGF experts were asked to share whether similar tools existed for parliamentarians.

**Ms. C. Bal** (Associate Programme Officer, IGF) said that the Parliamentary Track of the annual IGF would allow parliamentarians to discuss such issues with various stakeholders. While the IGF did not have a knowledge repository, relevant experts could be recommended through its regional and national initiatives.

**Mr. D.P. Naughten** (Ireland), Chair of the IPU Working Group on Science and Technology, said that the Working Group was consistently receiving requests for knowledge repositories across the field of science and technology and had drafted a list of resources to be published. His Government had launched an open call for expressions of interest to appoint an AI Ambassador and another for experts to establish a voluntary AI council to advise the Government and Parliament, which could be set up in many countries and did not need to be limited to the use of local experts.

**Ms. A. Gengo** (Coordinator of National, Regional and Youth Initiatives, IGF) said that the IGF had a toolkit on critical digital public policy issues of relevance for parliamentarians and was prepared to build the capacities of all parliamentarians.

**Mr. D.P. Naughten** (Ireland), Chair of the IPU Working Group on Science and Technology, said that he would be grateful if the IGF could share the link to the toolkit for distribution.

**Ms. N.B.K. Mutti** (Zambia) said that, while she commended the various initiatives, she was worried that enforcement could be challenging in cases where offenders did not fall under the jurisdiction of the country enforcing the law, especially as it could be difficult to track down offenders in online forums.

**Mr. D.P. Naughten** (Ireland), Chair of the IPU Working Group on Science and Technology, thanking the delegate from Zambia for her intervention, invited panellists to share questions and feedback.

**Ms. N. Lugangira** (United Republic of Tanzania), co-Rapporteur, said that UNESCO should establish a concrete programme for parliamentarians and that clarity should be provided as to when such a programme would be organized.

**Mr. P. Sibal** (Programme Specialist, UNESCO) said that there were several repositories on AI legislation around the world, for which links had been provided in the document shared in the preparatory debate on the resolution that morning. An AI policy toolkit for developing countries had been developed by the GIZ, a German agency for international cooperation. UNESCO had launched a programme to address how the judiciary could use AI in administrative processes and the relevant broader legal and ethical implications of AI. Regarding enforcement, the laws being discussed were sophisticated and required capacity-building for judiciaries, regulators and civil servants.

**Mr. D.P. Naughten** (Ireland), Chair of the IPU Working Group on Science and Technology, expressing thanks for the comments made by Mr. Sibal and the parliamentarians present, invited the co-Rapporteurs to provide their closing remarks.

**Ms. M. Rempel Garner** (Canada), co-Rapporteur, said that delegations should submit written comments on the resolution by mid-April 2024 and urged them to join the IPU AI caucus. A draft resolution should be ready by around July 2024.

**Ms. N. Lugangira** (United Republic of Tanzania), co-Rapporteur, expressing thanks to all parliamentarians present, said that participation in the IGF was necessary for those parliamentarians wanting to know more about internet governance. The IGF recognized the importance of parliamentarians. A few workshops would be organized by the IPU, one of which would take stock of AI legislations and regulations around the world and solicit feedback from parliamentarians on how to better draft the resolution. Alongside those forums, parliamentarians should keep one another updated in the IPU AI caucus. She thanked the Secretariat for its hard work.

**Mr. D.P. Naughten** (Ireland), Chair of the IPU Working Group on Science and Technology, said that his Working Group had prepared a survey to receive feedback on the challenges Member Parliaments faced in relation to science and technology and encouraged the participants to share the survey with other parliamentarians.

*The event ended at 18:10.*

## Workshop

# Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention

TUESDAY, 26 MARCH 2024

(Afternoon)

*The workshop was called to order at 13:40 with Mr. A. Duforest (Peace and International Security Consultant, IPU) as the Moderator.*

**The Moderator** said that the workshop sought to address parliament's crucial role in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Although international treaties and instruments were discussed and signed at the United Nations (UN), parliamentarians were the ones responsible for their ratification and national implementation.

He called on, Ms. A. Kuspan (Kazakhstan), President of the IPU Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, to present the good practices of her country in preventing the development, spread and use of chemical weapons.

**Ms. A. Kuspan** (Kazakhstan), President of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, panellist, said that, in the current context of growing global tensions, discussions on weapons of mass destruction were becoming ever more relevant. It was vital to promote a global order founded on the Charter of the United Nations, international rights and mutual respect. As legislators and political representatives, parliamentarians could contribute to cooperation and dialogue.

Kazakhstan strongly opposed the use of weapons of mass destruction in all their forms and was an ardent supporter of the CWC having signed it on 14 January 1993 and ratified it on 23 March 2000. Kazakhstan rigorously applied the CWC provisions and had gradually incorporated them into national law. In December 2022, the country had adopted the Law on Control of Specific Goods which took into account all international obligations on weapons of mass destruction. It also had a national law dedicated specifically to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction compliant with UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Kazakhstan adhered to the main multilateral regimes on arms export control, including the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Australia Group, and was also committed to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). It was, however, regrettable that the BWC, unlike the CWC, did not have mechanisms to monitor its implementation. Drawing on the lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic, she recommended that an international agency for biological security be set up.

She commended the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for its efforts to promote the universality of the CWC, reinforce international aid and collaborate with external stakeholders. It was absolutely essential to collaborate with civil society, academia and industry to create international programmes related to the peaceful use of chemistry. Kazakhstan supported OPCW's vision to foster more efficient coordination with the UN and other organizations, including regional and subregional organizations. There must be unity within the OPCW to effectively confront challenges.

Overall, Kazakhstan supported international efforts to mitigate the risks that undermined the non-proliferation of biological, chemical and nuclear materials, noting the importance of broadening cooperation on those questions. The country was carrying out several projects of its own aiming to mitigate chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks. It wished to maintain trust, friendship and strategic partnership with other countries and was ready to meet its obligations under the CWC.

**The Moderator** said that, as a former Soviet State, Kazakhstan had a history of producing chemical weapons. However, since its independence, it had afforded a great deal of attention to curtailing production, overseeing chemical materials and ensuring chemical safety. The case of Kazakhstan was an example of good practice in the area of non-proliferation of chemical weapons.

**Mr. R. Betancourt** (Senior Programme Officer, OPCW), panellist, said that the workshop organized jointly by the IPU and the OPCW was testament to the shared commitment of the two organizations to advancing global peace and security and protecting humanity from the devastation

caused by chemical weapons. It was imperative to recognize the enduring relevance of the CWC, which had been the cornerstone of international disarmament efforts for the past 27 years. Although it had been ratified by the majority of States, there were variations in terms of national implementation, which posed significant challenges to the effectiveness of the CWC. The objective of the workshop was to underscore the critical role of parliaments in CWC implementation, address existing variations in compliance and explore avenues for strengthening legislative measures to confront emerging threats posed by chemical weapons, including their use by non-State actors. From legislative amendments to enhanced parliamentary oversight, the discussion would delve into practical strategies for fostering greater adherence to the CWC and safeguarding global security.

Accompanying the remainder of his remarks with a digital slide presentation, he said that the CWC contained provisions on the development, production, stockpiling, use and destruction of chemical weapons. It was a multilateral treaty that established an absolute ban on an entire category of weapons, namely chemical weapons, and required States to declare and destroy their existing stockpiles. Although 100% of the declared stockpiles had been destroyed, the CWC remained relevant. Indeed, chemical weapons were not just weapons of mass destruction but also weapons used on a small-scale which meant that individuals, and not just States and terrorist organizations, could use them. The CWC was close to universality with 193 States having signed and ratified the Convention, leaving 4 States that had not.

Under article 2 of the CWC, “chemical weapons” meant the following, together or separately: toxic chemicals and their precursors, munitions and devices, and equipment used directly in connection with those munitions and devices. The phrase “together or separately” was key to understanding that definition. It meant that a toxic chemical, such as chlorine, could be considered a chemical weapon even if it was not assembled as a weapon whenever that chemical was intended to be used in the development of a chemical weapon. Similarly, a mobile phone used as an improvised explosive device could be considered a chemical weapon, separate to the chemicals used in conjunction with it.

Parliaments played a crucial role in the national implementation of the CWC by approving comprehensive national legislation, promoting compliance and exercising oversight over government action. One very important step parliamentarians could take was to include a proper definition of chemical weapons in national legislation. Many States had signed and ratified the CWC but did not have an accurate definition of chemical weapons which rendered domestic prosecutors incapable of advancing.

**The Moderator** said that parliaments must work on their own laws but should also support their neighbours to do the same. The security net would be incomplete unless all countries had strong laws. No country wanted to be the weak link.

**Ms. S. Khoshabi** (Legal Programme Officer, OPCW), panellist, said that, in July 2023, the OPCW Technical Secretariat had verified all declared chemical weapons stockpiles – 72,304 metric tonnes worth of weapons – as irreversibly destroyed and 97 chemical weapons production facilities as either destroyed or converted to peaceful uses. It was a huge milestone for the OPCW and its Member States and one of the most significant achievements of the CWC to date. However, to say that all declared chemical weapons had been destroyed was not to say that the mission of the OPCW and CWC had been accomplished. It was an ongoing goal. Indeed, the threat landscape was ever-changing. In addition to the recent threat and use of chemical weapons, there was also a growing threat of their use by non-State actors. Those two threats together required the continued commitment of the OPCW and its Member States, not only to ensuring the destruction of chemical weapons but also to preventing their re-emergence.

The OPCW had, for a long time, recognized the dangers posed by non-State actors and had taken steps to address them. In 2001, it had established an Open-Ended Working Group on Terrorism where States Parties could interact with international experts and exchange their views on chemical terrorism. In 2018, it had become a signatory to the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact and was now working alongside many UN agencies, including the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the World Health Organization (WHO) and INTERPOL, to enhance cooperation and public communications in the event of a chemical or biological attack. The OPCW also cooperated with the UN Security Council resolution 1540 Committee on the obligations of countries to refrain from enabling non-State actors to acquire materials or weapons, whether chemical, nuclear, biological or radiological.

Two objectives were of crucial importance to the OPCW at present: (1) to reach universality, ensuring that all countries signed and ratified the CWC; and (2) to ensure that the States Parties to the CWC enacted comprehensive and robust national legislation. Without accomplishing those two objectives the OPCW could not be sure there were no geographical areas with legal impunity or no legal loopholes on chemical weapons.

The CWC remained highly relevant for global peace and security for a number of reasons. First, it was not only concerned with destroying the weapons that already existed but with ensuring that they were never developed, produced or used again. A great deal of work went into supporting State Parties to establish controls over toxic chemicals on their territories, thus reducing the risk of chemical weapons being created or falling into the wrong hands. In addition, compliance mechanisms and international inspections by OPCW helped States to verify that they were fulfilling their obligations under the CWC.

Second, the CWC contributed to fostering cooperation and information sharing on a global scale. National implementation encouraged States to collaborate with each other and, by sharing information, best practices and expertise in chemical safety and security, States could address the challenges posed by chemical weapons more effectively. The collaborative approach strengthened the global community's ability to respond to threats and challenges.

Third, the CWC was part of a framework of many international instruments that contributed to disarmament and non-proliferation as a whole. It reduced the overall threat of chemical weapons and therefore bolstered not only regional but also international stability. When States implemented the CWC, through legislation and other measures, they were sending a clear signal to the international community about their commitment to disarmament.

Fourth, the CWC protected human security, helping States safeguard their population by ensuring that toxic chemicals were handled safely and stored securely. It reduced the risk of both deliberate misuse and accidents.

Fifth, the CWC helped to reduce environmental risks associated with the storage of hazardous substances. A vital component of national efforts to implement the CWC was proper disposal and destruction of not only chemical weapons but also toxic chemicals, which helped safeguard ecosystems and prevent contamination of natural resources.

Lastly, the CWC helped to tackle chemical terrorism in a context where the risk of non-State actors acquiring chemical weapons was very real. In February 2024, the OPCW's investigation and identification team had published a report that concluded that there were reasonable grounds to believe that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) had used sulphur mustard in September 2015. It showed that chemical terrorism was not just a possibility but a reality.

She asked delegates if there were any specific areas within the existing legal frameworks that required additional attention or amendments to better address the evolving nature of the chemical weapons threat.

**Mr. O.M. Amutike** (Zambia) said that Zambia had a long history of engaging in UN peacekeeping efforts dating back to 1988 when the country had first deployed peacekeepers to Iraq. It currently had a number of troops deployed in peacekeeping missions in Africa, especially the Central African Republic.

Given that legislators might not be aware, they should be sensitized to the fact that chemical weapons included not only weapons of mass destruction but also chemicals and objects meant for everyday use. More attention should also be paid to the impact of chemical weapons on the environment. Many countries in Southern Africa, including Zambia, were experiencing drought and were therefore in desperate need of preserving their natural environment, particularly their waters.

**Mr. B. Albinmohamed** (Bahrain), recalling that the security net was incomplete if one country implemented the CWC but its neighbours did not, said that, although Bahrain had signed and ratified the CWC and established a national committee responsible for its national implementation, the country remained at risk given that its neighbour, the Islamic Republic of Iran, had chemical factories very close to the Bahraini border. A mechanism must be put in place to enforce the CWC among States. Enforcing the CWC among non-State actors was, however, more complex and he requested more support in that regard.

**Mr. M. Green** (Canada) asked for clarification on the status of tear gas under international law when used by police forces domestically for crowd control. The science was clear that tear gas had negative impacts on pregnant women and people with respiratory illnesses, amongst others. In 2020, he had brought a petition to his Government requesting a ban on the use of tear gas. The petition,

however, had received a very disappointing response despite having about 11,000 signatories. It would be useful to know ways in which parliamentarians could strengthen national obligations in relation to tear gas and keep governments accountable.

**Mr. R. Betancourt** (Senior Programme Officer, OPCW), panellist, said that, under the CWC, the use of tear gas was prohibited as a method of warfare in the context of an international or non-international conflict. There were other situations where the use of tear gas was not recommended, such as for prison riots. However, such situations did not amount to a conflict and were therefore not covered under the CWC.

**Ms. S. Khoshabi** (Legal Programme Officer, OPCW), panellist, said that the use of riot control agents by law enforcement were mentioned under the CWC as one of the purposes not prohibited. However, those provisions must be read in conjunction with the general purpose criterion, which put restrictions on types and quantities used.

**Mr. M. Green** (Canada) asked whether more attention should be paid to closing loopholes on the domestic use of agents such as tear gas.

**The Moderator** said that it was interesting to consider that tear gas was prohibited under the CWC as a method of warfare, yet police continued to use it against their own citizens. Parliaments could use their oversight function to monitor the use of tear gas by the security sector. Although not prohibited, there was a strong argument to be made against the use of tear gas for civil purposes based on the CWC provisions.

**Ms. S. Khoshabi** (Legal Programme Officer, OPCW), panellist, asked delegates to clarify the role that parliamentary oversight could play in ensuring that countries remained vigilant and responsive to emerging challenges related to chemical weapons.

**The Moderator** said that oversight was defined as the ability of parliaments to hold governments to account, for instance, through the establishment of special commissions.

**Mr. B. Albinmohamed** (Bahrain) said that Bahrain had ratified the CWC and established a committee to oversee its national implementation. Parliamentarians regularly examined the reports of the committee to ensure all was in order.

**Mr. M. Green** (Canada) said that more oversight was needed on the export of components used in the production of chemical weapons, particularly to countries with a bad human rights record.

**The Moderator**, excusing himself from the meeting, said that the IPU and the OPCW were there to assist parliamentarians on matters related to the non-proliferation of chemical weapons. The discussion would continue beyond the present workshop.

*Mr. R. Betancourt (Senior Programme Officer, OPCW) took over as Moderator.*

**The Moderator** asked for details on the key considerations and priorities that parliamentarians should keep in mind to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons and address threats from non-State actors.

**Mr. B. Albinmohamed** (Bahrain) said that the matter was an international responsibility rather than a local one. Individual States could not do much on their own if their neighbours were not complying with the CWC. More guidance should be provided on such situations.

**Ms. A. Larouche** (Canada) asked how to proceed when a country was not producing weapons of mass destruction but was member of an international organization, such as the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), which might have access to them.

**Mr. M. Green** (Canada) said that international trade agreements could be used to put pressure on countries that were violating international law and human rights standards, such as Israel, which had recently used white phosphorus in Gaza and Lebanon.

**The Moderator** said that there were several enforcement procedures that States could follow in the case of non-compliance with the CWC. States could report the case to the OPCW policy-making organs, namely the Assembly and Executive Council, reference the matter in an annual or bi-annual declaration, or ask for an inspection to take place in the State concerned. The OPCW policy-making organs had the authority to implement sanctions against Member States that violated the Convention. Sanctions included restrictions on voting rights or even expulsion from the Organization. In serious cases, the matter could be referred to the UN Security Council.

**Ms. S. Khoshabi** (Legal Programme Officer, OPCW), panellist, said that aside from the hard measures addressing non-compliance, States Parties were encouraged to collaborate with the OPCW through assistance programmes with a view to enhancing their national capacities and improving international cooperation.

**The Moderator** drew attention to the Guide to the CWC for Parliamentarians.

*The event ended at 14:40.*

## Adoption of resolutions, final documents and reports

SITTING OF WEDNESDAY, 27 MARCH 2024

(Afternoon)

*The sitting was called to order at 14:40, with Dr. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania), President of the IPU, in the Chair.*

### Item 5 of the agenda

#### **Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence**

(Standing Committee on Peace and International Security)  
(A/148/5-DR)

**Ms. A. Kuspan** (Kazakhstan), President of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, presenting a draft resolution entitled *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence*, as prepared by the Committee and set out in document A/148/5-DR, said that, at the Committee's meeting of 24 March 2024, members had engaged in an animated but coherent and wide-ranging discussion concerning the initial text and the many proposed amendments received. The resulting draft resolution underscored the parliamentary role in awareness-raising, national legislation and accountability around its subject matter, the serious ethical, legal and security-related issues associated with autonomous weapons systems (AWS), and the need for compliance with international law, especially human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL), in AWS development and use. It furthermore called for international regulation to avoid an arms race and guarantee the preservation of human control. Expressions of opposition to or reservation on the text were indicated in a footnote.

On another note, following a lengthy discussion of the situation in Gaza, the Bureau of the Standing Committee had decided to propose *The role of parliaments in advancing a two-State solution in Palestine* as the Committee's next subject item. To ensure inclusivity and given the sensitive nature of the item, it had also proposed the nomination of a co-Rapporteur by each geopolitical group, two of which had already submitted nominations in response. She wished the eventual co-Rapporteurs success in producing a draft resolution that would be supported by all Committee members.

**The President** said she took it that the Assembly wished to adopt the draft resolution *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence*.

*It was so decided.*

**The President**, responding to a request from **a delegate from India**, confirmed that his delegation's opposition to the entire text of the resolution was reflected in the footnote mentioned.

### Item 3 of the agenda (continued)

#### **General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding***

(A/148/3-Inf.1 and DR)

**The President** said that substantive and robust deliberations had taken place over the preceding three days of the General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding*, during which some 185 interventions had been delivered by close to 130 national parliaments and 20 partner organizations. In sharing their experiences, good practices and wisdom, contributors had recognized the importance of parliamentary diplomacy as a means of building trust, cooperation and peace and advancing democratic principles and human rights



standards worldwide. Understanding the importance of prompt collective and durable responses, they had spoken of the need for immediate action by all and also acknowledged that parliamentarians were uniquely placed to ensure compliance with the rule of law and international norms essential for alleviating the many conflicts causing widespread suffering.

Eager to demonstrate the IPU's commitment to inclusivity and youth empowerment, she invited two young male and female parliamentarians to highlight other areas identified in which parliamentary diplomacy could further peace.

**Mr. A. Tongjaisod** (Thailand), speaking as his country's youngest male parliamentarian at 27 years of age, said that those areas included harnessing the potential of parliamentarians to mediate, facilitate dialogue and bolster citizen engagement in both processes; enacting, overseeing and monitoring the implementation of peace agreements and guaranteeing funding for health care, transitional justice and institutional reforms; urging strict adherence to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols and advocating for increased recourse to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and other international judicial institutions; understanding the particular vulnerability of young people to conflicts and radicalization; recognizing women's vital role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding; acting to prevent violence against women, girls and marginalized groups; condemning identity-based hatred and advocating for holistic dialogue processes to promote understanding; and recognizing that deteriorating peace and conflict escalation disproportionately affected the vulnerable and marginalized, and jeopardized development gains and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Ms. E.T. Muteka** (Namibia), speaking as her country's youngest female parliamentarian, said that further areas identified included addressing the underlying causes of conflict and the needs of at-risk persons through increased focus on human security; applying a common security approach to finding solutions for establishing a shared sense of security; monitoring the early warning signs of conflicts and preventing escalation through disarmament and military spending reductions; shifting budget priorities and holding governments to account; working towards the demilitarization of cyberspace and artificial intelligence (AI), harnessing instead their potential for scientific breakthroughs, international cooperation, and peace; and restoring trust in multilateralism.

**The President**, thanking the two young parliamentarians for their contributions, said that their experience of an IPU Assembly would hopefully inspire them to continue their parliamentary activities and remain in politics. She took it that the Assembly wished to endorse the draft Geneva Declaration on parliamentary diplomacy set out in document A/148/3-DR.

*It was so decided.*

**The President** said that, although no emergency item resolution had been adopted on the situation in Gaza, the IPU could not remain silent on a humanitarian catastrophe that had featured large in the deliberations and consultations conducted during the Assembly. It was therefore set to issue an IPU leadership statement on that situation, which she had prepared in conjunction with the Secretary General and which she read out (see [page 233](#)).

**Mr. A. Ekpenyong** (Nigeria) said that delegates agreed mostly or entirely with the principles articulated by the leader of his delegation in his earlier passionate appeal for humanity over politics in respect of the situation in Gaza. Essentially mirrored in the IPU leadership statement, those principles related to an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages and the delivery of humanitarian aid. The two IPU Assemblies held since the start of the current conflict almost six months previously, on 7 October 2023, had each failed to adopt a resolution on the situation. The very least that the IPU must therefore do was to issue such a statement before the closure of the Assembly.

**Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda** (Zimbabwe), after observing that an IPU statement should preferably have come from the Assembly, said that, notwithstanding the virtues of diplomacy, dialogue and negotiation extolled by the IPU's founding fathers, the Assembly had failed for the second time running to agree on an emergency item. It was highly contradictory and ironic that the newly adopted Geneva Declaration should advocate the practice of those same virtues in working to end conflicts that threatened global peace when the Organization itself failed to apply them to conflicts within its own setting, leaving it with no moral ground to stand on. He hoped for no recurrence of that scenario.

**The President**, noting that it was Members and not the leadership that had voted on the emergency item proposals, said that the IPU President and the Secretary General were mandated to issue statements on behalf of the membership, as necessary, concerning situations of global concern

and had felt it imperative to do so in the case of Gaza, given the absence of any emergency item resolution on the subject. Taking into consideration the comments made, she invited the Assembly to put its stamp of approval on the IPU leadership statement.

*It was so decided.*

#### Item 6 of the agenda

***Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity***  
(Standing Committee on Sustainable Development)  
(A/148/6-DR)

**Mr. W. William** (Seychelles), presenting the draft resolution entitled *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity*, as prepared by the Committee and set out in document A/148/6-DR, expressed thanks to the co-Rapporteurs for their tremendous work, dedication and commitment and to the IPU staff who had so effectively guided and coordinated the Committee's activities. Despite a record number of proposed amendments, team spirit and focus had enabled the Committee to finalize the text within the allocated time. It had approved the text by acclamation, with expressions of opposition to or reservation on the text detailed in a footnote. The draft resolution was aimed at effecting advanced parliamentary action on international commitments relating to climate change by accelerating the transition to zero- and low-emission technologies in a just and equitable manner, taking into account the Paris Agreement and the results of the first global stocktake.

The Standing Committee had approved a workplan for the 149th Assembly, including a debate on its next draft resolution, a panel debate on *Towards a fair global financial system: The role of parliaments in preventing corporate tax avoidance and achieving sustainable development*, and time devoted to preparing for the Parliamentary Meeting at the 29th session of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) in Azerbaijan. The Committee remained committed to honouring its obligations and noted the steps under way to amend the IPU Statutes and Rules with a view to ensuring that the Organization remained dynamic and on course in fulfilling its mission.

**The President** said she took it that the Assembly wished to adopt the draft resolution *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity*.

*It was so decided.*

#### Item 7 of the agenda

#### **Reports of the Standing Committees**

**Mr. A. Torosyan** (Armenia), Vice-President of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, reporting on the Committee's work in Geneva, said that the topic of its next draft resolution, *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*, had been presented by the appointed co-Rapporteurs and debated following opening remarks by representatives of the two lead United Nations (UN) bodies in matters of AI. The key takeaway was that AI had many potential advantages, such as helping to create economic opportunities, accelerate medical research and identify actions to mitigate climate change. With regard to fundamental aspects of society, including elections and democratic processes, many had expressed concern around the impact of AI development on mutual trust and people's confidence in what they saw and heard. In preparing the draft resolution, the co-Rapporteurs would seek to address, among others, pressing questions raised about how to limit risks from the negative use of AI and what parliaments could do to safeguard rights and ensure that technology built the desired society.

In a further debate on sustainable actions to improve the life conditions of people with disabilities, including their chances for education and work opportunities, a dialogue with the Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had been complemented by the perspective of parliamentarians at the forefront of work to ensure those rights. The debate had highlighted the important role of parliaments in advancing the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities through appropriate legal, policy and budgetary measures. Participants had recommended that the IPU should develop a handbook on the Convention, continue to foster exchanges among parliamentarians on the topic and explore the possible establishment of a working group on persons with disabilities.

**The President** said she took it that the Assembly wished to take note of the report.

*It was so decided.*

**Mr. D. McGuinty** (Canada), President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, reporting on the Committee's two sittings in Geneva, said in a prelude to his remarks that he had proudly drawn the attention of the Committee and its Bureau to the IPU's new anti-harassment policy, which set the gold standard worldwide and was an extraordinarily important tool for ensuring a safe workspace for all IPU staff and delegates. At the Committee's first sitting, the new UN Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs had explained the functions of the equally new UN Office for Youth Affairs, which was mandated to facilitate youth access to UN system-wide debates and processes. He had provided good examples of engagement with young people across the world and encouraged parliamentarians to follow suit, especially in light of what was now the world's highest ever youth demographic. In the ensuing vigorous discussion, members had highlighted innovative ideas from their own experiences of engaging youth in their national work.

In a briefing at the second sitting focused on the sustainability of UN humanitarian work, high-level officials from four leading UN agencies had spoken on the state of world affairs, emphasizing that headline-grabbing crises were not the only ones raging and that global military expenditures had reached a record high. The UN humanitarian system was currently delivering, despite inadequate funding, but the UN had instituted a hiring freeze and other cost-saving measures. Members had been reminded of the numbers of children living in conflict, of people forcibly displaced, of those experiencing acute food insecurity, of children globally at risk of wasting, and of the UN aid workers killed in Gaza. In the ensuing discussion, members had roundly praised the work of the UN, with some noting their country's humanitarian assistance contributions, and urged an increase in national budgetary allocations for helping UN agencies to ensure sustainable living for all, without exception. Several members had appealed for more emphasis on humanitarian efforts to prevent and address forgotten and festering conflicts in particular.

The Standing Committee had also approved a motion – the second to be put forward by the Bureau as part of the new focus on the Committee's workplan – encouraging parliamentarians to engage domestically on Security Council reform through fostering related debates within their parliaments, discussing the issue with their country's permanent representatives to the UN, and preparing to endorse any forthcoming changes in the Security Council. Lastly, the Committee had elected Mr. H. Arshakyan of Armenia for the Eurasia Group and Mr. M. Salinas of Paraguay for the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) to fill the two vacancies on its Bureau for a two-year term.

**The President** said she took it that the Assembly wished to take note of the report.

*It was so decided.*

#### Item 8 of the agenda

#### **Approval of the subject items for the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and for the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development for the 150th Assembly and appointment of the co-Rapporteurs** (A/148/8-R.1)

**The President**, drawing attention to the information set out in document A/148/8-R.1, said that the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security had proposed as its subject item at the 150th Assembly *The role of parliaments in advancing a two-State solution in Palestine*, with Mr. M.A. Bouchouit of Algeria and Mr. J. Buttimer of Ireland as co-Rapporteurs.

She took it that the Assembly wished to approve that subject item and the designated co-Rapporteurs.

*It was so decided.*

**The President** said that the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development had proposed as its subject item at the 150th Assembly *Parliamentary strategies to mitigate the long-lasting impact of conflicts, including armed conflicts, on sustainable development*, with Ms. H. Ramzy Fayez of Bahrain, Ms. E.T. Muteka of Namibia, and Mr. R. Fogiel of Poland as co-Rapporteurs.

She took it that the Assembly wished to approve that subject item and the designated co-Rapporteurs.

*It was so decided.*

## Closure of the Assembly

**Ms. S.S. Chaudhury** (Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, said in the first of concluding remarks by representatives of the geopolitical groups that, at its meeting in Geneva on 23 March 2024, the Group had nominated by consensus Ms. A. Sarangi of India as a Vice-President of the Executive Committee and Mr. K. Suebsang of Thailand for election as a member of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law. By a majority vote, it had also approved and forwarded to the IPU Secretariat an emergency item proposal by the delegations of Indonesia and Malaysia on the situation in Gaza. The Group had heard a number of reports, including from the ASEAN Plus Three, and nominated the Australian and Chinese Speakers for membership of the Preparatory Committee for the approaching Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament. In closing, she thanked the IPU President for taking time out of her busy schedule to attend the Group's meeting and speak to all its members.

**Mr. B. Boughali** (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group and commending the excellent organization of the Assembly, said that the second consecutive failure to include an emergency item in the agenda was highly regrettable and implied that international peace and security as one of the IPU's founding goals was no longer a first priority. In addition to Zionist occupation, Palestine was witnessing a barbaric war and genocide supported by countries that claimed to strive for international peace and security and acted on wholly false pretences. Coupled with the destruction of schools, hospitals, places of worship and UN premises, the many deaths of mostly children, women and the elderly in Gaza raised only fears for the future. It was time to repair the crumbling world order and restore the true value of UN practices, with all countries and peoples advocating peace and security the world over.

**Mr. M. Bouden** (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the African Group and congratulating the entire IPU team for its hard work to ensure the Assembly's success, said with respect to the emergency item proposals relating to Gaza that there had been disagreement over a word but that the unity otherwise shown and the spotlight shone on injustice counted as more of a success than a failure. The fate that had befallen the item should, however, serve as a lesson for overcoming any similar disagreements in future. Oppressed throughout their history and now enduring the worst of crises, Palestinians needed the support of the world's oldest multilateral organization. Considering the reference to hostages in new UN Security Council resolution 2728 (2024) demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza for the month of Ramadan, it was surprising that the IPU Members with more leeway to express themselves than governments had not managed to agree on that same word.

The African Group looked forward to working with the IPU to strengthen parliamentary activity in Africa, notably through the digitalization of national parliaments and provision of training for parliamentarians and their staff. It also hoped that the IPU and its Members would maintain a focus on the critical situation in Gaza and, using their wider scope for manoeuvre, channel their efforts towards obtaining a ceasefire and ensuring that peace and security prevailed across the globe. After the UN, the IPU was the world's most important and valuable multilateral organization and must raise its voice loud in defence of all just causes.

**Ms. S. Carvajal Isunza** (Mexico), speaking on behalf of GRULAC, expressed appreciation to the IPU's President, Secretary General and Ms. Filip, IPU Director for Member Parliaments and External Relations, for their support to GRULAC and also thanked retiring Conference Officer Ms. Sader for all her assistance over the decades, wishing her well in her future endeavours. It was extremely gratifying to see so many Latin American and Caribbean parliaments participating in the activities of the IPU, a key organization that, thanks to its work on vital issues and relations forged through dialogue and negotiation, had a truly global impact. The IPU must do all it could to continue increasing its effectiveness in confronting major crises around the world.

GRULAC was proud of its work completed during the Assembly, including a declaration on organized crime in Latin America and the Caribbean. The declaration was likely to be of relevance to countries in other regions, where national parliaments might wish to follow the example GRULAC set of how common ground could be found through dialogue and concerted effort. In a closing note, she underlined the importance of strengthening multilateralism for the benefit of all.

**Ms. V. Riotton** (France), speaking on behalf of the Twelve Plus Group, said that the Group had met throughout the Assembly and that its members had actively participated in the work of IPU committees. In the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, one of the Group's members had contributed as a co-Rapporteur towards the preparation of a draft resolution, adopted in the present sitting, on partnerships for climate action. In the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, another member had likewise contributed in that same capacity towards a draft resolution – also since adopted – on AWS and AI. In the latter case, difficulties in the complex discussions had been overcome through democratic negotiation to reach consensus on the text. The topic would again feature at the 150th Assembly, when the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights would prepare a draft resolution on the impact of AI on democracy, human rights and the rule of law, with one of the Group's members serving as a co-Rapporteur. Concerning the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, the Group had welcomed its motion relating to UN Security Council reform, which was especially pertinent in light of the many armed conflicts taking place around the world.

As to the emergency item, the Group deplored the second consecutive collective failure to avoid division and find consensus on the conflict raging in the Middle East. It nonetheless commended the efforts to reach a compromise solution, which, as demonstrated by the recently adopted UN Security Council resolution, should have been possible. The IPU must also maintain focus on the relentless war in Ukraine, in which context Russian parliamentarians should assume their expected role instead of acting as mouthpieces for the Russian regime and making themselves complicit in war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Group applauded the inspiring discussions during the Assembly and the IPU Secretariat for its exemplary work, paying special tribute to Ms. Sader in advance of her well-deserved retirement and to the IPU President for having chaired her first Assembly with such wisdom, patience, diplomacy and delicacy.

**Ms. T. Vardanyan** (Armenia), speaking on behalf of the Eurasia Group and likewise commending all involved in the tremendous work of the Assembly, said that special thanks were due to the IPU President and the Secretary General for their leadership statement on the situation in Gaza. Despite the failure to agree on an emergency item, the 148th Assembly could be proclaimed a success. The General Debate on parliamentary diplomacy had enabled legislators to address a highly topical and crucial issue, to which the Secretary General's personal commitment and contribution were evident. As a woman parliamentarian, she saluted the IPU on its work to ensure inclusiveness and leave no one behind. In conclusion, she invited all delegates to attend the Tenth IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians due to take place in Yerevan in September 2024.

**The President**, congratulating the geopolitical groups on their valuable work, said that the IPU looked forward to continuing its close cooperation with each group.

**The Secretary General** said in his closing remarks that the IPU President had very efficiently chaired her maiden Assembly and thanked her on behalf of all his colleagues for her kind words of encouragement towards them throughout. The IPU Secretariat was honoured to serve the global community of parliamentarians that she represented and would continue its best efforts on that score. On 30 June 1889, the IPU's inaugural conference convened in Paris by its founding fathers had been attended by 94 delegates, none of them women, from 9 countries. By contrast, some 1,500 delegates, including 700 parliamentarians, 36% of them women, had converged in Geneva for the 148th IPU Assembly. Cremer and Passy would see it as a dream come true that the global parliamentary community had grown so extensively and met in the city of peace to promote dialogue and peace for democracy and, ultimately, development, with a wealth of outcomes to which the reports delivered in the present sitting bore testament.

The hallmark of the 148th Assembly related to the IPU's increasing digital transformation and long-term policy of paperless meetings, among other measures, as part of the fight against climate change embodied in the IPU's climate campaign *Parliaments for the Planet*, launched in 2023. As well as hoping that parliaments would emulate its example, the IPU was heartened by Members' efforts to harness the positive potential of AI technology and mitigate its risks and dangers, thereby doing a service, as global parliamentary leaders, to humanity.

The IPU's 135th anniversary, on 30 June 2024, would be an opportunity for Members to amplify the enduring and ever relevant messages and values bequeathed by the Organization's founding fathers by rededicating themselves to the advancement of peace initiatives around the world, in line with the IPU's 2024 priority focus on peace and with an emphasis on dialogue. The IPU Director of Communications stood ready to support Members in organizing celebratory events to mark the anniversary. He looked forward to again welcoming delegates to Geneva for the 149th Assembly in October 2024.

**The President**, in her closing remarks, expressed deepest gratitude to all colleagues for their pivotal role in organizing a successful Assembly and thanked the Swiss authorities for warmly welcoming participants back to the ideal setting of Geneva after an absence of almost six years. There could have been no better way for her to start her term as IPU President. Including 52 Speakers, 719 parliamentarians from 141 countries had deliberated around the theme of parliamentary diplomacy, sending a strong signal to the entire international community that they were contributing to, supporting and accompanying its efforts, were eager to advance and reinvigorate multilateralism with a strong parliamentary dimension, and considered inclusive dialogue as the only means to long-lasting peace. Many had related inspiring examples of parliamentary diplomacy for peace, which had also been put into practice at the Assembly, which was the first time that the Armenian and Azerbaijani Speakers had met to explore ways of supporting the normalization of relations between their two countries. The IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine – one of the few remaining formats for Russian-Ukrainian engagement – was aiming for incremental progress in matters relating to displaced children, Significant resolutions had been adopted on important topics; substantive discussion had taken place on, among others, multilateralism, interfaith dialogue, human and common security, and minority rights; and a major political statement on the situation in Gaza had been issued.

With the adoption of the Geneva Declaration on parliamentary diplomacy, it was time for parliamentarians to move from words to action by using their legislative, oversight and budgetary powers to translate the outcomes of their deliberations at the Assembly into reality for the well-being of their people. They might also wish to organize a special event on parliamentary diplomacy in advance of the International Day of Parliamentarianism, which coincided with the IPU's 135th anniversary on 30 June 2024. They must reflect on the IPU's effectiveness and impact on their nations and report on their progress in the implementation of IPU resolutions, not only for others to learn from their experiences but also so as to hold themselves accountable for their commitments. The result would be to strengthen that implementation overall and foster mutual support and collaboration, as needed, ensuring in turn that the IPU remained as a driving force for genuine and impactful positive change. With the IPU only as strong as its membership, it was through engagement, unity and determination that its Members would make a tangible difference to the lives of those whom they served. She looked forward to seeing all participants again at the 149th Assembly.

*A video of members of the UN Chamber Music Society playing the official IPU Anthem was screened.*

**The President** declared the 148th Assembly closed.

*The sitting rose at 16:20.*

## Geneva Declaration

### *Parliamentary diplomacy: Building bridges for peace and understanding*

*Endorsed by the 148th IPU Assembly  
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

We, Members of Parliament from around the world, gathered together at the 148th IPU Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, reaffirm our commitment to parliamentary diplomacy to address the growing challenges to peace and international security.

We are meeting at a time of great turbulence and instability. From the resurgence of conflicts and geopolitical tensions, the increase in social polarization and a looming new global arms race, to the devastating impacts of climate change and the dangers posed by artificial intelligence – the multi-faceted and intractable challenges we face underscore the urgency for a collective, forward-looking and durable response that learns from the past and goes beyond conventional solutions. As we navigate this intricate landscape, it becomes increasingly evident that addressing these complex challenges demands a shared global commitment to building a resilient foundation for lasting peace, rooted in the upholding of human rights and democratic principles.

We conclude this Assembly recognizing the potential of parliamentary diplomacy, grounded in dialogue, mutual respect and the achievement of common goals, as an important means to build trust, promote cooperation, share good practices, and enhance the contribution of parliaments and parliamentarians to building lasting world peace. We recognize that the tools of parliamentary diplomacy include bilateral and multilateral associations, such as inter-parliamentary institutions, staff exchanges and friendship groups. We welcome the work of the IPU to help foster political dialogue conducive to peacebuilding and the peaceful resolution of conflict, and encourage the IPU to continue its efforts in this regard. We also call upon the IPU to support and accompany a return to the rule of law in countries, many of them on the African continent, which have undergone an unconstitutional dissolution of parliament.

As representatives of the people, we parliamentarians are keenly aware of our responsibility to build bridges of understanding among nations, bring peace to citizens and find consensus on how to overcome joint hurdles. Parliamentarians further have an active role to play in ensuring that efforts to negotiate peace processes, treaties and other international agreements are rooted in the needs of the people, taking into account traditional wisdoms and values. In addition, we recognize that parliamentarians are uniquely positioned to ensure compliance with the rule of law and international norms, which are essential prerequisites for restoring the conditions for peaceful coexistence and alleviating the growing fragmentation of societies and the multilateral system.

We condemn all human rights violations arising during conflict as well as all breaches of the basic rules, principles and core tenets of international law, in particular international humanitarian law. In this regard we must pay particular attention to the situation of young people who, when faced with disruption in their formative years, risk growing up as a lost generation, and to recognizing the vital role that women can and should play in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Parliamentary diplomacy is a crucial tool in empowering parliamentarians to actively promote and safeguard these rights and standards at the national level, as well as to advance democratic principles and human rights standards worldwide.

Furthermore, we seek to prioritize the safeguarding of human rights by emphasizing the importance of ratifying and effectively implementing international humanitarian law and human rights instruments at the national level as a critical step in ensuring that those entitled to protection genuinely benefit from it. Likewise, we agree to work to disseminate international humanitarian law as widely as possible to the population as a whole, to provide gender-sensitive training to armed and security forces on this subject and to step up the accountability of these forces for their actions.

We strongly reiterate our commitment to upholding the rule of law, both domestically and internationally, as the cornerstone of conflict prevention and resolution, as well as our belief in dialogue and diplomacy as an indispensable tool to achieve enduring peace. We urge all States, especially those parties to an armed conflict, to adhere strictly to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, with no exceptions. Additionally, we advocate for increased recourse to the International Court of Justice and other international judicial institutions as essential mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of disputes between nations.

We condemn the recent surge in identity-based hatred around the world, particularly religious hatred, and regret the political polarization that is helping to drive this phenomenon. We advocate for holistic dialogue processes that involve representatives of religions, beliefs and faith-based organizations to effectively complement existing efforts to mitigate violence and promote peace, inclusion and understanding. We commit to continuing our work to achieve the recommendations outlined in the Marrakesh Communiqué, the outcome document of the IPU's Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue, held in June 2023.

There is a close link between peace and development. The deterioration of peace and the escalation in the frequency and severity of conflicts within and between countries jeopardizes development gains and the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Vulnerable, marginalized and underrepresented members of society, such as women, youth, children, the elderly, the poor, indigenous people, minorities, and persons with disabilities, are disproportionately impacted by conflict, which further exacerbates pre-existing inequalities, such as unequal access to socio-economic and political rights. One such manifestation of this is in the radicalization by extremist groups of at-risk and often under-employed youth in fragile, conflict-affected States, undermining national security.

Our focus should be on tackling the underlying causes of conflict, which are often rooted in economic inequality and discrimination against entire groups. The well-being of the most vulnerable is a good litmus test for the health of society at large. Therefore, it is imperative to address the specific needs of at-risk members of the population by embracing inclusive solutions that simultaneously preserve their dignity, reduce their exposure to the detrimental impacts of conflict and provide the conditions for them to realize their socioeconomic potential. We should therefore increase our focus on human security, which encompasses citizens' protection by prioritizing essential needs such as food, health care and environmental security, and on guaranteeing equal rights for all, as the main path to fostering both peace and development.

We must monitor the early warning signs of potential conflicts both locally and nationally and take adequate action to prevent escalation, foster dialogue and cooperation, and ensure compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law. In this vein, we recognize our responsibility to promote conflict prevention through a focus on disarmament, reducing military spending, shifting budget priorities to better address the root causes of conflict, and holding governments to account – including by challenging their use of emergency powers to wage war. We also need to work towards the demilitarization of cyberspace and artificial intelligence, so that they can instead be used to open up spaces for scientific breakthroughs, international cooperation and peace.

Since parliamentarians are well-placed to play the role of impartial mediators, to facilitate dialogue to prevent or de-escalate conflict or to restore peace, we also pledge to redouble our efforts to resolve conflicts through the exercise of parliamentary diplomacy. We reaffirm our commitment to preventing a relapse of large-scale disputes in post-conflict situations, including through enacting, overseeing and monitoring the implementation of peace agreements and ensuring they are accompanied by adequate funding for basic health care services, mental health support, transitional justice and institutional reforms. We further commit to addressing past and current discord through bolstering citizen engagement and ensuring that perspectives from the full breadth of civil society and civic institutions are heard.

We are committed to fostering the more substantial involvement of women and youth in politics and leadership roles, including in the military and security sectors. We commit ourselves to the effective implementation of the women, peace and security, and youth, peace and security agendas of the UN Security Council by ensuring that peace processes, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and conflict prevention integrate a gender perspective and guarantee the equal and meaningful participation of women and youth. We also will strive to take all necessary measures to prevent and combat all forms



of violence against women and girls, especially against women in politics, as well as conflict-related gender-based violence and violence against minority and marginalized groups. Moreover, we commit to providing assistance to survivors of such violence, recognizing the importance of inclusivity and gender-sensitive approaches in creating a more equitable and secure environment.

Today's challenges transcend borders and demand a collective global response. As members of parliament, we agree on the importance of restoring trust in multilateralism. Further, it is only through international cooperation and upholding the rule of law that we can address growing risks, build solidarity and, through a common security approach, find lasting solutions to establish a shared sense of security, where all nations feel safe, leading to a more secure world for future generations. Essential to the credibility and success of all these efforts is ensuring that the attention and resources devoted to responding to global challenges are commensurate with their severity and not motivated by geopolitical interests, bearing in mind the equal rights, dignity and value of each human life.

Finally, as we mark the 135th anniversary of the IPU, we reconfirm our commitment to inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation, and we emphasize the IPU's unique role as the parliamentary counterpart to the United Nations. As we look ahead to the UN Summit of the Future in September 2024, we call on all Member Parliaments to help advance UN reform and to further strengthen the parliamentary dimension of the work of the UN. In turn, we shall take this Declaration back to our respective parliaments, disseminate the outcome of our collective work to our national authorities, and seek to mark the International Day of Parliamentarism (30 June, which coincides with the anniversary of the IPU) through a dedicated event in our respective parliaments.

As parliamentarians, we commit to lead the way towards a more peaceful world, pursuing tenacious, evidence-based and original approaches, and drawing on the experiences of all members of the global parliamentary community. We therefore pledge to do our utmost, individually and collectively, to protect and promote peace for all.

## **IPU Leadership Statement on the situation in Gaza**

*Issued at the 148th IPU Assembly  
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

In view of the worsening situation in Gaza, we call for urgent action to alleviate the suffering of the people in the region, including women, children and the elderly, who have been caught up in the fighting.

On behalf of the global parliamentary community, we call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

We reiterate our demand for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages.

We appeal to the relevant authorities on all sides to expand the flow of essential humanitarian aid to reach those in need in Gaza.

We reiterate our utter condemnation of any violence against civilians and stress the need for respect for international humanitarian law.

*Tulia Ackson, IPU President, and  
Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General*

# Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence

*Resolution adopted by consensus\* by the 148th IPU Assembly  
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

The 148th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

*Acknowledging* that, while the applications of emerging technologies open up opportunities for the development of humanity, they may also pose significant challenges to peace and international security and may raise new questions about the role of humans in warfare, that regulation of autonomy in the context of weapon systems requires a holistic understanding of its effects, and that human decision-making and control must take account of all ethical, legal, humanitarian and security implications,

*Affirming* that any discussion on autonomous weapon systems (AWS) is subject to international law, particularly the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law (IHL),

*Noting* the lack of an agreed definition of autonomous weapon systems, and *recalling* the proposal of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in which the term “autonomous weapon systems” encompasses any weapon system with autonomy in its critical functions, which means that it can select (i.e. search for, detect, identify or track) and attack (i.e. use force against, neutralize, damage or destroy) targets without human intervention,

*Recognizing* that the preservation of human control and judgment stands as a critical factor in ensuring legal compliance and effectively addressing the ethical concerns that arise from the deployment of AWS,

*Gravely concerned* that AWS that have full autonomy in their critical functions could be able to select and attack targets without human intervention,

*Concerned* that the lack of control and explicit regulation at the international level around the use of AWS could allow operators to violate international law, in particular the Charter of the United Nations and IHL, without accountability, potentially infringing on the fundamental human rights enshrined in national, regional and international legal frameworks, due to the absence of human judgement and supervision and the lack of opportunities for timely intervention or mechanisms for deactivation over the use of force,

*Deeply concerned* about the possible negative consequences and impact of AWS on global security and regional and international stability, including the risk of an emerging arms race, lowering the threshold for conflict and proliferation, including to non-State actors, as outlined in United Nations General Assembly resolution 78/241 on lethal autonomous weapon systems,

*Concerned* that advancements in sophisticated military technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI) and algorithmic data processing, may increase the risk of a new arms race, lowering the threshold for conflict and proliferation, including to non-State actors, and putting peace and international security at even greater risk, but *acknowledging* that a ban on research would be unrealistic, not least when so much of the research in this field is conducted by both military and civilian players and AI still has a very important role to play in civilian life,

*Alarmed* by the possibility that AWS have the potential to become future weapons of mass destruction as they combine two properties unique to such weapons: mass harm and lack of human control to ensure they do not injure civilians,

*Conscious* that human rights instruments guarantee the right to life, dignity and integrity of persons,

*Deeply concerned* that AWS could be used by armed groups and other non-State actors to undermine national, regional and global security, causing profound social and humanitarian impact,

*Alarmed* by the evidence that individual recognition algorithms, including facial recognition and automated decision algorithms have native embedded bias that is already propagating gender and race discrimination and perpetrating injustices against socio-economically disadvantaged people, the vulnerable and people with disabilities, and that AWS could be deliberately programmed to target people bearing certain “markers” or identities including race, gender or patterns of behaviour, and to apply force without human intervention, potentially leading to disproportionate harm to specific groups, locations or communities,

*Recalling*, without prejudice to Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, the fundamental rule under IHL according to which the right of Parties to a conflict to choose their means and methods of warfare is not unlimited, as stated in Article 35 (1) of the Additional Protocol I (AP I) to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 relating to the protection of victims in international armed conflicts, and as provided for by customary international law, as well as the obligation stated in Article 36 of AP I, which requires States to conduct reviews of the study, development, acquisition or adoption of all new weapons, means and methods of warfare in order to determine whether their use is prohibited by IHL or any other rule of applicable international law,

*Mindful* that, for decades, the international community has been actively keeping track of the emerging issues of AWS, marked by key milestones in AWS regulatory governance, including the report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions in 2010, which brought the issue of lethal autonomous robotics and the protection of life to the international spotlight and that, since 2013, the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), a key IHL instrument, have been holding discussions on the issue and, in 2016, established an open-ended Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems (LAWS),

*Recognizing* the GGE as a key international forum at which a framework around LAWS is being developed,

*Noting* the fact that, during its 2023 meetings, the GGE underscored the need to anticipate technological advancements in LAWS, urging strict adherence to IHL throughout the life cycle of these systems, highlighting the need for limitations on targets and operational parameters, coupled with appropriate training and instructions for human operators, and firmly stating that any LAWS-based system unable to comply with international law should not be deployed,

*Acknowledging* the adoption of resolution 78/241 by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2023, which, inter alia, requests that the Secretary-General of the United Nations submit a substantive report on the subject reflecting the full range of views received from Member and observer States on ways to address the related challenges and concerns such systems raise from humanitarian, legal, security, technological and ethical perspectives, and on the role of humans in the use of force, and invite the views of international and regional organizations, the ICRC, civil society, the scientific community and industry,

*Recognizing* that, since 2018, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has consistently maintained that AWS are politically unacceptable and morally repugnant and has called for their prohibition under international law, and that when presenting his *New Agenda for Peace* ahead of the Summit of the Future in 2024, he further called on States to adopt by 2026 a legally binding instrument to prohibit AWS that function without human control or oversight and to regulate all other types of AWS,

*Recognizing also* that the United Nations Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on counter-terrorism and human rights, the ICRC, civil society, including through the Stop Killer Robots Campaign, the scientific community, and academia have joined the call by the Secretary-General of the United Nations for a global prohibition on AWS,

*Noting* that the landmark joint appeal made in 2023 by the United Nations Secretary-General and the President of the ICRC underlined the urgency for States to negotiate a new, binding international law on AWS to set clear prohibitions and restrictions on AWS by 2026,

*Mindful* that many States and groups of countries have already been calling for the establishment of a legally binding instrument to regulate, limit and/or prohibit the use of AWS, and, at the same time, *cognisant* of the need for a unanimous decision, i.e. that all States agree to follow the proposed limitations,

*Recognizing* that urgent, concrete action is needed to develop international approaches, particularly given that weapon systems with varying degrees of autonomy have already been used in various conflicts,

*Considering* the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, international human rights law, and IHL and its founding principles of humanity, dictates of public conscience and ethical perspectives,

*Reaffirming* that, because IHL requires commanders and the users of weapons to be able to anticipate and limit their effects, weapon systems must be predictable, and that the potential “black box” effect arising from the integration of AI technologies could hinder compliance with these obligations,

*Gravely concerned* that the longer States wait to regulate AWS, the more likely the flow and proliferation of such systems will continue on the market,

*Stressing* the need to study an international regulatory framework for the use of AI to regulate the harmful use of this technology,

*Highlighting* that parliaments will have a significant role to play in raising awareness on the social, humanitarian, legal and ethical implications of the use of AWS, and in supporting governments with inputs to draft the text for an instrument to regulate such systems,

1. *Urges* parliaments and parliamentarians to actively and urgently engage in the debate to address the threat to peace and security posed by AWS;
2. *Strongly urges* parliaments to develop comprehensive national legislation to establish regulatory frameworks governing the development, deployment and use of AWS, once international agreement has been reached on a definition of “autonomous weapon system” and on the distinction between full and partial autonomy as well as consensus on the use and content of the term “meaningful human control”, taking into account all their ethical, legal, humanitarian and security implications and including the prohibition of AWS that function without human control or oversight, and which cannot be used in compliance with IHL;
3. *Calls on* parliaments to urge their governments to continue working through international forums, including the United Nations and the GGE, on an instrument, governance framework and regulations on autonomy in weapon systems, to ensure compliance with international law, including IHL, and ethical perspectives, as well as the prevention of the peace and security impact that autonomy in weapon systems entails;
4. *Suggests* that parliaments encourage their governments to share their views with the Secretary-General of the United Nations on ways to address challenges and concerns raised by AWS in accordance with resolution 78/241 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2023 and *A New Agenda for Peace*, which recommends multilateral efforts for a legally binding instrument on LAWS and other types of AWS by 2026;
5. *Recommends* that parliaments and parliamentarians work with relevant stakeholders, including the defence industry, civil society and academia, to understand, evaluate and create safeguards in relation to both AI and AWS, including weapon system designers, particularly regarding their compliance with existing law and with any developments to the law that may occur in the future;

6. *Encourages* parliaments to regularly assess and evaluate the application of new technologies, to avoid these technologies creating a unilateral pressure on all citizens that grants disproportionate powers to the parties when operating without proper oversight, and to address the risks posed by facial recognition systems, including hardware, software and algorithms, including to prevent gender and racial bias, that may be integrated into AWS;
7. *Urges* parliaments and parliamentarians to play a crucial role in holding governments accountable regarding AWS, in ensuring quality in their governance, notably regarding the imperative of retaining human control over the use of force, and transparency in their design, development, operation, regulation and oversight, and in triggering concrete action by governments and societies more broadly;
8. *Calls on* parliaments to encourage governments to engage actively in the ongoing discussions on LAWS at the GGE and to take all necessary efforts to support the GGE's work;
9. *Also calls on* parliaments to strongly urge their governments to establish robust frameworks for data protection to govern the development, deployment and use of AWS, emphasizing the critical importance of safeguarding sensitive data and ensuring ethical and responsible use of information;
10. *Urges* parliaments to ensure the establishment of effective mechanisms to conduct investigations, prosecution and punishment for violations of IHL arising from the use of weapons with autonomous functionalities, thereby upholding individual responsibilities and ensuring accountability for any breaches of ethical and legal standards;
11. *Also urges* parliaments to request that their governments clearly define their own responsibilities and those of the private sector and civil society with regard to AWS, and adopt legislation that incorporates regulatory frameworks and safeguards to ensure that such systems do not fall into criminal hands or into the hands of non-State actors that operate outside the law, and that such laws are fully in line with international human rights obligations;
12. *Encourages* parliaments and parliamentarians to stimulate exchange of relevant good practices between States, with due regard for national security regulations and commercial restrictions on private information;
13. *Recommends* that parliaments and parliamentarians: (a) allocate budgets to fund plans, programmes, projects and actions to raise awareness of the need to prevent, regulate, monitor and enforce human rights and safeguards related to AWS; (b) advocate for the incorporation of comprehensive educational programmes on AI and autonomous systems within national curricula at appropriate educational levels to promote widespread understanding of both the potential benefits and the risks associated with these technologies, including their ethical, legal, humanitarian and security implications;
14. *Calls for* the adoption of measures to ensure the inclusion of a gender and intersectional perspective based on United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), in discussions of AWS and military AI strategies;
15. *Calls on* relevant parliamentary networks and IPU permanent observers to include AWS on their agendas and to inform the IPU of their work and findings on the issue;
16. *Invites* the IPU, through its relevant Standing Committee and specialized bodies, to keep abreast of the issue and organize at the 151st Assembly a panel discussion, inviting relevant parliamentary networks and IPU permanent observers to participate, aimed at taking stock of the situation in advance of the 2026 deadline set by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to adopt a legally binding instrument on AWS;

17. *Suggests* that the IPU Secretariat compile and analyse a set of parliamentary good practices and stocktaking related to the use of AI in the security and military sectors and derived from the discussion within the IPU framework and other subsequent IPU activities, including measures to remove bias in the algorithms that underpin AI systems that are capable of autonomous analysis and actions;
18. *Urges* the Secretary General of the IPU to share the present resolution and further reports and publications related to AWS with the Secretary-General of the United Nations for inclusion in the report mentioned in resolution 78/241 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2023;
19. *Invites* the IPU to regularly hold sessions for parliamentarians to discuss the latest developments with AWS and AI and reassess their impacts in the military domain, particularly with regard to specific concerns on human rights violations, meaningful human control over the use of force and the ethical implications of these technologies;
20. *Encourages* parliaments to implement their strategies to exercise more effective parliamentary oversight functions and ensure that technological development, such as AI, is only deployed to assist humans in certain tasks, without compromising meaningful human control and intervention whenever it is needed.

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- **India, Iran (Islamic Republic of)** and the **Russian Federation** expressed their opposition to the entire text of the resolution.
  - **China** and **Lithuania** expressed a reservation on the entire text of the resolution.
  - **Australia, New Zealand** and the **United Kingdom** expressed reservations on several paragraphs.
  - **Cuba** and **France** expressed a reservation on the use of the term “autonomous weapon systems (AWS)” without mentioning the characteristic of lethality (i.e. lethal autonomous weapon system – LAWS).
  - **Türkiye** expressed reservations on preambular paragraphs 13, 17, 18, 20 and 21, and operative paragraphs 2, 4 and 16.
  - **Republic of Korea** expressed reservations on preambular paragraphs 18 and 19, and operative paragraph 16.
  - **Canada** expressed reservations on preambular paragraph 3 and operative paragraph 2 on the grounds that they are too prescriptive for national governments.

## Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity

*Resolution adopted by consensus<sup>\*</sup> by the 148th IPU Assembly  
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

The 148th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

*Recalling* the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement to strengthen the global response to climate change, as well as the outcomes of the United Nations Climate Change Conferences (COPs), which underline the urgent need for immediate, deep, rapid and sustained reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions across all applicable sectors based on available means of implementation, including through increased use of low-emission and renewable energy, just energy transition partnerships, and other multilevel and cooperative actions in the light of national circumstances,

*Recalling also* the IPU resolution *Climate change – Let us not cross the line*, adopted at the 139th IPU Assembly in October 2018, the *Parliamentary action plan on climate change* endorsed by the IPU Governing Council at its 198th session in March 2016, and the COP28 Parliamentary Meeting outcome document of December 2023,

*Noting* the importance of strengthening partnerships between all countries, parliaments, public and private institutions (governmental, non-governmental and inter-parliamentary), and civil society (especially vulnerable groups) to combat climate change, and that without such cooperation to facilitate climate action, the impacts of climate change will be inevitable at all levels,

*Recalling* the *COP28 UAE Consensus*, which has the potential to become a benchmark for partnerships for climate action by laying out a response to the global stocktake, putting forward a plan to close implementation gaps by 2030, calling on Parties to transition away from fossil fuels in a just, orderly and equitable manner to reach net zero, recognizing the crucial need to scale up adaptation finance, and introducing targets to triple renewable energy capacity globally and double the global rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030,

*Recalling also* the ultimate objective of the UNFCCC to achieve stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system,

*Considering* that the Paris Agreement has established mechanisms and procedures allowing countries to define their nationally determined contributions (NDCs) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change; *expressing appreciation* that all Parties to the Paris Agreement have communicated NDCs that demonstrate progress towards achieving the Paris Agreement temperature goal; and *noting* that more ambitious mitigation targets in NDCs are needed to reduce emissions rapidly,

*Noting* the launch, during the COP26 meeting in Glasgow, of the Global Methane Pledge, which is based on solid scientific data and contains a commitment to reduce global methane emissions by at least 30% below 2020 levels by 2030,

*Noting also* that, presently, more than 155 countries have signed the Global Methane Pledge, and *recognizing* that only by drastically reducing methane emissions in the current decade will it be possible to stay on track to avoid the average temperature rise in the atmosphere exceeding the 1.5°C target,

*Bearing in mind* that, despite making up only 16% of greenhouse gases, methane is responsible for approximately a third of global warming and traps 80 times more heat than carbon dioxide, although it dissipates in the atmosphere within decades, rather than centuries as is the



case for carbon dioxide, and *recognizing* both forestry activity, thanks to its vital importance in capturing carbon dioxide, and the production of renewable raw materials for construction, such as wood and its derivatives, as strategic for the sustainable development of countries,

*Acknowledging* that the right to a clean and healthy environment, including the right to have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations, is a fundamental right enshrined in both national and international laws,

*Considering* that parliaments play a fundamental role in the oversight and control of government policies on environmental matters as well as in budgetary allocations and enacting legislation, monitoring the implementation of corresponding legislation and regulations, and ensuring alignment between national policies and international commitments,

*Considering also* that many parliamentary initiatives address the need for urgent financing and climate action, including the parliamentary platforms taking shape for climate action against methane emissions,

*Acknowledging* that reducing carbon emissions is critical in dealing with climate change and mitigating environmental damage, and that renewable energy that does not degrade ecosystems provides a cleaner and more sustainable means to meet energy demand, bringing environmental sustainability and offering the further advantage of being able to provide power to even the most underprivileged people living in the remotest areas,

*Acknowledging also* that armed conflicts instigated by States or non-States have a considerable impact on the climate, causing the release of significant amounts of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, leading to the destruction of ecosystems that currently store carbon and absorb and remove greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, and resulting in ecocide,

*Acknowledging further* that the deployment of renewables in the power, heat and transport sectors is one of the main enablers of keeping the rise in average global temperatures within reach of 1.5°C, that the need to encourage the deployment of renewable energy has increased in recent years, that more cities, regions and countries, both developed and developing, are promoting and adopting policies to deploy renewable energy, and that concrete and easily-measured environmental goals are paramount in this respect,

*Emphasizing* the need for deep, rapid and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in line with 1.5°C pathways, as expressed in the decision on the first global stocktake at COP28, by tripling renewable energy capacity globally and doubling the global average annual rate of energy efficiency improvements by 2030 as well as through accelerating zero- and low-emission technologies and transitioning away from fossil fuels in energy systems,

*Welcoming* the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration, which emphasizes accelerating clean, sustainable, just, affordable and inclusive energy transitions through various pathways, as a means of enabling strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth and achieving climate objectives, and which calls for recognition of the needs, vulnerabilities, priorities and different national circumstances of developing countries and support of strong international and national enabling environments to foster innovation, voluntary and mutually agreed technology transfer, and access to low-cost financing,

*Recognizing* the need expressed in the decision on the first global stocktake at COP28 for States to contribute to global climate change efforts by accelerating zero- and low-emission technologies, including renewables, nuclear, abatement and removal technologies, and low-carbon hydrogen production,

*Recognizing also* the importance of the agreement reached at COP27 to provide loss and damage funding for vulnerable countries hit hard by floods, droughts and other climate disasters, and *welcoming* the subsequent operationalization of the global fund for loss and damage at COP28,

*Recognizing further* the role of developed countries in providing support to and enhancing cooperation with developing countries in transitioning to low-carbon, low-emission economies; *emphasizing* the imperative to significantly scale finance to meet the urgent and

evolving needs of developing countries, including access to technology and low-cost financing; *advocating* a collective approach for technology transfer and development, knowledge sharing, and cultivating innovative solutions as crucial to fostering socially just, sustainable and effective progress; and *emphasizing* that every nation is responsible for creating an attractive investment climate that can draw in both domestic and international capital to speed up change,

*Noting* that developed countries, as the largest contributors to carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions, should bear the greatest responsibility,

*Noting also* that the world's population is growing at an unprecedented rate and that this has resulted in a dramatic increase in energy demand globally, at a rate likely to be even more rapid than population growth,

*Aware* that, in an effort to meet this ever-increasing energy demand and address the issue of global warming, breakthrough advances have been made in the design of technologies that can control emissions and harness power from renewable and alternative energy sources, but their costs remain unaffordable to many developing countries,

*Recognizing* the need to promote and encourage new technologies to scale up integration of battery energy storage systems, aimed at enabling greater integration of variable renewable energy sources and fulfilling the dynamic energy requirements of a growing population,

*Encouraging* the harmonization of zero- and low-carbon hydrogen standards with the goal of fostering worldwide collaboration, facilitating trade and igniting innovation, which holds the capacity to unlock economies of scale, promote technology transfer and development, expedite the transition towards cleaner energy sources, and reach the full potential of renewable energy,

*Welcoming* the collaborative initiatives on universal energy access from civil society organizations for increased deployment of green energy technologies to bring energy access, ensure energy security and drive energy transition,

*Recognizing* the crucial role of grid interconnections, resilient energy infrastructure and regional/cross-border power systems integration in enhancing energy security, fostering economic growth, and facilitating universal energy access for all, in an affordable, reliable and sustainable manner,

*Highlighting* that climate change impacts individuals and communities differently, with women, youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, the populations of small island developing States, indigenous groups and communities in vulnerable situations often bearing the brunt of its consequences, and *calling for* coordinated efforts to ensure that actions to address these challenges reflect a comprehensive and equitable approach to climate action, including through the promotion of just transition pathways,

*Recognizing* that women and girls are uniquely affected by the damaging effects of climate change and that steps should be taken to support women's leadership and decision making in climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts, resilience-building and sustainable natural resource management,

*Acknowledging* that youth are the most important and dynamic segment of the population in a society, that they are agents of change, entrepreneurs and innovators, and that, through education, science and technology, they are scaling up their efforts and using their skills to accelerate climate action, taking account of their common needs, such as access to quality education to prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow, the availability of decent work, equality among men and women, and a planet that is healthy, clean and sustainable,

*Bearing in mind* that promoting climate culture and harnessing the perspectives, new ideas and energy of young people constitute vital components in the broader efforts to address key issues affecting people of all ages, such as achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), peace and security, the right to education, health and social protection, gender equality, equal socioeconomic and political opportunities, and fighting climate change,

*Acknowledging* the importance of investments in sustainable, healthy lifestyles, just and sustainable energy transitions, and accelerating progress with and achievement of the SDGs, especially in developing countries, as well as in the context of the fight to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions,

*Recognizing* that sustainable and responsible consumption, production and trade, coupled with environmentally friendly life choices and lifestyles such as zero-waste approaches, are key to achieving the SDGs, including climate goals and inclusive economic growth,

*Recognizing also* the leadership of subnational governments in accelerating and scaling up climate mitigation and adaptation action through the implementation of local and regional climate plans and actions, while effectively engaging citizens and industry in the transformative process towards responsible consumption and production,

*Envisaging* a comprehensive transformation in energy efficiency measures and global reduction in consumption, with the ambitious target of doubling the global annual rate of energy efficiency improvement by 2030 in a nationally determined manner, taking into account the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement and different national circumstances, pathways and approaches to foster a sustainable and responsible energy landscape on a global scale, and *acknowledging* that the global transition provides opportunities for and poses challenges to sustainable development, economic growth and eradication of poverty, and thus requires a coherent, just transition in different sectors of the national economy,

*Recognizing* the importance of accelerating the development, transfer, deployment, and dissemination of technologies, and of adopting policies to transition towards zero- and low-emission energy systems, including, inter alia, renewables, nuclear, abatement and removal technologies such as carbon capture and utilization and storage, particularly in hard-to-abate sectors, and *emphasizing* the need to make these technologies available and as affordable as possible to all,

*Highlighting* the importance of addressing environmental challenges through united climate actions and partnerships to safeguard the planet for present and future generations,

1. *Emphasizes* that global warming is a collective challenge requiring strengthened international cooperation and multilateral processes under the aegis of the UNFCCC framework, based on the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities as outlined in Article 3.1 of the Convention and Article 2.2 of its Paris Agreement; and *underscores* the need for added international support for developing countries;
2. *Encourages* parliaments to ensure a transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems in a just, orderly and equitable manner, accelerating action in this critical decade to achieve the goal of net zero emissions;
3. *Stresses* the importance of enhancing a clean energy mix in line with 1.5°C pathways, including zero- and low-emission and renewable energy, at all levels as part of diversifying energy mixes and systems, in line with national circumstances and recognizing the need for support towards just transitions; particularly for workers whose jobs are affected by the transition away from fossil fuels;
4. *Affirms* support for promoting reliable, diversified, sustainable and responsible supply chains for energy transitions, including for critical minerals and materials through responsible sourcing practices and international cooperation;
5. *Reaffirms* parliaments' steadfast commitment, in pursuit of the objectives of the UNFCCC, to tackle climate change by strengthening the full and effective implementation of the Paris Agreement and its temperature goals, reflecting equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances;

6. *Encourages* parliaments to urge their respective governments to undertake policy measures to combat climate change, promote renewable, zero- **and low-emission** energy, implement various schemes and initiatives, including based on the COP28 global stocktake, and establish regulatory frameworks to support green energy initiatives to the benefit of the people;
7. *Calls on* parliaments to actively commit to collective climate action to cut methane emissions, and ensure that:
  - (a) NDCs explicitly include reductions of methane emissions,
  - (b) legislative initiatives in national parliaments reduce methane emissions in the energy and waste management sectors,
  - (c) best practices in agriculture are promoted, such as sustainable agriculture and livestock farming as strategic economic activities,
  - (d) resources are allocated, including funding for research, technology development and implementation of methane emissions reduction strategies;
8. *Also calls on* parliaments to monitor whether government policies are effectively aligned with the commitments and emission reduction goals established in the Global Methane Pledge and the International Energy Agency's 75% reduction goal;
9. *Further calls on* parliaments to ensure that international funding in the coming years focuses on aid, investments and deployment of innovative green technologies to reduce methane emissions, namely by:
  - (a) detecting and repairing methane emissions from oil, gas and coal production and distribution, upgrading obsolete equipment, reducing flaring and venting waste, and applying drastic emissions controls,
  - (b) implementing better livestock and manure management practices,
  - (c) investing in waste management (household and industrial), as well as waste reduction, requiring landfills to strictly control methane emissions, and diverting organic waste to valorization processes such as composting, protein extraction and energy production;
10. *Recognizes* that the unprecedented global energy crisis underlines the urgency to rapidly transform energy systems to be more secure, reliable and resilient, including by accelerating the clean, equitable, affordable and just transition to renewable, zero- and low-emission energy;
11. *Encourages* the collective actions and efforts to triple renewable energy capacity globally through existing targets and policies, as well as to demonstrate similar ambition with respect to other zero- and low-emission technologies, including, inter alia, renewables, nuclear, abatement and removal technologies such as carbon capture and utilization and storage, particularly in hard-to-abate sectors, and low-carbon hydrogen production, in line with national circumstances;
12. *Encourages* parliaments to urge their respective governments to meet their international commitments to contribute to global climate change efforts by accelerating zero- and low-emission technologies, including renewables, nuclear, abatement and removal technologies, and low-carbon hydrogen production;
13. *Urges* parliaments to press their governments to create international, national, regional and local enabling environments and partnerships to foster innovation, voluntary and mutually agreed upon technology development and transfer, and access to low-cost financing, including capacity-building, grant-based finance and non-debt instruments, taking into account the needs, vulnerabilities, priorities and different national circumstances of developing countries;
14. *Also urges* parliaments to press their governments to allocate specific budgetary resources for climate action initiatives, focusing on the implementation of sustainable, zero- and low-emission development strategies, and to prioritize capacity-building to empower all nations, particularly those facing significant socio-economic challenges and the adverse effects of climate change;

15. *Encourages* parliaments to establish a parliamentary mechanism to systematically monitor and report, through an evidence-based approach, the progress of climate-related legislation and the mainstreaming of green budgeting in parliamentary procedures, to ensure transparency and accountability of the climate actions taken;
16. *Encourages* national parliaments to cooperate with other regional and international parliaments on knowledge exchange and the transfer of best practices, policy standards and legislation regarding climate action for sustainable development and clean technology transfer and development;
17. *Recommends* that the IPU, other inter-parliamentary institutions and platforms, and national parliaments closely engage with relevant international climate stakeholders including the UNFCCC finance architecture and its climate technology framework as a means to strengthen parliamentary exposure and awareness on climate issues;
18. *Urges* parliaments to cooperate with the public and private sectors to create a conducive environment for investing in clean energy technologies and infrastructure, capacity-building and technology transfer and development, as well as to promote greater public-private partnership at the regional and international level, and to deliver a more people-centred energy transition and climate-resilient development for all;
19. *Calls upon* parliaments to urge their governments to work towards facilitating access to low-cost financing for developing countries, for existing as well as new and emerging clean and sustainable energy technologies, and for supporting just and sustainable energy transitions;
20. *Recognizes* the role of parliamentarians in raising awareness of climate change issues and of the fact that children and youth will be significantly affected in the future by climate change, and *calls on* governments to include youth in all climate negotiations;
21. *Encourages* parliaments to ensure the meaningful and equal participation of women in climate action, including gender-responsive implementation of climate goals;
22. *Applauds* the initiative of the IPU to engage parliaments and parliamentarians in its *Parliaments for the Planet* campaign, which highlights that parliaments and parliamentarians can be agents of change by contributing to ensure a just, inclusive, equitable and sustainable transition through collective, individual and institutional efforts;
23. *Encourages* national parliaments to take stronger climate action by implementing the IPU climate change tools, such as the *10 actions for greener parliaments*, to align their work with greening initiatives, to take greater part in NDC processes and to call for more ambitious climate action plans and goals that focus on people-centred and community-led adaptation and a just and equitable energy transition at all levels;
24. *Recognizes* that climate equity is impossible when entities responsible for climate damage are not held accountable;
25. *Emphasizes* the importance of considering climate change-related damages within reparations mechanisms arising from internationally wrongful acts and of acknowledging that major past, present and future large emitters have a great responsibility in this respect;
26. *Highlights* the need to define ecocide as unlawful or wanton acts committed with knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of severe and either widespread or long-term damage to the environment being caused by those acts.

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- \* - **India** and **Iran (Islamic Republic of)** expressed their opposition to the entire text of the resolution.
  - **China** expressed reservations on preambular paragraphs 7 and 8, and operative paragraphs 7, 8 and 25.
  - **Türkiye** expressed reservations on operative paragraphs 24, 25 and 26.

## Reform of the United Nations Security Council

*Motion adopted by the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs  
(Geneva, 26 March 2024)*

The IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs is committed to seeing reform of the United Nations Security Council.

In the context of diminishing trust in the UN multilateral system, the Committee is deeply concerned by the current stalemate at the UN, where reform of the Security Council has been on the agenda for decades with no end in sight.

Despite widespread acknowledgment that the composition of the Security Council does not reflect the geopolitical realities of the 21st century, Member States remain deeply divided on, among other things, the question of expanded membership, the criteria by which new members should be considered, and possible limits to the use of the veto power by current and future permanent members.

The Committee welcomes resolution 76/262 of the General Assembly, which makes Permanent Members accountable to the General Assembly whenever they make use of their veto power to block a resolution of the Security Council. However, as recent experience demonstrates, this measure is not strong enough to prevent misuse of the veto.

Without effective Security Council reform, the Committee believes that the overall effort to make the multilateral system more democratic and accountable to the people will be severely hampered. The Committee looks to this year's Summit of the Future as an opportunity to demonstrate meaningful progress in order to restore trust and faith in multilateralism when global cooperation is most needed.

Building on the briefing on Security Council reform held at the 147th Assembly (Luanda, Angola, October 2023) and reflecting on possible parliamentary action to advance the current discussions, the Committee urgently calls upon each IPU Member Parliament to:

1. Engage with its government leadership and its Permanent Representatives to the United Nations to obtain regular updates about proposals for reforming the Security Council as well as progress made in this regard;
2. Demand that the reform process is undertaken democratically, inclusively and transparently, and with an eye to the Summit of the Future in September 2024 as a decisive turning point;
3. Prepare for the ratification of UN Security Council reform, pursuant to any final General Assembly approval and in accordance with national procedures; and
4. Engage in parliamentary processes, such as debates, committee hearings and resolutions, to influence the intergovernmental process leading up to the Summit of the Future in order to ensure that the voices of parliamentarians are reflected in its outcome document, the Pact for the Future.

# Report of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

*Noted by the 148th IPU Assembly  
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

The Committee held two sittings, on 25 and 26 March 2024.

The two sittings were chaired by Mr. A. Torosyan (Armenia), Vice-President of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, substituting for Bureau President Ms. J. Mahmood (Maldives), who was absent due to the election campaign in her country.

## **Debate on the draft resolution to be adopted at the 149th Assembly on *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law***

On 25 March 2024, the preparatory debate provided an opportunity to gather Committee members' perspectives, share experiences of actions taken by parliaments and make suggestions on the content of the resolution.

The debate was introduced by the co-Rapporteurs of the resolution, Ms. M. Rempel Garner (Canada) and Ms. N. Lugangira (United Republic of Tanzania), who observed that recent major advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and its rapid application across political, economic and social spheres pose immediate risks to democracy, human rights and the rule of law that must be urgently addressed by legislators around the world.

The debate also benefited from opening remarks from Mr. T. Lamanauskas, Deputy Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and Mr. P. Sibal, Programme Specialist, Digital Policies and Digital Transformation Section, UNESCO, representing the two lead organizations on AI within the UN system. The experts drew attention to the work on an international governance framework for AI that is taking place within the United Nations Secretary-General's AI Advisory Body. They also flagged certain resources published by their organizations, such as UNESCO's *Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence*.

The main message from the debate was very clear. Delegates see the many potential benefits that AI can bring, such as creating new economic opportunities, accelerating medical research, and identifying actions to mitigate climate change. But the more than 30 delegates who took the floor also expressed many concerns about the potential risks of AI, ranging from democratic instability to ethical concerns, threats to global peace and security, unease around data protection, the revolutionization of warfare and, particularly alarmingly, potential extinction-level events.

As an example, AI-generated "deep nudes" are already a new battleground in the fight against the exploitation of women and online harassment. AI-generated deep fakes have also greatly increased the risk of misinformation, and of manipulation of elections.

Delegates posed several questions for further consideration: What will the development of AI mean regarding our ability to trust each other, and our confidence in what we see and hear? How do we limit the risks of negative uses of AI? What can parliaments do to safeguard people's rights and ensure that this technology helps us build the society we want? These are pressing questions that the co-Rapporteurs will seek to address as they draft the resolution, which will be discussed at the 149th Assembly in October 2024.

## **Debate on *Sustainable actions to improve the life conditions of people with disabilities, including their chances for education and work opportunities***

On 26 March 2024, the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights held a debate to discuss existing challenges and share good practices on how parliaments can advance the inclusion of people with disabilities in society, in particular securing their chances for good quality education and work opportunities.

The debate was held in two parts. The first part consisted of a set of interventions from a panel, followed by a question-and-answer session. The second part was an open debate in which delegates shared their national experiences and potential solutions to enhance the life conditions of people with disabilities.

The Committee was joined in part 1 by Ms. G. Oforiwa Fefoame, Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD Committee), Ms. N. Shabani, Disability Focal Point at the UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, Mr. C. Lohr, Member of Parliament from Switzerland, and Mr. J.I. Pérez Bello, Senior Human Rights Advisor at the International Disability Alliance (IDA). Panellists highlighted the important role parliaments can play to advance implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), by ensuring laws, policies and budgets advance the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community and seek to remove all forms of discrimination and stigma based on disability. This includes addressing the multiple and intersectional forms of discrimination based, inter alia, on age, sex, gender and social origin. This can be achieved through the close consultation and active involvement of persons with disabilities in all decision-making processes. Parliaments should also duly utilize guidance by the CRPD in their work, such as the CRPD Committee's concluding observations adopted following the review of their own State party report, as well as the Committee's general comments on specific areas or provisions of the CRPD.

As far as the rights of children with disabilities in education is concerned, the aim should be to achieve inclusive education and avoid as much as possible their institutionalization. Inclusive education requires coordinated efforts, training of professionals, awareness-raising, support to families and an individualized approach. Staffing can prove challenging, and the training of trainers can be of greater importance than focusing on the qualification of professionals.

Delegates discussed the use of digital tools as an enabler of inclusion of people with disabilities, which can be a game changer if well-designed and tailored to each person's specific needs. Such tools must be accompanied by support services and a regulatory framework. In the absence of such a whole ecosystem approach, such tools may in fact widen disparities and expose persons with disabilities to abuse.

When asked about how to ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are prioritized, panellists indicated that political will is a determining factor. Holistic laws and dedicated budgets must be developed, including but not limited to, the areas of health and education — and their impact must also be regularly monitored. Political party quotas can prove effective in enhancing access to decision-making bodies, including parliament, for people with disabilities. This brings much-needed perspectives to the decision-making table and sets a good example to society. Also, the need to ensure a strong focus on disability in the context of the Summit of the Future was highlighted, as it needs to be considered as a public issue and a societal matter.

In part 2, delegates shared good practices in legislating for the rights of persons with disabilities and the non-discrimination principle and embedding such provisions in their constitutions. In many cases, national dialogues have been held, and dedicated national mechanisms have been put in place to ensure multistakeholder engagement and to devise policies in a consultative manner. Financial compensation mechanisms have also been put in place to encourage employers to recruit persons with disabilities.

Recommendations were also made during the debate, in particular to the IPU, which was encouraged to 1) develop a handbook for parliamentarians on the CRPD, following a similar format to the IPU handbooks on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) published in collaboration with the UN in 2003 and 2023, 2) continue to foster exchanges among parliamentarians on the topic, and 3) explore the possibility of setting up a dedicated working group on persons with disabilities.

In total, 25 delegations contributed to the debate, for a total of 29 speakers (13 men and 16 women).

At the end of its second sitting, pursuant to Rule 10.2 of the Rules of the Standing Committees, the Committee decided to declare vacant the seat held in its Bureau by Mr. E. Uwizeyimana (Rwanda). Mr. Uwizeyimana had not been included in the delegation from his country at the 148th Assembly and therefore had not taken part in Bureau meetings for more than two consecutive sessions, nor had he been replaced by another member from the same country.



# Report of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

*Noted by the 148th IPU Assembly  
(Geneva, 27 March 2024)*

The Committee met on 26 March 2024 in two sittings. The President, Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), opened the session by welcoming all present and by introducing the new IPU anti-harassment policy. He then invited participants to adopt the agenda of the session as well as the summary record of the preceding session (Luanda, October 2023). Having heard no objections, the Chair proceeded with the agenda as adopted.

## **The new United Nations Youth Office: Ensuring a deeper engagement with young people**

The Chair introduced the topic by recalling the needs of youth as a key group that ought to be at the centre of policy-making for peace and development. He then introduced Dr. F. Paullier, Assistant Secretary General for Youth Affairs and head of the new UN Youth Office. 48 delegations were present, of which 18 participated in the debate with questions and comments from the floor.

Dr. Paullier, who had been just three months in the job, introduced the new Youth Office, its mandate, and basic approach to facilitating youth access to debates and processes throughout the entire UN system. He noted that the Office had been established by a resolution of the General Assembly but that the initial impetus to create it had come from civil society groups who had long been asking for youth voices to be heard at the UN. Consistent with its Charter that starts with the phrase “We the peoples...”, the UN is pursuing a networked organizational model whereby youth and other key constituencies get to contribute their perspectives to various deliberative processes led by member States.

Dr. Paullier highlighted the fact that the world’s demographics have changed dramatically over the last few decades, with the largest number of young people ever recorded. He noted the paradox of some countries ageing while others are populated disproportionately by young people, and how this is causing both challenges and opportunities.

One of the objectives of the new Youth Office is to help the UN system carry forward the Youth 2030 plan as a common youth engagement blueprint adjustable to the different mandates of each UN system agency as well as to the geographic distribution of young people (urban vs. rural) within different national contexts. The plan includes a specific focus on young parliamentarians as a key constituency that can help advance youth concerns across the entire policy spectrum.

The underlying theme of the Youth 2030 plan and of the Youth Office is about achieving *meaningful* youth participation, understood as much more than providing input from the outside but as a way of effectively mainstreaming youth concerns directly within policies for climate, education, employment and the like. In practical terms, meaningful participation proceeds in three steps: consultation, participation and accountability. Bringing the voices of youth to bear in the policy-making process will help restore young people’s trust in the UN and in government in general.

Dr. Paullier highlighted the Summit of the Future, taking place later in 2024, as an important opportunity for the UN and member States to build on current commitments on youth. The Summit’s outcome, known as the Pact for the Future, will include a chapter on youth. In addition, there will be a more in-depth annex called the Declaration on Future Generations.

The following points emerged from the ensuing debate with delegates:

Many parliaments have instituted good practices for youth engagement that need to be scaled up and shared with other parliaments. It is not true that young people are not interested in politics. First and foremost, parliaments need to be more inclusive of young people, which is what the IPU’s campaign *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* is all about.

Having been turned off by formal processes, youth are finding outlets in protest movements, civil society organizations and social media. New digital technologies and social media present an opportunity for young people to make themselves heard and to connect to one another, but they also come with risks of exploitation and disinformation. Parliamentarians need to address these risks urgently and with the participation of young people themselves.

Employment and labour policy in general is a key concern for youth who are struggling to find good jobs. Part of the problem in some countries is that schooling is not sufficiently geared to the needs of the marketplace. The advent of AI and other such new developments pose a challenge to young people and indeed to workers at large, as they may result in a net loss of jobs in the economy.

The question of employment generation also illustrates a bigger problem of reconciling the needs of young people with those of older people. In this regard, many participants stressed the need for inter-generational dialogue as a mainstay of the youth agenda. Older people have much to share with the younger generation that can help communities and societies thrive.

Finally, most participants expressed strong support for the new Youth Office and encouraged Dr. Paullier on the journey ahead. The Office will no doubt become a hub for the IPU and parliaments to help bring more young parliamentarians closer to UN processes. At the same time, Dr. Paullier and his team were encouraged to make use of the extensive IPU network of members of parliament to disseminate information and engage parliaments in the work of the Office.

### **The United Nations' humanitarian work: How sustainable is it?**

The President introduced the topic of this discussion on challenges that the UN faces in its humanitarian work, including lack of funding.

The President noted that the UN was dealing with a growing number of conflict theatres, natural disasters and other emergencies, requiring an unprecedented humanitarian effort. He introduced the panel, made up of representatives from four UN system entities responsible for humanitarian work: Ms. G. Connell, Chief, Assessment, Planning and Monitoring Branch, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; Mr. G.C. Cirri, Director, Geneva Global Office, World Food Programme; Ms. M. Lorenzo, Director, Representative Office for Europe, UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA); and Mr. M. Manly, Head of Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service, UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

The four presenters spoke almost in unison about the tremendous strain under which the UN humanitarian system finds itself at present as a result of concurrent crises. Besides the headline grabbing crises in Ukraine and Gaza, there are crises in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and elsewhere, the vast majority in low or middle-income developing countries. The case of Gaza however was particularly grave because the civilian population under attack there had nowhere to flee.

A principal concern expressed was the inadequate funding to support humanitarian assistance, which mostly comes from unstable voluntary sources. Paradoxically, while global military expenditure has now reached a record-breaking US\$2.3 trillion per year, the UN is being asked to deliver assistance to millions of people on a budget of just a few billion dollars.

Despite inadequate funding, the UN's humanitarian system is not broken. Workers continue to provide support to refugees, malnourished or starving populations, civilians caught in the crossfire of war, and many others in need, making the most of each dollar. A key point about this work is that much of it could be spared if greater efforts were made upstream at the political level to prevent conflicts and other crisis situations. In fact, humanitarian crises are almost always the result of policy failure, for which governments are not held accountable. Parliamentarians have a key oversight role to play in all humanitarian crises and in addressing their root causes.

The UN system's humanitarian work is grounded in key principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence. The case for humanitarian assistance – whether in cash or in kind – is easily made: it is a testament to our shared humanity and moral obligation to one another; it reduces future costs to the international community by forestalling possible social unrest and more conflict; and it props up donor countries' standing on the world stage.

The following points emerged from the ensuing debate with delegates:

The UN's humanitarian work deserves high praise and full support by parliamentarians in both donor and recipient countries. Parliamentarians should ensure that such good work is never politicized or weaponized by parties in conflict or other nations pursuing their strategic objectives. Some participants openly denounced the hypocrisy of those who are arming aggressors and assisting victims at the same time. Others spoke against the risks involved in the "privatization" of humanitarian work.

Many participants spoke about the specific case of Gaza and expressed their solidarity with UNRWA for the tremendous work it is doing there despite impossible conditions. They denounced the collective punishment to which the people of Gaza had been subjected and called on the international community to demand a ceasefire that would allow for humanitarian assistance to be delivered urgently and at the required scale.

Several speakers highlighted the bilateral assistance (hospitals, food supplies, etc.) that their countries are providing in various crisis situations, including Gaza. It was noted that such assistance should aim not just at meeting immediate needs, but also at building resilience to prevent new crises, with investments in key institutions and infrastructure.

#### **Parliamentary motion on Security Council reform**

The President introduced a motion calling for parliamentary action to speed up the decades-long effort to reform the Security Council as the chief United Nations deliberative body in matters of international security. He explained that he had originally prepared the motion and circulated it to the Bureau for input. The present draft had been approved by the Bureau and members were now invited to adopt it.

A member from Pakistan spoke in favour of the motion while expressing a reservation to it. A member from Japan expressed his full support for the motion. Having run out of time and hearing no objections, the Chair declared the motion adopted.

#### **Elections to the Bureau of the Standing Committee**

At the end of the session, the President announced that two new members had been nominated by their respective geopolitical groups to the Bureau: Mr. H. Arshakyan of Armenia, and Mr. M. Salinas of Paraguay. The two members were then elected by acclamation.

With all agenda items completed, the President thanked all participants and declared the session closed.

## Raising awareness of the International Court of Justice provisional measures for Israel in relation to Palestinians in Gaza, and of the need for urgent action on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza

**Results of the roll-call vote on the request of the delegation of South Africa with the support of the Arab Group and the African Group for the inclusion of an emergency item**

### Results

Affirmative votes..... 904      Total of affirmative and negative votes .. 1,374  
Negative votes ..... 470      Two-thirds majority..... 916  
Abstentions ..... 237

| Country                          | Yes | No            | Abst. | Country                    | Yes | No            | Abst. | Country                     | Yes | No            | Abst. |
|----------------------------------|-----|---------------|-------|----------------------------|-----|---------------|-------|-----------------------------|-----|---------------|-------|
| Albania                          |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | Georgia                    |     |               | 11    | Paraguay                    |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Algeria                          | 16  |               |       | Germany                    |     | 19            |       | Peru                        |     | 15            |       |
| Andorra                          |     | 10            |       | Ghana                      | 15  |               |       | Philippines                 | 20  |               |       |
| Angola                           | 15  |               |       | Greece                     |     | 13            |       | Poland                      |     | 15            |       |
| Argentina                        |     | 8             |       | Guinea                     |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | Portugal                    |     | 13            |       |
| Armenia                          | 11  |               |       | Guinea-Bissau              | 11  |               |       | Qatar                       | 9   |               |       |
| Australia                        |     | 14            |       | Guyana                     | 10  |               |       | Republic of Korea           | 17  |               |       |
| Austria                          |     | 12            |       | Hungary                    |     | 10            |       | Romania                     |     | 13            |       |
| Azerbaijan                       | 13  |               |       | Iceland                    |     | 10            |       | Russian Federation          | 20  |               |       |
| Bahamas                          |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | India                      |     |               | 23    | Rwanda                      |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Bahrain                          | 11  |               |       | Indonesia                  | 22  |               |       | San Marino                  |     | 10            |       |
| Bangladesh                       | 21  |               |       | Iran (Islamic Republic of) | 19  |               |       | Sao Tome and Principe       |     |               | 10    |
| Belgium                          |     | 13            |       | Iraq                       | 16  |               |       | Saudi Arabia                | 15  |               |       |
| Benin                            |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | Ireland                    | 4   |               | 8     | Serbia                      |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | 8   | 5             |       | Israel                     |     | 12            |       | Seychelles                  | 10  |               |       |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina           | 8   |               |       | Italy                      |     | 10            |       | Sierra Leone                |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Botswana                         | 11  |               |       | Japan                      |     |               | 20    | Singapore                   |     |               | 12    |
| Brazil                           | 22  |               |       | Jordan                     | 13  |               |       | Slovakia                    |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Bulgaria                         | 10  |               |       | Kazakhstan                 |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | Slovenia                    |     | 11            |       |
| Burkina Faso                     | 14  |               |       | Kenya                      | 17  |               |       | Somalia                     |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Burundi                          | 13  |               |       | Lao People's Dem. Republic | 12  |               |       | South Africa                | 17  |               |       |
| Cabo Verde                       | 10  |               |       | Latvia                     |     | 11            |       | South Sudan                 |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Cambodia                         | 13  |               |       | Lebanon                    | 8   |               |       | Spain                       |     | 16            |       |
| Cameroon                         |     |               | 14    | Lesotho                    | 11  |               |       | Sri Lanka                   |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Canada                           |     | 15            |       | Liechtenstein              |     | 10            |       | Suriname                    | 10  |               |       |
| Chad                             | 13  |               |       | Lithuania                  |     | 11            |       | Sweden                      |     | 13            |       |
| Chile                            | 2   | 6             | 5     | Luxembourg                 |     | 10            |       | Switzerland                 |     | 12            |       |
| China                            | 23  |               |       | Madagascar                 |     |               | 14    | Syrian Arab Rep.            | 14  |               |       |
| Côte d'Ivoire                    | 14  |               |       | Malawi                     |     |               | 13    | Thailand                    |     |               | 18    |
| Cuba                             | 13  |               |       | Malaysia                   | 15  |               |       | Timor-Leste                 |     |               | 11    |
| Cyprus                           | 5   |               | 6     | Maldives                   | 10  |               |       | Tonga                       | 10  |               |       |
| Czech Republic                   |     | 13            |       | Mali                       | 10  |               |       | Trinidad & Tobago           |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| DR of the Congo                  | 19  |               |       | Malta                      | 8   |               |       | Tunisia                     | 13  |               |       |
| Denmark                          |     | 12            |       | Mexico                     | 10  | 10            |       | Türkiye                     | 19  |               |       |
| Djibouti                         | 11  |               |       | Monaco                     |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | Turkmenistan                |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Dominican Rep.                   |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | Mongolia                   |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | Uganda                      | 16  |               |       |
| Ecuador                          | 10  |               |       | Montenegro                 |     |               | 10    | Ukraine                     |     |               | 16    |
| Egypt                            | 20  |               |       | Morocco                    | 15  |               |       | United Arab Emirates        | 12  |               |       |
| Equatorial Guinea                | 11  |               |       | Mozambique                 | 15  |               |       | United Kingdom              |     | 18            |       |
| Estonia                          |     | 11            |       | Namibia                    | 11  |               |       | United Republic of Tanzania | 18  |               |       |
| Eswatini                         |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | Nepal                      |     |               | 15    | Uruguay                     |     |               | 11    |
| Ethiopia                         |     |               | 20    | Netherlands                |     | 13            |       | Uzbekistan                  |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Fiji                             |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | New Zealand                |     | 12            |       | Viet Nam                    |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Finland                          |     | 12            |       | Nigeria                    |     | 22            |       | Yemen                       | 13  |               |       |
| France                           |     | 18            |       | Norway                     |     | 12            |       | Zambia                      | 13  |               |       |
| Gabon                            |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | Oman                       | 11  |               |       | Zimbabwe                    | 13  |               |       |
| Gambia (The)                     | 11  |               |       | Pakistan                   | 22  |               |       |                             |     |               |       |
|                                  |     |               |       | Palestine                  | 12  |               |       |                             |     |               |       |

N.B. This list does not include delegations present at the session which were not entitled to vote pursuant to the provisions of Articles 5.2 and 5.3 of the Statutes. Parliaments participating in the IPU in a non-voting observer capacity in accordance with the decision of the 209th session of the Governing Council in Nusa Dua do not appear on this list.

## Call for urgent action regarding the conflict in the Middle East

### Results of roll-call vote on the request of the delegations of Denmark, France, Hungary, Ireland, Portugal, Sweden and United Kingdom for the inclusion of an emergency item

#### Results

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Affirmative votes..... 778 | Total of affirmative and negative votes .. 1,249 |
| Negative votes ..... 471   | Two-thirds majority..... 833                     |
| Abstentions ..... 362      |  |

| Country                          | Yes | No     | Abst. | Country                    | Yes | No     | Abst. | Country                     | Yes | No     | Abst. |
|----------------------------------|-----|--------|-------|----------------------------|-----|--------|-------|-----------------------------|-----|--------|-------|
| Albania                          |     | Absent |       | Georgia                    | 11  |        |       | Paraguay                    |     | Absent |       |
| Algeria                          |     | 16     |       | Germany                    | 19  |        |       | Peru                        | 15  |        |       |
| Andorra                          | 10  |        |       | Ghana                      | 15  |        |       | Philippines                 | 20  |        |       |
| Angola                           |     |        | 15    | Greece                     | 13  |        |       | Poland                      | 15  |        |       |
| Argentina                        | 8   |        |       | Guinea                     |     | Absent |       | Portugal                    | 13  |        |       |
| Armenia                          | 10  |        | 1     | Guinea-Bissau              |     | 11     |       | Qatar                       |     | 9      |       |
| Australia                        | 14  |        |       | Guyana                     | 10  |        |       | Republic of Korea           | 17  |        |       |
| Austria                          | 12  |        |       | Hungary                    | 10  |        |       | Romania                     | 13  |        |       |
| Azerbaijan                       |     |        | 13    | Iceland                    | 10  |        |       | Russian Federation          |     | 20     |       |
| Bahamas                          |     | Absent |       | India                      | 23  |        |       | Rwanda                      |     | Absent |       |
| Bahrain                          |     | 11     |       | Indonesia                  |     | 22     |       | San Marino                  | 10  |        |       |
| Bangladesh                       |     | 21     |       | Iran (Islamic Republic of) |     | 19     |       | Sao Tome and Principe       |     |        | 10    |
| Belgium                          | 13  |        |       | Iraq                       |     | 16     |       | Saudi Arabia                |     | 15     |       |
| Benin                            |     | Absent |       | Ireland                    | 12  |        |       | Serbia                      |     | Absent |       |
| Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | 5   |        | 8     | Israel                     |     |        | 12    | Seychelles                  |     | 10     |       |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina           | 8   |        |       | Italy                      | 10  |        |       | Sierra Leone                |     | Absent |       |
| Botswana                         |     | 11     |       | Japan                      | 20  |        |       | Singapore                   | 12  |        |       |
| Brazil                           |     |        | 22    | Jordan                     |     | 13     |       | Slovakia                    |     | Absent |       |
| Bulgaria                         | 10  |        |       | Kazakhstan                 |     | Absent |       | Slovenia                    | 11  |        |       |
| Burkina Faso                     |     | 14     |       | Kenya                      |     |        | 17    | Somalia                     |     | Absent |       |
| Burundi                          |     |        | 13    | Lao People's Dem. Republic |     |        | 12    | South Africa                |     | 17     |       |
| Cabo Verde                       | 10  |        |       | Latvia                     | 11  |        |       | South Sudan                 |     | Absent |       |
| Cambodia                         | 13  |        |       | Lebanon                    |     | 8      |       | Spain                       | 16  |        |       |
| Cameroon                         |     |        | 14    | Lesotho                    |     |        | 11    | Sri Lanka                   |     | Absent |       |
| Canada                           | 15  |        |       | Liechtenstein              | 10  |        |       | Suriname                    | 7   | 3      |       |
| Chad                             |     | 13     |       | Lithuania                  | 11  |        |       | Sweden                      | 13  |        |       |
| Chile                            | 11  |        | 2     | Luxembourg                 | 10  |        |       | Switzerland                 | 12  |        |       |
| China                            |     | 20     | 3     | Madagascar                 |     |        | 14    | Syrian Arab Rep.            |     | 14     |       |
| Côte d'Ivoire                    |     | 14     |       | Malawi                     | 13  |        |       | Thailand                    | 18  |        |       |
| Cuba                             |     |        | 13    | Malaysia                   |     |        | 15    | Timor-Leste                 |     |        | 11    |
| Cyprus                           | 6   |        | 5     | Maldives                   |     |        | 10    | Tonga                       | 10  |        |       |
| Czech Republic                   | 13  |        |       | Mali                       |     | 10     |       | Trinidad & Tobago           |     | Absent |       |
| DR of the Congo                  |     |        | 19    | Malta                      | 8   |        |       | Tunisia                     |     | 13     |       |
| Denmark                          | 12  |        |       | Mexico                     | 20  |        |       | Türkiye                     |     |        | 19    |
| Djibouti                         |     | 11     |       | Monaco                     |     | Absent |       | Turkmenistan                |     | Absent |       |
| Dominican Rep.                   |     | Absent |       | Mongolia                   |     | Absent |       | Uganda                      |     |        | 16    |
| Ecuador                          |     |        | 10    | Montenegro                 | 10  |        |       | Ukraine                     | 16  |        |       |
| Egypt                            |     | 20     |       | Morocco                    |     | 15     |       | United Arab Emirates        | 12  |        |       |
| Equatorial Guinea                |     |        | 11    | Mozambique                 |     |        | 15    | United Kingdom              | 18  |        |       |
| Estonia                          | 11  |        |       | Namibia                    |     | 11     |       | United Republic of Tanzania |     |        | 18    |
| Eswatini                         |     | Absent |       | Nepal                      | 15  |        |       | Uruguay                     | 11  |        |       |
| Ethiopia                         |     |        | 20    | Netherlands                | 13  |        |       | Uzbekistan                  |     | Absent |       |
| Fiji                             |     | Absent |       | New Zealand                | 12  |        |       | Viet Nam                    |     | Absent |       |
| Finland                          | 2   | 10     |       | Nigeria                    | 22  |        |       | Yemen                       |     | 13     |       |
| France                           | 18  |        |       | Norway                     | 10  | 2      |       | Zambia                      |     | 13     |       |
| Gabon                            |     | Absent |       | Oman                       |     | 11     |       | Zimbabwe                    |     |        | 13    |
| Gambia (The)                     |     | 11     |       | Pakistan                   |     | 22     |       |                             |     |        |       |
|                                  |     |        |       | Palestine                  |     | 12     |       |                             |     |        |       |

N.B. This list does not include delegations present at the session which were not entitled to vote pursuant to the provisions of Articles 5.2 and 5.3 of the Statutes. Parliaments participating in the IPU in a non-voting observer capacity in accordance with the decision of the 209th session of the Governing Council in Nusa Dua do not appear on this list.

## Free, fair and transparent elections without prohibitions: Towards an orderly and peaceful democratic transition in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

**Results of the roll-call vote on the request of the delegations of Argentina, on behalf of the delegations of Argentina, Guyana, Peru and Uruguay for the inclusion of an emergency item**

### R e s u l t s

Affirmative votes..... 225                      Total of affirmative and negative votes ..985  
Negative votes ..... 760                      Two-thirds majority.....657  
Abstentions ..... 626

| Country                          | Yes | No            | Abst. | Country                    | Yes | No            | Abst. | Country                     | Yes | No            | Abst. |
|----------------------------------|-----|---------------|-------|----------------------------|-----|---------------|-------|-----------------------------|-----|---------------|-------|
| Albania                          |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | Georgia                    | 11  |               |       | Paraguay                    |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Algeria                          |     | 16            |       | Germany                    |     |               | 19    | Peru                        | 15  |               |       |
| Andorra                          |     | 10            |       | Ghana                      |     |               | 15    | Philippines                 |     |               | 20    |
| Angola                           |     |               | 15    | Greece                     |     | 13            |       | Poland                      |     | 15            |       |
| Argentina                        | 8   |               |       | Guinea                     |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | Portugal                    |     | 13            |       |
| Armenia                          | 11  |               |       | Guinea-Bissau              | 7   | 4             |       | Qatar                       |     | 9             |       |
| Australia                        |     |               | 14    | Guyana                     | 10  |               |       | Republic of Korea           | 17  |               |       |
| Austria                          | 12  |               |       | Hungary                    |     |               | 10    | Romania                     |     | 13            |       |
| Azerbaijan                       |     | 13            |       | Iceland                    |     | 10            |       | Russian Federation          |     | 20            |       |
| Bahamas                          |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | India                      |     |               | 23    | Rwanda                      |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Bahrain                          |     | 11            |       | Indonesia                  |     | 22            |       | San Marino                  |     | 10            |       |
| Bangladesh                       |     | 21            |       | Iran (Islamic Republic of) |     | 19            |       | Sao Tome and Principe       |     |               | 10    |
| Belgium                          |     | 13            |       | Iraq                       |     | 16            |       | Saudi Arabia                |     | 15            |       |
| Benin                            |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | Ireland                    |     |               | 12    | Serbia                      |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Bolivia (Plurinational State of) | 5   |               | 8     | Israel                     |     |               | 12    | Seychelles                  |     | 10            |       |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina           |     | 8             |       | Italy                      | 10  |               |       | Sierra Leone                |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Botswana                         |     | 11            |       | Japan                      |     |               | 20    | Singapore                   |     |               | 12    |
| Brazil                           |     |               | 22    | Jordan                     |     | 13            |       | Slovakia                    |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Bulgaria                         |     | 10            |       | Kazakhstan                 |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | Slovenia                    |     | 11            |       |
| Burkina Faso                     |     | 14            |       | Kenya                      |     |               | 17    | Somalia                     |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Burundi                          |     |               | 13    | Lao People's Dem. Republic |     |               | 12    | South Africa                |     |               | 17    |
| Cabo Verde                       |     |               | 10    | Latvia                     |     | 11            |       | South Sudan                 |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Cambodia                         |     |               | 13    | Lebanon                    |     | 8             |       | Spain                       | 16  |               |       |
| Cameroon                         |     |               | 14    | Lesotho                    |     |               | 11    | Sri Lanka                   |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Canada                           |     |               | 15    | Liechtenstein              |     | 10            |       | Suriname                    | 5   |               | 5     |
| Chad                             |     | 13            |       | Lithuania                  |     |               | 11    | Switzerland                 |     | 12            |       |
| Chile                            | 11  |               | 2     | Luxembourg                 |     |               | 10    | Sweden                      |     | 13            |       |
| China                            |     | 23            |       | Madagascar                 |     |               | 14    | Switzerland                 |     | 12            |       |
| Côte d'Ivoire                    |     | 14            |       | Malawi                     |     |               | 13    | Syrian Arab Rep.            |     | 14            |       |
| Cuba                             |     |               | 13    | Malaysia                   | 15  |               |       | Thailand                    |     |               | 18    |
| Cyprus                           |     | 3             | 8     | Maldives                   |     |               | 10    | Timor-Leste                 |     |               | 11    |
| Czech Republic                   |     | 13            |       | Mali                       |     | 10            |       | Tonga                       |     |               | 10    |
| DR of the Congo                  |     | 19            |       | Malta                      |     | 8             |       | Trinidad & Tobago           |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Denmark                          |     | 12            |       | Mexico                     | 10  |               | 10    | Tunisia                     |     | 13            |       |
| Djibouti                         |     | 11            |       | Monaco                     |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | Türkiye                     |     | 19            |       |
| Dominican Rep.                   |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | Mongolia                   |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | Turkmenistan                |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Ecuador                          |     |               | 10    | Montenegro                 | 7   |               | 3     | Uganda                      |     | 16            |       |
| Egypt                            |     | 20            |       | Morocco                    |     | 15            |       | Ukraine                     | 16  |               |       |
| Equatorial Guinea                |     |               | 11    | Mozambique                 |     |               | 15    | United Arab Emirates        |     | 12            |       |
| Estonia                          |     |               | 11    | Namibia                    |     |               | 11    | United Kingdom              | 18  |               |       |
| Eswatini                         |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | Nepal                      |     |               | 15    | United Republic of Tanzania |     |               | 18    |
| Ethiopia                         |     |               | 20    | Netherlands                |     | 13            |       | Uruguay                     | 9   | 2             |       |
| Fiji                             |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | New Zealand                |     | 12            |       | Uzbekistan                  |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| Finland                          | 12  |               |       | Nigeria                    |     | 22            |       | Viet Nam                    |     | <i>Absent</i> |       |
| France                           |     |               | 18    | Norway                     |     |               | 12    | Yemen                       |     | 13            |       |
| Gabon                            |     | <i>Absent</i> |       | Oman                       |     | 11            |       | Zambia                      |     | 13            |       |
| Gambia (The)                     |     | 11            |       | Pakistan                   |     | 22            |       | Zimbabwe                    |     |               | 13    |
|                                  |     |               |       | Palestine                  |     | 12            |       |                             |     |               |       |

N.B. This list does not include delegations present at the session which were not entitled to vote pursuant to the provisions of Articles 5.2 and 5.3 of the Statutes. Parliaments participating in the IPU in a non-voting observer capacity in accordance with the decision of the 209th session of the Governing Council in Nusa Dua do not appear on this list.

## **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS** ***LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS***

Dr./Dr Tulia Ackson  
President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union  
Speaker of the National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania  
*Présidente de l'Union interparlementaire*  
*Présidente de l'Assemblée nationale de la République-Unie de Tanzanie*

Mr./M. Martin Chungong  
Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union  
*Secrétaire général de l'Union interparlementaire*

**I. MEMBERS – MEMBRES****ALBANIA – ALBANIE**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Mr. Edi PALOKA<br>Leader of the Delegation    | Member of Parliament (C)                    |
| Mr. Bledjon NALLBATI                          | Member of Parliament (C)                    |
| Mr. Ervin SALIANJI                            | Member of Parliament (C)                    |
| Ms. Mesila DODA                               | Member of Parliament (C)                    |
| Ms. Monika KRYEMADHI                          | Member of Parliament (C)                    |
| Mr. Genci GOLI<br>Secretary of the Delegation | Director, Parliament                        |
| C   | Democratic Party of the Republic of Albania |

**ALGERIA – ALGERIE**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| M. Brahim BOUGHALI<br>Chef de la délégation<br>Président du Groupe UIP   | Président de l'Assemblée populaire nationale   |
| M. Ahmed KHARCHI<br>Membre du Comité exécutif  | Vice-Président du Conseil de la Nation<br>Membre de la Commission des affaires juridiques,<br>administratifs, et des droits de l'homme (FLN)   |
| M. Monder BOUDEN<br>Membre du Groupe consultatif de haut niveau sur la<br>lutte contre le terrorisme et l'extrémisme violent   | Vice-Président de l'Assemblée nationale populaire<br>(RND)   |
| Mme Fawzia BENBADIS  | Membre du Conseil de la Nation<br>Membre de la Commission des affaires juridiques et<br>des droits de l'homme  |
| M. Abderahmane GUENCHOUBA  | Membre du Conseil de la Nation<br>Membre de la Commission des affaires financières<br>(RND)  |
| M. Kamel KHELIFATI   | Membre du Conseil de la Nation<br>Membre de la Commission des affaires étrangères et<br>de la coopération internationale, commission des<br>affaires étrangères et de la coopération internationale<br>(FLN) |
| Mme Farida ILIMI HADDOUCHE<br>Membre du Bureau de la Commission permanente<br>de la démocratie et des droits de l'homme<br>1 <sup>ère</sup> Vice-Présidente du Bureau des Femmes<br>parlementaires | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale populaire (FLN)  |
| M. Mohamed Anouar BOUCHOUIT<br>Vice-président de la Commission permanente<br>de la paix et de la sécurité internationale,<br>Membre du Conseil du Forum des Jeunes<br>parlementaires               | Membre de Assemblée populaire nationale  |
| M. Salim DJALAL<br>Conseiller  | Secrétaire général, Assemblée populaire nationale  |
| M. Abderazak Chaker MAHFOUDI<br>Conseiller   | Directeur adjoint, Assemblée populaire nationale   |
| M. Mohamed Amine ASSOUL  | Chargé du protocole  |



|  |  |
|--|--|
| Mme Hayatt SIAD<br>Secrétaire de la délégation         | Chargée d'étude, Assemblée populaire nationale |
| Mme Mounia BENZIADA<br>Secrétaire de la délégation     | Directrice du Conseil de la Nation             |
| Mme Nacira GHIOUM                                      | Conseiller                                     |
| M. Rachid BLADEHANE<br>Ambassadeur                     |  |
| M. Hakim BOUAZIZ<br>Conseiller des affaires étrangères |  |
| RND  | Rassemblement National Démocratique            |
| FLN  | Front de Libération Nationale                  |

**ANDORRA – ANDORRE**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Mme Sandra CODINA<br>Chef de la délégation    | Vice-Présidente du Conseil général (DA)   |
| Mme Maria Àngels ACHE                         | Membre du Conseil général<br>Membre, Commission de la santé<br>Membre, Commission de l'éducation, de la recherche,<br>de la culture, de la jeunesse et des sports (C) |
| M. Pere BARÓ                                  | Membre du Conseil général<br>Vice-président, Commission de l'économie<br>Membre, Commission des affaires étrangères (PS)  |
| Mme Arantxa RODRIGUEZ<br>Secrétaire du Groupe | Commissions législatives, Conseil général   |
| DA  | Démocrates pour l'Andorre   |
| C   | Concòrdia   |
| PS  | Parti social-démocrate  |

**ANGOLA**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Ms. Maria VALENTE<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group | Member of the National Assembly (MPLA)              |
| Mr. Adriano SAPINÁLA  | Member of the National Assembly (UNITA)             |
| Ms. Arlete CHIMBINDA  | Member of the National Assembly (UNITA)             |
| Mr. Kilamba VAN-DÚNEM   | Member of the National Assembly (MPLA)              |
| Ms. Leonor CRUZ   | Member of the National Assembly (MPLA)              |
| Mr. Pedro NERI<br>ASGP Member   | Secretary General of the National Assembly          |
| Mr. Lazáro VICENTE<br>Adviser   | Adviser, National Assembly                          |
| Ms. Sílvia SITA   | Adviser, National Assembly                          |
| Ms. Nildeice BARRICA<br>Secretary of the Group                              |   |
| MPLA  | Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola           |
| UNITA   | União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola |

**ARGENTINA – ARGENTINE**

Ms. Lucila CREXELL  
Leader of the Delegation  
Vice-President of the Standing Committee  
on United Nations Affairs  
Vice-President of GRULAC

Member of the Senate  
Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs  
Member, Committee on General Legislation (MPN)

Mr. Juan de Dios CINCUNEGUI

Adviser, Senate

Mr. Carlos FORADORI  
Ambassador

**ARMENIA – ARMÉNIE**

Mr. Alen SIMONYAN  
Leader of the Delegation  
President of the IPU Group

Speaker of the National Assembly (CC)

Mr. Hakob ARSHAKYAN

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly (CC)

Mr. Arsen TOROSYAN  
Vice-President of the Committee on Democracy  
and Human Rights

Member of the National Assembly  
Member, Standing Committee on European Integration  
(CC)

Ms. Hasmik HAKOBYAN  
Member of the Board of the Forum of Young  
Parliamentarians

Member of the National Assembly  
Member, Standing Committee on Science, Education,  
Culture, Diaspora, Youth and Sport (CC)

Mr. Levon KOCHARYAN

Member of the National Assembly  
Member, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs

Ms. Tsovinar VARDANYAN  
Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee  
on Sustainable Development

Member of the National Assembly  
Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Finance,  
Loan and Budgetary issues.

Mr. Davit ARAKELYAN  
Adviser

Secretary General of the National Assembly

Ms. Nelli GHULYAN

Press secretary of the Speaker, National Assembly

Ms. Ashkhen HAYRAPETYAN

Adviser, National Assembly

Mr. Arman MKRTCHYAN

Adviser, National Assembly

Mr. Mamikon MARGARYAN  
Adviser

Adviser, National Assembly

Mr. Tigran SEIRANIAN

Director, National Assembly

Ms. Zabela GHAZARYAN  
Secretary of the Delegation

Adviser, National Assembly

Mr. Andranik HOVHANNISYAN  
Ambassador

Mr. Vahe HAKOBYAN  
Diplomat

CC Civil Contract

**AUSTRALIA – AUSTRALIE**

Ms. Deborah O'NEILL  
Leader of the Delegation  
Member of the Committee to Promote Respect  
of International Humanitarian Law

Member of the Senate  
Chair, Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations  
and Financial Services  
Deputy Chair, Senate Standing Committee of Privileges  
(ALP)

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Mr. Julian HILL  | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Chair, Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit<br>Member, Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security (ALP) |
| Ms. Linda REYNOLDS<br>Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians | Member of the Senate<br>Chair, Senate Standing Committee of Senators' Interests<br>Deputy Chair, Senate Standing Committee for the Scrutiny of Delegated Legislation (LP) |
| Mr. Warren ENTSCH  | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Deputy Chair, Joint Select Committee on Northern Australia (LNP)  |
| Ms. Jane THOMSON<br>Secretary of the Delegation                      | Committee Secretary, Senate   |
| ALP  | Australian Labor Party  |
| LP   | Liberal Party of Australia  |
| LNP  | Liberal National Party of Queensland  |

**AUSTRIA – AUTRICHE**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Mr. Reinhold LOPATKA<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs | Member of the National Council (ÖVP)         |
| Ms. Doris BURES  | Deputy Speaker of the National Council (SPÖ) |
| Mr. Martin GRAF  | Member of the National Council (FPÖ)         |
| Ms. Ewa ERNST-DZIEDZIC   | Member of the National Council (GRÜNE)       |
| Mr. Nikolaus SCHERAK   | Member of the National Council (NEOS)        |
| Mr. Alexis WINTONIAK   | Deputy Secretary General                     |
| Mr. Adalbert WAGNER  | Adviser, National Council                    |
| Mr. Matthias MATUSCHEK<br>Secretary of the Delegation  | Adviser, National Council                    |
| Ms. Nadine GABRON  | Adviser, National Council                    |
| ÖVP  | Austrian People's Party                      |
| SPÖ  | Social Democratic Party of Austria           |
| GRÜNE  | The Greens                                   |
| FPÖ  | Austrian Freedom Party                       |
| NEOS   | The New Austria and Liberal Forum            |

**AZERBAIJAN – AZERBAÏDJAN**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Ms. Sahiba GAFAROVA<br>Leader of the Delegation            | Speaker of the Milli Majlis (YAP)  |
| Mr. Elnur ALLAHVERDIYEV<br>Deputy Leader of the Delegation | Member of the Milli Majlis<br>Member of the Committee for Economic Policy, Industries and Enterprising<br>Member of the Counting Commission (YAP)                          |
| Ms. Sevil MIKAYILOVA<br>Member of the Executive Committee  | Member of the Milli Majlis<br>Member of the Committee for Family and Women's and Children's Affairs<br>Member of the Committee on Foreign and Interparliamentary Relations |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Mr. Soltan MAMMADOV  | Member of the Milli Majlis<br>Member of the Labour and Social Policy Committee<br>Member of the Committee of Healthcare  |
| Mr. Kamran BAYRAMOV<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing<br>Committee on Peace and International Security | Member of the Milli Majlis<br>Member of the Committee for Regional Affairs<br>Member of the Committee on Foreign and<br>Interparliamentary Relations (YAP)                       |
| Ms. Amina AGHAZADA<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing<br>Committee on Democracy and Human Rights        | Member of the Milli Majlis<br>Member of the Committee for Law Policy and State-<br>Building<br>Member of the Committee for Defence, Security and<br>Counter-Corruption Committee |
| Mr. Shahin ISMAYILOV<br>Member of the Board of the Forum of<br>Young Parliamentarians                        | Member of the Milli Majlis<br>Deputy Chair of the Committee on Youth and Sports<br>(YAP)   |
| Ms. Sabina KHASAYEVA<br>Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians                                       | Member of the Milli Majlis<br>Member of the Committee for Regional Affairs (YAP)   |
| Mr. Farid HAJIYEV  | Secretary General of the Milli Majlis  |
| Mr. Firudin HAJIYEV  | Chief Administrator, Milli Majlis  |
| Mr. Rustam MAHMUDOVO   | Deputy Secretary General, Milli Majlis   |
| Mr. Teymur TAGHIYEV  | Head of the Secretariat, Milli Majlis  |
| Ms. Aynur NURAHMADOVA  | Assistant to the Speaker, Milli Majlis   |
| Mr. Elmar HUSEYNOV   | Assistant to the Speaker, Milli Majlis   |
| Mr. Agshin HUMMATOV  | Assistant to the Speaker, Milli Majlis   |
| Mr. Rauf MAMMADOV  | Assistant to the Speaker, Milli Majlis   |
| Mr. Ilkin MAMMADOV   | Head of the International Relations Department, Milli<br>Majlis  |
| Ms. Lala CHALABIZADA<br>Secretary of the Delegation  | Head of the Sector for International Parliamentary<br>Organizations of the Department of International<br>Relations, Milli Majlis  |
| Mr. Mir Kamal ALI-ZADA   | Head of Interparliamentary Sector of the Department of<br>International Relations, Milli Majlis  |
| Mr. Elvin ALIYEV   | Adviser, Milli Majlis  |
| Mr. Galib ISRAFILOV<br>Ambassador  |  |
| YAP            New Azerbaijan Party  |  |

**BAHAMAS**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Ms. Pia GLOVER-ROLLE<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group | Member of the House of Assembly<br>Deputy Leader of Government Business<br>Member of the Human Rights Committee (PLP) |
| Mr. Barry GRIFFIN  | Vice-President of the Senate (PLP)<br>Deputy Chairman of the Bahamas Trade Commission                                 |
| Ms. Maxine SEYMOUR   | Senator (FNM)   |
| Mr. Rashad FLOWERS<br>Adviser and Secretary of the Delegation                  | Assistant Secretary General   |

Ms. Natasha SANDS-JERVIS  
Adviser

Personal Assistant, Ministry of Labour and the Public  
Service

PLP Progressive Liberal Party  
FNM Free National Movement

### BAHRAIN – BAHREÏN

Mr. Jamal FAKHRO  
Leader of the Delegation

Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council

Mr. Abdul Nabi SALMAN AHMAD  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on  
Peace and International Security

First Deputy Speaker of the Council of Representatives

Mr. Bassam ALBINMOHAMED

Member of the Shura Council  
Member, Economics and Financial Affairs Committee

Ms. Dalal ALZAYED  
Member of the Committee to Promote Respect  
for International Humanitarian Law

Member of the Shura Council  
Chair, Committee legislative and legal affairs  
Member, Human Right Committee

Ms. Hala RAMZY FAYEZ  
Ex-Officio Member of the Bureau of Women  
Parliamentarians

Member of the Shura Council  
Member, Service Committee  
Member, Women and Child Affairs Committee

Mr. Hasan EBRAHIM

Member of the Council of Representatives  
Member, Foreign Affairs Defense & National Security  
Committee

Mr. Mahdi ALSHOWAIKH

Member of the Council of Representatives  
Member, Committee on Services

Ms. Kareema ALABBASI  
Adviser

Secretary General, Shura Council

Ms. Ameera ALQATTAF

Adviser, Council of Representatives

Ms. Fouzia ALJEEB  
Adviser

Adviser, Shura Council

Mr. Mahmood ALSEDDIQI  
Secretary of the Delegation

Adviser, Shura Council

Mr. Saleh HAMD I  
Secretary of the Delegation

Adviser, Council of Representatives

Mr. Sayed Ali MOHAMED  
Secretary of the Delegation

Adviser, Shura Council

### BANGLADESH

Ms. Shirin Sharmin CHAUDHURY  
Leader of the Delegation  
President of the IPU Group

Speaker of Parliament  
Chairman, Business Advisory Committee  
Chairman, Petition Committee (BAL)

Mr. Uzzaman AKHTAR

Member of Parliament  
Member, Public Accounts Committee  
Member, Committee on Petitions

Mr. H.M. BODIUJJAMAN

Member of Parliament  
Member, Standing Committee on Ministry of Primary  
and Mass Education (BAL)

Mr. Iqbalur RAHIM

Member of Parliament  
Member, Standing Committee on Ministry of Science  
and Technology  
Member, Business Committee (BAL)

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Mr. Mahboob UR RAHMAN                               | Member of Parliament<br>Member, Standing Committee on Ministry of Science and Technology<br>Member, Standing Committee on Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications & Information Technology (BAL) |
| Mr. MD Mujibul HAQUE                                | Member of Parliament<br>Member, Public Accounts Committee (PAC) (JP)   |
| Mr. MD Shafiqui ISLAM                               | Member of Parliament<br>Chairman, Standing Committee on Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives (BAL)  |
| Ms. Nilufar ANJUM                                   | Member of Parliament<br>Member, Standing Committee on Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (BAL)   |
| Mr. Noor E. Alam CHOWDHURY                          | Member of Parliament<br>Chairman, House Committee<br>Member, Estimate Committee (BAL)  |
| Ms. Shahadara MANNAN                                | Member of Parliament<br>Member, Library Committee<br>Member, Standing Committee on Ministry of Social Welfare (BAL)  |
| Mr. K.M. Abdus SALAM<br>Secretary of the Delegation | Secretary General of Parliament  |
| Mr. M.A. Kamal BILLAH                               | Additional Secretary, Parliament   |
| Mr. MD Enamul HAQUE                                 | Joint Secretary, Parliament  |
| Mr. MD Jasim UDDIN                                  | Deputy Secretary, Parliament   |
| Mr. MD Nazmul HOQUE                                 | Joint Secretary, Parliament  |
| Mr. MD Wares HOSSAIN                                | Deputy Secretary, Parliament   |
| BAL   | Bangladesh Awami League  |
| JP  | Jatiya Party   |

**BELGIUM – BELGIQUE**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Ms. Stephanie D'HOSE<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>Member of the IPU Task Force on Ukraine                                 | Speaker of the Senate<br>President of the Institutional Affairs Committee (Open VLD)  |
| Mr. Andries GRYFFROY<br>President of the Twelve-Plus Group  | Deputy Speaker of the Senate<br>Member, Committee on Democratic Renewal, Citizenship, and International Matters (N-VA)  |
| Mr. Christophe LACROIX<br>Co-rapporteur, Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Vice-President, Committee on Economy, Consumer Protection and Digital Agenda<br>Member, Committee on Foreign Relations (PS) |
| Mr. Michel DE MAEGD<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights                         | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Member, Committee on Foreign Relations<br>Member, Committee on European Matters (MR)  |
| Mr. Gert VAN DER BIESEN   | Secretary General of the Senate   |
| Mr. Alberik GORIS   | Deputy Secretary General, House of Representatives  |
| Mr. Peter VERCAMMEN<br>Secretary of the Group   | Deputy Director, Senate   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Ms. Sonja LANGENHAECK<br>Secretary of the Delegation | Adviser, Senate                             |
| Mr. Thierry DE GHELLINCK<br>Adviser                  | Attaché, Senate                             |
| Mr. Maarten SWINNEN                                  | Chief of Staff of the Speaker of the Senate |
| Ecolo  | Green Party                                 |
| Open VLD   | Flemish Liberal Party                       |
| N-VA   | New Flemish Alliance                        |
| PS   | Socialist Party                             |
| MR   | French Speaking Liberal Party               |

**BENIN – BÉNIN**

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| M. Sêdozan Jean-Claude APITHY<br>Chef de la délégation   | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale<br>Vice-président, Commission des relations extérieures,<br>de la coopération au développement, de la défense et<br>de la sécurité (UP le Renouveau)         |
| Mme Ahouéfa Adeline Natacha KPOCHAN<br>Membre du Groupe de travail sur la science et la<br>technologie | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale<br>Première rapporteur, Commission de l'éducation, de la<br>culture, de l'emploi et des affaires sociales (UP le<br>Renouveau)                               |
| M. Dédévi Eugénie Chantal AHYI   | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale<br>Deuxième questeur de l'Assemblée nationale (BR)   |
| Mme Djamiliatou SABI MOHAMED   | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale<br>Membre, Commission de l'éducation, de la culture, de<br>l'emploi et des affaires sociales (UP le Renouveau)<br>Président Caucus des Femmes Parlementaires |
| M. Eustache AKPOVI   | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale<br>Membre, Commission du plan, de l'équipement et de la<br>production (BR)   |
| M. Gnonlonfin Mathias KOUWANOU   | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale<br>Membre, Commission du plan, de l'équipement et de la<br>production (BR)   |
| M. Joel Timothée Sènou GODONOU   | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale<br>Membre de la Commission du Plan, de l'Equipement et<br>de la Production,  |
| M. Pascal Oscar Afolabi Mariano OGOUTOLOU<br>Secrétaire du Groupe, Secrétaire de la délégation         | Secrétaire général administratif de l'Assemblée<br>nationale   |
| M. Mathieu AHOUANSOU   | Directeur de cabinet du Président de l'Assemblée<br>nationale  |
| UP le  | Union progressiste le Renouveau (Mouvance)   |
| Renouveau  |  |
| BR   | Bloc Républicain   |

**BOLIVIA (PLURINATIONAL STATE OF) – BOLIVIE (ÉTAT PLURINATIONAL DE)**

|  |  |
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| Mr. Luis Alberto ZUÑIGA ROJAS<br>Leader of the Delegation  | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>Member of the Health Committee (CC) |
| Ms. Aleiza Alcira RODRIGUEZ MONTERO<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee<br>on Peace and International Security | Member of the Chamber of Deputies (CC)                                   |
| Ms. Alicia Lisseth TICONA QUISPE   | Member of the Chamber of Deputies (MAS IPSP)                             |
| Ms. Ana MERELIS GENARO   | Member of the Chamber of Deputies (MAS IPSP)                             |

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| Ms. Clotilde PADILLA SOLIS<br>Member of the High-Level Advisory Group on<br>Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>(CREEMOS)   |
| Mr. Faustino OLLISCO BARRERO<br>Member of the Working Group on Science and<br>Technology                               | Member of the Chamber of Deputies (MAS-IPSP)   |
| Mr. Gonzalo Adolfo Ramon MENDOZA LEIGUE  | Member of the Chamber of Deputies (MAS IPSP)   |
| Ms. Martha RUIZ FLORES   | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>(MAS IPSP)  |
| CC<br>CREEMOS<br>MAS-IPSP  | Comunidad Ciudadana<br>CREEMOS<br>Movimiento Al Socialismo - Instrumento Político para la Soberanía de los Pueblos |

**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA – BOSNIE-HERZÉGOVINE**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Mr. Denis ZVIZDIC<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group | Speaker of the House of Representatives<br>Member, Administrative committee (NiP) |
| Ms. Amila KLICIC<br>Adviser   |   |
| Ms. Dzenana LEPER<br>Secretary of the Delegation                            |   |
| Ms. Emina KUKULJAC<br>Adviser   |   |
| Mr. Kenan HODZIC<br>Adviser   |   |
| NiP   | People and Justice  |

**BOTSWANA**

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| Mr. Phandu Tombola Chaha SKELEMANI<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group | Speaker of the National Assembly<br>Chairperson, Business Advisory Committee<br>Chairperson, Committee of Selection (BDP)  |
| Mr. Onneetse RAMOGAPI  | Member of the National Assembly (UDC)  |
| Mr. Palelo Keitseope MOTAOSANE   | Member of the National Assembly<br>Chairperson, Portfolio Committee on Health and<br>HIV/AIDS<br>Member, Portfolio Committee on Local Governance and<br>Social Welfare (BDP)                                 |
| Ms. Nnaniki Wilhemina Tebogo MAKWINJA<br>Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions    | Member of the National Assembly<br>Chairperson, Parliamentary Caucus on Women (BDP)  |
| Mr. Dithapelo KEORAPETSE   | Member of the National Assembly (UDC)<br>Committee of Selection<br>Business Advisory Committee   |
| Mr. Thapelo LETSHOLO   | Member of the National Assembly<br>Finance and Estimates Committee, Standing<br>Committee on Sustainable Development<br>Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Finance,<br>Trade and Economic Development |
| Ms. Barbara Ntheeleng DITHAPO  | Clerk of the National Assembly   |



Mr. Christopher Shimane NFILA  
Adviser, Secretary of the Delegation

Deputy Director, National Assembly

Mr. Bethuel MOREME  
Adviser

BDP Botswana Democratic Party  
UDC Umbrella for Democratic Change

### BRAZIL – BRÉSIL

Mr. Claudio CAJADO  
Leader of the Delegation  
President of the IPU Group

Member of Parliament (PP)

Mr. Atila LIRA

Member of Parliament (PP)

Mr. Cleber VERDE

Member of Parliament (MDB)

Mr. Atila LINS

Member of Parliament (PSD)

Mr. João Carlos BACELAR

Member of Parliament (PL)

Mr. Rodrigo CUNHA

Member of Parliament (PODE)

Mr. Sergio CUNHA

Member of Parliament (PSD)

Ms. Silvia ARAUJO  
Secretary of the Group

PP Progressives  
PSD Social Democratic Party  
PL Liberal Party  
PODE Podemos  
MDB Brazilian Democratic Movement

### BULGARIA – BULGARIE

Ms. Rositsa KIROVA  
Leader of the Delegation

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly  
Member, Committee on Energy  
Member, Committee on Regional Policy, Public Works  
and Local Self-Government (GERB)

Ms. Stefana KARASLAVOVA-VODENICHARSKA  
ASGP Member

Secretary General of the National Assembly

Ms. Hrizantema NIKOLOVA  
Adviser

Director, National Assembly

Ms. Sacha NIKOLOVA

Adviser, National Assembly

Mr. Ivan IVANOV

Directorate, National Assembly

Ms. Stefka ALEXANDROVA  
Secretary of the Delegation

State expert, International Relations and Protocol  
Directorate, National Assembly

GERB Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria

### BURKINA FASO

M. Ousmane DIALLO  
Chef de la délégation

Vice-Président de l'Assemblée nationale

M. Sibiri COULIBALY

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale

M. Issa SAWADOGO

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale

M. Kalifa KABRE

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale

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| M. Moussa NOMBO                                      | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale   |
| Mme Sephorah Anita Soumai TRAORE                     | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale   |
| M. Wilfried Prosper BAKO                             | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale   |
| Mme Valerie SEMPORE SOUBEIGA<br>Secrétaire du Groupe | Secrétaire général de l'Assemblée nationale   |
| M. Abdoul Aime Roland KONATE                         | Directeur de la Diplomatie Parlementaire, Assemblée nationale                         |
| M. Bahouba Norbert TANKOANO                          | Agent à la Direction de la Diplomatie parlementaire, Assemblée nationale              |
| M. Wendmissida Antoine Elisee ZONG-NABA              | Conseiller du Président en Charges des Relations internationales, Assemblée nationale |

**BURUNDI**

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| Mme Sabine NTAKARUTIMANA<br>Chef de la délégation<br>Membre du Groupe consultatif de haut niveau sur la lutte contre le terrorisme et l'extrémisme violent | Vice-Présidente de l'Assemblée nationale (CNDD-FDD)                                       |
| M. Fabrice NKURUNZIZA  | Vice-Président du Sénat (CNDD-FDD)  |
| Mme Evelyne NININHAZWE<br>Conseillère  |   |
| M. Jules MINANI<br>Conseiller  |   |
| CNDD-FDD   | Le Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie – Forces de Défense de la Démocratie |

**CABO VERDE**

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|---|---|
| Mr. Celso RIBEIRO<br>Leader of the Delegation   | Member of the National Assembly (MPD)                           |
| Ms. Vanuza BARBOSA                              | Member of the National Assembly                                 |
| Mr. Walter ÉVORA                                | Member of the National Assembly (PAICV)                         |
| Ms. Maria SEMEDO<br>Secretary of the Delegation | Adjunct to the Office of the President of the National Assembly |
| MPD   | Parliamentary Group of the Movement for Democracy               |
| PAICV   | African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde                |

**CAMBODIA – CAMBODGE**

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| Mr. Sem YANG<br>Leader of the Delegation | Member of the Senate<br>Chairperson, Commission on Human Rights, Complaint Reception and Investigation of the Senate (CPP)                       |
| Mr. Kim Yeat CHHIT                       | Member of the Senate<br>Vice-Chairperson, Commission on Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Information and Media of the Senate (CPP) |
| Ms. Samvada KHENG                        | Member of the National Assembly<br>Vice-Chairperson, Commission on education, youth sport, cult, religious affairs, culture and tourism (CPP)    |
| Mr. Sokun TY                             | Member of the National Assembly<br>Secretary, Commission on Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation, Information and Media (CPP)              |

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| Mr. Malayvireak KOY<br>Secretary of the Delegation      | Director, Senate            |
| Ms. Pheanchhaymaly THANG<br>Secretary of the Delegation | Adviser, National Assembly  |
| Mr. Thul HEANG<br>Secretary of the Delegation           | Director, National Assembly |
| CPP          Cambodian People's Party                   |                             |

**CAMEROON – CAMEROUN**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Mme Marie Armande DIN BELL  | Vice-Présidente du Sénat<br>Membre, Commission des Affaires étrangères  |
| M. Manju NESTUS FRU   | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale<br>Membre de la Commission de l'Education, de la Formation Professionnelle et de la Jeunesse<br>Rapporteur de la Commission des Affaires étrangères                                 |
| Mme Oumoul KOULTCHOUMI épouse AHIDJO  | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale<br>Secrétaire, Commission des Finances et du Budget (UNDP)  |
| M. ISSAC MBUNKA XI FON CHAFAH   | Membre du Sénat<br>Commission des Lois Constitutionnelles, des Droits de l'Homme et des Libertés, de la Justice, de la Législation et du Règlements, de l'administration, Membre Commission des Affaires étrangères |
| M. Bernard WONGOLO<br>Conseiller  | Secrétaire général adjoint, Sénat   |
| M. Justin NJOMATCHOUA<br>Conseiller   | Directeur de Cabinet du Président du Sénat  |
| M. Gustave Léopold NGANE  | Conseiller technique au Cabinet du Président du Sénat   |
| Mme Edwige Ursule MEDOUANE AWOLE<br>EPSE ETOGA<br>Secrétaire de la délégation | Conseiller Technique au Sénat   |
| M. Medard MVONDO<br>Secrétaire de la délégation                               | Directeur, Assemblée Nationale  |
| UNDP          Union Nationale pour la Démocratie et le Progrès                |   |

**CANADA**

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| Mr. David MCGUINTY<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group<br>President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs | Member of the House of Commons<br>Chair, National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians<br>Member, Joint Interparliamentary Council (LPC)                                     |
| Ms. Andr anne LAROUCHE  | Member of the House of Commons<br>Vice-Chair, Standing Committee on the Status of Women<br>Member, Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women (BLOC) |
| Mr. Larry MAGUIRE   | Member of the House of Commons<br>Member, Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (CPC)   |
| Mr. Matthew GREEN   | Member of the House of Commons<br>Joint Chair, Special Joint Committee on the Declaration of Emergency<br>Member, Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics (NDP)         |

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| Ms. Michelle REMPEL GARNER<br>Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing<br>Committee on Democracy and Human Rights | Member of the House of Commons<br>Member, Standing Committee on Science and<br>Research (CPC)   |
| Ms. Pam DAMOFF  | Member of the House of Commons<br>Member, Subcommittee on International Human Rights<br>of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and<br>International Development<br>Member, Standing Committee on Access to Information,<br>Privacy and Ethics (LPC) |
| Ms. Raymonde SAINT-GERMAIN  | Member of the Senate<br>Member, Standing Committee on Internal Economy,<br>Budgets and Administration<br>Member, Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures<br>and the Rights of Parliament (ISG)  |
| Mr. Robert BLACK  | Member of the Senate<br>Chair, Standing Committee on Agriculture and Forestry<br>Member, Standing Committee on Rules, Procedures<br>and the Rights of Parliament (CSG)  |
| Mr. Eric JANSE  | Clerk of the House of Commons   |
| Ms. Catherine CUERRIER<br>Secretary of the Group, Secretary of the Delegation   | Procedural Clerk, House of Commons  |
| Mr. Matthew PRINGLE   | Adviser, House of Commons   |
| Ms. Natalie MYCHAJLYSZYN  | Adviser, House of Commons   |
| LPC   | Liberal Party of Canada   |
| BLOC  | Bloc Québécois  |
| CPC   | Conservative Party of Canada  |
| NDP   | New Democratic Party  |
| ISG   | Independent Senators Group  |
| CSG   | Canadian Senators Group   |

**CHAD – TCHAD**

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| M. Jacques LAOUHINGAMAYE DINGAOMAIBE<br>Président du Groupe UIP<br>Membre du Bureau de la Commission permanente<br>des Nations Unies | Membre du Conseil national de transition<br>Membre, Commission Politique Générale, Institutions,<br>Lois, Droits Fondamentaux et Libertés (MPS) |
| Mme Achta MAHAMAT NOUR   | Membre du Conseil national de transition (RMDT)   |
| M. Alghassim KHAMIS<br>Secrétaire administratif  | Secrétaire général du Conseil national de transition  |
| MPS  | Mouvement Patriotique du Salut  |
| RMDT   | Rassemblement National des Démocrates Tchadiens – Le réveil   |

**CHILE – CHILI**

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| Mr. Ricardo CIFUENTES LILLO<br>Leader of the Delegation  | Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies<br>President, Internal Regime and Administration<br>Member, Emergency, Disasters and Firefighters (DC) |
| Ms. Loreto CARVAJAL<br>Member of the Committee to Promote Respect of<br>International Humanitarian Law | Member of the Senate<br>Member, Economics Committee   |
| Mr. Rojo EDWARDS   | Member of the Senate  |

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| Ms. Claudia MIX JIMÉNEZ                   | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>Member, Social Development, Overcoming Poverty and Planning<br>Member, Women and Gender Equality (Commons) |
| Mr. Francisco UNDURRAGA GAZITÚA           | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>President, National Defense<br>Member, Social Development, Overcoming Poverty and Planning (EVOP)          |
| Mr. Harry JÜRGENSEN RUNDSHAGEN            | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>President, Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development<br>Member, Ethics and Transparency (IND)            |
| Ms. Marcia RAPHAEL MORA                   | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>Member, Education<br>Member, Housing, Urban Development and National Assets (RN)                           |
| Mr. Raúl SOTO MARDONES                    | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>Member, Foreign Relations, Interparliamentary Affairs and Latin American Integration                       |
| Mr. Miguel LANDEROS PERKIC                | Secretary General, Chamber of Deputies  |
| Mr. Juan OSES<br>Adviser                  | Director, Senate  |
| Ms. Jacqueline PEILLARD GARCIA<br>Adviser | Director of International Affairs, Chamber of Deputies  |
| DC  | Christian Democratic  |
| Commons                                   | Commons Party   |
| EVOP                                      | Political Evolution   |
| IND                                       | Independent   |
| RN  | National Renewal  |
| PPD                                       | Party for Democracy   |

**CHINA – CHINE**

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| Mr. Jie XIAO<br>Leader of the Delegation       | Deputy Speaker of the National People's Congress   |
| Mr. Shan ZHONG                                 | Member of the National People's Congress<br>Chairman, Financial and Economic Affairs Committee                     |
| Mr. Fuli CHEN                                  | Member of the National People's Congress   |
| Mr. Zhenchun GU                                | Member of the National People's Congress<br>Vice chairman, Supervisory and Judicial Affairs Committee              |
| Mr. Xuejun TIAN                                | Member of the National People's Congress<br>Vice chairman, Education, Science, Culture and Public Health Committee |
| Mr. Gao LI                                     | Member of the National People's Congress<br>Member, Environmental Protection and Resources Conservation Committee  |
| Ms. Yuping LI                                  | Member of the National People's Congress<br>Member, Constitution and Law Committee                                 |
| Mr. Wei ZHANG<br>Secretary of the Delegation   |  |
| Ms. Jiarong YAN<br>Secretary of the Delegation |  |

Mr. Yan ZHANG  
Secretary of the Delegation

### CÔTE D'IVOIRE

M. Adama BICTOGO  
Chef de la délégation  
Président du Groupe UIP

Président de l'Assemblée nationale (RHDP)

M. Berry SIDIBE

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale  
Membre de la Commission des Affaires Sociales et  
Culturelles (RHDP)

Mme Coulibaly DAO NEE MACOURA

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale  
Membre de la Commission de la Sécurité et de la  
Défense (RHDP)

M. Koffi Kra Paulin KOUASSI

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale  
Président de la Commission de l'Évaluation des  
Politiques Publiques (RHDP)

M. Koffi Marius KONAN

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale  
Membre de la Commission des Affaires Générales et  
Institutionnelles (PDCI-RDA)

M. Samy MERHY

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale  
Membre de la Commission des Affaires Économiques  
et Financières (RHDP)

M. Wonsébéo Innocent YOUTE

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale  
Membre de la Commission des Relations Extérieures  
(PPA-CI)

M. Aboubacar Sidiki DIOMANDE

Secrétaire Général de l'Assemblée nationale

M. Amani Sébastien KOUASSI  
Secrétaire du Groupe

Chef de Service, Assemblée nationale

Ms. Mouminatou BARRY DIABY

Conseillère diplomatique

RHDP Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et  
la Paix

PDCI-RDA Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire - Rassemblement  
Démocratique Africain

PPA-CI Parti des peuples africains – Côte d'Ivoire

### CUBA

Ms. Ana María MARI MACHADO  
Leader of the Delegation

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of the  
People's Power

Ms. Cristina LUNA MORALES  
Member of the Advisory Group on Health

Member of the National Assembly of the People's  
Power

Mr. Miguel Charbonet MARTELL

Member of Parliament, National Assembly of the  
People's Power

Mr. Jesús Rafael MORA GONZÁLEZ  
Secretary of the Group

Director, National Assembly of the People's Power

Mr. Juan Antonio QUINTANILLA ROMÁN  
Diplomat

Ms. Greisy CORDERO SUÁREZ  
Diplomat

**CYPRUS – CHYPRE**

|  |  |
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| Mr. Averof NEOFYTOU<br>Leader of the Delegation      | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Deputy Chairperson, House Standing Committee on Energy, Trade, Industry and Tourism<br>Member, House Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs (DISY) |
| Mr. Stefanos STEFANOY                                | Member of the House of Representatives (AKEL)  |
| Ms. Alexandra ATTALIDES                              | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Member, House Standing Committee on Internal Affairs<br>Member, House Standing Committee on Human Rights and on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women (N/A)    |
| Ms. Avgousta CHRISTOU<br>Secretary of the Delegation | Senior International Relations Officer, House of Representatives   |
| Mr. Kostas KOULLAPIS<br>Secretary of the Delegation  | International Relations Officer, House of Representatives  |
| DISY   | Democratic Rally   |
| N/A  | Independent  |
| AKEL   | Progressive Party of the Working People  |

**CZECH REPUBLIC – RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Mr. Viktor VOJTKO<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group<br>Member of the Working Group on Science and Technology | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>Member, Committee on Social Policy<br>Member, Committee for Public Administration and Regional Development (STAN) |
| Ms. Miluše HORSKÁ  | Member of the Senate<br>Chairwoman, Committee on Social Policy (KDU-CSL)   |
| Mr. Petr FIFKA   | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>Vice-Chair, Committee on European Affairs<br>Vice-Chair, Committee on Health Care (ODS)                           |
| Mr. Zdeněk NYTRA   | Member of the Senate<br>Member, Committee on Agenda and Procedure<br>Member, Committee on EU Affairs (ODS)   |
| Mr. Martin PLISEK  | Secretary General, Chamber of Deputies   |
| Mr. Radek JIRÁNEK  | Secretary General, Senate  |
| Ms. Alena TUCKOVA<br>Secretary of the Group  | Adviser, Chamber of Deputies   |
| Ms. Radka ZEMANOVA<br>Secretary of the Group   | Adviser, Senate  |
| STAN   | Mayors and Independents  |
| KDU-CSL  | Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party and Independents Caucus   |
| ODS  | Civic Democratic Party   |

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO – RÉPUBLIQUE DÉMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| M. Andre MBATA BETUKUMESU<br>Chef de la délégation | Vice-Président de l'Assemblée nationale                  |
| M. Willy MAKIASHI                                  | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (PALU)                   |
| M. Jacques DJOLISENG'EKELI                         | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale                          |
| Mme Marie Thérèse WANGOIE                          | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale<br>Membre, Environnement |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| M. Aime Patience MANGYADI BIFULU   | Membre du Sénat<br>Membre, Politique administrative, juridique et droit de l'homme |
| Mme Ida KITWA GODELENA   | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale  |
| Mme Jeannette KAVIRA MAPERA<br>Membre du Bureau des Femmes Parlementaires          | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale  |
| M. Jean Nguvulo KHOJI  | Sécrétaire général, Assemblée nationale  |
| M. Jean MUKWALA BATEKE   | Sécrétaire général, Sénat  |
| M. Blaise KABANZI MABALA   | Assistant au Bureau d'Etudes, Assemblée nationale                                  |
| M. Ngalala DOYEN   | Conseiller, Assemblée nationale  |
| M. Jules MALEWA MAKENGO  | Conseiller, Assemblée nationale  |
| M. Laurent IMOTE ETSHINDO  | Conseiller coordonnateur, Assemblée nationale                                      |
| M. Juvens MABAYA<br>Secrétaire de la délégation                                    |  |
| M. Basile OLELA OKONDJI  | Directeur adjoint, Assemblée nationale   |
| Mme Marie Suzanne PASI VALU<br>Secrétaire du Groupe                                | Directrice, Sénat  |
| UDPS Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social<br>PALU Parti Lumumbiste Unifié |  |

**DENMARK – DANEMARK**

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|--|--|
| Mr. Søren SØNDERGAARD<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group              | Member of the Danish Parliament<br>Vice Chairman, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly<br>Substitute, Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly (EL) |
| Mr. Jens MEILVANG  | Member of the Danish Parliament<br>Vice Chairman, Transport Committee<br>Member, Rural Districts and Islands Committee (LA)                |
| Mr. Kim VALENTIN   | Member of the Danish Parliament<br>Member, Foreign Affairs Committee<br>Member, Fiscal Affairs Committee (V)                               |
| Mr. Kris Jensen SKRIVER  | Member of the Danish Parliament<br>Member, Climate, Energy and Utilities Committee<br>Member, Environment and Food Committee (S)           |
| Mr. Thomas MONBERG   | Member of the Danish Parliament<br>Member, Cultural Affairs Committee<br>Member, Employment Committee (S)                                  |
| Mr. Peter RIIS<br>Secretary of the Delegation  | International Counsellor, Danish Parliament  |
| Mr. Claudius LARSON<br>Secretary of the Delegation   | Higher Executive Officer, Danish Parliament  |
| EL Red-Green Alliance<br>LA Liberal Alliance<br>V Liberal Party<br>S Social Democratic Party |  |

**DJIBOUTI**

|                      |                                       |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| M. Elmi MAHABEH WAIS | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (RPP) |
| M. Hassan ADEN GUEDI | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (UDJ) |





**EQUATORIAL GUINEA – GUINÉE ÉQUATORIALE**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Mr. Atanasio-Ela NTUGU NSA<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group | Member of the Senate<br>Permanent Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, Permanent Committee on Sustainable Development (PDGE) |
| Ms. Amparo MELE COLIFA   | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>Committee of Women Parliamentarians (PDGE)  |
| Ms. María Flavia MBA OBONO   | Member of the Senate (PDGE)  |
| Mr. Bienvenido-Ekua ESONO ABE<br>Secretary of the Group                              | Secretary General, Chamber of Deputies   |
| Mr. Obama NZANG JESUS  | Secretary General, Senate  |
| PDGE      Partido Democrático de Guinea Ecuatorial                                   |  |

**ESTONIA – ESTONIE**

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| Ms. Maris LAURI<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group | Member of the Estonian Parliament<br>Member, Finance Committee<br>Deputy Chairman, State Budget Control Select Committee (REF)               |
| Mr. Toomas KIVIMÄGI   | Deputy Speaker of the Estonian Parliament (REF)  |
| Ms. Helle-Moonika HELME   | Member of the Estonian Parliament<br>Member, Cultural Affairs Committee (EKRE)   |
| Ms. Helmen KÜTT   | Member of the Estonian Parliament<br>Member, Social Affairs Committee (SOC)  |
| Mr. Peeter TALI   | Member of the Estonian Parliament<br>Member, National Defence Committee<br>Member, Security Authorities Surveillance Select Committee (E200) |
| Mr. Antero HABICHT  | Secretary General, Estonian Parliament   |
| Ms. Enel OTSTAVEL   | Adviser, Estonian Parliament   |
| REF      Reform Party   |  |
| EKRE      Estonian Conservative People's Party                            |  |
| SOC      Social Democratic Party  |  |
| E200      Estonia 200   |  |

**ESWATINI**

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| Mr. Ndumiso MDLULI<br>Leader of the Delegation       | Deputy Speaker of the Senate<br>Member, Economic Planning and Development<br>Member, Finance |
| Ms. HRH Princess Ncengcenge DLAMINI                  | Member of the Senate<br>Chairperson, ICT Committee   |
| Mr. Alec Nhlanhla Lucky LUSHABA                      | Member of the House of Assembly<br>Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation               |
| Mr. Mshengu Victor DLAMINI                           | Member of the House of Assembly<br>Member, Ministry of Agriculture Portfolio Committee       |
| Mr. Treasure SHABANGU<br>Secretary of the delegation |  |
| Mr. Lunga Vulindlela DLAMINI                         | Committee Adviser  |

**ETHIOPIA – ÉTHIOPIE**

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| Mr. Agegnehu TESHAGER GESSESSE<br>Leader of the Delegation | Speaker of the House of the Federation (PP)          |
| Ms. Banchyirga Melese GOSHU                                | Member of the House of the Federation (PP)           |
| Mr. Fikre Aman GAKA  | Member of the House of the Federation (PP)           |
| Mr. Mihretu GIDI   | Member of the House of Peoples' Representatives (PP) |
| Mr. Tesfaye DARA   | Member of the House of Peoples' Representatives (PP) |
| Mr. Belay Wodisha GISHADI<br>Secretary of the Delegation   | Secretary General, House of the Federation           |
| Ms. Mesrak YETNEBERK                                       | Secretary General, House of Peoples' Representatives |
| Mr. Hailemichael Gezahagn ADERA                            | Adviser, House of the Federation                     |
| Mr. Wondwossen Mesfin GEBREGZI                             | Protocol expert, House of Peoples' Representatives   |
| PP   | Ethiopian Prosperity Party                           |

**FIJI – FIDJI**

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|--|---|
| Mr. Naiqama LALABALAVU<br>Leader of the Delegation | Speaker of Parliament                                     |
| Ms. Alitia BAINIVALU                               | Member of Parliament<br>Chairperson, Social Affairs (PAP) |
| Mr. Inia SERUIRATU                                 | Member of Parliament<br>Leader of the Opposition (FFP)    |
| Ms. Jeanette EMBERSON<br>Adviser                   | Clerk of Parliament                                       |
| Ms. Neomai DOLOKOTO<br>Secretary of the Delegation | Adviser, Parliament                                       |
| Mr. Seniteli WAINIU<br>Secretary of the Delegation | Deputy Director, Parliament                               |
| PAP  | People's Alliance Party                                   |
| FFP  | Fiji First Party  |

**FINLAND – FINLANDE**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Mr. Sebastian TYNKKYNNEN<br>Leader of the Delegation | Member of Parliament<br>Member, Foreign Affairs Committee<br>Deputy Member, Committee for the Future (PS) |
| Ms. Anne KALMARI                                     | Member of Parliament<br>Vice Chair, Agriculture and Forestry Committee (kesk)                             |
| Mr. Markku EESTILÄ                                   | Member of Parliament<br>Chair, Agriculture Subcommittee<br>Member, Finance Committee (kok)                |
| Mr. Mikko OLLIKAINEN                                 | Member of Parliament<br>Member, Education and Culture Committee<br>Member, Environment Committee (SFP)    |
| Ms. Sanna ANTIKAINEN                                 | Member of Parliament<br>Member, Grand Committee<br>Deputy Member, Foreign Affairs Committee (PS)          |
| Mr. Antti PELTTARI                                   | Secretary General of Parliament   |

Mr. Teemu VUOSIO  
Secretary of the Delegation

Adviser, Parliament

Ms. Outi LEHTIMÄKI  
Secretary of the Delegation

Assistant Secretary, Parliament

PS           The Finns Party  
kesk        Centre Party  
kok        National Coalition Party  
SFP        Swedish People's Party of Finland

## FRANCE

M. Xavier IACOVELLI  
Chef de la délégation  
Président du Groupe UIP

Membre du Sénat  
Vice-président de la Commission des Affaires sociales  
(RE)

Mme Corinne FÉRET

Membre du Sénat  
Secrétaire, Commission des Affaires sociales (SER)

Mme Laetitia SAINT-PAUL  
Membre du Groupe consultatif de haut niveau sur la  
lutte contre le terrorisme et l'extrémisme violent

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale  
Membre de la Commission des Affaires étrangères (RE)

M. Louis-Jean DE NICOLAY  
Membre du Comité exécutif

Membre du Sénat  
Membre de la Commission du Développement durable  
Membre de la Commission des Affaires européennes  
(LR)

Mme Marie-Noëlle BATTISTEL

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale  
Vice-présidente de la Commission des Affaires  
économiques (PS)

Mme Véronique RIOTTON  
Membre du Bureau des Femmes parlementaires

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale  
Membre de la Commission du Développement durable  
et de l'aménagement du territoire,  
Président de la Délégation aux Droits des femmes (RE)

M. Bernard BUIS

Membre du Sénat  
Membre de la Commission des Affaires économiques  
(RDPI)

M. Damien CHAMUSSY

Secrétaire général, Assemblée nationale

M. Eric TAVERNIER

Secrétaire général, Sénat

M. Philippe DELIVET

Directeur, Sénat

Mme Cécile LAMBRECQ  
Secrétaire de la délégation

Conseillère, Sénat

M. Pierre-Nicolas GUESDON  
Secrétaire de la délégation

Administrateur, Assemblée nationale

Mme Capucine CAPON  
Co-Secrétaire de l'ASGP

Administratrice, Assemblée nationale

Mme Karine VELASCO

Assistante de direction et de gestion, Assemblée  
nationale

RDPI       Rassemblement des démocrates, progressistes et indépendants  
SER        Socialiste, Écologiste et Républicain  
RE         Renaissance  
LR         Les Républicains  
PS         Socialistes et apparentés

**GABON**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| M. Jean-François NDONGOU<br>Chef de la délégation | Président de l'Assemblée nationale           |
| M. Florentin MOUSSAVOU                            | 3ème Vice-président de l'Assemblée nationale |
| M. Gabriel MALLY                                  | 2ème Vice-président de l'Assemblée nationale |
| M. Patrick NDONGO                                 | Secrétaire général                           |
| M. Ghislain Claude ESSABE                         | Directeur des Relations Parlementaires       |

**GAMBIA (THE) – GAMBIE**

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|--|---|
| Mr. Seedy SK NJIE<br>Leader of the Delegation    | Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly (NPP)                   |
| Mr. Assan TOURAY                                 | Member of the National Assembly (UDP)                           |
| Ms. Fatou CHAM                                   | Member of the National Assembly (UDP)                           |
| Mr. Kebba JALLOW                                 | Member of the National Assembly (NPP)                           |
| Mr. Musa CHAM                                    | Member of the National Assembly (PDOIS)                         |
| Mr. Sainey KONTEH<br>Secretary of the Delegation | Deputy Director, National Assembly                              |
| NPP  | National People's Party   |
| UDP  | United Democratic Party   |
| PDOIS  | People's Democratic Organisation for Independence and Socialism |

**GEORGIA – GÉORGIE**

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| Mr. George VOLSKI<br>Leader of the Delegation    | First Deputy Speaker of Parliament (GD)  |
| Mr. David ZILPIMIANI                             | Member of Parliament<br>Deputy Chairperson, Foreign Relations Committee<br>Member, Education, Science and Youth Affairs Committee (ES)       |
| Ms. Khatia TSILOSANI                             | Member of Parliament<br>First Deputy Chairperson, Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Committee<br>Member, Defense Committee (GD) |
| Mr. Nikoloz SAMKHARADZE                          | Member of Parliament<br>Chairperson, Foreign Relations Committee<br>Member, Committee on European Integration (GD)                           |
| Mr. Irakli BROKISHVILI<br>Secretary of the Group | Chief Specialist; Department for International Relations<br>Parliament   |
| GD   | Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia  |
| ES   | European Socialists  |

**GERMANY – ALLEMAGNE**

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|---|---|
| Mr. Volkmar KLEIN<br>Leader of the Delegation | Member of the German Bundestag<br>Member, Committee for Economic Cooperation and Development (CDU/CSU)  |
| Mr. Andreas LAREM                             | Member of the German Bundestag<br>Deputy Chair, Subcommittee on United Nations, International Organizations and Civilian Crisis Prevention<br>Member, Foreign Affairs Committee (SPD) |

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|--|---|
| Mr. Axel SCHÄFER   | Member of the German Bundestag<br>Member, Committee on European Union Affairs<br>Member, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) (SPD)                                     |
| Ms. Elisabeth WINKELMEIER-BECKER                             | Member of the German Bundestag<br>Chair, Legal Affairs Committee<br>Alternate member, Committee for Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid (CDU/CSU)   |
| Mr. Ulrich LECHTE  | Member of the German Bundestag<br>Member, Foreign Affairs Committee<br>Alternate member, Subcommittee on United Nations, International Organizations and Civilian Crisis Prevention (FDP) |
| Mr. Petr BYSTRON   | Member of the German Bundestag<br>Member, Foreign Affairs Committee<br>Alternate member, Committee for Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid (AfD)  |
| Ms. Silke ALBIN<br>ASGP Member                               | Deputy Secretary General for International Affairs and Director-General for External Relations, Europe and Analysis   |
| Mr. Georg KLEEMANN<br>ASGP Member                            | Deputy Secretary General of the German Bundesrat  |
| Ms. Katalin ZÁDOR<br>Secretary of the Delegation             | Adviser, German Bundestag   |
| Ms. Claudia BRAMMER<br>Assistant to the Delegation           |   |
| Ms. Katharina STASCH<br>Ambassador/ Permanent Representative |   |
| Mr. Lars-Uwe Kettner<br>Diplomat                             |   |
| CDU/CSU  | Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union   |
| SPD  | Social Democratic Party   |
| AfD  | Alternative for Germany   |
| FDP  | Free Democratic Party   |

**GHANA**

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|---|---|
| Mr. Alban Sumana Kingsford BAGBIN<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group | Speaker of Parliament   |
| Mr. Cassiel Baah FORSON   | Minority Leader, Member of Parliament<br>Vice-Chairman, Special Budget Committee<br>Ranking Member, Finance Committee (NDC) |
| Mr. Osei KYEI-MENSAH-BONSU  | Majority Leader, Member of Parliament<br>Chairperson, Special Budget Committee<br>Chairperson, House Committee (NPP)        |
| Mr. Habib IDDRISU   | Member of Parliament<br>Member, Committee on Mines and Energy<br>Member, Business Committee (NPP)                           |
| Mr. Ahmed IBRAHIM   | 1st Minority Whip & Member of Parliament<br>Member, Special Budget Committee<br>Member, Committee on Communications (NDC)   |

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| Ms. Patricia APPIAGYEI                                      | Member of Parliament<br>Chairperson, Government Assurance Committee<br>Member, Special Budget Committee (NPP)                            |
| Ms. Agnes Naa Momo LARTEY                                   | Member of Parliament<br>Member, Committee on Gender and Children<br>Member, Committee on Local Government and Rural<br>Development (NDC) |
| Ms. Abia Dzifa GOMASHIE                                     | Member of Parliament<br>Member, Poverty Reduction Strategy Committee<br>Member, Committee on Trade, Industry and Tourism<br>(NDC)        |
| Mr. Cyril Kwabena Oteng NSIAH                               | Clerk of Parliament  |
| Mr. Ebenezer Ahumah DJIETROR<br>Secretary of the Delegation | Deputy Clerk of Parliament   |
| Mr. Emmanuel KORANTENG<br>Secretary of the Delegation       | Senior Assistant Clerk, Parliament   |
| Ms. Nana Adjoa Serwaah OPOKU                                | Senior Assistant Clerk, Parliament   |
| Mr. Justice NOVOR   | Adviser, Parliament  |
| NDC   | National Democratic Congress   |
| NPP   | New Patriotic Party  |

**GREECE – GRÈCE**

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|---|---|
| Mr. Stavros KALAFATIS<br>Leader of the Delegation       | Member of the Hellenic Parliament<br>Member, Standing Committee on Economic Affairs<br>Member, Special Permanent Committee on<br>Environmental Protection (Conservative)          |
| Mr. Christos DERMENTZOPOULOS                            | Member of the Hellenic Parliament<br>Member, Standing Committee on Economic Affairs<br>Member, Standing Committee on National Defense and<br>Foreign Affairs (Conservative)       |
| Mr. Panagiotis DOUDONIS                                 | Member of the Hellenic Parliament<br>Member, Standing Committee on Social Affairs<br>Member, Standing Committee on Public Administration,<br>Public Order and Justice (Socialist) |
| Mr. Symeon KEDIKOGLOU                                   | Member of the Hellenic Parliament<br>Member, Standing Committee on Production and Trade<br>Member, Special Permanent Committee on<br>Environmental Protection (Left wing)         |
| Ms. Foteini TSOUNI<br>Secretary of the Group            |   |
| Ms. Thaleia PAPADOPOULOU<br>Secretary of the Delegation |   |
| Ms. Aikaterini VOUNISIOU<br>Diplomat                    |   |
| Ms. Dimitra GEORGANTZOGLOU<br>Diplomat                  |   |
| Conservative  | New Democracy   |
| Socialist   | Pasok-Kinal Movement for change   |
| Left wing   | Syriza  |

**GUINEA – GUINÉE**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| M. Mory DOUNOH<br>Chef de la délégation | Membre du Conseil national de la transition             |
| M. Mamadou Fadia BALDE                  | Membre du Conseil national de la transition             |
| M. Souleymane TOURE                     | Secrétaire Général du Conseil national de la transition |
| M. Aboubacar sidiki KEITA               | Directeur du Conseil national de la transition          |

**GUINEA-BISSAU – GUINÉE-BISSAU**

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|---|--|
| Mr. Domingos SIMOES PEREIRA<br>Leader of the Delegation | Speaker of the People's National Assembly (PAIGC)  |
| Mr. Almame CASSAMA                                      | Member of the People's National Assembly<br>President, UIP (PAIGC)   |
| Mr. Abdu MANÉ   | Member of the People's National Assembly<br>Member, UIP (MADEM-G15)  |
| Mr. Dionisio do Reino PEREIRA                           | Member of the People's National Assembly<br>President of the Permanent Commission for Social<br>Affairs, Sport, Education, Health and Youth                                      |
| Mr. Octávio LOPES                                       | Member of the People's National Assembly<br>President, Legal, Constitutional, Human Rights and<br>Public Administration Affairs<br>Vice-President, Constitutional Reform (PAIGC) |
| Ms. Ruth MONTEIRO<br>Adviser                            | Adviser<br>People's National Assembly  |

PAIGC Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo-Verde  
MADEM-G15 Movimento para a Alternância Democrática

**GUYANA**

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|---|--|
| Mr. Manzoor NADIR<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group                       | Speaker of Parliament<br>Chairman, Parliamentary Management Committee<br>Chairman, Committee of Privileges   |
| Ms. Dawn HASTINGS-WILLIAMS  | Member of Parliament<br>Member, Assembly Committee<br>Member, Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Natural<br>Resources (APNU)                            |
| Mr. Mohabir NANDLALL  | Member of Parliament<br>Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee For<br>Constitutional Reform<br>Member, Parliamentary Management Committee<br>(PPP/C) |
| Ms. Savitri PARAG<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing<br>Committee on Sustainable Development | Member of Parliament<br>Member, Parliamentary Management Committee<br>Member, Parliamentary Standing Committee For<br>Constitutional Reform (PPP/C)      |
| Mr. Sherlock ISAACS<br>Secretary of the Group   | Clerk of Parliament  |
| Ms. Carleeta CHARLES<br>Secretary of the Delegation   | Parliamentary Executive Officer  |
| APNU A Partnership for National Unity<br>PPP/C People's Progressive Party/Civic                   |  |



**HUNGARY – HONGRIE**

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| Mr. Mihaly BALLA<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group | Member of the National Assembly<br>Deputy Chair, Committee for Foreign Affairs (Fidesz)                                   |
| Ms. Monika BARTOS<br>First Vice-President of the Group                     | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Committee for Foreign Affairs<br>Member, Committee for Social Affairs (Fidesz) |
| Ms. Katalin SOMFAINE ADAM<br>Secretary of the Group                        | Head of the Hungarian IPU Office  |
| Fidesz      Hungarian Civic Alliance                                       |   |

**ICELAND – ISLANDE**

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| Ms. Hildur SVERRISDÓTTIR<br>Leader of the Delegation   | Member of Parliament<br>Chair, Industrial Affairs Committee<br>Deputy Chair, Welfare Committee (Conservative Party)              |
| Ms. Thorunn SVEINBJARNARDÓTTIR   | Member of Parliament<br>Chair, Constitutional and Supervisory Committee<br>Member, Environment and Communications Committee (SP) |
| Mr. Jóhann Friðrik Firðriksson   | Member of Parliament   |
| Ms. Auður Elva JÓNSDÓTTIR  | Deputy Secretary General of Parliament   |
| Ms. Arna Gerður BANG<br>Secretary of the Delegation  | Adviser<br>Parliament  |
| Conservative Party      Independence Party<br>SP                              Social Democratic Alliance |  |

**INDIA – INDE**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Mr. Harivansh SINGH<br>Leader of the Delegation | Deputy Chairman the Council of States (JD (U))            |
| Mr. Prashanta NANDA                             | Member of the Council of States (BJD)                     |
| Ms. Sumitra BALMIK                              | Member of the Council of States (BJP)                     |
| Mr. Ashok Kumar MITTAL                          | Member of the Council of States                           |
| Mr. S. Niranjan REDDY                           | Member of the Council of States (YSRCP)                   |
| Mr. Ghanshyam TIWARI                            | Member of the Council of States (BJP)                     |
| Dr. Sujeet KUMAR                                | Member of the Council of States                           |
| Mr. P.C. MODY<br>ASGP Member                    | Secretary General, Council of States                      |
| Ms. Garima JAIN                                 | Joint Secretary, Council of States                        |
| Mr. N.K. SINGH                                  | Secretary to the Deputy Chairman of the Council of States |
| Mr. L.V. RAMANA<br>Secretary to the Delegation  | Director, Lok Sabha Secretariat                           |
| Mr. Sujeet KUMAR                                | Private Secretary to the Chairman, Rajya Sabha            |
| Mr. Yogendra SINGH                              | Deputy Secretary, Rajya Sabha Secretariat                 |
| Mr. Chanderlekha SHARMA                         | Deputy Secretary, Rajya Sabha Secretariat                 |

Mr. Rajesh Kumar KALRA

Deputy Director, Rajya Sabha Secretariat

Mr. Arindam BAGCHI  
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of India  
to the United Nations Office at Geneva

Ms. Priyanka CHAUHAN  
Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative  
of India to the United Nations Office at Geneva

|        |                                       |
|--------|---------------------------------------|
| JD (U) | Janata Dal (United)                   |
| BJP    | Bhartiya Janta Party                  |
| BJD    | Biju Janta Dal                        |
| YSRCP  | Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party |

### INDONESIA – INDONÉSIE

Ms. Puan MAHARANI  
Leader of the Delegation

Speaker of the House of Representatives (PDI-P)

Ms. Ema Umiyyatul CHUSNAH

Member of the House of Representatives  
Member, Committee for Inter-Parliamentary  
Cooperation  
Member, Commission IV: Agriculture, Plantations,  
Maritime, Fisheries and Food, and Environment

Mr. Andi Achmad DARA

Member of the House of Representatives  
Member, Committee for Inter-Parliamentary  
Cooperation  
Member, Commission XI: Finance, National  
Development Planning, Banking and Non-Banking  
Financial Institutions (Golkar)

Mr. Charles HONORIS

Member of the House of Representatives  
Member, Committee for Inter-Parliamentary  
Cooperation  
Member, Commission IX: Demography, Health and  
Labor (PDI-P)

Mr. Fadli ZON  
Member of the Executive Committee

Member of the House of Representatives  
Chair, Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation  
Member, Commission I: Defense, Foreign, and  
Information Affairs (Gerindra)

Mr. Gilang DHIELAFAREZ  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing  
Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

Member of the House of Representatives  
Vice-Chair, Committee for Inter-Parliamentary  
Cooperation  
Member, Commission III: Laws, Human Rights and  
Security Affairs (PDI-P)

Ms. Irine Yusiana ROBA PUTRI  
Ex-Officio, Member of the Bureau of Women  
Parliamentarians

Member of the House of Representatives  
Member, Committee for Inter-Parliamentary  
Cooperation  
Member, Commission V: Transportation,  
Telecommunication, Public Works, Public Housing,  
Development of Rural and Disadvantaged Areas  
(PDI-P)

Mr. Melchias Markus MEKENG

Member of the House of Representatives  
Member, Committee for Inter-Parliamentary  
Cooperation  
Member, Commission XI: Finance, National  
Development Planning, Banking and Non-Banking  
Financial Institutions (Golkar)

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|---|--|
| Mr. Putu Supadma RUDANA<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing<br>Committee on Sustainable Development               | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Vice-Chair, Committee for Inter-Parliamentary<br>Cooperation<br>Member, Commission VI: Trade, Investments,<br>Cooperative, SMEs, and State-Owned Enterprises<br>(Demokrat)             |
| Ms. Ratih Megasari SINGKARRU<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing<br>Committee on Peace and International Security | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Member, Committee for Inter-Parliamentary<br>Cooperation<br>Member, Commission X: Education, Research and<br>Technology, Youth Affairs, Sports, Tourism, Arts, and<br>Culture (NasDem) |
| Mr. Sukamta MANTAMIHARJA<br>Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions  | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Vice-Chair, Committee for Inter-Parliamentary<br>Cooperation<br>Member, Commission I: Defense, Foreign, and<br>Information Affairs (PKS)   |
| Ms. Agustina Wilujeng PRAMESTUTI<br>Adviser   | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Member, Committee for Inter-Parliamentary<br>Cooperation<br>Member, Commission X: Education, Research and<br>Technology, Youth Affairs, Sports, Tourism, Arts, and<br>Culture (PDI-P)  |
| Ms. Suprihartini Hardjana DIWIJOYO  | Deputy Secretary General, House of Representatives   |
| Ms. Endah T.D. RETNOASTUTI<br>Secretary of the Group  | Director, House of Representatives   |
| Ms. Elvira Dianti AMRIS<br>Secretary of the Group   | Deputy Director, House of Representatives  |
| Ms. Haryanti HARYANTI<br>Secretary of the Delegation  | Deputy Director, House of Representatives  |
| Mr. Heriyono Adi ANGGORO<br>Adviser   | Adviser, House of Representatives  |
| Mr. Jaka ADIWIGUNA<br>Secretary of the Group  | Deputy Director, House of Representatives  |
| Ms. Masyithoh Annisa RAMADHANI<br>Adviser   | Adviser, House of Representatives  |
| Ms. Miranti WIDIANI<br>Secretary of the Delegation  | Secretariat Staff, House of Representatives  |
| Mr. Naufal Fakhri ERLANGGA<br>Secretary of the Delegation   | Secretariat Staff, House of Representatives  |
| Mr. Toferry Primanda SOETIKNO   | Adviser, House of Representatives  |
| PDI-P   | Partai Demokrasi Indonesia - Perjuangan (Indonesian<br>Democratic Party - Struggle)  |
| PAN   | Partai Amanat Nasional (National Mandate Party)  |
| Golkar  | Partai Golongan Karya (The Party of Functional Groups)   |
| Gerindra  | Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya (Great Indonesia Movement<br>Party)  |
| Demokrat  | Partai Demokrat (Democratic Party)   |
| NasDem  | Partai Nasional Demokrat (National Democratic Party)   |
| PKS   | Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (Prosperous Justice Party)   |
| PPP   | Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party)  |

**IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF) – IRAN (RÉPUBLIQUE ISLAMIQUE D’)**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Mr. Mojtaba REZAKHAH<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group<br>Vice-President of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security | Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran<br>Member, Program and Budget Standing Committee in the Islamic Parliament of Iran                   |
| Mr. Abbas GOLROO<br>Member of the High-level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism  | Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran<br>Member, National Security and Foreign Policy Standing Committee in the Islamic Parliament of Iran |
| Mr. Ahmad NADERI   | Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran<br>Member, Bureau of the board   |
| Ms. Elham AZAD<br>Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians   | Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran<br>First Secretary, Standing Committee on Article Ninety of the Constitution                         |
| Mr. Rahim ZARE   | Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran<br>Member, Program and Budget Standing Committee in the Islamic Parliament of Iran                   |
| Mr. Mojtaba YUSEFI   | Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran  |
| Mr. Ali SULTANIFARD<br>Adviser   |   |
| Mr. Jalal ABOUHASSANI CHIMEH<br>Adviser  |   |
| Mr. Seyed Mostafa SHARIFI<br>Adviser   |   |
| Mr. Behnam KHORSHIDI MEHR<br>Diplomat  |   |
| Mr. Akbar KHORRAMI MASHKANI<br>Diplomat  |   |

**IRAQ**

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|--|---|
| Mr. Ahmed SHAKHWAN<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group | Deputy Speaker of the Council of Representatives  |
| Mr. Saleh ABBAS<br>Member of the Working Group on Science and Technology     | Member of the Council of Representatives<br>Member, Parliamentary Foreign Relations Committee   |
| Mr. Arshed FATH ALLAH  | Member of the Council of Representatives<br>Chairman of the Committee, Human Rights Committee in the Iraqi Parliament                       |
| Mr. Nader MUTHANNA   | Member of the Council of Representatives<br>Member, Parliamentary Foreign Relations Committee   |
| Ms. N.H.M. KAKY<br>Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions          | Member of the Council of Representatives<br>Member, Parliamentary Education Committee<br>Member, Women, Family and Childhood Committee      |
| Ms. Hammood SIHAM<br>Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians          | Member of the Council of Representatives<br>First Deputy, Health and Environment Committee<br>Member, Women, Family and Childhood Committee |
| Mr. Mansoon WATBAN   | Member of the Council of Representatives<br>Member, Parliamentary Foreign Relations Committee   |

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| Ms. Fahad WIHDA<br>Member, Member of the Bureau of the Standing<br>Committee on Peace and International Security | Member of the Council of Representatives<br>Deputy Chairman of the Committee, Human Rights<br>Committee in the Iraqi Parliament<br>Member, Committee of Martyrs, Victims and Political<br>Prisoners |
| Mr. Younus SAFWAN<br>Secretary of the Group  | Secretary General, Council of Representatives   |
| Mr. Mohammed SALAM<br>Adviser  | Deputy Secretary General, Council of Representatives  |
| Mr. Ahmed MOHAMMED<br>Adviser  | Director, Council of Representatives  |
| Mr. Fahad JAWAD<br>Adviser   | Director, Council of Representatives  |
| Mr. Ghaith ABDALSATAR<br>Adviser   | Director, Council of Representatives  |
| Mr. Mustafa KALAF<br>Adviser   | Deputy Director, Council of Representatives   |
| Ms. Shelan ALWAN<br>Adviser  | Deputy Director, Council of Representatives   |
| Mr. Walaa HUSSEIN<br>Adviser   | Director, Council of Representatives  |
| Mr. Yousif MOHAMMED<br>Adviser   | Deputy Director, Council of Representatives   |
| Mr. Abdulkarim MOSTAFA<br>Ambassador   |   |
| Mr. Obay KHALLIL<br>Diplomat   |   |

**IRELAND – IRLANDE**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Mr. Jerry BUTTIMER<br>Leader of the Delegation  | Speaker of the Senate<br>Chair, Committee on Parliamentary Privileges and<br>Oversight (Seanad Éireann) (FG)  |
| Mr. Denis Patrick NAUGHTEN<br>Chair, Member of the Working Group on Science<br>and Technology | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Member, Business Committee<br>Chair, Committee on Social Protection, Community and<br>Rural Development and the Islands                                       |
| Ms. Lorraine CLIFFORD LEE<br>President, Member of the Advisory Group on Health                | Member of the Senate<br>Member, Committee on Health<br>Vice Chair, Committee on the Irish Language, Gaeltacht<br>and the Irish-speaking Community (FF)  |
| Ms. Roisin GARVEY   | Member of the Senate<br>Member, Committee on Enterprise, Trade and<br>Employment<br>Member, Committee on Parliamentary Privileges and<br>Oversight (GP)   |
| Ms. Rose CONWAY WALSH   | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Member, Committee on Finance, Public Expenditure<br>and Reform, and Taoiseach<br>Member, Committee on the Implementation of the Good<br>Friday Agreement (SF) |

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|---|---|
| Ms. Bridget DOODY                           | Deputy Clerk, Senate  |
| Ms. Aisling HART<br>Adviser                 | Private Secretary to the Cathaoirleach, Senate  |
| Mr. Ben DUNNE                               | Adviser, House of Representatives   |
| Ms. Eileen LAWLOR<br>Secretary of the Group | Adviser, House of Representatives   |
| Ms. Elaine GUNN                             | Clerk Assistant of the Dáil, Asst. Secretary-<br>Parliamentary Services, House of Representatives |
| FG  | Fine Gael   |
| FF  | Fianna Fáil   |
| GP  | Green Party   |
| SF  | Sinn Féin   |

**ISRAEL – ISRAËL**

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|---|-------------------------------|
| Mr. Danny DANON<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions<br>Member of the High-level Advisory Group on<br>Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism | Member of the Knesset (Likud) |
| Ms. Shelly TAL MERON  | Member of the Knesset         |
| Mr. Hanan RETTMAN<br>Adviser  |                               |
| Likud   | National Liberal Movement     |

**ITALY – ITALIE**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Mr. Pier Ferdinando CASINI<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group<br>Honorary IPU President  | Member of the Senate<br>Member, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and<br>Defense             |
| Ms. Deborah BERGAMINI<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee<br>on Peace and International Security, Member<br>of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>Member, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs (FI-<br>PPE)  |
| Mr. GiangiacoMO CALOVINI  | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>Member, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs (Fdl)         |
| Ms. Lia QUARTAPELLE PROCOPIO<br>Member of the Committee on the Human Rights<br>of Parliamentarians  | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>Deputy Chair, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs<br>(PD) |
| Mr. Roberto SORBELLO<br>Secretary General of the Group  | Head of the Ceremonial Office, Chamber of Deputies   |
| Ms. Susanna RADONI<br>Secretary of the Delegation   | Protocol Office, Chamber of Deputies   |
| Ms. Maria Teresa CALABRO  | International Relations Office, Chamber of Deputies  |
| Ms. Beatrice GIANANI  | Permanent Representative to European Union, Senate   |
| Mr. Vincenzo GRASSI<br>Ambassador   |  |

Ms. Angela ZANCA  
Diplomat

FI-PPE Forza Italia-Partito Popolare Europeo  
Fdl Fratelli d'Italia  
PD Partito Democratico

### JAPAN – JAPON

Ms. Seiko NODA  
Leader of the Delegation

Member of the House of Representatives (LDP),  
Member, Committee on Audit and Oversight of  
Administration

Mr. Tatsuya ITO

Member of the House of Representatives (LDP)  
Member, Committee on Budget  
Member, Commission on the Constitution

Mr. Yutaka BANNO

Member of the House of Representatives (CDP)  
Member, Committee on Land, Infrastructure, Transport  
and Tourism, Director, Special Committee for  
Investigation of Nuclear Power Issues

Mr. Hitoshi AOYAGI  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing  
Committee on United Nations Affairs

Member of the House of Representatives (JIP)  
Director, Committee on Foreign Affairs  
Member, Commission on the Constitution

Ms. Yumi YOSHIKAWA

Member of the House of Councillors (LDP)  
Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense  
Director, Research Committee on Foreign Affairs and  
National Security

Mr. Hiroyuki KONISHI

Member of the House of Councillors (CDP)  
Director, Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense  
Director, Commission on the Constitution

Mr. Hiromitsu FUJITA

Director, House of Representatives

Mr. Kanemitsu TANAKA

Deputy Director, House of Representatives

Ms. Narumi NISHIHARA

Adviser, House of Representatives

Mr. Ryo UENOHATA

Adviser, House of Representatives

Mr. Jun ISHIHARA

Director, House of Councillors

Mr. Tomoya KONDO

Deputy Director, House of Councillors

Ms. Akiko YAZAWA

Adviser, House of Councillors

LDP Liberal Democratic Party of Japan  
CDP The Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan  
JIP Japan Innovation Party

### JORDAN – JORDANIE

Mr. Khaled ALBAKKAR  
Leader of the Delegation

Member of the Senate  
Chairman, Administrative committee  
Member, Financial and Economic Committee  
(Taqqadum Party)

Mr. Talal ALMADI

Member of the Senate  
Member, Education Committee  
Member, Agriculture and Water Committee

Ms. Mahasen ALJAGHOUB

Member of the Senate  
Chair, Education Committee  
Member, Legal CommitteeMr. Shadi OBIEDAT  
Secretary of the Delegation

Deputy Director, Senate

**KAZAKHSTAN**Mr. Yerlan KOSHANOV  
Leader of the Delegation

Speaker of the House of Representatives (AMANAT party)

Ms. Aigul KUSPAN  
President of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

Member of the House of Representatives, Chairperson of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Security (AMANAT party)

Mr. Bolatbek NAZHMETDINULY

Member of the House of Representatives  
Member, Committee for Economic Reform and Regional Development (AMANAT party)

Mr. Bekbolat ORYNBEKOV

Member of the Senate  
Member of the Committee on Finances and Budget

Mr. Yermurat BAPI

Member of the House of Representatives  
Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Security

Mr. Baurzhan SMAGULOV

Member of the House of Representatives  
Member of the Committee on Issues of Ecology and Environmental Management

Ms. Dinara NAUMOVA

Member of the House of Representatives  
Member of the Committee on Legislation and Judicial and Legal Reform

Mr. Sergey PONOMAREV

Member of the House of Representatives  
Member of the Committee on Issues of Ecology and Environmental Management

Mr. Renat AITAYEV

Secretary General, House of Representatives

Mr. Rustam TLEGENOV  
Secretary of the Delegation

Head of the Protocol Sector, House of Representatives

Mr. Bolat KALYANBEKOV

Staff, House of Representatives

Mr. Serik BAKHTIYAR

Staff, House of Representatives

Mr. Kairat Sarzhanov  
Ambassador to SwitzerlandMs. Anna LEBEDEVA  
Diplomat**KENYA**Mr. Amason KINGI  
Leader of the Delegation  
President of the IPU GroupPresident of the Senate  
Chairperson, Senate Business Committee  
Chairperson, Procedure and Rules Committee (PAA)

Mr. Allan CHESANG

Member of the Senate  
Chairperson, Standing Committee on Information, Communication and Technology  
Member, Standing Committee on Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (UDA)



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|---|---|
| Mr. John CHIKATI  | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Budget and Appropriations Committee<br>Member, Constitutional Implementation Oversight Committee (Ford-K)  |
| Ms. Betty MAINA   | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Departmental Committee on Social Protection<br>Member, Constitutional Implementation Oversight Committee (UDA)                                       |
| Ms. Catherine MUMMA<br>Member of the Working Group on<br>Science and Technology                               | Member of the Senate<br>Vice-Chairperson, Standing Committee on Devolution<br>and Intergovernmental Relations<br>Member, Standing Committee on Justice, Legal Affairs<br>and Human Rights (ODM) |
| Mr. John Kiarie WAWERU<br>President of the Committee to Promote Respect<br>for International Humanitarian Law | Member of the National Assembly<br>Chairperson, Communication, Information & Innovation<br>Committee (UDA)  |
| Ms. Naisula LESUUDA<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing<br>Committee on Sustainable Development           | Member of the National Assembly<br>Vice-Chairperson, Public Investments Committee on<br>Governance and Education<br>Member, Budget and Appropriations Committee<br>(KANU)                       |
| Ms. Millie ODHIAMBO<br>President of the Committee on the<br>Human Rights of Parliamentarians                  | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Budget and Appropriations Committee<br>Member, Defence, Intelligence and Foreign Relations<br>Committee (ODM)  |
| Ms. Rebecca TONKEI<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing<br>Committee on United Nations Affairs             | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Public Investments Committee on Governance<br>and Education<br>Member, Education and Research Committee (UDA)  |
| Mr. Benedict FURAHA   | Director/Chief of Staff, Office of the Speaker  |
| Mr. Jeremiah NYEGENYE<br>Secretary of the Group   | Clerk of the Senate   |
| Ms. Serah KIOKO   | Deputy Clerk, National Assembly   |
| Mr. Mohamed Ali MOHAMED   | Deputy Clerk, Senate  |
| Mr. Kipkemoi KIRUI<br>Adviser   | Ag. Director, National Assembly   |
| Mr. Daniel CHANIA<br>Secretary of the Delegation  | Deputy Director, Legislative and Procedural Services of<br>the Senate   |
| Ms. Racheal KAIRU<br>Secretary of the Delegation  | Deputy Director, Legislative and Procedural Services of<br>the National Assembly  |
| Mr. Peter ADIKA<br>Adviser  | Chief Research Officer, Senate  |
| Mr. Ahmed Ibrahim BELEL   | Personal Assistant to the Speaker   |
| Ms. Madeline KISAMA   | Public Communications Officer   |
| PAA   | Pamoja Africa Alliance  |
| FORD-K  | Forum for the restoration of democracy  |
| UDA   | United Democratic Alliance  |
| ODM   | Orange Democratic Movement  |
| KANU  | Kenya African National Union  |

**LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC – RÉPUBLIQUE DÉMOCRATIQUE POPULAIRE LAO**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Ms. Sounthone XAYACHACK<br>Leader of the Delegation      | Vice-President of the National Assembly<br>Member, Foreign Affairs Committee (SP)                   |
| Mr. Sanya PRASEUTH                                       | Member of the National Assembly<br>Chairman, Foreign Affairs Committee (SP)                         |
| Mr. Linkham DOUANGSAVANH                                 | Member of the National Assembly<br>Chairman, Economic, Technology and Environment<br>Committee (SP) |
| Mr. Phetla THANTHAVONGSA<br>Secretary of the Delegation  | Director, National Assembly   |
| Mr. Khemphone ANOTHAY<br>Secretary of the Delegation     | Deputy Director, National Assembly  |
| Ms. Saliphone OUTHACHACK<br>Secretary of the Delegation  | Adviser, National Assembly  |
| Ms. Soudsada KEOMANY<br>Secretary of the Delegation      | Adviser, National Assembly  |
| Ms. Annia KEOSAVANG                                      | Interpreter   |
| Mr. Chanthone LOUANGPHANE<br>Secretary of the Delegation | Adviser, National Assembly  |
| SP   | Lao People's Revolutionary Party  |

**LATVIA – LETTONIE**

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|---|--|
| Ms. Jana SIMANOVSKA<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group | Member of Parliament<br>Member, Budget and Finance (Taxation) Committee<br>Member, Public Expenditure and Audit Committee<br>(PRO) |
| Ms. Linda LIEPINA   | Member of Parliament<br>Member, Human Rights and Public Affairs Committee<br>Member, Parliamentary Inquiry Committee (LPV)         |
| Ms. Lelde RAFELDE   | Secretary General of Parliament  |
| Ms. Sandra PAURA<br>Secretary of the Group, Secretary of the Delegation       | Director, Parliament   |
| PRO   | Progressive  |
| LPV   | Latvia First   |

**LEBANON – LIBAN**

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| Mr. Michel MOUSSA<br>Chef de la délégation | Membre de l'Assemblée nationale<br>Président, Commission des droits de l'Homme<br>(Populist) |
| Mr. Adnan Daher                            | Secrétaire général de l'Assemblée nationale  |
| Populist                                   | Amal movement  |

**LESOTHO**

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|--|---|
| Ms. Matlhohonolofatso Tsepang MOSENA<br>Leader of the Delegation | Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly (MEC)   |
| Mr. Lebohlang Simon PHOHLELI                                     | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Law Cluster<br>Member, Natural Resources Cluster (RFP) |

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| Mr. Tello Lawrence KIBANE     | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Natural Resources Cluster (BAP) |
| Mr. Lebohng Fine MAEMA (Adv.) | Clerk to the National Assembly   |
| MEC                           | Movement for Economic Change   |
| RFP                           | Revolution for Prosperity  |
| BAP                           | Basotho Action Party   |

**LIECHTENSTEIN**

|  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Mr. Albert FRICK<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group | Speaker of Parliament (FBP) |
| Ms. Dagmar BÜHLER-NIGSCH   | Member of Parliament (VU)   |
| Ms. Gabriele WACHTER<br>Secretary of the Delegation                        | Adviser, Parliament         |
| Ms. Jessica F. BUCHER<br>Secretary of the Delegation                       | Adviser, Parliament         |
| (VU)   | Patriotic Union             |
| FBP  | Progressive Citizens Party  |

**LITHUANIA – LITUANIE**

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| Ms. Guoda BUKIENIENE<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing<br>Committee on Sustainable Development | Member of Parliament<br>Deputy Chair, Committee on European Affairs<br>Member, Committee on State Administration and Local<br>Authorities (LFGU) |
| Mr. Emanuelis ZINGERIS   | Member of Parliament<br>Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs<br>Deputy Chair, Committee on European Affairs (HULCD)                              |
| Ms. Asta SKIRMANTIENE<br>Secretary of the Delegation   | Adviser, Parliament  |
| LFGU   | Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union  |
| HULCD  | Homeland Union-Lithuanian Christian Democrat   |

**LUXEMBOURG**

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| Mr. Georges ENGEL<br>Leader of the Delegation  | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>Vice-Président, Commission de la Culture<br>Vice-Président, Commission de la Défense (LSAP) |
| Mr. Laurent SCHEECK                            | Secretary General, Chamber of Deputies   |
| Mr. Yann GERGES<br>Secretary of the Delegation | Adviser, Chamber of Deputies   |
| LSAP   | Lëtzebuurger Sozialistesche Arbechterpartei  |

**MADAGASCAR**

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|---|--|
| M. Mahaleo Richard Victor TSIEBO<br>Chef de la délégation | Membre du Sénat<br>Président du Groupe parlementaire IRMAR<br>Rapporteur, Commission juridique<br>Membre de la Commission Finances, Economie et<br>Développement (TGV) |
| M. Dinaraly Odilon TIANDAIZA                              | Membre du Sénat<br>Président, Commission juridique<br>Membre de la Commission sociale, culturelle et<br>communication (TGV)  |

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| Mme Sidonie RAHARINIRINA  | Membre du Sénat<br>Rapporteur de la Commission Sociale, culturelle et communication<br>Membre de la Commission Finances, Economie et Développement durable (MMM) |
| Mme Mirana RAZAFINDRAZAY<br>Conseillère                               | Secrétaire générale du Sénat   |
| M. Safidiniavo Toky ANDRIAMBELONIAINA<br>Secrétaire de la délégation  | Directeur de Cabinet, Sénat  |
| TGV        Tanora Malagasy Vonona<br>MMM       Malagasy Miara-Miainga |  |

**MALAWI**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Mr. Kenny Edward KANDODO<br>Head of the Delegation  | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Budget Committee<br>Member, International Relations Committee (MCP)                              |
| Mr. Claude MLOMBWA  | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Legal Affairs Committee<br>Member, International Relations Committee (MCP)                       |
| Ms. Esther JOLOBALA   | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Natural Resources Committee<br>Member, International Relations (UDF)                             |
| Mr. Misolo Mussa KAPICHILA  | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Legal Affairs<br>Member, International Relations (UDF)   |
| Mr. Victor MUSOWA<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing<br>Committee on Peace and International<br>Security     | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Education Science and Technology<br>Committee<br>Member, International Relations Committee (DPP) |
| Ms. Fiona KALEMBA<br>Adviser  | Clerk of the National Assembly  |
| Ms. Kettie Catherine MUSUKWA  | Adviser, National Assembly  |
| Ms. Nancy CHIKANDIRA<br>Secretary of the Group  | Adviser<br>National Assembly  |
| MCP        Malawi Congress Party<br>UDF        United Democratic Front<br>DPP        Democratic Progressive Party |   |

**MALAYSIA – MALAISIE**

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|---|--|
| Ms. Zurainah MUSA<br>Leader of the Delegation                             | Member of the Senate<br>Member, Special select committee on social and<br>community affairs (UMNO)                                       |
| Mr. Chen WONG<br>Member of the Working Group on Science and<br>Technology | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Chairman, Special select committee on international<br>trade and international relations (PKR) |
| Mr. Jalaluddin ALIAS  | Member of the House of Representatives (UMNO)  |
| Mr. Khairil Nizam KHIRUDIN  | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Member, Special select committee on infrastructure,<br>transportation and communication (PAS)  |

Mr. Verdon BAHANDA

Member of the House of Representatives

Ms. Nurul Fadhilah IBHARIM  
Secretary of the DelegationAssistant Secretary International Relations and  
Research Division, House of RepresentativesUMNO United Malay National Organisation  
PKR People's Justice Party  
PAS Malaysian Islamic Party**MALDIVES**Mr. Mohamed ASLAM  
Leader of the Delegation  
President of the IPU Group

Speaker of the People's Majlis (MDP)

Mr. Abdulla RIYAZ

Member of the People's Majlis  
Member, Public Accounts Committee  
Member, National Security Services Committee (MNP)Ms. Eva ABDULLA  
Member of the High-level Advisory Group on  
Countering Terrorism and Violent ExtremismMember of the People's Majlis  
Member, National Security Services Committee (The  
Dems)

Mr. Ibrahim NAZIL

Member of the People's Majlis  
Member, Judiciary Committee  
Member, Economic Affairs Committee (MDP)

Mr. Mohamed MUMTHAZ

Member of the People's Majlis  
Member, Foreign Relations Committee (MDP)

Mr. Ahmed THARIQ

Member of the People's Majlis  
Member, Government Oversight Committee  
Member, Economic Affairs Committee (PPM)Ms. Fathimath NIUSHA  
Secretary of the Group

Secretary General, People's Majlis

Ms. Fathmath FILZA

Counsel General, People's Majlis

Mr. Hussein Evan RASHEED

Senior Bureau Officer, People's Majlis

Ms. Zuyyina BADHREE  
Secretary of the Delegation

Director, People's Majlis

MDP Maldivian Democratic Party  
MNP Maldives National Party  
The Dems The Democrats  
PPM Progressive Party of Maldives**MALI**M. Hamidou TRAORE  
Chef de la délégation  
Président du GroupeVice-Président de l'Assemblée nationale  
Membre, Commission des Affaires étrangères

M. Amadou MAIGA

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale  
Membre, Commission des Finances

M. Sidy SOUMAORO

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale  
Vice-président, Commission de l'Education, de la  
Culture

M. Moussa AG ACHARATOU MANE

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale  
Membre, Commission de Défense

**MALTA – MALTE**

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|--|---|
| Mr. Angelo FARRUGIA<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group<br>Member of the Committee to Promote Respect of<br>International Humanitarian Law | Speaker of the House of Representatives<br>Chairperson, House Business Committee<br>Chairperson, Privileges Committee |
| Mr. Randolph DE BATTISTA   | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Members, Social Affairs Committee (PL)                                      |
| Mr. Ryan CALLUS  | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Members, Standards in Public Life Committee (PN)                            |
| Mr. Ian Paul BAJADA<br>Secretary of the Group  |   |
| PL   | Partit Laburista  |
| PN   | Partit Nazzjonalista  |

**MEXICO – MEXIQUE**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Ms. Marcela GUERRA CASTILLO<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group<br>Member of the High-level Advisory Group on<br>Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism | Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies (PRI)   |
| Ms. Alejandra Noemí REYNOSO SÁNCHEZ<br>Member of the Committee on the Human Rights of<br>Parliamentarians   | Deputy Speaker of the Senate (PAN)   |
| Ms. Sofia CARVAJAL ISUNZA<br>President of the IPU Group   | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>Secretary, Marine Committee<br>Member, Human Rights (PRI)   |
| Mr. Noé Fernando CASTAÑÓN RAMÍREZ   | Deputy Speaker of the Senate (MC)  |
| Mr. Cristóbal ARIAS SOLÍS   | Member of the Senate<br>Chair, Bicameral Commission for the evaluation and<br>monitoring of the permanent Armed Forces in public<br>security tasks<br>Secretary, Committee on Radio, Television and<br>Cinematography (MORENA) |
| Ms. Nuvia Magdalena MAYORGA DELGADO   | Member of the Senate<br>Secretary, Committee on Finance<br>Member, Committee for Gender Equality (PVEM)  |
| Ms. Wendy GONZALEZ URRUTIA  | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>Secretary, Gender Equality Committee<br>Member, Culture and Cinematography Committee<br>(PAN)   |
| Mr. Klaus Uwe RITTER OCAMPO   | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>Member, Climate Change and Sustainability Committee<br>Member, International Affairs Committee (MORENA)   |
| Ms. Graciela BÁEZ RICARDEZ  | Secretary General, Chamber of Deputies   |
| PRI   | The Institutional Revolutionary Party  |
| MORENA  | Movimiento Regeneración Nacional   |
| MC  | Movimiento Ciudadano   |
| PVEM  | Partido Verde Ecologista de México   |
| PAN   | Partido Acción Nacional  |

**MONACO**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| M. Fabrice NOTARI<br>Chef de la délégation<br>Membre du Bureau de la Commission Permanente du<br>Développement durable | Membre du Conseil national (L'Union)                                   |
| Mme Corinne BERTANI  | Membre du Conseil national (L'Union)                                   |
| M. Benjamin CELLARIO<br>Secrétaire de la délégation  | Chef de Section pour les Affaires internationales,<br>National Council |
| L'Union  | L'Union Nationale Monégasque   |

**MONGOLIA – MONGOLIE**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Mr. Munkhbaatar LKHAGVA<br>Leader of the Delegation | Deputy Speaker of the State Great Hural<br>Member, Standing Committee on Budget<br>Member, Standing Committee on Justice (MPP)                |
| Ms. Anujin PUREV-OCHIR                              | Member of the State Great Hural<br>Chair, Standing Committee on Social Policy<br>Member, Standing Committee on Security and Foreign<br>Policy |
| Mr. Enghbat DAMDIN                                  | Secretary-General, State Great Hural  |
| Mr. Baatarsaikhan BATSUKH                           | Adviser, State Great Hural  |
| Mr. Byambadorj AYURZANA                             | Adviser, State Great Hural  |
| Mr. Bat-Erdene ORSOO                                | Adviser, State Great Hural  |
| Mr. Batchuluun OTGONSUREN                           | Adviser, State Great Hural  |
| MPP<br>D  | Mongolian People's Party<br>Democratic Party  |

**MONTENEGRO – MONTÉNÉGRO**

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| Ms. Jelena BOZOVIĆ<br>Leader of the Delegation      | Member of Parliament |
| Mr. Gordan STOJOVIĆ                                 | Member of Parliament |
| Ms. Jevrosima PEJOVIĆ                               | Member of Parliament |
| Ms. Marija MILOSEVIĆ<br>Secretary of the Delegation |                      |
| Ms. Tijana ROSANDIĆ<br>Adviser                      |                      |

**MOROCCO – MAROC**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| M. Ahmed TOUIZI<br>Chef de la délégation<br>Membre du Bureau de la Commission permanente<br>de la paix et de la sécurité internationale | Membre de la Chambre des Représentants (PAM)  |
| M. Kamal AIT MIK<br>Membre du Conseil du Forum des Jeunes<br>Parlementaires   | Membre de la Chambre de Conseillers<br>Membre, Commission des secteurs productifs (RNI) |
| Mme Khaddouj SLASSI   | Membre de la Chambre des Représentants (USFP)   |
| M. Mustapha REDDAD  | Membre de la Chambre des Représentants (RNI)  |
| M. Omar HEJIRA  | Membre de la Chambre des Représentants (PI)   |

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| M. Najib EL KHADI<br>Président de l'ASGP        | Secrétaire général de la Chambre des Représentants                             |
| M. Abdelwahad DRIOUCHE                          | Conseiller Général, Chambre des Conseillers                                    |
| M. Said SATRAOUY<br>Secrétaire de la délégation | Chef de la Division des Relations multilatérales,<br>Chambre des Représentants |
| RNI   | Rassemblement National des Indépendants  |
| PAM   | Parti d'Authenticité et de Modernité   |
| USFP  | l'Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires                                       |
| PI  | Parti d'Istiqlal   |

**MOZAMBIQUE**

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| Mr. Eduardo MULEMBWE<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group | Member of the Assembly of the Republic (FRELIMO) |
| Ms. Lucinda MALEMA   | Member of the Assembly of the Republic (FRELIMO) |
| Ms. Gania MUSSAGY  | Member of the Assembly of the Republic (RENAMO)  |
| Mr. Alfredo NAMPETE  | Secretary General, Assembly of the Republic      |
| Ms. Lurdes GOMES   |  |
| Mr. José MADROBA   | Adviser, Assembly of the Republic                |
| Mr. Narcisio MANJATE<br>Secretary of the Group                                 | Adviser, Assembly of the Republic                |
| FRELIMO  | Front of Liberation of Mozambique                |
| RENAMO   | Mozambican National Resistance                   |

**NAMIBIA – NAMIBIE**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Mr. Peter KATJAVIVI<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>Member of the IPU Task Force<br>on Ukraine | Speaker of the National Assembly<br>Chairperson, Standing Rules and Orders and Internal<br>Arrangements Committee<br>Chairperson, Privileges Committee (SWAPO)              |
| Ms. Victoria Mbawo KAUMA  | Deputy Speaker of the National Council<br>Chairperson, Committee on Implementation and<br>Coordination<br>Vice-Chairperson, Rules, Orders and Business<br>Committee (SWAPO) |
| Ms. Emma Tangi MUTEKA<br>Member of the Board of the Forum of Young<br>Parliamentarians        | Member of the National Council<br>Vice-Chairperson, Standing Committee on Health,<br>Social Welfare and Labour (SWAPO)  |
| Mr. Leonard SHIKULO   | Member of the National Council<br>Vice-Chairperson, Standing Committee on Public<br>Accounts and Economy (SWAPO)  |
| Mr. Sebastiaan Ignatius GOBS  | Member of the National Council<br>Member, Standing Committee on Public Accounts and<br>Economy<br>Member, Privileges Committee (UDF)  |
| Ms. Charmaine TJIRARE   | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Parliamentary Committee on Public Accounts<br>Member, Parliamentary Committee on ICT   |



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| Mr. Henny H SEIBEB  | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Committee on Defense<br>Member, Committee on Human Resources             |
| Ms. Gerhardine Nono KATJINGISIUA                          | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Committee on ICT<br>Chairperson, Committee on Human Resources and Gender |
| Ms. Lydia Tjihimise KANDETU<br>Secretary of the Group     | Secretary General, National Assembly  |
| Mr. Johannes Tousy NAMISEB<br>Secretary of the Delegation | Secretary General, National Council   |
| Mr. Efraim Gwai JANE<br>Secretary of the Delegation       | Deputy Secretary General, National Council  |
| Ms. Moringa Johanna GOAGOSSES<br>Adviser                  | Parliamentary Clerk, National Council   |
| Ms. Cornelia TJAONDJO<br>Secretary of the Delegation      | Adviser, National Assembly  |
| Mr. Mwira BERNHARD<br>Adviser                             | Adviser, National Council   |
| Mr. Petrus Muyenga KAVHURA<br>Secretary of the Delegation | Adviser, National Council   |
| Mr. Norbert Angula UUYUNI                                 |   |
| SWAPO   | South West Africa People's Organisation   |
| UDF   | United Democratic Front   |

**NEPAL – NÉPAL**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Mr. Dev Raj GHIMIRE<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group | Speaker the House of Representatives                |
| Ms. Ganga Kumari BELBASE  | Member of the National Assembly (CPN(MC))           |
| Mr. Hita Raj PANDE  | Member of the House of Representatives (CPN(MC))    |
| Mr. Mahesh Kumar BARTAULA   | Member of the House of Representatives (CPN(UML))   |
| Mr. Ramesh LEKHAK   | Member of the House of Representatives (NC)         |
| Mr. Santosh PARIYAR   | Member of the House of Representatives (RSP)        |
| Mr. Padma Prasad PANDEY   | Secretary General of the House of Representatives   |
| Mr. Eak Ram GIRI  | Joint Secretary, House of Representatives           |
| Mr. Pradeep GURAGAIN  | Undersecretary, House of Representatives            |
| Mr. Tej Prakash BHATTARAI   | Chief Private Secretary, House of Representatives   |
| CPN(MC))  | Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre)            |
| CPN(UML))   | Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) |
| NC  | Nepali Congress                                     |
| RSP   | Rastriya Swatantra Party                            |

**NETHERLANDS – PAYS-BAS**

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| Mr. Hendrik-Jan TALSMA<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions           | Member of the Senate (C)   |
| Mr. Dennis RAM   | Member of the House of Representatives (PVV)                               |
| Ms. Fatimazhra BELHIRCH<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing<br>Committee on Peace and International Security | Member of the Senate (D66)   |
| Ms. Glimina CHAKOR   | Member of the House of Representatives (Social<br>Democrats / Green party) |
| Ms. Judith TIELEN  | Member of the House of Representatives (VVD)                               |
| Mr. Peter OSKAM<br>ASGP Member   | Secretary General, House of Representatives                                |
| Mr. Remco NEHMELMAN<br>ASGP Member   | Secretary General, Senate  |
| Ms. Femmy BAKKER<br>Secretary of the Delegation  | Clerk, House of Representatives  |
| Ms. Monique CHRISTIAANSE<br>Secretary of the Delegation  | Deputy Clerk, House of Representatives                                     |
| C  | Christen Union   |
| PVV  | Party for Freedom  |
| VVD:   | People's party for Freedom and Democracy                                   |
| D66  | Democraten 66  |
| Social Democrats / Green party   | GroenLinks-PvdA  |

**NEW ZEALAND – NOUVELLE-ZÉLANDE**

|  |  |
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| Mr. Stuart SMITH<br>Leader of the Delegation     | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Chairperson, Finance and Expenditure (NAT)                     |
| Ms. Kahurangi CARTER                             | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Member, Petitions (GP)   |
| Mr. Tangi UTIKERE                                | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Member, Business<br>Member, Transport and Infrastructure (LAB) |
| Mr. Winton HOLMES<br>Secretary of the Delegation | Senior Inter-Parliamentary Relations Adviser, House of<br>Representatives                                |
| NAT  | National Party   |
| GP   | Green Party  |
| LAB  | Labour   |

**NIGERIA – NIGÉRIA**

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|--|---|
| Mr. Godswill Obot AKPABIO<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>Member of the Executive Committee | Speaker of the Senate (APC)   |
| Mr. Benjamin Okezie KALU   | Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives (APC)  |
| Mr. Folorusho Jimoh IBRAHIM  | Member of the Senate  |
| Mr. Ibrahim Hassan DANKWABO  | Member of the Senate<br>Chairman, Senate Committee on Drugs and Narcotics<br>Member, Senate Committee on Inter-Parliamentary<br>Union (PDP) |

|   |   |
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| Mr. Asuquo EKPENYONG  | Member of the Senate<br>Chairman, Senate Committee on Niger Delta<br>Development Commission<br>Vice-Chairman, Senate Committee on National Security<br>and Intelligence (APC) |
| Ms. Natasha Hadiza AKPOTI   | Member of the Senate<br>Chairman, Senate Committee on Local Content<br>Deputy Chairman, Senate Committee on Steel (PDP)   |
| Mr. Osita Ugwu NGWU   | Member of the Senate (PDP)  |
| Mr. Victor Bisong ABANG   | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Chairman, House Committee on Inter-Parliamentary<br>Affairs(APC)  |
| Mr. Olamijuwonlo Ayodeji ALAO AKALA   | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Chairman, House Committee on Youth in<br>Parliamentarian<br>Member, House Committee Gas Resources (APC)                             |
| Ms. Marie Enenimiete EBIKAKE  | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Vice-Chairperson, House Committee on Inter-<br>Parliamentary Affairs<br>Member, House Committee on Women in Parliament<br>(PDP)     |
| Mr. Nasiru SHEHU  | Member of the House of Representatives (APC)  |
| Mr. Titus Tartenger ZAM<br>Adviser  | Member of the Senate<br>Chairman, Senate Committee on Rules and Business<br>Member, Senate Committee on Inter-Parliamentary<br>Union (APC)                                    |
| Nr, Saliu MUSTAPHA<br>Adviser   | Member of the Senate  |
| Mr. Mark Udo ESSET<br>Adviser   | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Chairman, House Committee on Inter-Parliamentary<br>Affairs<br>Member, House Committee on Marine (PDP)                              |
| Mr. Anamero Sunday DEKERI   | Member of the House of Representatives  |
| Mr. Sani Tambawal MAGAJI  | Secretary General, Senate   |
| Ms. Florence Olanike FOFAH<br>Secretary of the Delegation, IPU Desk officer | Deputy Director, Senate   |
| Mr. Godwin Okon EKPENYONG   | Permanent Secretary, House of Representatives   |
| Ms. Hassana Danimoh ABDULWAHAB<br>Adviser                                   | Legislative Officer/IPU Desk, Senate  |
| Mr. Idowu Abib BAKARE<br>Adviser  | Assistant Director, Interparliamentary Relations<br>Committee, House of Representatives   |
| Mr. Mohammed Chubado GANA   | Protocol, Senate  |
| Mr. Nsikak Gregory EFFIONG  | Legislative aide, Senate  |
| Mr. Basil Anthony ABIA  | Senate President's Aide   |
| Mr. Udo Ogbu UMEKWE   | Legislative staff   |

Mr. Toby OKECHUKWU Chief of staff to Deputy Speaker

Ms. Vivian Hannah OKORIE SA Admin to Deputy Speaker

APC All Progressives Congress  
PDP Peoples Democratic Party

### NORWAY – NORVÈGE

Mr. Tellef Inge MØRLAND Member of Parliament (Ap)  
Leader of the Delegation  
President of the IPU Group

Ms. Birgit Oline KJERSTAD Member of Parliament (SV)

Mr. Grunde ALMELAND Member of Parliament (V)

Ms. Linda Monsen MERKESDAL Member of Parliament (Ap)

Ms. Silje HJEMDAL Member of Parliament (FrP)

Mr. Thomas FRASER Adviser, Parliament  
Secretary of the Delegation

Ms. Lisbeth Merete STOCK Adviser, Parliament  
Secretary of the Delegation

Ap Labour Party  
SV Socialist Left Party  
V Liberal Party  
FrP Progress Party

### OMAN

Mr. Said AL SADI Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council  
Leader of the Delegation

Mr. Ahmed AL BULUSHI Member of the Shura Council  
Member, committee of education scientific research and innovation

Mr. Badar AL JABRI Member of the Shura Council  
Member, Committee of youth and human resources

Mr. Juma AL WAHAIBI Member of the Shura Council  
Member, Economic and financial committee

Mr. Mohammed AL ANSI AL YAFAI Member of the Shura Council  
Member of the Majlis Bureau

Ms. Azza AL ISMAILI Member of the State Council

Ms. Maryam AL AWADI Member of the State Council

Mr. Ahmed AL NADABI Secretary General, Shura Council

Mr. Khalid AL SAADI Secretary General, State Council

Mr. Abdullah AL HABSI Director, Shura Council  
Adviser

Mr. Khalid AL HARTHI Director, State Council  
Adviser

Mr. Majid AL ISMAILI Adviser, Shura Council  
Secretary of the Delegation

Ms. Muna AL FUTAIISI  
Secretary of the Delegation

Director, State Council

Ms. Sumaiya ALAMRI  
Secretary of the Group

Director, Shura Council

### PAKISTAN

Mr. Sardar Ayaz SADIQ  
Leader of the Delegation

Speaker of the National Assembly (PML-N)

Mr. Farooq Hamid NAEK  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing  
Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

Member of the Senate  
Chairperson of Committee on foreign affairs (PPPP)

Ms. Saadia ABBASI

Member of the Senate  
Chairperson of Committee on cabinet secretariat  
Chairperson of Committee on parliamentary caucus on  
water resources in the country (PMLN)

Mr. Syed Ali ZAFAR

Member of the Senate  
Chairperson of Committee on law and justice  
Member of Committee on delegated legislation (PTI)

Mr. Umar FAROOQ

Member of the Senate  
Member, Aviation committee  
Member, Defence committee (ANP)

Mr. Aqeel MALIK

Member of the National Assembly (PML-N)

Ms. Hina Rabbani KHAR

Member of the National Assembly (PPPP)

Mr. Ahmad Ateeq ANWAR

Member of the National Assembly (PML-N)

Mr. Syed Aminul HAQUE

Member of the National Assembly (MQM-Pak)

Mr. Syed Naveed QAMAR

Member of the National Assembly (PPPP)

Mr. Tahir HUSSAIN  
Secretary of the Group

Secretary General, National Assembly

Mr. Syed Shamoan HASHMI  
Adviser

Special Secretary (SI), National Assembly

Mr. Waseem Iqbal CHAUDHRY  
Adviser

Special Secretary (Parliamentary Diplomacy/Chief of  
Protocol, National Assembly)

Mr. Zahid ANWAR

Assistant Director (IR), National Assembly

Mr. Hyder ALI

Joint Secretary

Mr. Qamar Shehzad

Director Coordination

MQM-Pak Muttahida Qaumi Movement - Pakistan  
PPPP Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarian  
PML-N Pakistan Muslim League  
PTI Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf  
ANP Awami national party

### PALESTINE

Mr. Musa HADID  
Leader of the Delegation  
Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions

Deputy Speaker of the Palestine National Council  
(FATEH)

Ms. Doaa NOFAL

Member of the Palestine National Council

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Mr. Ali FAYSAL   | Deputy Speaker of the Palestine National Council (DFLP) |
| Mr. Bashar SULAIMAN<br>Adviser, Secretary of the Group,<br>Secretary of the Delegation | Director, Palestinian Legislative Council               |
| Mr. Ibrahim KHRAISHI<br>Ambassador   |   |
| Mr. Ryad AWAJA<br>Diplomat   |   |
| FATEH<br>DFLP  | Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine        |

**PARAGUAY**

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Mr. Marcelo SALINAS | Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PLRA) |
| Mr. Rodrigo BLANCO  | Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PLRA) |
| Mr. Sergio ROJAS    | Member of the Senate (PLRA)              |
| PLRA                | Partido Liberal Radical Autentico        |

**PERU – PÉROU**

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|--|---|
| Mr. Alex Antonio PAREDES GONZALES<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>Member of the Committee to Promote Respect of<br>International Humanitarian Law | Member of the Congress of the Republic (PPNL) |
| Ms. Maria del Carmen ALVA PRIETO<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee<br>on Democracy and Human Rights                              | Member of the Congress of the Republic (AP)   |
| Ms. Rosangella BARBARÁN REYES  | Member of the Congress of the Republic (FP)   |
| Mr. Ernesto BUSTAMANTE<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing<br>Committee on United Nations Affairs  | Member of the Congress of the Republic (FP)   |
| Mr. Wilson SOTO<br>Member of the Board of the Forum of Young<br>Parliamentarians   | Member of the Congress of the Republic (AP)   |
| FP   | Fuerza Popular                                |
| AP   | Acción Popular                                |
| PPNL   | Peru Libre                                    |

**PHILIPPINES**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Mr. Juan Miguel ZUBIRI<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group                | President of the Senate   |
| Mr. Aquilino PIMENTEL III   | Member of the Senate (PDP-Laban)<br>Senate Minority Leader  |
| Ms. Pia CAYETANO<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing<br>Committee on United Nations Affairs | Member of the Senate<br>Chair, Committee on Accountability of Public Officers &<br>Investigations<br>Chair, Committee on Sustainable Development Goals,<br>Innovation and Futures Thinking (NP) |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Ms. Maria Lourdes Nancy S. BINAY  | Member of the Senate<br>Chair, Committee on Tourism (UNA)  |
| Mr. Manuel LAPID  | Member of the Senate<br>Chair, Committee on Games and Amusement (NPC)  |
| Ms. Glona LABADLABAD  | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Chair, Committee on Inter-parliamentary Relations and<br>Diplomacy<br>Vice Chair, Committee on Ecology (Lakas-CMD)             |
| Ms. Maria Rachel ARENAS<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing<br>Committee on Sustainable Development | Member of the House of Representatives   |
| Mr. Gustavo Alonzo TAMBUNTING   | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Chair, Committee on Legislative Franchise<br>Vice Chair, Committee on Labor and Employment (NUP)                               |
| Ms. Ma. Lucille NAVA  | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Vice-Chair, Committee on Inter-Parliamentary Relations<br>and Diplomacy<br>Vice-Chair, Committee on Agriculture and Food (NUP) |
| Ms. Mikaela Angela B. SUANSING  | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Vice-Chair, Committee on Agriculture and Food (Lakas-<br>CMD)  |
| Mr. Renato BANTUG Jr.<br>ASGP Member  | Secretary General, Senate  |
| Mr. Reginald S. VELASCO<br>ASGP Member  | Secretary General, House of Representatives  |
| Ms. Marivic LAUREL GARCIA<br>ASGP Member  | Deputy Secretary for Legislation of the Senate   |
| Ms. Rose Marie ARENAS<br>Adviser  | Former Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives  |
| Mr. Antonio, DE GUZMAN Jr.<br>Secretary of the Group  | Director General, Office of International Relations and<br>Protocol, Senate  |
| Ms. Grace ANDRES  | Deputy Secretary General for Inter-Parliamentary and<br>Public Affairs, House of Representatives   |
| Ms. Annalou NACHURA   | Deputy Secretary General for Legal Affairs, House of<br>Representatives  |
| Mr. Cesar DE CHAVEZ   | Director, Protocol Service, Office of International<br>Relations and Protocol, Senate  |
| Mr. Joe Anthony RAMOS   | Committee Secretary, Committee on Inter-Parliamentary<br>Relations and Diplomacy, House of Representatives   |
| Mr. Renard Kayne R. YCASIANO  | Acting Committee Secretary, Special Committee on West<br>Philippine Sea, House of Representatives  |
| Mr. Ronyll MENDOZA<br>Secretary of the Delegation   | Legislative Staff Officer, Senate  |
| Ms. Kary Mei VILLAFLORES  | Legislative Staff Officer, Social Media Unit, Senate Public<br>Relations and Information Bureau<br>Senate  |
| Ms. Neliza MACAPAYAG-MARGETIĆ   | Chief of Staff, Office of Senate President Juan Miguel F.<br>Zubiri, Senate  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Mr. Ricky ILETO  | Chief of Staff, Office of Senator Manuel Lapid, Senate |
| Mr. Carlos D. SORRETA<br>Ambassador/Permanent Representative                 |  |
| Ms. Kristine Leilani R. Salle<br>Ambassador/ Deputy Permanent Representative |  |
| NUP  | National Unity Party                                   |
| PDP-Laban  | Partido Demokratiko Pilipino-Lakas ng Bayan            |
| NPC  | Nationalist People's Coalition                         |
| NP   | Nacionalista Party                                     |
| Lakas-CMD  | Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats                       |
| UNA  | United Nationalist Alliance                            |

**POLAND – POLOGNE**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Ms. Gabriela MORAWSKA-STANECKA<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>Member of the Executive Committee<br>Member of the Committee to Promote Respect<br>for International Humanitarian Law | Member of the Senate<br>Deputy Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee<br>Member, Climate and Environmental Committee               |
| Ms. Barbara BARTUS  | Member of the Sejm<br>Member, Rules, Deputies' Affairs and Immunities<br>Deputy Chair, Legislative (PiS)                     |
| Ms. Dorota OLKO   | Member of the Sejm<br>Member, Education, Science and Youth<br>Member, Social Policy and Science (L)                          |
| Ms. Jolanta ZIEBA-GZIK  | Member of the Sejm<br>Member, Public Finance<br>Member, Education, Science and Youth (PSL-TD)                                |
| Ms. Marta GOLBIK  | Member of the Sejm<br>Member, Public Finance<br>Member, National Defence (KO)  |
| Mr. Radoslaw FOGIEL   | Member of the Sejm<br>Deputy Chair, Foreign Affairs (PiS)  |
| Mr. Rafal KASPRZYK  | Member of the Sejm<br>Deputy Chair, Public Finance<br>Member, Infrastructure (PL 2050 TD)                                    |
| Mr. Stanisław GAWŁOWSKI   | Member of the Senate<br>Chairperson, Climate and Environment Committee<br>Member, Legislative Committee (KO)                 |
| Mr. Wiktor DURLAK   | Member of the Senate<br>Chairperson, Sport Committee<br>Member, Local Government and State Administration<br>Committee (PiS) |
| Ms. Agata KARWOWSKA-SOKOŁOWSKA<br>Adviser   | Director, Senate   |
| Ms. Agata WÓJCIK-PAWLICZAK<br>Adviser   | Head of Unit, Senate   |
| Ms. Magdalena ŚLESICKA<br>Secretary of the Delegation   | Head Specialist, Senate  |
| Mr. Michal DESKUR   | Deputy Secretary General, Sejm   |



Mr. Wojciech GRUBA  
Secretary of the Group

Adviser, Sejm

PiS Law and Justice  
L The Left  
PSL-TD Polish People's Party - Third Way  
KO Civic Coalition  
PL 2050 TD Poland 2050 - Third Way

## PORTUGAL

Mr. Joaquim BARRETO  
Leader of the Delegation  
President of the IPU Group

Member of the Assembly of the Republic  
Member, Agriculture and Fisheries  
Member, Environment and Energy (SP)

Ms. Carla SOUSA

Member of the Assembly of the Republic  
Member, Committee on Education and Science  
Party coordinator, Committee on Culture,  
Communication, Youth and Sport (SP)

Mr. Duarte PACHECO  
Honorary IPU President

Member of the Assembly of the Republic  
Coordinator of political party, Budget and Finance  
Member, Foreign Affairs and Portuguese communities  
(SDP)

Mr. Hugo CARNEIRO

Member of the Assembly of the Republic  
Vice-President, Budget and Finance Committee (SDP)

Mr. Miguel SANTOS

Member of the Assembly of the Republic  
Vice-President, European Affairs Committee (SDP)

Ms. Vera BRAZ

Member of the Assembly of the Republic  
Member, Budget and Finance Committee (SP)

Mr. João CAMPOS COELHO  
Adviser

Head of International Relations and Cooperation  
Division, Assembly of the Republic

Mr. Rui COSTA  
Adviser

Deputy Secretary General, Assembly of the Republic

Ms. Suzana SANTOS  
Secretary of the Delegation

Adviser, Assembly of the Republic

SP Socialist Party  
SDP SDP

## QATAR

Mr. Sultan ALDOSARI  
Leader of the Delegation  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing  
Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

Member of the Shura Council

Mr. Ali AL-KAABI

Member of the Shura Council

Mr. Ahmad ALJAHANI

Member of the Shura Council

Mr. Ali ALHAJRI  
Secretary of the Delegation

Director, Shura Council

Mr. Rashid AL-MASLAMANI  
Secretary of the Delegation

Adviser, Shura Council

Mr. Khalaf AL-KAABI  
Secretary of the Delegation

Adviser, Shura Council

**REPUBLIC OF KOREA – RÉPUBLIQUE DE CORÉE**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Mr. Jong Yoon CHOI<br>Leader of the Delegation    | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, National Policy Committee<br>Member, Special Committee on Demographic Crisis (DPK)  |
| Ms. Hyun Young SHIN                               | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Health and Welfare Committee<br>Vice-Chair, Gender Equality and Family Committee (DPK)  |
| Ms. Jung Min HONG                                 | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Trade, Industry, Energy, SMEs, and Startups Committee<br>Member, Special Committee on Cutting-Edge Strategic Industries (DPK) |
| Mr. Woong KIM                                     | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Public Administration and Security Committee<br>Member, Special Committee on Budget & Accounts (PPP)                          |
| Mr. Jaehyun BAEK<br>ASGP Member                   | Secretary General, National Assembly   |
| Ms. Jeongwon MOON<br>Secretary of the Delegation  | Deputy Director, National Assembly   |
| Ms. Minkyung HA<br>Secretary of the Delegation    | Program officer, National Assembly   |
| Ms. Saera LEE<br>Secretary of the Delegation      | Program officer, National Assembly   |
| Ms. Seorin HYUN<br>Secretary of the Delegation    | Deputy Director, National Assembly   |
| Mr. Seung Woo SHIN<br>Secretary of the Delegation | Senior Deputy Director, National Assembly  |
| Ms. Yeonkyung KIM<br>Secretary of the Delegation  | Program Officer, National Assembly   |
| Mr. Yun Jae CHO<br>Adviser                        | Chief of Staff of the Secretary General, National Assembly   |

**ROMANIA – ROUMANIE**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Ms. Silvia-Monica DINICĂ<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>Member of the Working Group on Science and Technology | Member of the Senate<br>Chairperson, Committee for Science, Innovation and Technology<br>Member, Committee for Economic Affairs, Industries and Services (USR)           |
| Ms. Mara-Daniela CALISTA  | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>Deputy Chairperson, Committee for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men<br>Member, Committee for Labour and Social Protection (PNL) |
| Mr. Zoltan ZAKARIAS   | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>Member, Committee for Health and Family<br>Member, Committee for European Affairs (UDMR)  |
| Mr. Ion Marcel VELA   | Member of the Senate<br>Deputy Chairman, Foreign Policy Committee<br>Member, Committee for Defence, Public Order and National Security (PNL)                             |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Mr. Sorin-Cristian MATEESCU                          | Member of the Senate<br>Deputy Chairman, Committee for Constitutionality<br>Member of the Committee for Legal Affairs, Nominations,<br>Discipline, Immunities and Validations (AUR)                               |
| Mr. Ionel-Dănuț CRISTESCU                            | Member of the Senate<br>Member of the Bureau, Committee for Budget, Finances,<br>Banking and Capital Markets<br>Member, Committee for Legal Affairs, Nominations,<br>Discipline, Immunities and Validations (PSD) |
| Mr. Marian-Iulian RASALIU                            | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>Member of the Bureau, Committee for Defense, Public Order<br>and National Security<br>Member, Foreign Affairs Committee (PSD)  |
| Mr. Claudiu-Augustin ILISANU                         | Member of the Chamber of Deputies<br>Member, Committee for Environment and Ecological Balance<br>Member, Committee for Equal Opportunities for Women and<br>Men (PSD)   |
| Mr. Mario-Ovidiu OPREA                               | Secretary General, Senate   |
| Mr. George Ionuț DUMITRICĂ<br>ASGP Member            | Deputy Secretary General, Chamber of Deputies   |
| Ms. Cristina DUMITRESCU<br>Secretary of the Group    | Director, Senate  |
| Ms. Cristina IONESCU<br>Secretary of the Delegation  | Director, Senate  |
| Ms. Luminița TEODOREL<br>Secretary of the Delegation | Adviser, Senate   |
| Ms. Teodora Elena POTERAȘU<br>Secretary of the Group | Adviser, Chamber of Deputies  |
| Mr. Răzvan RUSU<br>Ambassador                        |   |
| Mr. Traian FILIP<br>Deputy Permanent Representative  |   |
| USR  | Save Romania Union  |
| PSD  | Social Democratic Party   |
| PNL  | National Liberal Party  |
| AUR  | Alliance for the Unity of Romanians   |
| UDMR   | Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania  |

### RUSSIAN FEDERATION – FÉDÉRATION DE RUSSIE

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Mr. Konstantin KOSACHEV<br>Leader of the Delegation | Deputy Speaker of the Council of the Federation<br>Member, Federation Council Committee on Foreign<br>Affairs                                 |
| Mr. Petr TOLSTOY<br>Leader of the Delegation        | Deputy Speaker of the State Duma (UN)   |
| Mr. Aleksandr DUOINYKH                              | Member of the Council of the Federation<br>Chair, Federation Council Committee on Agriculture and<br>Food Policy and Environmental Management |
| Mr. Aleksei CHEPA                                   | Member of the State Duma<br>First Deputy Chairman, Committee on International<br>Affairs (JRFT)   |

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|---|---|
| Ms. Inna SVIATENKO  | Deputy Speaker of the Council of the Federation<br>Member, Federation Council Committee on Social Policy            |
| Mr. Leonid SLUTSKIY   | Member of the State Duma<br>Chairman, Committee on International Affairs (LDPR)                                     |
| Ms. Liliia GUMEROVA<br>Member of the Working Group on<br>Science and Technology                     | Member of the Council of the Federation<br>Chair, Federation Council Committee on Science,<br>Education and Culture |
| Ms. Rosa CHEMERIS   | Member of the State Duma<br>Member, Committee on International Affairs (NP)   |
| Mr. Sergey GAVRILOV<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing<br>Committee on Sustainable Development | Member of the State Duma<br>Chairman, Committee on Property, Land and Property<br>Relations (CPRF)                  |
| Mr. Andrei BORZOV<br>Adviser  | Director, State Duma  |
| Mr. Dmitrii ANDRIIANOV<br>Secretary of the Group  | Adviser, Council of the Federation  |
| Mr. Dmitrii STEPANOV<br>Secretary of the Delegation   | Director, State Duma  |
| Ms. Mariia ZHOLOBOVA<br>Secretary of the Delegation   | Adviser, Council of the Federation  |
| Ms. Olga SHMACHKOVA<br>Secretary of the Delegation  | Adviser, Council of the Federation  |
| Mr. Anton MINAEV<br>Counsellor  | Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the<br>United Nations in Geneva                                      |
| Mr. Ivan TARUTIN<br>Third Secretary   | Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the<br>United Nations in Geneva                                      |
| Ms. Liubov BOGOSLOVSKAYA  | Adviser   |
| Mr. Pavel KUKARKIN  | Adviser   |
| Ms. Daria SKVORTSOVA  | Adviser   |
| UN  | United Russia   |
| JRFT  | Just Russia - For Truth   |
| LDPR  | Liberal-Democratic Party of Russia  |
| NP  | New People  |
| CPRF  | Communist Party of the Russian Federation   |

**RWANDA**

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| Ms. Espérance NYIRASAFARI<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group<br>Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians | Deputy Speaker of the Senate (RPF-INKOTANYI) |
| Ms. Betty DUSENGE<br>Adviser  |  |
| RPF-INKOTANYI   | Rwandan Patriotic Front – Inkotanyi          |

**SAN MARINO – SAINT-MARIN**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Mr. Lorenzo BUGLI<br>Leader of the Delegation | Member of the Great and General Council<br>Member, Permanent Committee on Foreign Affairs (PDCS)                               |
| Ms. Michela PELLICIONI                        | Member of the Great and General Council<br>Member, Committee on Financial Affairs<br>Member, Committee on Health Affairs (DML) |
| Mr. Paolo RONDELLI                            | Member of the Great and General Council<br>Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs<br>Member, Committee on Health Affairs (RETE)  |
| Ms. Sara CONTI                                | Member of the Great and General Council<br>Member, Permanent Committee on Internal Affairs (RF)                                |
| DML   | Domani Motus Liberi  |
| PDCS  | Partito Democratico Cristiano Sammarinese  |
| RF  | Repubblica Futura  |
| RETE  | Movimento Civico Rinnovamento – Equità – Trasparenza – Ecosostenibilità  |

**SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE – SAO TOMÉ-ET-PRINCIPE**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Ms. Celmira SACRAMENTO<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group | Speaker of the National Assembly (ADI)  |
| Mr. Lourenço FREITAS   | Member of the National Assembly (ADI)   |
| Mr. Baltazar QUARESMA  | Member of the National Assembly (MCI/PS-PUN)  |
| Mr. Wuando ANDRADE   | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Committee on Political, Legal, Constitutional, Public Administration and Ethical Affairs (MLSTP/PSD) |
| Mr. Domingos BOA MORTE   | Secretary General, National Assembly  |
| Ms. Darine NETO  | Adviser, National Assembly  |
| Mr. Eleutério NETO   | Adviser, National Assembly  |
| ADI  | Acção Democrática Independente  |
| MCI/PS-PUN   | Movimento de Cidadãos Independentes/Partido Socialista  |
| MLSTP/PSD  | Movimento de Libertação de São Tomé e / Partido Social Democrata  |

**SAUDI ARABIA – ARABIE SAOUDITE**

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Ms. Hanan ALAHMADI   | Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council |
| Mr. Abdulrahman ALHARBI<br>Member of the High-level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism | Member of the Shura Council         |
| Mr. Abdullah ALSALAMAH   | Member of the Shura Council         |
| Ms. Hoda ALHELAISSI<br>Member of the Advisory Group on Health  | Member of the Shura Council         |
| Ms. Amal ALSHAMAN  | Member of the Shura Council         |
| Mr. Mohamad ALMETAIRI  | Secretary General, Shura Council    |
| Mr. Khalid ALMANSOUR<br>Secretary of the Group, Secretary of the Delegation                                      | Director, Shura Council             |

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| Mr. Khalid ALTURKI<br>Secretary of the Group, Secretary of the Delegation | Director, Shura Council  |
| Mr. Akram HOBROM<br>Adviser   | Director, Shura Council  |
| Mr. Ahmed ALSHAHRANI<br>Adviser   | Adviser, Shura Council   |
| Mr. Majed ALSAHLI<br>Secretary of the Delegation                          | Adviser, Shura Council   |
| Mr. Turki ALSAUD<br>Secretary of the Delegation                           | Adviser, Shura Council   |
| Ms. Afnan ALORAIJ<br>Adviser, Secretary of the Delegation                 | Adviser, Shura Council   |
| Mr. Khalid ALMUBARAK<br>Secretary of the Group                            | Secretary, Shura Council |
| Ms. Lina ALMARZOOQ<br>Adviser   | Secretary, Shura Council |
| Mr. Fahad ALOMER<br>Adviser   | Secretary, Shura Council |

**SERBIA – SERBIE**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Ms. Ana BRNABIĆ<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group     | Speaker of the National Assembly (SNS)          |
| Mr. Edin Đerlek   | Member of the National Assembly (SPP)           |
| Mr. Milan RADIN   | Member of the National Assembly (SNS)           |
| Ms. Snežana PAUNOVIĆ<br>Member of the Bureau of<br>Women Parliamentarians     | Member of the National Assembly (SPS)           |
| Mr. Srđan SMILJANIĆ   | Secretary General, National Assembly            |
| Mr. Dario KUKOLJ  | Deputy Secretary General, National Assembly     |
| Mr. Miloš POPOVIĆ   | Head of the Speaker's Office, National Assembly |
| Ms. Jelena PAREZANOVIĆ  | Adviser, National Assembly                      |
| Mr. Mladen BAŠIĆ  | Adviser, National Assembly                      |
| Mr. Nikola STOJANOVIĆ   | Adviser, National Assembly                      |
| Mr. Vladimir FILIPOVIĆ<br>Secretary of the Delegation, Secretary of the Group | Adviser, National Assembly                      |
| Ms. Aleksandra MLADAN<br>Adviser  |   |
| Ms. Iliana VUKAJLOVIC<br>Adviser  |   |

SNS Serbian Progressive Party  
SPP Justice and Reconciliation Party  
SPS Socialist Party of Serbia

**SEYCHELLES**

Mr. Roger MANCIENNE  
Leader of the Delegation  
President of the IPU Group

Speaker of the National Assembly  
Chairperson, Assembly Business Committee

Ms. Audrey VIDOT

Member of the National Assembly  
Vice-Chairperson, Women's Parliamentary Caucus  
Members, Communicable Diseases, HIV/AIDS and  
Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights Committee (US)

Mr. Waven WILLIAM  
President of the Bureau of the Standing  
Committee on Sustainable Development

Member of the National Assembly  
Chairperson, International Affairs Committee  
Vice-Chairperson, Food Security and Sustainable  
Development Committee (LDS)

Ms. Emma DIDON  
Secretary of the Delegation, IPU Desk Officer

Research Officer, National Assembly

LDS Linyon Demokratik Seselwa  
US United Seychelles

**SIERRA LEONE**

Mr. Abass Chernor BUNDU  
Leader of the Delegation  
President of the IPU Group

Speaker of Parliament  
Member, Committee of Selection  
Member, Standing Orders Committee

Mr. Edward GEORGE

Member of Parliament  
Member, Committee on Youth Affairs  
Member, Committee on Local Government & Rural  
Development (SLPP)

Ms. Hawa Roselyn SIAFA

Member of Parliament  
Member, Public Accounts Committee  
Member, Committee on Planning And Economic  
Development, Committee on Basic Secondary  
Education (SLPP)

Ms. Zainab THOLLEY  
Secretary of the Delegation

Protocol Officer, Parliament

SLPP Sierra Leone People's Party

**SINGAPORE – SINGAPOUR**

Mr. Vikram NAIR  
Leader of the Delegation

Member of Parliament  
Member, Estimates Committee (PAP)

Ms. Cheng Sim Joan PEREIRA

Member of Parliament (PAP)

Mr. Kheng Wee Louis CHUA

Member of Parliament  
Member, Public Accounts Committee (WP)

Ms. Francine Yu Qing TING  
Secretary of the Delegation

Assistant Manager (Official Reports)  
Parliament

Mr. Sze Peng Dennis ONG  
Secretary of the Delegation

Senior Assistant Clerk, Parliament

PAP People's Action Party  
WP The Workers' Party

**SLOVAKIA – SLOVAQUIE**

Ms. Simona PETRIK  
Head of the Delegation

Member of the National Council  
Social Affairs Committee

Ms. Silvia KOVACIK GABEROVA  
Secretary of the Delegation

Deputy Director, National Council

**SLOVENIA – SLOVÉNIE**

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|--|---|
| Mr. Predrag BAKOVIC<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group                                  | Member of the National Assembly<br>Chair, Committee on Foreign Policy<br>Member, Committee on Infrastructure, the Environment<br>and Spatial Planning (Socialist Party) |
| Mr. Zoran MOJSKERC<br>Member of the High-level Advisory Group on<br>Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Committee on European Union Affairs<br>Member, Committee on Justice (Conservative Party)                                     |
| Ms. Tanja PANDEV<br>Secretary of the Delegation  | Director, National Assembly   |
| Socialist Party  | Social Democrats  |
| Liberal Party  | Svoboda   |
| Conservative Party   | Slovene Democratic Party  |

**SOMALIA – SOMALIE**

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|---|---|
| Mr. Said Mohamed MOHAMUUD<br>Leader of the Delegation | Member of the House of the People<br>Member, Foreign Affairs Committee<br>Vice-President, Somali & Iraqi Friendship Committee |
| Mr. Abdullahi Omar ABSHIR                             | Deputy Speaker of the House of the People   |
| Mr. Farah Moalim BISHAR                               | Member of the House of the People   |
| Mr. Iftin Hassan IMA                                  | Member of the Upper House   |
| Mr. Ismail Eid MOHAMED                                | Member of the House of the People<br>Justice and Judiciary  |
| Mr. Noradin OLUJOG                                    | Member of the House of the People<br>Member, Committee of communication, Technology,<br>and Telecommunications.               |
| Ms. Zamzam Dahir MOHAMUD                              | Member of the Upper House<br>Secretary, National Resources Committee  |
| Mr. Abdinasir Ibrahim GULED                           | Secretary General, Upper House  |
| Mr. Abdirahman ABDULLE<br>Secretary of the Delegation | Secretary General, House of the People  |
| Ms. Hanifa IBRAHIM<br>Adviser                         | Adviser, House of the People  |
| Mr. Mohamed ABDULLAHI<br>Secretary of the Delegation  |   |
| Mr. Mohamud Hadis MOHAMED                             | Secretary to the Deputy Speaker, House of the People  |

**SOUTH AFRICA – AFRIQUE DU SUD**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Ms. Sylvia Elizabeth LUCAS<br>Leader of the Delegation | Deputy Speaker of the National Council of Provinces<br>(ANC) |
| Mr. Cedric Thomas FROLICK                              | Member of the National Assembly (ANC)                        |
| Ms. Dorries Eunice DLAKUDE                             | Member of the National Assembly (ANC)                        |
| Ms. Fikile Andiswa MASIKO                              | Member of the National Assembly (ANC)                        |
| Mr. Narend SINGH                                       | Member of the National Assembly (IFP)                        |
| Mr. Nqabayomzi KWANKWA                                 | Member of the National Assembly (UDM)                        |



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| Mr. Seiso Joel MOHAI                                    | Member of the National Assembly                          |
| Mr. Xolile GEORGE                                       | Secretary to Parliament                                  |
| Mr. Ian Coenie MUNDELL                                  | Speaker's Office, National Assembly                      |
| Mr. Moloto Kenneth MOTHAPO                              | Director, National Assembly                              |
| Mr. Dumisani SITHOLE                                    | Manager, International Relations and Protocol Department |
| Mr. Masibulele XASO                                     | Secretary, National Assembly                             |
| Ms. Nogolide Feziwe NOJOZI                              | Adviser  |
| Ms. Sebolelo Constance MVULANE                          | Adviser, National Council of Provinces                   |
| Mr. Phandulwazi JIKELO                                  | Adviser  |
| Ms. Rosalind Mpho MONNAKGOTLA<br>Secretary of the Group | Staff support, National Assembly                         |
| Ms. Natalie Wilma Esmeralda LEIBRANDT-LOXTON            | Adviser  |
| ANC   | African National Congress                                |
| IFP   | Inkatha Freedom Party                                    |
| UDM   | United Democratic Movement                               |

**SOUTH SUDAN – SOUDAN DU SUD**

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|--|--|
| Mr. Deng Deng AKOON ACHIEN<br>Leader of the Delegation                     | Speaker of the Council of States (SPLM IO)                         |
| Mr. Daniel ABOCHA ALI MALOU  | Member of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (SPLM)    |
| Mr. Gabriel GUOT GUOT ACIEN  | Member of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (NA)      |
| Ms. Genivia Eliaba Jenaba TOTO   | Member of the Council of States                                    |
| Ms. Janet AYA ALEX TABAN<br>Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians | Member of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (SPLM)    |
| Mr. John GAI NYUOT YOH   | Member of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (SPLM)    |
| Mr. Paulino Lukudu Obede LAILA   | Member of the Council of States                                    |
| Mr. Petro Juaj MACHAR JUOJ   | Member of the Council of States                                    |
| Ms. Sandra BONA MALWAL   | Member of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (SPLM-IO) |
| Mr. Samuel BUHORI LOTTI THEOPHILUS<br>Adviser                              | Member of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (SSOA)    |
| Mr. Alalla LORO  | Secretary General, Council of States                               |
| Ms. Bakhita AKUINDIK ABIEM AKEEN   | Parliamentary Reporter, Transitional National Legislative Assembly |
| Mr. Makuc MAKUC NGONG AKOT   | Secretary General, Transitional National Legislative Assembly      |

Mr. Peter WILSON LADU Adviser

SPLM IO Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition  
SPLM Sudan People's Liberation Movement  
NA National Agenda  
SSOA South Sudan Opposition Alliance

### SPAIN – ESPAGNE

Mr. Agustín ALMODÓBAR BARCELÓ Member of the Senate (PP)  
Leader of the Delegation  
Member of the Executive Committee

Mr. Amaro HUELVA Member of the Senate (PSOE)

Ms. Sara SIEIRA Secretary General, Senate

Mr. Joaquín CABEZAS  
Adviser

Ms. Teresa GÓMEZ-BERNARDO  
Secretary of the Group, Secretary of the Delegation

PP Popular Party  
PSOE Socialist Party

### SRI LANKA

Mr. Mahinda Yapa ABEYWARDANA Speaker of Parliament  
Leader of the Delegation  
President of the IPU Group  
Chairman, Committee on Parliamentary Business  
Chairman, Committee on High Posts (SLPP)

Mr. Ashok Ranjan Abeysinghe KALUKOTTE Member of Parliament  
KANKANAMGE Member, Parliamentary Caucus for Children  
Member, The Parliamentary Caucus for Open  
Parliament Initiative (SJB)

Ms. Manjula Wijekoon Dissanayake WIJEKOON Member of Parliament  
MUDIYANSELAGE Member, Women Parliamentarians Caucus in  
Parliament  
Deputy, Parliamentary Caucus for Youth (SLPP)

Mr. Ranjith Madduma Bandara RATNAYAKA Member of Parliament  
MUDIYANSELAGE Member, Committee on Parliamentary Business  
Member, Sectoral Oversight Committee on Food  
Security & Agriculture (SJB)

Mr. Sumith Weerasinghe UDUKUMBURAGE Member of Parliament  
Member, Parliamentary Caucus for Youth  
Member, Sectoral Oversight Committee on Energy &  
Transport (SLPP)

Ms. Kushani Anusha ROHANADEERA Secretary General of Parliament  
Secretary of the Group, Secretary of the Delegation

SLPP Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna  
SJB Samagi Jana Balawegaya

### SURINAME

Mr. Asiskumar GAJADIEN Member of the National Assembly  
Leader of the Delegation  
Chairman, Standing Committee of Planning and  
Finance  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing  
Committee on Democracy and Human Rights  
Chairman, Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs  
International Business and International Cooperation  
Member, Standing Committee on Natural Resources  
(VHP)

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Ms. Soerjani MINGOEN-KARIJOMENAWI | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Standing Committee of Agriculture, Livestock,<br>Farming, and Fishing<br>Member, Standing Committee of Economic Business,<br>Entrepreneurship and Technological Innovation (VHP) |
| Ms. Tashana LOSCHE                | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Standing Committee of Education (NDP)  |
| Ms. Agatha RAMDASS                | Deputy Clerk, National Assembly   |
| Ms. Asna RADJARAM<br>Adviser      |   |
| VHP                               | Progressive Reform Party  |
| NDP                               | National Democratic Party   |

**SWEDEN – SUÈDE**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Ms. Kerstin LUNDGREN<br>Leader of the Delegation   | Third Deputy Speaker of Parliament<br>Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs (C) |
| Ms. Margareta CEDERFELT<br>Leader of the Delegation  | Member of Parliament<br>Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs (M)               |
| Mr. Arin KARAPET   | Member of Parliament<br>Member, Committee on the Labour Market (SD)            |
| Mr. Mattias KARLSSON<br>Member of the High-level Advisory Group on<br>Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism | Member of Parliament<br>Committee on Foreign Affairs (SD)                      |
| Mr. Serkan KÖSE  | Member of Parliament<br>Member, Committee on the Labour Market (SAP)           |
| Ms. Yasmine ERIKSSON   | Member of Parliament<br>Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs (SD)              |
| Ms. Leila ALI ELMİ   | Member of Parliament<br>Member, Committee on the Labour Market (MP)            |
| Mr. Ingvar MATTSON   | Secretary General of Parliament  |
| Ms. Anna-Sara HULTGÅRD CZERNICH<br>Adviser   |  |
| Mr. Björn SONDÉN<br>Secretary of the Delegation  |  |
| Mr. Ralph HERMANSSON<br>Secretary of the Delegation  |  |
| Ms. Alexa TIMLICK  |  |
| C  | The Centre Party   |
| M  | The Moderate Party   |
| SD   | The Sweden Democrats   |
| SAP  | The Social Democratic Party  |
| MP   | Green Party  |

**SWITZERLAND – SUISSE**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| M. Thomas HURTER<br>Chef de la délégation<br>Président du Groupe UIP<br>Membre du Groupe de travail sur la science et la technologie                               | Membre du Conseil national<br>Vice-Président, Commission des transports et des télécommunications<br>Membre, Commission de la politique de sécurité (SVP/UDC)  |
| M. Christian LOHR<br>Membre du Bureau de la Commission permanente de la Démocratie et Droits de l'homme  | Membre du Conseil national<br>Membre, Commission de la sécurité sociale et de la santé publique (M/C)  |
| M. Daniel JOSITSCH   | Membre du Conseil des Etats<br>Membre, Commission de politique extérieure<br>Président, Commission des affaires juridiques<br>Membre, Commission de la politique de sécurité<br>Membre, Commission des institutions politiques<br>Membre, Délégation auprès de l'Assemblée parlementaire de l'OSCE (SP/PS) |
| M. Franz GRÜTER  | Membre du Conseil national<br>Membre, Commission de politique extérieure<br>Membre, Commission de l'immunité (SVP/UDC)   |
| Mme Isabelle CHASSOT   | Membre du Conseil des Etats<br>Membre, Commission de politique extérieure<br>Membre, Commission des affaires juridiques<br>Membre, Commission de la science, de l'éducation et de la culture (M/C)   |
| Mme Laurence FEHLMANN RIELLE<br>Membre du Comité sur les droits de l'homme des parlementaires, Membre du Comité sur les questions relatives au Moyen-Orient        | Membre du Conseil national<br>Membre, Commission de politique extérieure<br>Membre, Commission des finances (SP/PS)  |
| M. Laurent WEHRLI<br>Membre du Bureau de la Commission permanente de la Paix et de la Sécurité internationale, Membre du Groupe de facilitateurs concernant Chypre | Membre du Conseil national<br>Président, Commission de politique extérieure<br>Membre, Commission de gestion<br>Membre, Délégation auprès de l'Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (FDP/PLR)  |
| M. Philippe SCHWAB   | Secrétaire général de l'Assemblée fédérale   |
| M. Jérémie EQUÉY<br>Secrétaire du Groupe, Secrétaire de la délégation  | Relations internationales  |
| Mme Anna-Lea GNÄGI<br>Secrétaire adjointe du Groupe, Secrétariat de la délégation  | Relations internationales  |
| SVP/UDC Union démocratique du centre<br>M/C Le Centre<br>SP/PS Parti socialiste<br>FDP/PLR Les Libéraux / Les Libéraux-Radicaux                                    |  |

**SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC – RÉPUBLIQUE ARABE SYRIENNE**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Ms. Maysa SALEH<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians | Member of the People's Assembly (Socialist)  |
| Mr. Ahmad ALZAYDAN  | Member of the People's Assembly<br>Member, Agriculture and Water Resources Committee (Socialist) |
| Ms. Fatimah KHAMEES   | Member of the People's Assembly<br>Vice-chairperson, Social Affairs Committee (Socialist)        |

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|---|---|
| Mr. Jamil MURAD                               | Member of the People's Assembly<br>Member, Committee on Economic Affairs and Energy<br>Member, Youth and Sports Committee |
| Mr. Rafat DARMOCH                             | Member of the People's Assembly<br>Member, Martyrs and War Victims Affairs Committee<br>(Socialist)                       |
| Mr. Abdul Azim DIAB<br>Secretary of the Group | Director, People's Assembly   |
| Socialist      Ba'ath Party                   |   |

**THAILAND – THAÏLANDE**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Mr. Pornpetch WICHITCOLCHAI<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group                                | President of the Senate  |
| Ms. Theerarat SAMREJVANICH   | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Chairperson, Committee on Communications,<br>Telecommunications, and Digital Economy and Society<br>(PTP)                |
| Ms. Suwannee SIRIVEJCHAPUN<br>Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians   | Member of the Senate<br>First Vice-Chairperson, Committee on Laws, Justice,<br>and Police Affairs, Senate  |
| Mr. Kraisd TONTISIRIN<br>Member of the Working Group on Science and<br>Technology                                    | Member of the Senate<br>Third Vice-Chairperson, Committee on Higher<br>Education, Science, Research and Innovation, Senate   |
| Ms. Saratsanun UNNOPORN  | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Secretary, Committee on Foreign Affairs (PTP)  |
| Mr. Chaiwat SATHAWORNWICHIT  | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Secretary, Committee on Debt, Poverty Problems<br>Solutions, and Inequality Reduction, House of<br>Representatives (MFP) |
| Mr. Akara TONGJAISOD   | Member of the House of Representatives<br>Spokesperson, Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of<br>Representatives (PPRP)   |
| Mr. Anusart SUWANMONGKOL<br>Member of the High-level Advisory Group on<br>Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism | Member of the Senate<br>Second Vice-Spokesperson, Committee on Foreign<br>Affairs, Senate  |
| Mr. Pita LIMJAROENRAT  | Member of the House of Representatives (MFP)   |
| Mr. Padipat SUNTIPHADA<br>Adviser  | Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives (FP)  |
| Ms. Pikulkeaw KRAIRIKSH<br>Adviser   | Member of the Senate<br>Chairperson, Committee on Foreign Affairs Senate   |
| Ms. Natchtanun ROOPKHAJORN<br>Secretary to the Leader of Delegation  | Adviser to the President of the Senate   |
| Mr. Sirote PATPUN  | Deputy Secretary General, House of Representatives   |
| Ms. Steejit TAIPIBOONSUK<br>ASGP Member  | Deputy Secretary General, House of Representatives   |
| Ms. Boontarika JUNHANANDANA<br>Secretary of the Delegation   | Director, Bureau of Inter-Parliamentary Organizations,<br>Secretariat of the House of Representatives  |

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| Mr. Tanukom BAMRUNGPON<br>Assistant Secretary of the Delegation                        | Director of IPU Division, Bureau of Inter-Parliamentary Organizations, Secretariat of the House of Representatives |
| Mr. Worathep CHEUJEDONGK<br>Interpreter and Assistant Secretary to the ASGP Delegation | Foreign Affairs Officer, Senior Professional Level, House of Representatives                                       |
| Ms. Somsakul LICKANAJULE<br>Assistant Secretary of the Delegation                      | Foreign Relations Officer<br>Secretariat of the House of Representatives   |
| Mr. Chulatas SAIKRACHANG<br>Assistant Secretary of the Delegation                      | Foreign Relations Officer, Secretariat of the House of Representatives   |
| Mr. Kanon SUKPORNCHAIKAK<br>Secretary to the ASGP Delegation                           | Foreign Affairs Officer, Professional Level, House of Representatives  |
| Mr. Pattrapong ISSARIYAPRUET<br>Assistant Secretary of the Delegation                  | Parliamentary Officer,<br>Secretariat of the House of Representatives  |
| Mr. Koson UDOMSIN<br>Assistant Secretary of the Delegation                             | Foreign Relations Officer, Secretariat of the House of Representatives   |
| PPRP Palang Pracharath Party   |  |
| PTP Phai Thai Party  |  |
| MFP Move Forward Party   |  |
| FP Fair Party  |  |

**TIMOR-LESTE**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Ms. Maria Fernanda LAY<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group | Speaker of the National Parliament     |
| Mr. Aniceto LOPES  | Member of the National Parliament      |
| Ms. Carmida CARLOTA  | Member of the National Parliament      |
| Ms. Cedelizia FARIA DOS SANTOS   | Member of the National Parliament      |
| Ms. Maria Teresa DA SILVA GUSMÃO   | Member of the National Parliament      |
| Mr. Saul Salvador H.J. AMARAL  | Member of the National Parliament      |
| Ms. Maria Angelina LOPES SARMENTO  | Member of the National Parliament      |
| Mr. Edgar Sequiera MARTINS<br>Secretary of the Delegation                        | Secretary General, National Parliament |
| Ms. Izilda PEREIRA   | Protocol, National Parliament          |
| Mr. Joaquim da Conceição SOARES  | Adviser, National Parliament           |
| Ms. Lizetti Maria Yolanda LAY LENGGO   | Adviser, National Parliament           |
| Ms. Teresa da Silva do Rego ANDRADE  | Adviser, National Parliament           |
| Ms. Marcia CORREIA DE LEMOS  | Adviser, National Parliament           |

**TONGA**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Mr. Fatafehi FAKAFANUA<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>Member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians | Speaker of the Legislative Assembly<br>Chair, Environment Climate Change Standing Committee<br>Member, Law Standing Committee |
|--|---|

Mr. Tevita Fatafehi PULOKA

Member of Parliament  
Legislative Assembly**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO – TRINITÉ-ET-TOBAGO**Mr. Nigel de FREITAS  
Leader of the Delegation  
President of the IPU GroupSpeaker of the Senate  
Chairman, Committee of Privileges  
Chairman, Statutory Instruments CommitteeMr. Julien OGILVIE  
Secretary of the Delegation

Secretary General, Senate

**TUNISIA – TUNISIE**M. Mohamed Amine OUERGHI  
Chef de la délégationMembre de l'Assemblée des Représentants du peuple  
Assesseur chargé des relations avec les citoyens et la  
société civile

M. Abdelkader AMMAR

Membre de l'Assemblée des Représentants du peuple  
Membre, Commission de la Santé, de la Femme, de la  
Famille, des Affaires Sociales et des Personnes  
Handicapées

M. Dhafer SGHIRI

Membre de l'Assemblée des Représentants du peuple  
Rapporteur, Commission de la législation

Mme Nejla LAHIANI

Membre de l'Assemblée des Représentants du peuple  
Vice-Président, Commission de l'Éducation, la  
Formation, la Recherche Scientifique, des Jeunes et du  
SportMme Najoua AOUAITI  
Secrétaire de la délégationDirecteur adjoint, l'Assemblée des Représentants du  
peuple**TÜRKIYE**Ms. Asuman ERDOĞAN  
Leader of the Delegation  
President of the IPU Group  
Member of the Committee on Middle East QuestionsMember of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye  
(AK)Mr. Selman ÖZBOYACI  
Leader of the DelegationMember of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye  
(AK)

Ms. Fatma ONCU

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye  
(AK)

Ms. Zuhai KARAKOÇ DORA

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye  
(MHP)

Mr. Talip UZUN

Secretary General of the Grand National Assembly of  
TürkiyeMs. Saren AKSELİ  
Delegation Coordinator

Ms. Cigdem GUNDIZ

Director, Grand National Assembly of Türkiye

AK Justice and Development Party  
MHP Nationalist Movement Party**TURKMENISTAN – TURKMÉNISTAN**Ms. Dunyagozel GULMANOVA  
Leader of the Delegation  
President of the IPU Group

Chairperson of the Assembly

Ms. Jenet OVEKOVA  
Member of the Assembly (TDP)

Mr. Maksat BEKIYEV  
Diplomat

Mr. Vepa HAJIYEV  
Diplomat

TDP Democratic Party of Turkmenistan

**UGANDA – OUGANDA**

Mr. Alex RUHUNDA  
Leader of the Delegation  
Member of Parliament  
Member, Budget Committee  
Member, Natural Resources Committee (NRM)

Mr. Abdul MUTUMBA  
Member of Parliament  
Member, Equal Opportunities Committee  
Member, Education and Sports Committee (NRM)

Mr. Mohammed KATO  
Member of Parliament  
Member, Rules, Privileges and Discipline Committee  
Member, Tourism, Trade and Industry (NRM)

Ms. Nancy Odonga ACORA  
Member of Parliament  
Member, National Economy Committee  
Member, Presidential Affairs Committee

Mr. Patrick Kayongo NSANJA  
Member of Parliament  
Member, Public Accounts Committee - COSASE  
Committee  
Member, Physical Infrastructure Committee

Mr. Paul AKAMBA  
Member of Parliament  
Member, Equal Opportunities Committee  
Member, Environment and Natural Resources  
Committee (NRM)

Ms. Susan AMERO  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing  
Committee on Peace and International Security  
Member of Parliament  
Member, Local Government and Public Service  
Committee  
Member, Public Accounts Committee - Central

Mr. Hassan KIRUMIRA  
Member of Parliament (NUP)  
Member, Committee on National Economy  
Member, Committee on Trade, Tourism, and Industry

Ms. Jane Rose Semakula IKIROR  
Adviser

Mr. Meshach NUWABIINE  
Secretary of the Delegation  
Deputy Director, Parliament

Ms. Sitnah Chemisto CHEROTICH  
Adviser

NRM National Resistance Movement  
NUP National Unity Platform

**UKRAINE**

Mr. Oleksandr KORNIYENKO  
Leader of the Delegation  
Deputy Speaker of Parliament ("Servant of the People"  
political party)

Mr. Arsenii PUSHKARENKO  
Member of Parliament  
Deputy Chairman of the Committee, Committee of the  
Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Foreign Policy and  
Interparliamentary Cooperation ("Servant of the People"  
political party)



Mr. Artur GERASYMOV  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing  
Committee on Sustainable Development

Member of Parliament  
Member of the Committee, Committee of the Verkhovna  
Rada of Ukraine on Agrarian and Land Policy  
("European Solidarity" political party)

Ms. Lesia VASYLENKO  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing  
Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

Member of Parliament  
Head of the Subcommittee on Climate Change and Air  
Protection, Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of  
Ukraine on Environmental Policy and Nature  
Management (Political Party "Voice")

Mr. Oleksandr SANCHENKO

Member of Parliament  
Head of the subcommittee on the music industry,  
Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on  
Humanitarian and Information Policy ("Servant of the  
People" political party)

Mr. Oleksandr MEREZHKO

Member of Parliament  
Chairman of the Committee, Committee of the  
Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Foreign Policy and  
Interparliamentary Cooperation ("Servant of the People"  
political party)

Mr. Oleksii ZHMERENETSKYI

Member of Parliament  
Head of the subcommittee on adaptation of Ukrainian  
legislation to the provisions of European Union law (EU  
acquis), fulfillment of Ukraine's international legal  
obligations in the field of European integration,  
Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Anti-  
corruption Policy ("Servant of the People" political party)

Ms. Olga RUDENKO  
Member of the Board of the Forum of Young  
Parliamentarians

Member of Parliament  
Head of the subcommittee on ensuring foreign  
economic ties and effective use of international aid,  
Committee of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on  
Foreign Policy and Interparliamentary Cooperation  
("Servant of the People" political party)

Mr. Viacheslav SHTUCHNYI  
Secretary of the Group

Secretary General of Parliament

Mr. Andriy KANIUKA  
Secretary of the Delegation

Mr. Artem RYZHAK  
Adviser

Ms. Olha RYBAK  
Secretary of the Delegation

Ms. Yevheniia FILIPENKO  
Ambassador

Mr. Oleksandr KAPUSTIN  
Diplomat

### UNITED ARAB EMIRATES – ÉMIRATS ARABES UNIS

Mr. Ali AL NUAIMI  
Leader of the Delegation  
President of the IPU Group  
President of Gender Partnership Group, Member of the  
Executive Committee

Member of the Federal National Council

Mr. Ahmed KHOORI

Member of the Federal National Council

Mr. Marwan ALMHERI

Member of the Federal National Council

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Ms. Meera AL SUWAIDI   | Member of the Federal National Council      |
| Ms. Moza ALSHEHHI  | Member of the Federal National Council      |
| Ms. Sara FALAKNAZ<br>Member of the Board of the Forum of Young<br>Parliamentarians | Member of the Federal National Council      |
| Ms. Sedra ALMANSOORI   | Member of the Federal National Council      |
| Ms. Afra ALBASTI   | Secretary General, Federal National Council |
| Ms. Roudha ALSHEHHI  | Director, Federal National Council          |
| Mr. Abdulrahman ALSHEHHI   | Adviser, Federal National Council           |
| Mr. Ahmed ALMHEIRI   | Adviser, Federal National Council           |
| Mr. Bilal ALALI  | Adviser, Federal National Council           |
| Ms. Eman ALSUWAIDI   | Adviser, Federal National Council           |
| Mr. Ibrahim ALZAABI  | Adviser, Federal National Council           |
| Ms. Mira ALKHATIB  | Adviser, Federal National Council           |
| Ms. Salama ALSHEHHI  | Adviser, Federal National Council           |

**UNITED KINGDOM – ROYAUME-UNI**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Dame Karen BRADLEY<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group       | Member of the House of Commons<br>Chair, Procedures<br>Member, Liaison (C) |
| Mr. Dan CARDEN<br>President of the Board of the Forum of Young<br>Parliamentarians | Member of the House of Commons<br>Member, Foreign Affairs (L)              |
| Mr. Ian LIDDELL-GRAINGER   | Member of the House of Commons<br>Member, International Development (C)    |
| Mr. Alex SOBEL   | Member of the House of Commons<br>Member, Culture Media and Sport (L)      |
| Baroness Gloria HOOPER   | Member of the House of Lords (C)   |
| Lord Ross KEMPESELL  | Member of the House of Lords (C)   |
| Lord Stewart JACKSON   | Member of the House of Lords (C)   |
| Lord Chris RENNARD   | Member of the House of Lords (LD)  |
| Mr. Rick NIMMO<br>Director-BGIPU   |  |
| Ms. Dominique REES<br>Deputy Director-BGIPU  |  |
| Ms. Rhiannon EDWARDS<br>Multilateral Programme Manager-BGIPU                       |  |
| Mr. Joe PERRY<br>International Project Manager-BGIPU                               |  |
| Mr. Liam LAURENCE SMYTH  | Clerk of Legislation, House of Commons                                     |
| Ms. Chloe MAWSON   | Clerk Assistant, House of Lords  |

Ms. Susie LATTA  
Head of Inter-Parliamentary Relations Office, House of Lords

Ms. Elektra GARVIE-ADAMS  
ASGP Co-Secretary

C Conservative  
L Labour  
LD Liberal Democrats

### UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA – RÉPUBLIQUE-UNIE DE TANZANIE

Mr. Joseph MHAGAMA  
Leader of the Delegation  
Member of the National Assembly (CCM)

Mr. Elibariki KINGU  
Member of the National Assembly (CCM)

Ms. Neema LUGANGIRA  
Member of the National Assembly (CCM)

Ms. Esther MATIKO  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing  
Committee on Democracy and Human rights  
Member of the National Assembly  
(CHADEMA)

Mr. Faustine NDUGULILE  
Member of the Advisory Group on Health  
Member of the National Assembly (CCM)

Ms. Mwanaisha ULENGE  
Member of the National Assembly (CCM)

Mr. Ramadhan SULEIMAN  
Member of the National Assembly (CCM)

Ms. Katherine KAIHULA  
Secretary of the Delegation, Secretary of the Group

Mr. Mohammed MWANGA  
Office of the Clerk of the National Assembly

Ms. Zanele BRIGHTON CHIZA  
Coordinator to the Clerk of the National Assembly

CCM Chama Cha Mapinduzi  
CHADEMA Chama Cha Maendeleo Na Demokrasia

### URUGUAY

Ms. Beatriz ARGIMÓN  
Leader of the Delegation  
President of the IPU Group  
Member of the Executive Committee  
Speaker of the General Assembly and Senate, Vice-  
President of Uruguay (PN)

Mr. Amín NIFFOURI  
Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions  
Member of the Senate (PN)

Ms. Carmen ASIAÍN  
Member of the Committee on the Human Rights of  
Parliamentarians  
Member of the Senate (PN)

Ms. Irene MOREIRA  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing  
Committee on Sustainable Development  
Member of the Senate (CA)

Ms. Silvia NANE  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing  
Committee on Democracy and Human Rights  
Member of the Senate (FA)

Mr. Gustavo SÁNCHEZ  
ASGP Member  
Secretary General, General Assembly and Senate

Mr. Fernando RIPOLL  
ASGP Member  
Secretary General, House of Representatives

Mr. José Pedro MONTERO  
Vice-President of the ASGP

Secretary General, Senate

Ms. Carina GALVALISI  
Secretary of the Group, Secretary of the  
Delegation, GRULAC Secretariat

Head, International Relations,  
House of Representatives

Mr. Oscar PIQUINELA  
GRULAC Secretary

Adviser, Senate

PN Partido Nacional  
FA Frente Amplio  
CA Cabildo Abierto

### UZBEKISTAN – OUZBÉKISTAN

Ms. Tanzila NARBAEVA  
Leader of the Delegation  
President of the IPU Group

Speaker of the Senate

Ms. Odinakhon OTAKHONOVA

Member of the Legislative Chamber  
Member, Committee on Issues of Agriculture and Water  
Management (UzLiDeP)

Mr. Ravshanbek ALIMOV

Member of the Senate

Mr. Sanjar KHAMIDULLAEV

Member of the Legislative Chamber  
Member, Committee on Issues of Innovation  
Development, Information Policy and Information  
Technology (UzLiDeP)

Mr. Mirbotir MIRKHAMIDOV

Adviser, Senate

Mr. Ubaydulla RASULOV  
Secretary of the Delegation

UzLiDeP Uzbekistan Liberal Democratic Party

### VANUATU

Mr. Simeon Davidson SEOULE  
Leader of the Delegation

Speaker of Parliament

Mr. Peter VARI

Member of Parliament

Mr. Maxime BANGA

Secretary General of Parliament

Ms. Vanessa MOLISA

Adviser, Parliament

### VIET NAM

Mr. Phuong TRAN QUANG  
Leader of the Delegation

Vice-President of the National Assembly (CPV)

Mr. Phong DON TUAN

Member of the National Assembly  
Vice-Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee (CPV)

Mr. Hung NGUYEN HAI

Member of the National Assembly  
Vice-Chairman of the National Defence and Security  
Committee (CPV)

Ms. Chi NGUYEN VAN

Member of the National Assembly  
Vice-Chairwoman, Committee for Finance and Budget  
(CPV)

Ms. Phuong NGUYEN THI MAI

Member of the National Assembly  
Vice-Chairwoman, Committee on Law (CPV)

|  |  |
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| Mr. Tuan VU MINH                                     | Member of the National Assembly<br>Vice Chair of the Office of the National Assembly                           |
| Mr. Hien DO MANH                                     | Member of the National Assembly (CPV)<br>First Deputy Secretary, Hai Phong City Party<br>Committee             |
| Mr. Binh PHAM PHU                                    | Member of the National Assembly<br>Standing Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs (CPV)                         |
| Ms. Anh NGUYEN THI KIM                               | Member of the National Assembly<br>Standing Member, Committee for science, technology<br>and environment (CPV) |
| Mr. Son NGUYEN TRUC                                  | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs (CPV)                                  |
| Mr. Cuong BUI VAN                                    | Secretary General of the National Assembly   |
| Mr. Anh TRAN QUANG<br>Adviser                        | Deputy Director, National Assembly   |
| Mr. Trung DAO DUY<br>Secretary of the Delegation     | Deputy Director, National Assembly<br>Department of Protocol and International Relation                        |
| Ms. Van NGUYEN THI HOANG<br>Secretary of the Group   | Adviser, National Assembly   |
| Ms. Quynh Thi NGUYEN                                 | Adviser, National Assembly   |
| Mr. Quang NGUYEN MINH<br>Secretary of the Delegation | Adviser, National Assembly   |
| Ms. Hoa HOANG<br>Secretary of the Delegation         | Adviser, National Assembly   |
| Mr. Tuan LU Anh<br>Diplomat                          |  |
| CPV  | Communist Party of Vietnam   |

**YEMEN – YÉMEN**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Mr. Mohamed Ali AL-SHADADI<br>Leader of the Delegation   | Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives |
| Mr. Hamid Abdullah AL-AHMAR<br>Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee<br>on Democracy and Human Rights | Member of the House of Representatives         |
| Mr. Mohamed Saif AL-SHAMIRI  | Member of the House of Representatives         |
| Mr. Naser Mohamed BA-JIL   | Member of the House of Representatives         |
| Mr. Abdullah Salah Aldeen DARWESH<br>Secretary of the Delegation   | Adviser, House of Representatives              |

**ZAMBIA – ZAMBIE**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Ms. Nelly Butete Kashumba MUTTI<br>Leader of the Delegation<br>President of the IPU Group<br>Member of the Executive Committee | Speaker of the National Assembly   |
| Mr. Harry KAMBONI  | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, National Guidance & Gender Matters<br>Chairperson, Education, Science & Technology (UPND) |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Ms. Jacqueline SABAO  | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Standing Orders<br>Vice-Chairperson, Public Accounts (UPND)                          |
| Mr. Kenny SIACHISUMO  | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Delegated Legislation (UPND)   |
| Ms. Sibongile MWAMBA  | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Public Accounts Committee  |
| Mr. Mubita Boris ANAKOKA  | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Parastatal Bodies (UPND)   |
| Mr. Oliver Mumbuna AMUTIKE<br>Member of the Committee on Middle<br>East Questions | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Media, Information & Communication<br>Technologies<br>Member, Cabinet Affairs (UPND) |
| Mr. Roy NGULUBE<br>Secretary of the Group   | Clerk of the National Assembly  |
| Mr. Dominic MWINAMO   | Director, National Assembly   |
| Ms. Pauline MONGA<br>Secretary of the Delegation                                  |   |
| Mr. Sage SAMUWIKA   | Director, National Assembly   |
| Ms. Sharon Biemba MUTETO<br>Adviser   | Deputy Director, National Assembly  |
| UPND      United Party for National Assembly<br>PF          Patriotic Front       |   |

**ZIMBABWE**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Mr. Jacob Francis Nzwidamilimo MUDENDA<br>Leader of the Delegation | Speaker of the National Assembly<br>Chairperson, Committee on Standing Rules and Orders   |
| Ms. Mabel Memory CHINOMONA   | President of the Senate<br>Deputy Chairperson, Committee on Standing Rules and<br>Orders Patron, Zimbabwe Women Parliamentarians<br>Caucus (ZANU PF)  |
| Mr. Chapfiwa Prosper MUTSEYAMI                                     | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Public Accounts Committee<br>Member, Portfolio Committee on Budget and Finance<br>(CCC)                    |
| Mr. Jona NYEVERA   | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Mines and Mining Development<br>Member, Local Government, Public Works and National<br>Housing (ZANU PF)   |
| Ms. Judith TOBAIWA   | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Mines and Mining Development<br>Member, Women Affairs Community and Small Medium<br>Enterprises (CCC)      |
| Mr. Lucas Mtshane KHUMALO  | Member of the National Assembly   |
| Ms. Naledi Lindarose MADZARA                                       | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Mines and Mining Development<br>Member, Youth Empowerment Development and<br>Vocational Training (ZANU PF) |
| Mr. Tawanda KARIKOGA   | Member of the National Assembly<br>Member, Foreign Affairs and International Trade<br>(ZANU PF)   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Ms. Tsitsi Veronica MUZENDA  | Member of the Senate<br>Member, Thematic Committee on Human Rights<br>Member, Thematic Committee on Sustainable<br>Development Goals (ZANU PF) |
| Mr. Asha JENJE<br>Adviser  |  |
| Mr. Farai Nicholas MAKUBAZA<br>Adviser   |  |
| Mr. Frank Mike NYAMAHOWA<br>Adviser  |  |
| Mr. Kennedy Mugove CHOKUDA<br>Adviser  | Clerk of the National Assembly   |
| Ms. Martha MUSHANDINGA<br>Secretary of the Delegation  | Principal Executive Assistant to the Hon. Speaker,<br>National Assembly  |
| Ms. Rumbidzai Pamela CHISANGO<br>Secretary of the Delegation   | Principal External Relations Officer, National Assembly  |
| CCC      Citizens' Coalition for Change<br>ZANU PF   Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front |  |

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**DELEGATIONS PARTICIPATING IN AN OBSERVER CAPACITY /  
DÉLÉGATIONS PARTICIPANT EN QUALITE D'OBSERVATEURS**

**AFGHANISTAN**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Mr. Mir Rahman RAHMANI QALANDERKHAN<br>Leader of the Delegation | Speaker of the House of the People   |
| Mr. Jomadin GIYANWAL  | Member of the House of Elders<br>Member, Committee on Borders and Cultural Affairs |
| Ms. Shenkai KAROKHAIL   | Member of the House of the People  |
| Mr. Abdul Qader ARYUBI  | Secretary General, House of the People   |
| Mr. Abdul Muqtader NASARY                                       | Secretary General, House of Elders   |
| Mr. Amanullah KATAWAZAI<br>Secretary of the Delegation          | Director, House of Elders  |

**MYANMAR**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Mr. Win Myat AYE<br>Leader of the Delegation | Member of the House of Nationalities (NLD) |
| Ms. Mya THIDA                                | Adviser, House of Nationalities            |
| Mr. Shane HTET KO                            | Secretary, House of Nationalities          |
| NLD      National League for Democracy       |  |

**II. ASSOCIATE MEMBERS – MEMBERS ASSOCIES****ARAB PARLIAMENT  
PARLEMENT ARABE**

|  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Mr. Adel AL-ASOOMI<br>Leader of the Delegation | Speaker of the Arab Parliament |
| Mr. Hazza AL-QAHTANI                           | Deputy Speaker                 |
| Ms. Shaikha AL-JUFAIRI                         | Member of Parliament           |
| Ms. Mastourah AL-SHAMMARI                      | Member of Parliament           |
| Mr. Kamel Mohamed Farid SHARWY                 | Secretary General              |
| Mr. Ashraf EL-SEIDY                            | Adviser                        |
| Mr. Ahmed HASSABALLA                           | Protocol Officer               |

**EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (EALA)  
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'EST**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Mr. Joseph NTAKIRUTIMANA<br>Leader of the Delegation | Speaker of the Legislative Assembly   |
| Mr. Kim Gai Ruot DUOP                                | Member of the Legislative Assembly<br>Member, General Purpose Committee   |
| Mr. Suleiman Said Saleh SHAHBAL                      | Member of the Legislative Assembly<br>Chairperson, Committee on Communication, Trade and Investments<br>Member, Committee on Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution |
| Mr. Alex Lumumba OBATRE                              | Secretary General   |
| Mr. John Njoroge MUTEKA                              | Deputy Secretary General  |
| Mr. Ajak Nicodemus BIOR                              | Senior Public Relations Officer   |
| Mr. Anatole NAHAYO                                   | Senior Research Officer   |
| Ms. Priscilla AMODING                                | Senior Administrative Secretary   |
| Ms. Emilly Okema KIRUNGI                             | Administrative Assistant  |

**INTERPARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF MEMBER NATIONS OF THE  
COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES (IPA CIS)  
ASSEMBLÉE INTERPARLEMENTAIRE DES NATIONS MEMBRES  
DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ DES ÉTATS INDÉPENDANTS**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Mr. Ravshan RAJABZODA<br>Leader of the Delegation | Member of Parliament<br>Chair, Committee on Legislation and Human Rights of the Majlisi namoyandagon of the Majlisi Oli of the Republic of Tajikistan |
| Mr. Dmitry KOBITSKIY                              | Secretary General   |
| Mr. Denis ZHUK                                    | Head of the Expert and Analytical Department of the IPA CIS Council Secretariat   |



**INTER-PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE OF THE WEST AFRICAN ECONOMIC  
AND MONETARY UNION (WAEMU)  
COMITÉ INTERPARLEMENTAIRE DE L'UNION ÉCONOMIQUE  
ET MONÉTAIRE OUEST-AFRICAINE (UEMOA)**

Ms. Maria Paula COSTA PEREIRA Deputy Speaker

**LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN PARLIAMENT (PARLATINO)  
PARLEMENT LATINO-AMÉRICAIN ET CARIBÉEN**

Mr. Rolando GONZALEZ PATRICIO Speaker  
Leader of the Delegation

Mr. Elias CASTILLO Secretary General

Ms. Norma CALERO Adviser

**PARLIAMENT OF THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)  
PARLEMENT DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ ÉCONOMIQUE DES ÉTATS DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST  
(CEDEAO)**

Mr. Sidie Mohamed TUNIS Speaker  
Leader of the Delegation

Mr. Kountouon Bertin SOME Secretary General

Mr. Ezekiel Friday FWANGDER Adviser

Mr. Mohammed Kabeer GARBA Director

Ms. Nancy HARVEY Deputy Director

**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF LA FRANCOPHONIE  
ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE (APF)**

M. Mars DI BARTOLOMEO Membre de l'Assemblée  
Chef de la délégation Trésorier

Mme Chantal SOUCY Membre de l'Assemblée  
Présidente du réseau

M. Damien CESSÉLIN Secrétaire général

Mme Isabelle KEMPENEERS Conseillère

M. Florian GIACOBINO Conseiller

M. Benoit ONAMBELE Conseiller

**III. OBSERVERS – OBSERVATEURS**

**JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)  
PROGRAMME COMMUN DES NATIONS UNIES SUR LE VIH/SIDA (ONUSIDA)**

Mr. Efraim GOMEZ, Director, External Relations

Ms. Muleya MWANANYANDA, Director, Influence and Partnership

Ms. Kasia KOS, Advisor, Influencers & Partnerships

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)  
HAUT-COMMISSARIAT DES NATIONS UNIES POUR LES RÉFUGIÉS (HCR)**

Ms. Elizabeth TAN, Director, Division of International Protection

Mr. Mark MANLY, Head of Donor Relations and Resource Mobilization Service

**UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD)**  
**CONFÉRENCE DES NATIONS UNIES SUR LE COMMERCE ET LE DÉVELOPPEMENT (CNUCED)**

Mr. Andres Miguel RONDON, Economic Affairs Officer  
Ms. Erika MARTINEZ LIEVANO, Advisor

**UNITED OFFICE FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (UNDRR)**  
**BUREAU DES NATIONS UNIES POUR LA RÉDUCTION DES RISQUES DE CATASTROPHES**

Ms. Paola ALBRITO, Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General  
Mr. Sunjit MOHANTY, Chief of Branch Intergovernmental processes, Interagency Coordination and Partnerships  
Ms. Sarah WAADE-APICELLA, Head of Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement Unit

**WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)**  
**ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTÉ (OMS)**

Dr. Catharina BOEHME, Assistant Director-General, External Relations and Governance  
Dr. Gaudenz SILBERSCHMIDT, Director, Health and Multilateral Partnerships

**ORGANIZATION FOR THE PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS (OPCW)**  
**ORGANISATION POUR L'INTERDICTION DES ARMES CHIMIQUES (OIAC)**

Mr. René Betancourt, Senior Programme Officer  
Ms. Suzanna KHOSHABI, Programme Officer (Legal)

**PARTNERSHIP FOR MATERNAL, NEWBORN AND CHILD HEALTH (PMNCH)**  
**PARTENARIAT POUR LA SANTÉ DE LA MÈRE, DU NOUVEAU-NÉ ET DE L'ENFANT (PMNCH)**

Ms. Flavia BUSTREO, Head of delegation  
Mr. Mohit PRAMANIK, Technical Officer

**AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION (APU)**  
**UNION PARLEMENTAIRE AFRICAINE (UPA)**

M. Boubacar IDI GADO, Secrétaire général  
M. Samir CHEROUATI, Administrateur

**ARAB INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION**  
**UNION INTERPARLEMENTAIRE ARABE (UIPA)**

Mr. Fayez AL SHAWABKAH, Secretary General  
Mr. Samir NIHAWI, Director of parliamentary relations

**ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (AIPA)**  
**ASSEMBLÉE INTERPARLEMENTAIRE DE L'ASEAN (AIPA)**

Ms. Siti Rozaimeryanty DATO HAJI ABDUL RAHMAN, Secretary General  
Ms. Putri Maha LIMA, Deputy Secretary General

**ASIAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (APA)**  
**ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE ASIATIQUE (APA)**

Mr. Mohammad Reza MAJIDI, Secretary General  
Mr. Mehdi GHASHGHAVI, Executive Deputy of the APA Secretariat

**BALTIC ASSEMBLY**  
**ASSEMBLÉE BALTE**

Mr. Jānis VUCĀNS, Vice-President of the Baltic Assembly, Latvia  
Mr. Enn EESMAA, Member of the Presidium of the Baltic Assembly, Estonia  
Ms. Agnija ANTANOVIČA, Secretary General of the Baltic Assembly

**COLLECTIVE SECURITY TREATY ORGANIZATION PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (CSTO PA)  
ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DE L'ORGANISATION DU TRAITÉ DE SÉCURITÉ COLLECTIVE  
(AP-OTSC)**

Mr. Sergei POSPELOV, Executive Secretary  
Mr. Hleb BAKHANOVICH, Secretary

**COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION (CPA)  
ASSOCIATION PARLEMENTAIRE DU COMMONWEALTH (APC)**

Mr. Stephen TWIGG, Secretary-General  
Ms. Benite DIBATEZA, Programmes Manager

**FORUM OF PARLIAMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE GREAT LAKES  
REGION (FP-ICGLR)  
FORUM DES PARLEMENTS DE LA CONFÉRENCE INTERNATIONALE SUR LA RÉGION DES  
GRANDS LACS (FP-CIRGL)**

Mr. Onyango KAKOBA, Secretary General  
Mr. Jeni BOTHA TOKO, Communication Officer

**GLOBAL ORGANIZATION OF PARLIAMENTARIANS AGAINST CORRUPTION (GOPAC)  
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DES PARLEMENTAIRES CONTRE LA CORRUPTION**

Mr. Putu Supadma RUDANA, Member of Parliament

**INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK FOR EDUCATION (IPNEd)  
RÉSEAU INTERNATIONAL DES PARLEMENTAIRES POUR L'ÉDUCATION (IPNEd)**

Mr. Joseph NHAN-O'REILLY, Director  
Mr. Christopher CECIL, Policy & Advocacy Adviser

**INTERPARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY ON ORTHODOXY (IAO)  
ASSEMBLÉE INTERPARLEMENTAIRE SUR L'ORTHODOXIE (AIO)**

Mr. Evangelos PARRAS, Scientific Assistant

**MAGHREB CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL  
CONSEIL CONSULTATIF MAGHRÉBIN**

M. Said MOKADEM, Secrétaire général

**PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT (PNND)  
PARLEMENTAIRES POUR LA NON-PROLIFÉRATION ET LE DÉSARMEMENT NUCLÉAIRES  
(PNND)**

Ms. Margareta KIENER NELLEN, Board Member  
Mr. Alyn WARE, Global Coordinator

**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COMMUNITY OF PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING COUNTRIES  
(AP-CPLP)  
ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ DES PAYS DE LANGUE PORTUGAISE**

Mr. Pedro-Ela NGUEMA BEA, Representative of the President-in-Office  
Mr. Jonas-Micha ASUMU NCHAMA, Translator of the President-in-Office

**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN (PAM)  
ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA MÉDITERRANÉE (APM)**

Mr. Lyes ACHOUR, Member of the Algerian Delegation to PAM  
Mr. Gerhard PUTMAN CRAMER, Permanent Observer at the UN in Geneva

**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF TURKIC STATES (TURKPA)  
ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DES ÉTATS TURCIQUES**

Mr. Mehmet Sureyya ER, Secretary General

**PARLIAMENTARY UNION OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION MEMBER STATES (PUIC)  
UNION PARLEMENTAIRE DES ÉTATS MEMBRES DE L'ORGANISATION DE LA COOPÉRATION ISLAMIQUE (UPCI)**

Mr. Mouhamed Khouraiichi NIASS, Secretary General  
Mr. Aliasghar MOHAMMADI SIJANI, Deputy Secretary General

**SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PARLIAMENTARY FORUM (SADC-PF)  
FORUM PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ DE DÉVELOPPEMENT DE L'AFRIQUE AUSTRALE (FP-SADC)**

Ms. Boemo SEKGOMA, Secretary General  
Ms. Clare MUSONDA, Director Corporate Governance

**UNITE PARLIAMENTARIANS NETWORK FOR GLOBAL HEALTH  
RÉSEAU DE PARLEMENTAIRES POUR LA SANTÉ MONDIALE UNITE**

Mr. Ricardo BAPTISTA-LEITE, President  
Mr. Francisco ALMEIDA LEITE, Executive Director

**GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA  
FONDS MONDIAL DE LUTTE CONTRE LE SIDA, LA TUBERCULOSE ET LE PALUDISME**

Mr. Scott BOULE, Senior Specialist for Parliamentary Affairs  
Ms. Christina DO PAÇO, Associate Specialist, Donors Relations

**INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LAW ORGANIZATION (IDLO)**

Mr. Mark CASSAYRE, Representative  
Ms. Silvia DODERO, Senior Advocacy Officer

**INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF SUPREME AUDIT INSTITUTIONS (INTOSAI)  
ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DES INSTITUTIONS SUPÉRIEURES DE CONTRÔLE DES FINANCES PUBLIQUES (INTOSAI)**

Mr. Antonio ANASTASIA, Minister  
Mr. Cláudio SOUTO MAIOR GOMES, Chief of Minister's Cabinet

**INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC)  
COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE**

Ms. Anne QUINTIN, Head of the Advisory Service  
Mr. Fahad AHMED, Legal Advisor, Advisory Services on IHL

**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY AND ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE  
(INTERNATIONAL IDEA)  
INSTITUT INTERNATIONAL POUR LA DÉMOCRATIE ET L'ASSISTANCE ÉLECTORAL**

Mr. Jonathan MURPHY, Head of Programme, INTER PARES

**ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES  
ORGANISATION DES ÉTATS AMÉRICAINS (OEA)**

Mr. Moises BENAMOR, Head of Section for the Support to Legislative Institutions. Secretariat for Strengthening Democracy

**SOVEREIGN ORDER OF MALTA  
ORDRE SOUVERAIN DE MALTE**

Ms. Marie-Thérèse PICTET-ALTHANN, Ambassadeur / Observateur permanent  
Mr. Jean-François KAMMER, Observateur permanent adjoint

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**IV. PARLIAMENTS PARTICIPATING AS OBSERVERS WITH A VIEW  
TO A POSSIBLE AFFILIATION/REAFFILIATION  
PARLEMENTS PARTICIPANT EN QUALITE D'OBSERVATEURS EN VUE  
D'UNE AFFILIATION/REAFFILIATION EVENTUELLE**

**JAMAICA  
JAMAÏQUE**

Mr. Thomas TAVARES-FINSON

Speaker of Parliament

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**V. ADVISERS AND OTHER PERSONS TAKING PART IN THE WORK OF THE 148th ASSEMBLY –  
CONSEILLERS ET AUTRES PERSONNES PARTICIPANT AUX TRAVAUX DE LA 148<sup>e</sup>  
ASSEMBLÉE**

**ANDEAN PARLIAMENT  
PARLEMENT ANDIN**

Mr. Juan Pablo LETELIER

Director

**EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
PARLEMENT EUROPÉEN**

Mr. Petra PARVANOV

Head of Unit

**VI. SPECIAL GUESTS TAKING PART IN ACTIVITIES FORESEEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
148th ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION  
INVITES SPECIAUX PRENANT PART A DES ACTIVITES PREVUES A L'OCCASION DE LA  
148<sup>e</sup> ASSEMBLEE DE L'UNION INTERPARLEMENTAIRE**

**General Debate / Débat general**

Ms. Mirjana SPOLJARIC EGGER, President, ICRC  
Dr. Tedros Adhanom GEBREYESUS, Director-General, WHO  
Mr. Filippo GRANDI, High Commissioner for Refugees, UNHCR  
Mr. Ben MAJEKODUNMI, Chief of Staff, UNRWA  
Dr. Felipe PAULLIER, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs  
Ms. Pramila PATTEN, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict

**High-level meeting on *The crisis of multilateralism: Root causes and possible solutions***

Ms. Tatiana VALOVAYA, Director-General, UNOG  
Ms. Rebecca GRYNSPAN, Secretary-General, UNCTAD

**Standing Committee on Peace and International Security**

Ms. Shimona MOHAN, Associate Researcher, Gender and Disarmament, and Security and Technology programmes, UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDR)  
Mr. Thomas GREMINGER, Executive Director, Geneva Centre for Security Policy

**Standing Committee on Sustainable Development**

Ms. Christine ADAM, Director and Principal Legal Adviser, Division of Legal Affairs, UNFCCC Secretariat

**Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights**

Mr. Tomas LAMANAUSKAS, Deputy Secretary General, International Telecommunication Union  
 Mr. Prateek SIBAL, Programme Specialist, Digital Policies and Digital Transformation Section, UNESCO  
 Ms. Yvonne BRAENDLE-AMOLO, Zoi Environment Network  
 Ms. Regina DE DOMINICIS, Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia, UNICEF  
 Ms. Nora SHABANI, Disability focal point, UNICEF Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia  
 Ms. Gertrude OFORIWA FEFOAME, Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, CRPD  
 Mr. Juan Ignacio PÉREZ BELLO, Senior Human Rights Advisor, International Disability Alliance (IDA)

**Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs**

Ms. Gemma CONNELL, Chief, Assessment, Planning and Monitoring Branch (APMB), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)  
 Mr. Gian Carlo CIRRI, Director of the Geneva Global Office, World Food Programme (WFP)

**Forum of Women Parliamentarians**

Ms. Shimona MOHAN, Associate Researcher, Gender and Disarmament, and Security and Technology programmes, UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDR)  
 Mr. Thomas GREMINGER, Executive Director, Geneva Centre for Security Policy  
 Ms. Madeleine REES, Secretary General, Women International League for Peace and Freedom  
 Ms. Adriana QUIÑONES, Head of Human Rights and Development, UN Women Liaison Office in Geneva

**Committee on Middle East Questions**

Ms. Marta LORENZO, Director, UNWRA Representative Office for Europe

**Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law**

Mr. Juan Carlos RUAN, Director, Implementation Support Unit of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (ISU-APMBC)

**Panel discussion on interfaith dialogue: *Building bridges through interfaith dialogue for more peaceful and inclusive societies***

Dr. Nazila GHANEA, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief  
 Mr. Michael WIENER, OHCHR  
 Mr. Abdulla Isa AL MANNAL, Executive Director, King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence

**Panel discussion on *Addressing strategic and existential threats through common security and the rule of law***

Mr. Neshan GUNASEKERA, Member, World Future Council  
 Ms. Rebecca SHOOT, Executive Director, Citizens for Global Action  
 Ms. Maja GROFF, Climate Governance Commission  
 Ms. Saba HADDAD, Representative of the Bahá'í International Community's United Nations Office in Geneva

**Panel discussion on Minority Rights**

Mr. Jim FITZGERALD, Director, Equal Rights Trust  
 Mr. Claude CAHN, Human Rights Officer, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

**Panel discussion on *Climate change and conflict: How can parliaments ensure health during times of crises?***

Dr Lasha GOGUADZE, Lead for health climate, migration and risk communication, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

**Workshop on Artificial intelligence (AI)**

Ms. Céline BAL, Internet Governance Forum (IGF)  
 Ms. Anja GENGO, Internet Governance Forum (IGF)  
 Mr. Prateek SIBAL, UNESCO

**Workshop - *Strengthening climate legislation: Practical tools for parliamentarians***

Ms. Amanda ELLIS, Arizona State University  
 Ms. Marianne GILCHRIST, Arizona State University  
 Mr. Matt Gray, Co-Founder and CEO of TransitionZero and founding member of Climate TRACE  
 Mr. Tom Crowther, Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Systems Science, ETH Zürich

**Workshop - *Human Security: Equipping Parliamentarians for peacebuilding and conflict prevention***

Mr. Gary JACOBS, President and CEO, World Academy of Art and Science (WAAS)

Mr. Donato KINIGER-PASSIGLI, Vice-President, World Academy of Art and Science (WAAS)

**Other related activities**

Ms. Afshan KHAN, Assistant Secretary General and Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Coordinator

Mr. Frederic CAVE, Political Affairs Adviser, Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)

Mr. Alexandre BRECHER, Communications and Advocacy Adviser, Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)

Ms. Marie BIERMANN, Management Board, World Future Council

**GLOSSARY / GLOSSAIRE****English****Titles/Functions:**

Speaker of Parliament  
President of the Group

Adviser  
Chair/Chairman/Chairperson  
Clerk  
Deputy Speaker  
Head  
Leader of the Delegation  
Officer  
Researcher  
Secretary of the Group/delegation  
Spokesman

**Parliaments:**

House of Commons  
House of Representatives  
National Assembly  
People's Representatives

**Parliamentary Committees:**

Abroad  
Agreements  
Broadcasting  
Building  
Citizenship  
Complaint Reception  
Computer Science  
Cross-cutting Issues  
Directive Board  
Elderly  
Fishery  
Food  
Foreign Affairs  
Freedoms  
Funding  
Gender Equality  
Growth  
Health/Healthcare  
Heritage  
Home Affairs  
Housing  
Human Rights  
Intelligence  
Investigation/Inquiry  
Joint Committee  
Labour/Work  
Law  
Legal  
Local Self-government  
Missing, Adversely Affected Persons  
Oversight  
People with Disabilities  
Physical Planning, Land Use Planning, Country  
Planning  
Public Expenditure  
Public Works  
Rehabilitation  
Social Welfare  
Standing Committee  
Standing Orders/Rules  
State Device  
Sustainable Development

**Français****Titres/Fonctions :**

*Président du Parlement*  
*Président(e) du Groupe*  
  
*Conseiller*  
*Président(e)*  
*Secrétaire général/Greffier*  
*Vice-Président(e)*  
*Chef*  
*Chef de la délégation*  
*Fonctionnaire*  
*Chercheur*  
*Secrétaire du Groupe/ de la délégation*  
*Porte-parole*

**Parlements :**

*Chambre des Communes*  
*Chambre des représentants*  
*Assemblée nationale*  
*Représentants du peuple*

**Commissions parlementaires :**

*A l'étranger*  
*Approbations*  
*Radiodiffusion*  
*Bâtiment*  
*Citoyenneté*  
*Instruction des plaintes*  
*Informatique*  
*Matières transversales*  
*Comité directeur*  
*Aînés*  
*Pêche*  
*Alimentation*  
*Affaires étrangères*  
*Libertés*  
*Financement*  
*Egalité entre les sexes*  
*Croissance*  
*Santé*  
*Patrimoine*  
*Affaires internes*  
*Logement*  
*Droits de l'homme*  
*Renseignement*  
*Enquête*  
*Comité mixte*  
*Travail*  
*Lois*  
*Juridique*  
*Autonomie locale*  
*Personnes disparues ou lésées*  
*Surveillance*  
*Personnes handicapées*  
*Aménagement du territoire*  
  
*Dépenses publiques*  
*Travaux publics*  
*Réinsertion*  
*Protection sociale*  
*Comité permanent*  
*Règlement*  
*Dispositif étatique*  
*Développement durable*



Trade  
Training  
Truth  
Underprivileged  
Ways and Means  
Wildlife  
Women, Children and Youth

**IPU Committees:**

Advisory Group on Health  
Bureau of Women Parliamentarians  
Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians  
Committee on Middle East Questions  
Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL)  
Executive Committee  
Forum of Young Parliamentarians  
Gender Partnership Group  
Group of Facilitators for Cyprus  
Standing Committee on Peace and International Security  
Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade  
Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights  
Standing Committee on UN Affairs

*Commerce*  
*Formation*  
*Vérité*  
*Défavorisés*  
*Voies et moyens*  
*Faune*  
*Les femmes, les enfants et les jeunes*

**Commissions et Comités de l'UIP :**

*Groupe consultatif sur la santé*  
*Bureau des femmes parlementaires*  
*Comité des droits de l'homme des parlementaires*  
*Comité sur les questions relatives au Moyen-Orient*  
*Comité chargé de promouvoir le respect du droit international humanitaire (DIH)*  
*Comité exécutif*  
*Forum des jeunes parlementaires*  
*Groupe du partenariat entre hommes et femmes*  
*Groupe de facilitateurs concernant Chypre*  
*Commission permanente de la paix et de la sécurité internationale*  
*Commission permanente du développement durable, du financement et du commerce*  
*Commission permanente de la démocratie et des droits de l'homme*  
*Commission permanente des affaires des Nations Unies*