



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

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## 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly

### 1. Inaugural ceremony

*The 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly inaugural ceremony took place at the Sheraton Convention Center, Doha, on Saturday, 6 April 2019 at 7.30 p.m., with His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of Qatar, in attendance.*

**His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of Qatar**, congratulated the IPU on its 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Investing in education, especially if integrated into a comprehensive development plan, helped to build strong, prosperous and stable societies and to tackle intolerance and the risk of extremism. He emphasized that Qatar was supporting developing countries and international organizations with a range of education initiatives.

Young people in the Arab world had shown that they could protest peacefully in the pursuit of greater dignity, justice and freedom. Ruling elites should understand such requests and lead reform. Those that did not bore a responsibility for making the situation worse.

The rule of law was a universally accepted concept. Without it there would be no justice but chaos and tyranny which led to arbitrariness and injustice and, consequently, to conflict, insecurity, and human suffering. International law was losing its ground in international relations, and was being increasingly disregarded. It was only through dialogue and respect for international law that lasting peace could be achieved.

Tackling questions such as poverty, extremism and cybersecurity required commitment to the shared values enshrined in key international covenants. No-one could claim exemption from them on any grounds. Joint work on those issues should be as natural as trade links, and parliamentary democracy was a crucial tool in forging these partnerships.

**Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union**, said that the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the IPU bore witness to the Organization's past and continuing relevance. The world was full of contradictions that demonstrated technology was not enough if real political will was lacking. Similarly, even with extensive opportunities for inter-cultural exchange, hate speech and xenophobia was growing in today's political discourse.

Statistics on gender parity and youth representation in parliaments showed there was a huge amount to do. Important challenges continued to endure, particularly building an inclusive economy, tackling poverty, and fighting for peace, stability and dialogue.

Parliamentary diplomacy was a crucial tool for overcoming global challenges. The more that parliamentarians could speak with one voice, share objectives, harmonize legislation, fight to implement solutions and make suitable budgetary provision, the more capable parliaments would be of helping to make the Sustainable Development Goals a reality. Constituents must be at the heart of each Member's work towards that goal at all times. The IPU had a chance to develop new tools to build better spaces for cooperation and dialogue. Its voice had to ring out clearly to demonstrate the strength of parliaments to people who were now calling for change.

**Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union**, said that the 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly was an opportunity to reaffirm the IPU's role as a bridge-builder. Universality was a crucial part of the IPU's ability to address the concerns of Member Parliaments and their constituents.

**Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism**, introducing the message of the United Nations Secretary-General, said that a strong relationship between the United Nations and the IPU was important when multilateralism was being questioned, and that parliaments had a critical role to play in improving people's lives on the basis of international law and UN resolutions.

**Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations**, addressed the Assembly by video message. He welcomed the Assembly's focus on education for peace and the rule of law. The fruitful cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations was needed more than ever to help ensure fair globalization, combat rising intolerance, advance gender equality and increase ambitions on the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, as well as financing that work.

*Mr. Ahmad Bin Abdulla Bin Zaid Al Mahmoud, Speaker of the Shura Council, declared the 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly open.*

## 2. Participation

Delegations from 147 Member Parliaments took part in the work of the Assembly\*:

Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, Somalia, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The following eight Associate Members also took part in the Assembly: the Arab Parliament, the Central American Parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS), the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), the Parliament of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), and the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The Parliaments of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Liberia, Nauru, and Saint Kitts and Nevis participated as observers with a view to future affiliation/re-affiliation.

Observers included representatives of:

(i) the United Nations and related organizations: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), World Health Organization (WHO); Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO);

(ii) regional inter-governmental organizations: the League of Arab States;

(iii) parliamentary assemblies and associations: ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA), African Parliamentary Union (APU), Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF), Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World (ASSECAA), Forum of Parliaments of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (FP-ICGLR), Inter-Parliamentary Union of the Member States of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IPU-IGAD), Maghreb Consultative Council, Pan-African Parliament (PAP), Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and Russia, Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking Countries (TurkPA), Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Member States (PUIC), Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF);

(iv) worldwide non-governmental organizations: the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria;

(v) international political party federations: Liberal International (LI), Socialist International;

(vi) other IPU partner organizations: International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

\* For the complete list of IPU Members, see page 33

Of the 1,521 delegates who attended the Assembly, 757 were members of parliament. Those parliamentarians included 74 Presiding Officers, 38 Deputy Presiding Officers, 227 women MPs (30%) and 132 (17.4%) young MPs.

### 3. Choice of an emergency item

On 7 April 2019, the President informed the Assembly that the following two requests for the inclusion of an emergency item had been proposed:

- *Call for urgent international action to support Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe hit by Cyclone Idai* (Netherlands);
- *Ensuring international protection of Palestinian people, rejecting Israeli authority over the occupied Golan Heights, promoting the values of peaceful coexistence among people and religions and combatting all forms of racism and intolerance* (Indonesia, Kuwait, Morocco and Turkey).

The Assembly proceeded with a roll-call vote on the two items (see pages 47 to 48). The proposal put forward by the Netherlands was adopted and added to the agenda as Item 2.

### 4. Debates and decisions of the Assembly and its Standing Committees

- (a) General Debate: *Parliaments as platforms to enhance education for peace, security and the rule of law* (item 3)

During the three days of deliberations, over 145 legislators from 115 Member Parliaments, including 52 Presiding Officers, as well as representatives of a dozen partner organizations, contributed to the General Debate. The proceedings of the Debate were webcast, and many of the good practices and recommendations that emerged were reflected in the outcome document.

**Mr. A. Al Mahmoud, Speaker of the Shura Council**, opened the General Debate on 7 April. He underscored that ideologies which aimed to destroy the world's value system were on the rise. The IPU must play a decisive and effective role in spreading knowledge, tackling concepts that threatened the principles of peace, security and the rule of law, and in promoting quality education for all.

As legislators and representatives of the people, parliamentarians had the responsibility to promote quality education for all: education that respected cultural, religious and ideological diversity, and taught tolerance and respect for others and their rights. As noted by the United Nations Secretary-General, "*we must teach our children to love before others teach them to hate*". It was also important to ensure that education was provided to the most vulnerable, including in situations of war and conflict. He hoped that the IPU could develop an education action plan whose progress could be monitored in future by a Committee or the Assembly.

**Ms. M.F. Espinosa, President of the United Nations General Assembly**, addressed the Assembly by video message. She said that, with people's waning faith that institutions could improve their lives, parliamentarians should make clear that multilateralism strengthened rather than weakened sovereignty and allowed States to share burdens and costs. MPs could enhance the transparency of international institutions, press for constituents' views to be included in decision-making, transfer global commitments into national law, and ensure sufficient funds were available for implementation.

**Ms. G. Cuevas Barron, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union**, said that in education systems, no one should be left behind, whether they were rich or poor, young or old, a woman, girl, man or boy, or from a developed or developing country. Education also needed to ensure that love and respect for one's home country never led to racism or xenophobia, and was always balanced against a clear sense of being citizens of one planet.

Parliamentarians could easily fall into the trap of being led by the news agenda of the moment. But their real responsibility lay in looking to the future, which would undoubtedly be heavily influenced by technology. As representatives of those affected by technological change, MPs had a duty to consult on and decide how society should approach that wave of innovation and change.

**Dr. R. Yuste, Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative**, said that he sought to put the debate into a wider context as a scientist and researcher so that parliamentarians could prepare and adapt societies to new realities. Research projects of the recent past worth billions of dollars had the potential to help treat brain diseases and understand more about how we learn. Dr. R. Yuste highlighted several areas of concern: the increasing use of brain-computer interfaces and how far personal identity could be dissolved into online spaces; the extent to which using



technology to make decisions diminished our own agency and free will; the possibility of having internal thoughts and mental processes accessible to the outside world and therefore susceptible to being commercialized or manipulated; how the use of technology to augment cognitive abilities could affect efforts to create a level playing field for all, and the need to strictly regulate military applications of such technologies; and the risk of undoing hard-fought rights to equality through the inherent biases of artificial intelligence.

These issues did not diminish the hugely positive impact of neurotechnology in areas such as education and science. However, risks were undoubtedly involved. Parliamentarians and society should decide how and when to regulate the discoveries that were made every day. Parliamentarians should lead the debate, including by asking: who did we want to be as a species? Was the answer to that question in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? Should the Declaration be updated to include *neurorights* to protect our neurological spaces? The scientific community would also be ready to work with legislators as they considered such questions.

**Ms. S. Kihika (Kenya), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians**, said that peace, security and the rule of law were shared objectives that must remain part of the fabric of society as we learn to live more sustainably in a world of more than seven billion people. Education should focus on equipping young people with the tools to shape their own world. It also offered a strong return on investment in terms of greater peace, stability and prosperity. Although progress had been made, there was still work to be done on gender parity and access to education for girls. Governments and the private sector should be strongly encouraged to contribute to improving educational tools and facilities.

**Ms. M. Oloru (Uganda), President of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians**, said that, as violence, extremism and intolerance were not innate but learned, education was the way to ensure that those learned reactions were countered with more positive influences. Military responses to conflict only demonstrated where societies had failed to address root causes of instability through education. The Forum's recommendations included regularly updating curricula to equip students for the jobs of the future; including topics that nurtured global citizens, such as human rights and digital literacy; making education a lifelong endeavour; and jointly designing curricula with young people.

The General Debate also featured a special segment which focused on education for refugees.

**Mr. A. Aynte, Director of Partnerships, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)**, gave an overview of UNRWA's work and the daunting challenges that it faced, including in terms of funding and providing access to education. Ms. H. Abu Asbah, a Palestinian refugee living in Hebron, and Mr. A. Baker, a Palestinian refugee living in North Amman, both 15 years of age, provided a moving personal testimony of their experience as refugee children striving to build a future for themselves. Elected as student parliamentarians by over 530,000 students from UNRWA schools, they described how the School parliaments were striving to promote a culture of respect and tolerance and play an effective role in schools and in the community.

**Mr. R. Uttamchandani, founder of the H.E.R. Academy (Humanity. Education. Rights.)**, spoke about his work to deliver education to refugee girls in Bangladesh, while also providing guidance and advice to governments on implementing programmes and laws to help better protect women and children refugees. He called on all parliamentarians to strive to become better attuned to the realities on the ground, so as to effectively deliver on the needs and expectations of the citizens they were elected to represent.

#### (b) Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security held three sittings from 7 to 9 April 2019, with its President, Mr. J.I. Echániz (Spain) in the chair.

At its first sitting, the Committee welcomed Mr. V. Voronkov, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General of the Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT), who gave a brief presentation on UNOCT. The Committee considered the draft resolution entitled *Non-admissibility of using mercenaries as a means of undermining peace and violating human rights*, as well as the explanatory memorandum prepared jointly by the co-Rapporteurs, Mr. K. Al Bakkar (Jordan) and Mr. B. Tarasyuk (Ukraine).

The Committee also examined the 131 amendments to the draft resolution submitted by 20 Member Parliaments and the Forum of Women Parliamentarians. Twenty-five per cent of the proposed amendments and sub-amendments were approved. The Committee adopted the consolidated text by vote.

On behalf of the delegations of Finland, France, Germany, Norway and Sweden, the Swedish delegation expressed their reservation regarding the text of the resolution. The delegations of Romania and the Czech Republic also expressed their reservation regarding the text of the resolution.

The text of the resolution, as amended and approved by the Committee, was submitted in the afternoon of 10 April to the Assembly's plenary where it was adopted by consensus. The Assembly amended the title of the resolution to read as follows: *Non-admissibility of using mercenaries and foreign fighters as a means of undermining peace, international security and the territorial integrity of States, and violating human rights*.

Following the adoption of the resolution by the Assembly, the Swedish delegation shared the reservations of the delegations of Armenia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Norway, Romania and Sweden on the text of the resolution. The delegation of the Czech Republic also expressed, on its own behalf, its reservation on the text of the resolution.

The Bureau held a meeting on 8 April to discuss the future subject item and plan of work of the Committee. The only delegation to submit a subject item proposal was the delegation of Germany. Following a redrafting of the title, the Committee adopted the following subject item: *Parliamentary strategies to strengthen peace and security in the face of challenges and conflicts resulting from climate-related disasters and their consequences*. The Assembly approved the proposal which would be the subject of a resolution at the 142<sup>nd</sup> Assembly.

The Committee also adopted its plan of work for 2019. It was agreed that the Committee focus its work for the 141<sup>st</sup> Assembly on the following activities: consultations with experts on the theme of the next resolution, an activity on the implementation of the 2014 resolution entitled *Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: The contribution of parliaments*, and a panel discussion on the criminalization of money laundering. It also took note of Jordan's invitation to conduct a field mission to the country.

Elections to the Bureau were held during the Committee's last sitting. The Committee filled the five vacant posts in the Bureau by electing the candidates proposed by the African Group, the Asia-Pacific Group, and the Eurasia Group. Regarding two members of the Eurasia Group, the Committee approved the Group's request for an exemption to Rules 8 and 9 of the Standing Committees, according to which representatives of a Member could not hold a post in the same body for more than four consecutive years and whereby a two-year lapse was required before taking up office in the same body. In the case discussed, given the limited number of Group Members, it was agreed that Armenia and the Russian Federation could join the Bureau after a one-year lapse. It also approved the change of delegates as proposed by the Arab Group.

#### (c) Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade

The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade held its sittings on 7, 8 and 9 April 2019 with its President, Ms. T.V. Muzenda (Zimbabwe), in the chair. The Standing Committee considered an explanatory memorandum and draft resolution, *The role of fair and free trade and investment in achieving the SDGs, especially regarding economic equality, sustainable infrastructure, industrialization and innovation*, jointly prepared by the co-Rapporteurs, Mr. J. Wilson (Australia), Ms. S. Raskovic Ivic (Serbia) and Mr. H. Iddrisu (Ghana). It considered 96 amendments to the draft resolution submitted by 21 Member Parliaments as well as amendments from the Forum of Women Parliamentarians.

The Committee first heard a presentation of the draft resolution by the co-Rapporteurs, followed by a debate. A total of 20 delegates spoke. The Standing Committee then considered the proposed amendments in two plenary sittings.

At its final sitting on 9 April, the Standing Committee adopted the amended draft resolution by acclamation. No delegation expressed a reservation. The Committee agreed that Ms. Muzenda would present the draft resolution to the Assembly.

The draft resolution was submitted to the Assembly at its plenary sitting on the afternoon of 10 April and was adopted unanimously.

At its final sitting, at the proposal of the Bureau the Standing Committee adopted its next subject item, *Mainstreaming digitalization and the circular economy to achieve the SDGs, responsible consumption and production*. The Committee approved the nomination of Ms. S. Dinică (Romania) and Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium) as co-Rapporteurs and entrusted the Parliament of Kenya with nominating an additional rapporteur. The Assembly approved the nomination of Mr. P. Mariru (Kenya) as the third co-Rapporteur.



In terms of the work plan for the 141<sup>st</sup> Assembly, the Committee approved the proposal of the Bureau to organize a debate on the subject item and a session to follow up on the resolution adopted in March 2014, *Towards risk-resilient development: Taking into consideration demographic trends and natural constraints*. The Committee also agreed that a short segment should be organized to prepare for the Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Chile in December 2019 (COP 25).

The Committee elected new members to its Bureau and re-elected others for a second term (see page 29).

(d) Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

The Committee held sittings on 8 and 9 April with its Vice-President, Ms. A. Gerken (Netherlands) in the chair. In her absence at the start of the first sitting, Mr. A. Niyongabo (Burundi), member of the Bureau of the Committee, opened the session on the morning of 8 April. At its first sitting, the Committee examined how IPU Members had followed up on three resolutions adopted by the IPU in recent years:

- 2015: *Democracy in the digital era and the threat to privacy and individual freedoms*
- 2013: *The use of media, including social media, to enhance citizen engagement and democracy*
- 2009: *Freedom of expression and the right to information*.

The second part of the sitting focused on disinformation and "fake news", a global phenomenon that could have significant effects on national politics. Three experts took part in a question-and-answer session with the moderator and other members of the Committee. The experts were Mr. T. Venturini (Centre for Internet and Society, *Centre national de la recherche scientifique*—CNRS, France), Ms. S. Joshi (Verification specialist at *Proto* and co-founder of *Khabar Lahariya*, India's only digital rural news network), and Mr. P. Nakov (Principal Scientist, Qatar Computing Research Institute).

At its second sitting, the Committee held a preparatory debate on the theme of the next resolution: *Achieving Universal Health Coverage by 2030: the role of parliaments in ensuring the right to health*. Two rapporteurs had already been appointed at the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly in October 2018. At the opening of the debate, the Committee confirmed the appointment of a third Rapporteur, Ms. M. Carvalho (Brazil).

Opening remarks were given by Mr. Z. Mirza, Director, Health System Development (Regional Office for Eastern Mediterranean, World Health Organization) and Ms. V. Dagnimisom Koutou, Regional Advocacy Advisor for the Sahel (Save the Children), and member of the civil society coordination mechanism for the UHC 2030 campaign.

Further information about the two debates is in the Annex (see page 51).

The Committee elected new members to its Bureau and re-elected others for a second term (see page 29).

(e) Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

The Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs met on 9 April 2019 and focused on the SDGs. The first sitting took stock of parliamentary action on the SDGs, while the second helped prepare parliamentarians for the debate that would be held at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) in July 2019. That debate would focus on governance (Goal 16) and inequality (Goal 10). Close to 60 parliaments were represented at the sittings of the Committee, with some 20 statements made.

Ms. K. Jabre, IPU Director of the Division of Programmes, outlined the results of the IPU study on parliamentary engagement with the SDGs and the work the IPU was doing with Member Parliaments to ensure they were fit for purpose. Mr. K. Al Bakkar (Jordan) and Mr. A. Rozas (Argentina) presented what they had done in parliament on SDG implementation, outlining the structure of their work and giving examples of success. Seven additional Members provided feedback on their work.

At the second sitting, there were presentations from Ms. R.K. Wijeratne (Sri Lanka), Mr. C. Chauvel (Team Leader, Inclusive Political Processes, Governance and Peacebuilding, UNDP) and Mr. N. Ahmed (Executive Strategy Advisor, Oxfam International). Twelve additional members offered questions or comments.

Mr. P. Akamba (Uganda) and Mr. U. Nyam-Osoz (Mongolia) were elected to the Bureau.

(f) Debate on the emergency item

*Call for urgent international action to support Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe hit by Cyclone Idai*

The debate on the emergency item was held in the morning of 8 April 2019, with Mr. A. Al Mahmoud, Speaker of the Shura Council of Qatar, in the chair.

Eighteen speakers took the floor during the debate.

Participants addressed sincere condolences to the people affected by Cyclone Idai and expressed their solidarity with Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

While Idai was not the first cyclone of that scale, it had caused more damage as it hit densely populated areas, resulting in the loss of hundreds of lives, livestock and crops and the destruction of infrastructure. Lack of clean water had triggered an outbreak of cholera in Mozambique. Mr. L. Prapancha Suryantoro, the World Health Organization (WHO) representative, explained it was providing basic medical care and preventing infectious diseases, and underscored an urgent need to restore health infrastructure to help people affected by the Cyclone. The representative also underlined the importance of following the 2005 International Health Regulations.

Many delegates, including those from middle and low income economies, said their countries had already provided food and medical assistance to the three countries affected by the Cyclone. More urged the international community to continue assisting the three affected countries in the medium and long terms, given that many roads, bridges, schools and other infrastructure had been destroyed.

Other delegates highlighted the urgent need to counter climate change to avoid future natural disasters. Mr. H. Rogers, Founder and President of the Blue Planet Foundation, reiterated the need to change our way of life to mitigate climate change. A delegate from Chile, the country that was going to host the next United Nations' climate conference in 2019—COP 25, said it would organize a parliamentary summit in the context of COP 25 and urged other parliaments to join the event. The Speaker of the Shura Council of Qatar expressed solidarity with the affected countries and underscored the necessity of international cooperation to mitigate the impact of the humanitarian crisis.

The Assembly referred the emergency item to a drafting committee made up of representatives of Belgium, China, Ecuador, Ghana, Netherlands, Pakistan, Portugal and Seychelles.

(g) Adoption of the resolution on the emergency item

In the afternoon of 9 April 2019, the plenary sitting of the Assembly adopted the resolution (see page 49) by consensus. The delegation of Turkey expressed a reservation to preambular paragraph 10 and operative paragraph 3.

## 5. Concluding sitting of the Assembly

At the concluding sitting on 10 April, Mr. P. Dallier (France) and Ms. C. Lopez Castro (Mexico) presented the Assembly outcome document, the Doha Declaration, *Parliaments as platforms to enhance education for peace, security and the rule of law*. They highlighted the various courses of action that parliaments and parliamentarians could undertake in terms of equitable access to education for all, ensuring quality of education, promoting productive civic engagement through global citizenship education, supporting non-formal education and protecting education systems in situations of conflict or insecurity. They called on all Members to follow up on these recommendations through specific national initiatives. The Assembly endorsed the Doha Declaration (see full text on page 35).

The Assembly adopted by consensus the resolution presented by the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, *Non-admissibility of using mercenaries and foreign fighters as a means of undermining peace, international security and the territorial integrity of States, and violating human rights* (text of resolution on page 39). The Assembly also unanimously adopted the resolution presented by the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade, *The role of fair and free trade and investment in achieving the SDGs, especially regarding economic equality, sustainable infrastructure, industrialization and innovation* (page 43).

The Assembly noted the Reports of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights and of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, and it approved the subject items of resolutions to be adopted at the 142<sup>nd</sup> IPU Assembly, together with the rapporteurs who would be working on these draft resolutions (page 30).

Speaking on behalf of the Speaker of the Parliament of Serbia, Mr. M. Grujic (Serbia) warmly encouraged all IPU Members to attend the forthcoming IPU Assembly, which would be taking place from 13 to 17 October 2019 in Belgrade. A short video was shown.

At the conclusion of the Assembly, the representatives of the Geopolitical Groups took the floor: Speaker J.F. Mudenda (Zimbabwe) on behalf of the African Group, Mr. A.S. Ali (Pakistan) on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, Speaker A. Al Tarawneh (Jordan) on behalf of the Arab Group, Ms. L. Gumerova (Russian Federation) on behalf of the Eurasia Group, Ms. L. Rojas (Mexico) on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, and Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal) on behalf of the Twelve Plus Group. They extended their deep appreciation to the State of Qatar and the Shura Council for the warm hospitality and excellent organization of what was undoubtedly a very successful IPU Assembly. They congratulated Mr. A. Al Mahmoud, Speaker of the Shura Council, for his personal leadership and outreach to all IPU Member Parliaments in the service of peace and understanding. They thanked the IPU President and Secretariat for their hard work and pledged their commitment to follow up on the important decisions that they had collectively taken.

In her concluding remarks, the IPU President provided an overview of the main highlights and outcomes of the Assembly, and reiterated the importance of parliamentary solidarity and robust parliamentary action in tackling the challenges of our world. Referring to the Presidential Statement on parliamentary diplomacy issued earlier in the day, she underscored that the use of political sanctions against parliamentarians as representatives of the people was unacceptable. She also reiterated the IPU position of principle rejecting all action that was not in compliance with international law, including unilateral actions such as sanctions, embargoes and blockades that were not mandated by the international community and in particular the United Nations.

The IPU was committed to continuing its efforts to facilitate dialogue and interaction among parliaments of different countries. In that connection, the IPU welcomed recent developments on the Korean Peninsula and further hoped that the parties concerned would resolve outstanding issues, such as complete denuclearization and lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula, through dialogue based on the agreements of the leaders at the Inter-Korean and Pyongyang-Washington Summits. For its part, the IPU would continue relentlessly to foster parliamentary dialogue between the two Koreas as part of overall efforts to bring about lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula.

The IPU President thanked Mr. A. Al Mahmoud, Speaker of the Shura Council of Qatar, and the State of Qatar for the excellent conditions they had provided for a very substantive Assembly, which without a doubt, had also attracted among the highest attendance in the history of the IPU.

In his closing remarks, Mr. A. Al Mahmoud thanked all delegations for their active contributions to the successful outcome of the Doha Assembly. His country had been honoured to receive so many delegations from the world over, and to showcase Qatar's many achievements and its commitment to parliamentary diplomacy, world peace, sustainable development and the wellbeing of the people. He looked forward to further developing good and productive cooperation with the IPU and its Member Parliaments. He also thanked the IPU Secretariat, the interpreters, the members of the Qatar Organizing Committee and all the Qatari staff and volunteers who had worked so hard to provide high-quality arrangements at such short notice. He looked forward to working closely with the IPU in the implementation of the important outcomes of the Doha Assembly.

Thanking all the participants again for their support and active engagement, he declared the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly closed.

## 204<sup>th</sup> session of the Governing Council

### 1. Election of the President of the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly

At its first sitting on 7 April, the Governing Council elected Mr. A. Al Mahmoud, Speaker of the Shura Council of Qatar, as the President of the 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly.

The Governing Council observed a minute of silence in memory of the late Speaker Ms. J. Luveni (Fiji) and in commemoration of the International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

## 2. IPU membership

The Governing Council welcomed the affiliation of the Parliament of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as the 179<sup>th</sup> Member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Mr. T. Jomo Sanga, Speaker of the House of the Assembly, expressed his satisfaction with the decision of the Council and his Parliament's great interest in developing close and productive cooperation with the IPU and its other Member Parliaments.

The Council also welcomed the participation at the Assembly of six non-Member Parliaments as observers, with a view to possible affiliation/re-affiliation with the IPU: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Liberia, Nauru, and Saint Kitts and Nevis. It expressed the hope that in the not too distant future those parliaments too would join the IPU family. This would also contribute in a significant way to achieving the IPU's strategic objective of universal membership.

The Council was apprised of the situation of certain parliaments and endorsed the related recommendations made by the Executive Committee with regard to each of those parliaments. In accordance with Article 5.2 of the IPU Statutes, it approved the request by the National Assembly of Venezuela to register a delegation of two parliamentarians with voting rights, given the fact that Venezuela's failure to pay its assessed contribution was due to conditions beyond parliament's control. The Council called upon the Government of Venezuela to provide the National Assembly with the financial means to function and to honour the commitment made previously to receive an IPU delegation to Caracas with a view to holding discussions with the parties involved in the current political crisis.

## 3. Financial results for 2018

The Governing Council considered the Financial Report and Audited Financial Statements for 2018. The Financial Statements had been prepared in full compliance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and the accounts of the IPU and the closed Pension Fund were consolidated into a single set of financial statements.

The financial results for 2018 were introduced by Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland), Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance, who reported that the External Auditor had expressed to her that the financial statements were of exemplary quality and that the collaboration with the IPU finance team had been excellent. During the year under review, an operational deficit of CHF 607,000 had resulted from a combination of three factors. The performance of IPU investments reflected a market correction in December 2018, which had in fact already been fully recovered in the first quarter of 2019. Both Assemblies had been held in Geneva which had increased costs and two extraordinary sessions of the Executive Committee had taken place. In parallel, voluntary funds received and spent increased by 6 per cent compared to 2017. The Chair of the Sub-Committee also drew attention to the fact that the membership rights of three Members (Honduras, Mauritania and Papua New Guinea) would be suspended if they did not pay their dues by 1 October 2019. She asked the geopolitical groups to raise Members' attention to their responsibility to pay their dues in time and encouraged Members to sponsor parliaments in financial difficulty.

The Internal Auditor's report was submitted by Mr. V. Macedo (Portugal). He noted the different roles of the External and Internal Auditor. The External Auditor conveyed his opinion that the accounts gave a true and fair reflection of the financial situation of the IPU at 31 December 2018 and complied with all current standards and rules. The Internal Auditor evaluated the Organization's effectiveness and recommended improvements for internal controls. It was for this reason that the Internal Auditor changed each year in order to provide a critical overview. Mr. V. Macedo recommended constant improvements in transparency at the level of governance and internal controls. Specifically, he recommended that the IPU should always favour local interpretation services of the required quality during Assemblies outside of Geneva. He also recommended that the IPU should issue an annual transparency report. He thanked the IPU staff for their full assistance and cooperation in answering all his questions.

The Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance agreed that transparency was indeed of the greatest importance and added that a register of interests for the IPU and its leadership would further improve transparency. Regarding the interpreters, she noted that the IPU had a well-established practice of always hiring local interpreters whenever possible at the best price and quality.

In response to questions from France, the Secretary General confirmed that the IPU's investment practices were conservative and prudent. Investments had yielded an average 4 per cent return on investment over the past five years. He reassured Members that assessed contributions would remain

stable in 2020, noting that the Governing Council had previously agreed to entertain a small increase sufficient to cover the costs of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament. The budget for 2020 would be prepared in that spirit.

The Governing Council approved the Secretary General's financial administration of the IPU and the financial results for 2018. It took note of the internal auditor's report and endorsed his recommendation for the IPU to issue an annual transparency report.

The Governing Council further endorsed the updated Administrative Arrangements for the IPU. The President intended to introduce greater flexibility and transparency.

#### 4. Financial situation

The Governing Council received a written overview of the IPU's financial situation at 31 January 2019 which noted that the overall level of expenditure was on track at this early stage of the year. Arrears in assessed contributions amounted to CHF 866,000, with 34 Members having overdue accounts. Assessed contributions of CHF 8.0 million had already been paid for 2019, being 77 per cent of the total amount due.

The Secretary General gave a written and oral report to the Governing Council on the mobilization of voluntary funding towards implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2017-2021. The Governing Council authorized the Secretary General to pursue opportunities for the extension of the IPU's Headquarters building in Geneva and approved his fundraising efforts in that and other areas, including outreach to the State of Qatar.

The Governing Council approved the request from Rwanda to cover the cost of staff allowances during its hosting of the 143<sup>rd</sup> Assembly. The estimated amount of CHF 80,000-100,000 would be taken from the Working Capital Fund.

#### 5. Implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2017-2021

The Governing Council took note of the mid-term report of the President on her activities ([www.ipu.org/resources/publications/about-ipu/2019-04/activities-report-ipu-presidency-accountability-exercise-evaluate-first-half-2017-2020-mandate](http://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/about-ipu/2019-04/activities-report-ipu-presidency-accountability-exercise-evaluate-first-half-2017-2020-mandate)) and of the annual report of the Secretary General on the activities of the IPU in 2018 ([www.ipu.org/resources/publications/about-ipu/2019-03/annual-report-activities-inter-parliamentary-union-2018](http://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/about-ipu/2019-03/annual-report-activities-inter-parliamentary-union-2018)). It also took note of a comprehensive report on progress made on implementation of the eight strategic objectives, including in terms of cooperation with the United Nations ([www.ipu.org/download/6918](http://www.ipu.org/download/6918)). It endorsed the new IPU Communications Strategy ([www.ipu.org/sites/default/files/documents/3years\\_comm\\_strategy-en-28fev.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/sites/default/files/documents/3years_comm_strategy-en-28fev.pdf)), as well as the programme of initiatives designed to mark the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the IPU. Delegates drew attention to the high cost of producing the proposed anniversary book and stressed the need to make every effort to bring the cost down.

The Council also approved the draft Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation between the IPU, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in the context of IPU's activities on countering terrorism. It authorized the Secretary General to sign it with his UN counterparts.

#### 6. Recent specialized meetings

The Governing Council took note of the results of: the Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the World Investment Forum 2018 ([www.ipu.org/download/6457](http://www.ipu.org/download/6457)); the Parliamentary Speakers' Summit at the G20 ([www.ipu.org/download/5762](http://www.ipu.org/download/5762)); the Regional seminar on climate change and disaster risk reduction for Parliaments of the Caribbean ([www.ipu.org/download/5829](http://www.ipu.org/download/5829)); the Regional Seminar on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals for the IPU's Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group and East Asia Parliaments ([www.ipu.org/download/5922](http://www.ipu.org/download/5922)); the Follow-up regional seminar on the contribution of parliament to combat child trafficking and labour on the occasion of the ECOWAS Parliamentary session ([www.ipu.org/download/6483](http://www.ipu.org/download/6483)); the World e-Parliament Conference 2018 ([www.ipu.org/download/6292](http://www.ipu.org/download/6292)); the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO ([www.ipu.org/download/6032](http://www.ipu.org/download/6032)); the Parliamentary Conference on Migration in the lead-up to the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration ([www.ipu.org/download/6147](http://www.ipu.org/download/6147)); the Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 24) ([www.ipu.org/download/6179](http://www.ipu.org/download/6179)); the Fifth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians ([www.ipu.org/download/6228](http://www.ipu.org/download/6228)); the Annual Parliamentary



Hearing at the United Nations ([www.ipu.org/download/6490](http://www.ipu.org/download/6490)); the IPU-UN Regional Conference for the Middle East and North Africa ([www.ipu.org/download/6658](http://www.ipu.org/download/6658)); the Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the 63<sup>rd</sup> session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women ([www.ipu.org/download/6794](http://www.ipu.org/download/6794)).

## 7. Reports of plenary bodies and specialized committees

The Governing Council took note of the reports on the activities of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians (see page 18); the Committee on Middle East Questions (see page 19); the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (see page 20); the Gender Partnership Group (see page 20); the Advisory Group on Health (see page 21); and the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU (see page 18). It approved the elections and appointments that took place in these different bodies. It also elected the new members of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG).

The Council heard the report of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and approved 12 decisions submitted by the latter ([www.ipu.org/download/7001](http://www.ipu.org/download/7001)), noting the reservation expressed by the delegation of Turkey regarding the observation on the court hearings on cases in that country.

## 8. Future inter-parliamentary meetings

The Council approved the offers made by the parliaments of Rwanda and Kenya to host the 143<sup>rd</sup> and 144<sup>th</sup> Assembly and related meetings respectively. It noted the decision of the Preparatory Committee of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (2020) to hold the World Conference at the United Nations Office in Vienna, during the week of 17 August (exact dates to be confirmed). The Council approved proposals for specialized meetings (see page 68 for the full list of future meetings).

The Secretary General drew the Council's attention to the dates of the 142<sup>nd</sup> Assembly in April 2020. These dates would be just after the Easter holidays. It had not been possible to negotiate better dates as the *Centre International de Conférences* (CICG) would be undergoing renovations and the facilities would be restricted.

A delegate from Japan said that the P20 meeting for 2019 had not been approved during the 139<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly as indicated in the list of the future meetings. He said that, as presented, he took it as a request from the IPU to co-host the event. He added that if the Parliament of Japan received a formal request, they would consider whether they could co-host it.

The IPU President clarified that, further to the P20 Speakers' Summit of 2018 organized jointly by the National Congress of Argentina and the IPU, the IPU was committed to continuing that good practice as part of its strategic objective of enhancing global governance by providing a parliamentary component to major global processes. She would be writing formally to the Japanese Diet in this regard, and very much hoped that a positive response could be provided as soon as possible.

The Council also endorsed the Presidential Statements on parliamentary diplomacy and on the situation of the Golan Heights (see pages 55 and 56).

## 9. Amendments to the Statutes and Rules

The Governing Council was informed that the Gender Partnership Group intended to submit proposals for amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules with a view to imposing stricter penalties for parliaments that consistently sent single-sex delegations to IPU Assemblies. Those amendments would follow the normal procedure for amendments, with a view to possible endorsement in Belgrade, Serbia, on the occasion of the 141<sup>st</sup> IPU Assembly.

## 10. Elections to the Executive Committee

The Governing Council elected Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal) from the African Group for a four-year term ending in April 2023.

## 281<sup>st</sup> session of the Executive Committee

### 1. IPU activities report

The Executive Committee held its 281<sup>st</sup> session in Doha on 4, 5 and 9 April 2019. The President of the IPU chaired the meetings. The following members took part in the session: Ms. M.I. Oliveira Valente (Angola), Mr. A. Lins (Brazil) on 4 and 5 April, replaced by Mr. A. Anastasia on 9 April, Ms. S. Ataullahjan on 5 and 9 April replacing Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), Mr. G. Chen (China), Ms. Y. Ferrer Gómez (Cuba) on 4 and 5 April, Mr. K. Jalali (Iran [Islamic Republic of]), Mr. K. Lusaka (Kenya), as of the afternoon sitting on 4 April, Ms. A. Habibou (Niger), Ms. H. Haukeland Liadal (Norway) on 9 April, replaced by Mr. U. Leirstein on 4 and 5 April, Mr. A. Klimov on 9 April replacing Mr. K. Kosachev (Russian Federation), Mr. M. Grujic (Serbia), Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland), Mr. Nguyen Van Giau (Viet Nam) replaced by Mr. Vu Hai Ha on 4 and 5 April, Ms. A. Tolley (New Zealand) on behalf of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, and Ms. M. Osoru (Uganda) in her capacity as President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

After the President called the meeting to order, Mr. A. Al Mahmoud, Speaker of the Shura Council of Qatar, welcomed the members and wished them a successful meeting.

The Executive Committee took note of the President's report of activities since the 139<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly. The President highlighted the need to build the capacity of parliamentarians in the pursuit of stronger parliaments serving the people. To that end, she suggested funds be raised to establish a mechanism that would build the leadership capacity of parliamentarians. She believed that multilateralism and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were among the tools that could help reach those objectives in the 11 years that remained until 2030. She also said that the IPU should be provided with economic expertise to better contribute to people's wellbeing. To that end she suggested setting up an Advisory Group on the Economy, which was further discussed at the final sitting of the Executive Committee on 9 April.

The Executive Committee took note of the IPU's Annual Report by the Secretary General, including of his efforts to assist parliaments in a range of areas. Members noted that there were some underfunded activities, such as those related to climate change. In that regard, they welcomed the possibility to cooperate with the Blue Planet Foundation, which promoted the use of clean energy. It was noted that, in other areas, greater efforts should be made to improve people's wellbeing.

The Committee members expressed concern about recurrent sexism and sexual harassment in parliaments. They believed that robust measures, including a zero-tolerance policy and regular self-assessment, should be implemented so as to eradicate that unacceptable behaviour.

The Executive Committee confirmed the need to work in cooperation with regional parliamentary organizations and to intensify collaboration with the United Nations system and other relevant international agencies. It welcomed the IPU's enhanced commitment to addressing conditions conducive to terrorism and violent extremism. The Members unanimously agreed that the draft Memorandum of Understanding between the IPU, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) be submitted to the Governing Council for endorsement.

### 2. Financial questions

The Executive Committee heard the report of Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland), Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance, who presented the 2018 financial statements and the External Auditor's report to the Executive Committee for its approval. The Sub-Committee on Finance had met on 19 March 2019 to prepare and facilitate the Executive Committee's consideration of financial and budgetary matters. It had carefully examined all the financial documents, including the financial results, the External Auditor's report, the current financial situation and voluntary funding update. It had been pleased to note that the IPU's accounts were again fully IPSAS-compliant and that the External Auditor had given a positive audit opinion, noting that the quality of the financial statements was exemplary.

The Chair of the Sub-Committee drew attention to the fact that the arrears of assessed contributions from Members were higher than in previous years, and asked the geopolitical groups to draw Members' attention to their responsibility to pay their dues. She also recommended that, unless payment was received by 1 October 2019, the membership rights of the three Members who had been in arrears for more than three years be suspended. The Sub-Committee had noted the stability of voluntary contributions.



The Executive Committee approved the updated Administrative Arrangements for the Presidency, noting that they provided more transparency and flexibility in the use of the budget and conditions of travel for IPU Presidents.

The Executive Committee thanked the Sub-Committee and the Secretariat for their work and recommended that the Governing Council should approve the financial administration of the IPU and the financial results for 2018.

The Executive Committee was informed of the formal invitation received from the Parliament of Rwanda to host the 143<sup>rd</sup> IPU Assembly, as well as of its request for the IPU to provide financial assistance to alleviate the burden of hosting the Assembly. If approved by the Council, that request (based on precedent) would be reflected in the 2020 budget, which would be submitted for approval in October 2019.

The members of the Executive Committee welcomed the Secretary General's efforts to continue fundraising, including reaching out to Qatar to support IPU's activities in accordance with the Organization's Strategy. They recommended seeking endorsement from the Governing Council to proceed with preliminary consultations on a possible extension to the IPU headquarters that would be funded from extra-budgetary sources.

### **3. IPU membership and implementation of the IPU Strategy**

The Executive Committee welcomed the request for affiliation submitted by the Parliament of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. It was recommended that the request be submitted to the Council for endorsement.

Members of the Executive Committee examined the situation of certain parliaments and made specific recommendations to the Governing Council, including to continue monitoring the situation and promoting dialogue between all sides in the parliaments of Burundi, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Maldives, Nicaragua, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), and Yemen.

The Executive Committee welcomed the good news from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau and Maldives where the situation had returned to normal with the organization of parliamentary elections. It recommended building capacity in these newly elected parliaments to support the fulfilment of their mission.

The Executive Committee called for the organization of fact-finding missions to Cambodia, Turkey and Venezuela, expressly requesting a formal invitation for the latter mission from the Venezuelan authorities.

The Executive Committee authorized the Secretary General to undertake a fact-finding and working visit to Syria in the context of the IPU's more robust and constructive engagement with the Parliament there.

The Executive Committee discussed and approved the proposals to celebrate the IPU's 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary that had been prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with the Executive Committee. The celebrations would run from 30 June 2019 to 30 June 2020.

The Executive Committee approved the publication of a book to mark the anniversary that would feature input from all the IPU Member Parliaments. It also approved the global parliamentary campaign, which included:

- A serialized story of the history of the IPU told over six chapters in IPU's e-bulletin;
- A physical exhibition at the United Nations in Geneva (Salle des pas perdus) and New York (Visitors' Centre) in June/July 2019;
- A virtual exhibition online including a video and timeline;
- Dedicated branding, slogan and #hashtags;
- Direct marketing to parliaments including a letter addressed to all MPs to explain what the IPU could offer them;
- A menu of tools and products for parliaments to choose from, including key messaging;
- A social media toolkit for all members to encourage them to celebrate the anniversary;
- A Charter on parliamentarism.

The Committee discussed the IPU's draft three-year Communications Strategy. The Strategy was designed to position the IPU as a unique global resource for and about parliaments and parliamentarians. It was prepared following extensive consultations with internal and external stakeholders and was aligned with the IPU's 2017–2021 Strategy and the IPU President's vision. It aimed to be as inclusive as possible in order to bring in the Members and geopolitical groups, give a voice to parliamentarians from all over the world, and show that parliaments were part of the solution to the problems the world faces. It also contained sub-strategies to develop the IPU's website and digital tools to make them more interactive, including a two-way communications channel between the IPU and its Members to share best practices. The Executive Committee recommended that the draft Communications Strategy be submitted to the Governing Council for approval with some modifications aimed at reinforcing the inclusivity of the Strategy.

The Executive Committee was informed by the Gender Partnership Group of its intention to submit amendments to the Statutes and Rules. The amendments would aim to strengthen existing sanctions for single-sex delegations by reducing voting rights to one in the Governing Council and implementing sanctions after two Assemblies instead of three.

The majority of the Executive Committee members were not in favour of the creation of a high-level panel on parliamentary diplomacy. Rather, they recommended that the IPU's existing resources, including the President and Secretary General, as well as members of the Executive Committee, Standing Committees and other specialized IPU bodies, be called upon to undertake parliamentary diplomacy missions on behalf of the IPU.

The Executive Committee was informed of the President's request to set up an Advisory Group on the Economy. Though the Committee recognized the need for the IPU to tackle economic issues in depth, it opted for a review of the mandate and composition of the existing Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade instead of establishing a new advisory group. It requested the IPU Secretariat to submit a revised proposal for review at the 141<sup>st</sup> IPU Assembly.

The Executive Committee took note of the list of the future meetings requiring the approval of the Governing Council. Members' attention was brought to:

- The dates (15–19 April 2020) of the 142<sup>nd</sup> IPU Assembly in Geneva, which implied that the Sub-Committee on Finance would start its work on Monday 13 April (Easter Monday);
- The formal invitation of the Parliament of Rwanda to host the 143<sup>rd</sup> Assembly and related meetings;
- The offer of the Parliament of Kenya to host the 144<sup>th</sup> Assembly and related meetings (formal invitation forthcoming).

The Executive Committee took note of preparations for the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments (WCSP-5) and was informed that the Parliament of Austria had submitted within the stipulated deadlines a formal invitation to host the Conference in Vienna. The Parliament of Kenya had also recently submitted an offer. The matter was subsequently discussed during a meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference on 7 April. It was decided that Austria would host WCSP-5 in 2020, and that Kenya would host a future Assembly of the IPU.

#### **4. Questions relating to the Secretariat of the Inter-Parliamentary Union**

Reporting on staff movements, the Secretary General informed the Executive Committee of the retirement of Ms. Dominique Gillieron who had worked as an Administrative Assistant to the Director of Programmes. She was replaced by Mr. Alexander Lowe in March 2019. He announced the departure at the end of February 2019 of Ms. Stara Ahmidouch, Chief of Staff and Head of Language Services. The Executive Committee heard that Ms. Suroor Alikhan had started her functions in the Communications Division as Web and Social Media Editor in December 2018. The Secretary General introduced Ms. S. Alikhan and Mr. A. Lowe to the Executive Committee members.

#### **5. Other business**

The Committee heard a presentation from Mr. G. Chen who stressed the need for the rules of the IPU to be strictly enforced.

The Executive Committee was also informed of a host of communications from the Palestine National Council and the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union in respect of recent developments in the Middle East. It expressed concern about these developments and encouraged the IPU Committee on Middle East Questions to continue examining these matters in a constructive manner so as to contribute to lasting solutions.

## Forum and Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

The 29<sup>th</sup> session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians took place on 6 April 2019. At the meeting, there were 181 parliamentarians – 133 women and 48 men – from 71 countries.

The President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. S. Kihika (Kenya), opened the session. Ms. R. Al Mansoori, Member of the Shura Council (Qatar), was elected Chair of the 29<sup>th</sup> session of the Forum. Ms. R. Al Mansoori welcomed the participants and presented the programme of work. The IPU President, Ms. G. Cuevas Barron, and the Speaker of the Shura Council of Qatar, Mr. A. Al Mahmoud, welcomed the members of the Forum. Mr. M. Chungong, Secretary General of the IPU, was also in attendance.

As a contribution to the Assembly, the participants examined, from the point of view of gender parity, the draft resolutions on the agenda of the 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, *Non-admissibility of using mercenaries as a means of undermining peace and violating human rights*; and the draft resolution *The role of fair and free trade and investment in achieving the SDGs, especially regarding economic equality, sustainable infrastructure, industrialization and innovation*. Two groups were formed to conduct the discussions. The Forum subsequently proposed amendments to the draft resolutions, which the Standing Committees incorporated into their work.

The participants then discussed the challenges that women faced in the world of work, as well as measures and good practices by which those challenges could be overcome. The Forum underlined the importance of girls' education and of raising awareness within society at large so as to tackle sexist stereotypes and ensure that women could access all sectors of the economy and leadership roles. Participants highlighted the importance of labour policy and social security in order to protect women working in the informal sector, including migrants, and to recognize unpaid care work that was predominantly carried out by women. They recommended that positive measures be taken to promote women-led businesses, equal pay, and quotas within both company boards of directors and government. Participants also welcomed new instruments on violence in the workplace that were currently being considered by the ILO and supported the adoption of those instruments.

The Forum elected a regional representative from the African Group, Ms. K. Bukar Abba Ibrahim (Nigeria), to fill a vacant seat on the Bureau.

The Bureau of Women Parliamentarians had presented candidatures to the Forum at its 42<sup>nd</sup> session held on 18 October 2018. On that basis, the Forum elected Ms. A. Al Basti (United Arab Emirates) to the post of First Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and Ms. A. Tolley (New Zealand) to the post of Second Vice-President of the Bureau.

## Forum and Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU

The Forum of Young Parliamentarians met on 7 April, with 61 young parliamentarians in attendance, 35 per cent of whom were women. The President of the Board of the Forum, Ms. M. Osoru (Uganda) chaired the Forum. Mr. M. Bouva (Suriname), Member of the Board of the Forum, replaced the President for part of the Forum's proceedings.

The young parliamentarians took stock of recent developments in youth participation. The 2018 edition of the IPU report *Youth participation in national parliaments* had revealed that only 2.2 per cent of MPs were under 30. In several countries, legal reform was underway to support the election of young MPs. Lowering the age requirement to run for office and the adoption of youth quotas remained key strategies to enhance youth participation. The participants also monitored youth participation at the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly, noting that 17.4 per cent of those registered to attend the Assembly were young MPs, below the minimum target of 25 per cent of young delegates at IPU Assemblies.

Discussing the theme of education for peace, security and the rule of law, participants expressed empathy and support to young people living in conditions of war, conflict, occupation and natural disasters and who were being prevented from pursuing their education and called for the fulfilment of the right to education for all children and young people. In preparation of the 141<sup>st</sup> Assembly, the Forum appointed Mr. P. Kalobo (Zambia) to prepare a youth overview report to be submitted to the co-Rapporteurs of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights.

The members of the Forum were informed of the offer from the Parliament of Paraguay to host the Sixth IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Asuncion in 2019. The Board of the Forum had met on 7 April, and had agreed to include mentorship and political empowerment of young people on the agenda of the 2019 Conference with a particular focus on young women.

The Forum elected its new Board formed of one man and one woman under 45 years of age from each geopolitical group (see page 29 for Elections). The newly elected members of the Board met on 10 April and elected Mr. M. Bouva (Suriname) as President.

## Subsidiary bodies of the Governing Council

### 1. Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

Ms. A. Jerkov (Serbia), President, Mr. N. Bako-Arifari (Benin), Mr. D. Carter (New Zealand), Mr. A. Caroni (Switzerland), and Ms. J. Mukoda Zabwe (Uganda) took part in the Committee's 159<sup>th</sup> session, which was held from 5 to 9 April 2019. Ms. F. Koofi (Afghanistan), Mr. F. Pinedo (Argentina), Mr. A.A. Alaradi (Bahrain), Ms. L. Dumont (France), and Ms. D. Solórzano (Venezuela, [Bolivarian Republic of]), Vice-President, and were unable to attend.

The Committee submitted twelve decisions to the Governing Council for adoption concerning 145 parliamentarians from the following countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Maldives, Mongolia, Philippines, Turkey, and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (see link: [www.ipu.org/download/7001](http://www.ipu.org/download/7001)).

During the session, the Committee held nine hearings and informal meetings with delegations and complainants to reinforce its understanding of the cases before it and convey its concerns. At this session, the Committee had on its agenda 22 cases concerning the situation of 187 members of parliament in 12 countries. Of the cases examined, 35 per cent were from the Americas, 32 per cent from Europe, 24 per cent from Africa and 9 per cent from Asia. Eighty-four per cent of the cases concerned opposition members of parliament and twenty-five per cent concerned women. The violations most frequently examined by the Committee during the session were, lack of due process in proceedings against members of parliament, torture, ill-treatment and other acts of violence, undue suspension and loss of parliamentary mandate, violations of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association.

### 2. Committee on Middle East Questions

The Committee held two sittings, on 6 and 9 April 2019. The Committee's President, Ms. S. Atallahjan (Canada), Ms. B. Grouwels (Belgium), Mr. H. Julien-Laferrrière (France), Mr. A.N.M. Al-Ahmad (Palestine) and Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland) attended both sittings. Mr. R. De Roon (Netherlands) and Mr. A. Jama (Somalia) attended on 6 April 2019.

Ms. S. Atallahjan (Canada) was unanimously re-elected as President of the Committee.

The Committee examined the current situation in the region, particularly in Israel and Palestine, Libya, Syria and Yemen. Members were informed about the dissolution of both the Knesset and the Palestinian Legislative Council in December 2018. The Committee stressed the importance of undertaking a mission to the region and recommended sending a delegation to observe the elections of the Palestinian Legislative Council. They highlighted the need to comply with international resolutions, including those related to the two-State solution. Members heard about the instability of the situation in Syria and the recent announcement by the President of the United States of America to recognize Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights. It was suggested that the Secretariat provide more visibility on Yemen and allocate more Committee time to discuss the situation there.

Members heard presentations from Mr. S. Fouzi, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of Libya, and Mr. M. Larive, a French parliamentarian. In the framework of the Committee's Peace Programme, Mr. M. Larive presented an initiative on behalf of the French IPU Group to establish a permanent science-focused structure at the IPU. Given its desire to build bridges between parliamentary and scientific communities, the Committee fully supported the French initiative and reaffirmed its commitment to the Peace Programme.

The Committee also heard presentations from Mr. A. Aynte, Director of Strategic Partnerships of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and from two 15-year-old student parliamentarians from UNRWA schools, Ms. H. Abu Asbah and Mr. A. Baker. All three stressed the importance of guaranteeing education for Palestinian refugees to foster respect and work towards lasting peace.

### 3. Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

The Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL Committee) met on 7 April 2019. Representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also attended. At the close of the meeting, the Committee elected as its chair Ms. A. Vadai (Hungary) for a one year term. It elected Mr. M. Rogers (Zambia) as chair for the following year. The Committee paid tribute to Ms. N. Ali Assegaf (Indonesia), outgoing chair.

The Committee discussed follow-up to the emergency item resolution, *Ending the grave human crisis, persecution and violent attacks on the Rohingya as a threat to international peace and security and ensuring their unconditional and safe return to their homeland in Myanmar*, adopted at the 137<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in St. Petersburg. It held a dialogue session with the delegation of Myanmar and expressed its thanks to the Parliament for engaging with the Committee for a second time. The dialogue session allowed the Committee to better understand that complex situation and know more about the initiatives taken in Myanmar. The Committee highlighted the importance of having a better grasp of the reality in Myanmar. It encouraged the Parliament of Myanmar to pursue its involvement in the resolution of that tragedy, and play its role of monitoring and overseeing the government, and reaching out to populations to improve the situation.

The Committee expressed its wish to carry out a mission to Myanmar in the coming months to gain a better understanding of the reality and see how the IPU could support the Parliament in its work. A formal request would be sent to the Parliament as follow-up.

The Committee discussed the latest developments regarding the global campaign to end statelessness. In 2019 UNHCR would hold a ministerial event on statelessness to mark the midway point in the 10-year campaign. That event would be an opportunity for States to pledge to make additional specific steps to address statelessness. The Committee called on Parliaments to be involved in domestic consultations in the run up to the ministerial event and encourage their Governments to make pledges in that regard. The Committee welcomed the publication of the IPU-UNHCR handbook *Good practices in nationality laws for the prevention and reduction of statelessness*. It encouraged parliaments to widely disseminate it and make use of that short practical tool to engage in reform.

The 10 action points of the *Global Action Plan to End Statelessness* and information on the high-level segment can be found at: [www.unhcr.org/ibelong/high-level-segment-statelessness](http://www.unhcr.org/ibelong/high-level-segment-statelessness).

The Committee also discussed how to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 (GC70) and decided to dedicate its open session at the 141<sup>st</sup> Assembly in Belgrade to that end.

The Committee noted that two of its members had been absent for two or more consecutive sessions. In accordance with its Rules, these members would be notified that their seats were now declared vacant. Elections would be held for these seats at the next Assembly.

### 4. Gender Partnership Group

The Gender Partnership Group held its 42<sup>nd</sup> session on 6 and 10 April 2019. In attendance were Ms. H. Haukeland Liadal (Norway), Mr. K. Lusaka (Kenya) and Ms. A. Tolley (New Zealand) who replaced Ms. A. Al Basti (United Arab Emirates).

As per its mandate, the Group reviewed the composition of the delegations at the 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly. As at 9 April 2019, 30.3 per cent of the delegates at the Assembly were women (see page 65). That was one of the lowest percentages since 2015. The Group noted that the proportion of women decreased in large delegations, which tended to include only one or a few women. The Group decided to strongly encourage gender-balance within delegations to ensure a sustained increase in the number and percentage of women. It commended the gender-balanced delegations attending the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly. In Doha, women accounted for 40 to 60 per cent in 35 delegations out of 147 (23.8%). The 35 delegations are listed on page 67.

Of the 147 delegations of Member Parliaments present, 135 were composed of at least two delegates, of which 16 were composed exclusively of men (11.8%). No delegation was composed entirely of women. The 16 single-sex (male) delegations were from the parliaments of the following countries: Central African Republic, El Salvador, Eswatini, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Maldives, Malta, Micronesia (Federated States of), Morocco, Poland, Sierra Leone, Spain, Tunisia and



Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). In addition, there were 12 single-member delegations attending the Assembly. All in all, nine delegations were subject to sanctions. The Group requested that those figures and those on the gender-balanced delegations be sent to all IPU Member Parliaments after the Assembly to trigger action.

Considering the large number of single-sex delegations at each Assembly, the Group expressed its intention to submit amendments to the current IPU Statutes and Rules to strengthen existing sanctions for single-sex delegations by further reducing voting rights and implementing the sanctions after two Assemblies. That initiative was shared with the Executive Committee in Doha.

The Group continued discussions on a dedicated framework against sexism and sexual harassment for Assemblies and other IPU-organized meetings. The Group would continue work on that issue at its future sessions and requested that relevant information be included in the documentation to delegations for the next IPU Assembly.

At its previous meeting during the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly, the Group decided to extend its work and engage not only with parliaments that had no women members, but also with parliaments where women accounted for less than five per cent of the members.

On Tuesday, 9 April, the Group discussed the issue with the delegation of Oman where elections were to take place in 2019. The delegation from Oman was led by the Speaker and two members of the Consultative Council. The Secretaries General of both chambers of the Majlis also attended. The discussion on the challenges that women faced to participate in politics and on preparations for the upcoming legislative elections was lively. The delegation described how the Government of Oman had been working to encourage women's participation, including by proposing a quota system, which did not eventually find consensus. Currently, efforts were focused on conducting an awareness-raising campaign to encourage women to participate in elections. The delegation expressed its wish to have IPU support for the campaign, including arranging for the Group members to attend one of the campaign activities in Oman. The Group welcomed the exchanges. Members confirmed their willingness to support the campaign and assist the Parliament of Oman with any other possible measures to strengthen women's participation in politics.

## 5. Advisory Group on Health

The IPU Advisory Group on Health met on 6 April with four out of six members in attendance (three members and a replacement). The Group welcomed its technical partners from the World Health Organization (WHO), the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), UNAIDS and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

The Advisory Group was welcomed by the IPU Secretary General, who stressed the important role of the Group as the only statutory mechanism within the IPU that dealt with health matters. He invited members to discuss how to ensure that the IPU resolution on Universal Health Coverage, expected to be adopted in October 2019, would provide a broad mandate that would encompass the many aspects of Universal Health Coverage, including nutrition, HIV/AIDS, women's, children's and adolescents' health, and global health security.

The Group heard a report from the IPU Secretariat about health-related activities carried out since the last meeting, and then provided an update on what had been done in their countries to pass new legislation, allocate budgets and reach out to communities on health-related issues.

The Advisory Group agreed to write a letter to the IPU Secretary General and the WHO Director-General to ask the two Organizations to collaborate in supporting national parliaments in implementing the upcoming IPU resolution on Universal Health Coverage.

In its capacity as the review board for the IPU Handbook for parliamentarians on women's, children's and adolescents' health, the Group provided guidance on the accessibility of data and information through technology and on how to incentivize national parliamentary action.

The Group further discussed the positive and negative effects of criminal law on women's, children's and adolescent's health, highlighting the role that parliamentarians have in amending discriminatory law.

Finally, the Advisory Group requested that the IPU Secretariat explore options for conducting a half-day field visit during the next IPU Assembly in Belgrade, Serbia, and to hold a side event on a topic related to Universal Health Coverage.

## Other events

### 1. **Speakers' Dialogue – *Low trust in democracy: An urgent call to rethink our governance models***

The first Speakers' Dialogue to be held at an IPU Assembly considered the question of low trust in democracy. The IPU President, Ms. G. Cuevas Barron, who chaired the meeting, gave a presentation on the root causes of the crisis and its consequences for parliaments and society at large. The Speaker of the Shura Council of Qatar, Mr. A. Al Mahmoud, co-hosted the event. Mr. N. Ahmed (Executive Strategy Advisor, Oxfam International) added a civil society perspective that focused on the problem of growing inequalities. Over 30 Speakers of Parliament participated in the discussion.

The content of the presentations and remarks from participants revealed a convergence of views. The crisis of democracy today stemmed fundamentally from an economic model that favoured shareholders and special interests at the expense of the vast majority of people, leading to increasing inequalities of income, wealth and knowledge, as well as a pervasive sense of economic insecurity. Governments had been captured by moneyed elites that had little interest in the common good. There was a direct correlation between growing inequalities and disenchantment in democracy.

Parliaments and parliamentarians had to accept their share of responsibility for the crisis. At the same time, however, they were often victims of external forces such as fake news propagated on social media or the rise of populist movements whose divisive rhetoric undermined political dialogue as the core function of democratic institutions.

Parliaments needed to become more relevant and open to the people they were meant to represent. That included fairer representation of all groups but also a proactive effort to listen to the people, which might require more personal contact between MPs and their constituents. Parliaments had to work to safeguard the integrity of elections so that people could trust the results of polls. More importantly, parliaments needed to reclaim the ground they had lost to overbearing executive branches that had every interest in disempowering parliaments and eroding their oversight prerogatives. Several Speakers noted that parliaments needed to do much more to include women and young people. Making parliament a workplace more accessible to women and adopting gender-sensitive budgeting were two key steps that needed to be scaled up considerably.

While working to reform the political system in which they operated, parliamentarians also had to work to tackle inequality through progressive tax reforms, the provision of public goods such as universal, affordable and quality education and health care, and a big push to facilitate girls' access to education. Restoring peoples' faith in politics had to begin by showing that politics could deliver for the people.

In bringing the session to a close, Ms. G. Cuevas Barron pledged to make the Speakers' Dialogue a permanent fixture of Assemblies. More time would be allocated to the Dialogue to allow for in-depth discussions and greater interaction among participants. A more creative format might also be introduced to include more input from civil society and citizens.

### 2. **Meeting of the Chairpersons of the Geopolitical Groups and the Presidents of the Standing Committees**

On the morning of 6 April, the President and Secretary General of the IPU met with the Chairpersons of the Geopolitical Groups and the Presidents of the four Standing Committees. The President briefed participants on the implementation of her vision for the IPU, including through marking the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Organization, developing a new Leadership Seminar for young parliamentarians, and fostering closer ties between Members outside the statutory IPU Assemblies.

The Chairpersons of the Geopolitical Groups reported on their activities since the last Assembly. The African Group had focused on mainstreaming IPU resolutions and decisions into the work of their Group and regional parliamentary organizations. A recent regional seminar for Caribbean island States hosted by the Parliament of Suriname had helped build cooperation with a number of non-Member Parliaments. It had been a good example of Members working with the IPU to organize regional activities so as to reach out in a more targeted manner to the parliaments of the region and expand IPU membership. The Asia-Pacific and Twelve Plus Groups were also actively engaged in convening regional events in conjunction with the IPU on issues of mutual interest.

The Presidents of the Standing Committees reported on their activities at the current Assembly and their future programme of work, which included field visits to get a better understanding of realities on the ground. The intention was to further strengthen the functioning of the Standing Committee Bureaux,



including in terms of composition, so as to ensure that the Bureaux members had the relevant experience and commitment to the areas under their purview. Follow-up to previous Committee resolutions was also important, and the Presidents wished to devote more time in future to reviewing the implementation of resolutions. From that perspective, cooperation between the Standing Committees and the Geopolitical Groups was important, as it could help maximize engagement by Member Parliaments in the implementation and review processes.

Participants examined the calendar of future IPU activities and identified events that still required a host. They agreed to discuss that matter with the other members of their respective Groups, with a view to filling any remaining gaps as soon as possible.

### **3. Meeting with the Heads of regional and other parliamentary organizations**

The meeting took place on 6 April. Representatives of more than a dozen parliamentary organizations with Associate Member or Permanent Observer status at the IPU exchanged views regarding the main challenges facing governance and democracy in the world today. They acknowledged that reducing work duplication and enhancing the effectiveness of regional and global parliamentary cooperation were essential to address pressing global challenges such as climate change, gender equality, sustaining peace, tackling corruption and addressing the growing trend of disenchantment with democracy and governance structures in general. As follow-up actions, it was decided that participants would keep in touch, send their proposals for concrete joint actions to the IPU Secretariat, organize activities to promote regional and global parliamentary cooperation in their respective organizations, and identify and disseminate good practices.

### **4. Panel discussion: *Ending energy poverty through access to renewable energies and inclusive public policies: How can parliaments help?***

The panel featured Mr. A. Gryffroy (Senator, Belgium), Ms. E. Thiombiano (MP, Burkina Faso), Ms. M.S. Manguiat (Head, National Environmental Law Unit, UN Environment), and Mr. F. Gonzalez Diaz (former Director of the Import-Export Bank of Mexico). It was moderated by Mr. A. Motter (Senior Advisor, IPU). Twenty-two parliamentarians participated. Bangladesh, Chile, France, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland and Oman spoke from the floor.

The debate took its cue from the 2018 IPU resolution *Engaging the private sector in implementing the SDGs, especially on renewable energy*. It served as the launching pad for a new IPU-UN Environment Issues Brief entitled *Shades of Green: An introduction to the green economy for parliamentarians*.

The discussion placed the issue of energy poverty in the broader context of the green economy, described as an alternative to the current growth-centric economic model that aims to effectively decouple economic growth from environmental degradation. Energy poverty affected both developed and developing countries. In developed countries, the issue was more about supply, with not enough energy being produced, especially from renewable sources; in developing countries, energy poverty was mainly about making energy more affordable to people on low income. In both cases, part of the solution was energy conservation, which entailed an economy-wide transformation to make all products more energy efficient and to facilitate lifestyle changes conducive to less energy consumption.

Renewable energies such as solar, wind and geothermal energy were becoming cheaper than fossil fuels. Despite that, their share in global, final energy consumption changed little over the years. Financing for renewable energy infrastructure and off-grid solutions, as well as for R&D, was limited. Technology transfers to developing countries were not always easy because of adaptability problems as well as lack of finance. An important consideration that would support the industrialization of developing countries was the fact that renewable energy technology was mostly owned by developed countries and, because of patent restrictions, could not easily be replicated in developing countries.

The debate illustrated the many innovative ways to support the spread of renewable energies. Public finance could play a leading role in creating innovative financing mechanisms (for example, subsidies, tax exemptions, loan guarantees) for utilities, municipalities and households to generate their own energy supply or tap into an existing grid. Public investments in green infrastructure could also be facilitated by changing budget rules such as the rule that prohibited the amortization of government loans over the years.

The sharing economy, the circular economy, and the solidarity economy were all expressions of the green economy. Taken together, they could facilitate the transition toward renewable energy by helping reduce overall demand for energy intensive products and services. While many countries had adopted elements of the green economy to some extent or other, no country had succeeded in implementing it

consistently. Governments and parliaments needed to better understand the green economy as a system that encompassed all sectors of the economy and that required much more than a technology fix. The full implementation of the green economy would require political will and a comprehensive phase-in plan.

#### **5. Panel discussion on counter-terrorism and violent extremism: *From international resolutions to national legislations: Bridging the implementation gap***

The event was organized as part of the activities of the IPU-UNODC-UNOCT Joint Programme on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism guided by the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG).

The IPU Secretary General stressed that parliaments and parliamentarians could intervene at every stage of radicalization. Marginalization of and discrimination against any group could be avoided by establishing strong parliaments that represented every sector of society. Mr. V. Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of UNOCT, underlined that parliamentarians played an important role in supporting the agreements of the United Nations and in facilitating the implementation of UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions related to counter-terrorism. Parliaments set budgets, proposed and adopted legislation and held governments accountable for their policies, actions and spending.

Mr. M. Karimipour (UNODC) stressed that an effective response to terrorism required greater cooperation between all countries with the support of international organizations, such as the United Nations and the IPU. Parliaments needed to provide relevant legal frameworks and empower their criminal justice officials. Mr. O. Tinni, Speaker of the National Assembly of Niger, highlighted the challenges and problems that the Sahel region was facing in combating terrorism, particularly with terrorist groups like Boko Haram. He said that the international community had to emphasize the importance of working in that region, where terrorist groups had settled and were actively recruiting young people. Ms. M. Kiener Nellen, Vice-Chairperson of the HLAG, highlighted the need for parliaments to join forces with governments as terrorism should be fought at every level of society.

Additionally, the panellists concurred that there was an urgent need to address the physical and social devastation caused by years of terrorism. The audience then heard the testimony of Ms. F. Bunu, a 19-year-old girl who was abducted by Boko Haram but managed to escape. She was committed to sharing her story so that she could help others, and called on parliamentarians to ensure education for all to prevent radicalization.

Members from France, Germany, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Kenya, Pakistan, Palestine, Peru, and Qatar spoke. They were deeply touched by the testimony of Ms. Bunu. It highlighted the importance of giving space to victims and allocating budget resources to meet their needs. Members concurred that it was essential to work together to counter terrorism. They reiterated that terrorism had no borders and that no country was immune to it.

#### **6. Joint Meeting of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians: *Sexism, harassment and violence against women MPs***

On 10 April, the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians organized a joint meeting with the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians on combating sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments. The meeting began with a presentation of the findings of the IPU studies on the topic.

The discussions emphasized the role that men and the younger generation of parliamentarians should play to spread knowledge, raise awareness and trigger strong, efficient parliamentary action to free politics and parliaments from sexism and all forms of gender-based violence. It was agreed that men should be agents of change and should raise that issue in their parliaments. Participants recommended practical actions that could be taken and commitments that could be made, including launching social media campaigns to change mindsets and challenge the culture of silence. They also considered cooperation with think tanks, labour unions and NGOs. Participants proposed mandatory training and monitoring tools in parliaments to help people recognize sexism and sexual harassment. There was agreement on the need to assess how parliaments currently gathered detailed information on instances of harassment and violence experienced by parliamentarians and parliamentary staff. That sort of internal investigation could be carried out as part of a gender sensitivity assessment of a parliament. It was also proposed to review rules that gave parliamentarians immunity from prosecution for sexual harassment and violence against women, and to gather more information about the role of parliamentary ethics committees so that gender-based abuses against women in parliament could be addressed.

The participants found the first joint meeting very constructive and determined to continue and deepen the partnership between the two bodies.

## **7. Workshop on maternal, newborn and child health: *Act now for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health: Lessons on health financing, legislation, and partnerships***

The session was opened by Ms. G. Cuevas Barron, President of the IPU, who stressed the importance of discussing parliamentary best practices and challenges regarding women's, children's and adolescents' health to promote better health outcomes at the local level. Dr. G. Silberschmidt, WHO Director for Partnerships and Non-State Actors, provided an overview of the current status of women's, children's and adolescents' health. He said that, even though great progress had been made in the past two decades, stronger action was needed.

Legislation, budget allocation and partnership building were considered at three separate sessions. They were moderated by Dr. F. Bustreo, Board Member of the Botnar Foundation and representative of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), and Mr. D. Imbago Jácome, Representative of the PMNCH adolescent and youth constituency.

On legislation, parliamentarians from Namibia, Mexico and Bangladesh presented best practices from their countries, including on preventing violence and child marriage and protecting the rights of children and adolescents. The discussion highlighted the need to look at customary law and its impact on women's, children's and adolescents' health, and the importance of oversight to ensure that existing legal frameworks were implemented. Mental health was also identified as a pressing issue in developing and developed countries.

Representatives of Sweden, Thailand and Rwanda presented their experiences and lessons learned on health financing. It was pointed out that gender equality and gender budgeting were important ways of reducing poverty, while political commitment and home-grown solutions were two enablers to achieving universal health coverage, including in low- and middle-income countries. Experiences in different regions showed that primary health care for mothers and children was at the core of universal health coverage.

Finally, examples from Serbia and Uganda were presented. They highlighted the need to: work across party and gender lines to promote stronger legislation on women's, children's and adolescents' health; advocate for increases in health budgets; and foster gender equality and women's participation in politics.

Ms. H. Fogstad, PMNCH Executive Director, spoke of the importance of engaging communities and strengthening accountability on women's, children's and adolescents' health. In her closing remarks, Ms. G. Cuevas Barron invited parliamentarians to focus on people's needs, paying particular attention to vulnerable and marginalized groups, including on sensitive issues such as mental health and sexual and reproductive health.

## **8. Interactive session jointly organized by the IPU and the ASGP: *Innovation in parliament: Getting ready for the future***

The interactive session, jointly organized by the IPU and the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP), brought together around 50 MPs, Secretaries General and senior parliamentary staff.

The workshop was moderated by Ms. R. Saint-Germain, Senator (Canada), who observed at the opening that citizens were increasingly demanding and critical about MPs. Parliaments needed to find ways to respond and prevent loss of trust in the institution.

Mr. A. Richardson, IPU Secretariat, briefly presented the Centre for Innovation in Parliament, a partnership between the IPU and parliaments to support parliamentary innovation through improved use of digital technology.

As an introduction to the discussion on innovation in parliament, participants responded to an online polling question: "Has your parliament changed anything in the way it works in recent years?" The clear majority of affirmative responses confirmed, as expected, that parliaments and MPs were constantly innovating and evolving.

The discussion that followed focused on communication with the public and citizen participation in decision-making, as well as legislative procedures. Based on a second online polling question and a pre-session survey, those were the three areas in which participants expressed the most interest to discuss innovative approaches.

Mr. A. Anastasia, Senator (Brazil), presented the experience of his Parliament in involving the public. He cited initiatives aimed at bringing MPs closer to citizens, such as the e-citizen portal where anyone could participate in public hearings, submit proposals for legislation and provide opinions on any bill.

Mr. R. Nehmelman, Secretary General of the Senate (Netherlands) presented the outcome of a study by the Dutch State Commission in the Netherlands which had been assigned to advise the Government and Parliament on whether the parliamentary system of the Netherlands was "future-proof". The Commission made several recommendations, including the introduction of a binding corrective referendum to give voters an ultimate possibility to reverse legislation that did not correspond with the views of the majority of the people. Mr. R. Nehmelman noted that there were fundamental questions about how much influence citizens should have in a representative democracy, questions on citizens' participation in decision-making on a host of practical issues, and citizens' relationship to elected representatives.

Some of the examples shared included an Open Data hub hosted by Brazil within the Centre for Innovation in Parliament, as well as a Latin American hub hosted by Chile, and a Southern Africa hub hosted by Zambia. Other parliamentary initiatives to communicate with citizens came from Pakistan, which uses a mixture of interventions and strategies, including a student programme for better understanding of parliamentary work; Argentina, where there is an initiative in the Senate to promote clear language in legislation, so that people can understand the law, and to reduce legal ambiguity; mobile committee hearings in Canada and the use of filters on online petitions to recognize and block those signed by robots. South Africa noted that Parliament had made a clear diagnosis of what needed to be done to enhance citizen participation, but that implementation was still lacking, particularly when it came to providing feedback to citizens on the input they provided.

The closing polling question—"How ready is your parliament for the future?"—provoked also reflection on how to judge parliamentary readiness for the future and, indeed, what the parliament of the future could look like. The discussion touched on the link between direct democracy and representative democracy. It was noted that innovation in representative democracy was needed to combat populism, but also that innovations needed to be sustainable. Innovating for the sake of change alone was not sufficient. Innovation had to be seen through the lens of whether or not it would strengthen representative democracy.

## **9. Knowledge Fair**

The General Debate of the Assembly was accompanied by a Knowledge Fair, which aimed at bringing international education stakeholders closer to parliamentarians through direct discussions and interactive activities. It featured exhibitions from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the near East (UNRWA), the Qatar Foundation, and the Humanity, Education and Rights (H.E.R.) Academy.

## **10. Side event: *National implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention as a means to address threats arising from non-State actors***

On 7 April, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) organized, in partnership with the Government of Qatar, a side event on the role of parliaments in the national implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), as part of tackling threats from non-State actors. The President of the IPU Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and the OPCW Head of Implementation Support (International Cooperation and Assistance Division) opened proceedings. They started with a brief presentation of the Convention so that participants could better understand the obligations of States that were party to the Convention and the role of the Convention in tackling current and new threats posed by non-State actors. Participants then shared their experiences and the challenges they had faced in implementing the Convention. They exchanged views on how parliaments could play a more active role at the national level in raising awareness about the urgent need to adopt a legislative framework to implement the CWC.

## Elections and appointments

### 1. Executive Committee

The Governing Council elected the following member to the Executive Committee:

*African Group*

- Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal) for a four-year term ending in April 2023.

### 2. Sub-Committee on Finance

The Executive Committee renewed:

- Mr. A. Abdel Aal (Egypt) for a further two-year term ending in April 2021.

The Executive Committee appointed:

- Mr. K. Lusaka (Kenya) for a term ending in October 2019.

### 3. Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

The Forum of Women Parliamentarians elected Ms. A. Al Basti (United Arab Emirates) as its First Vice-President and Ms. A. Tolley (New Zealand) as its Second Vice-President for a term ending in March 2020.

It also elected the following regional representative to the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians:

*African Group*

- Ms. K. Bukar Abba Ibrahim (Nigeria) to fill the seat left vacant after the demise of Ms. F. Adedoyin (Nigeria), for a term ending in March 2020.

A regional representative position for the Eurasia Group to fill the seat left vacant by Ms. S. Sardaryan (Armenia), who is no longer a parliamentarian, for a term ending in March 2020.

### 4. Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians

The Forum elected the following members to its Board for a two-year term ending in March 2021:

*African Group:*

- Ms. M. Tiendrébéogo (Burkina Faso)
- Mr. F. Fouti (Gabon)

*Arab Group:*

- Ms. R. Al Manthari (Oman)
- Mr. O. Altabtabaee (Kuwait)

*Asia-Pacific Group:*

- Mr. S. Durrani (Pakistan)
- (Vacancy)

*Eurasia Group:*

- Ms. E. Afanasieva (Russian Federation)
- Mr. B. Maken (Kazakhstan)

*Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC):*

- Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico)
- Mr. M. Bouva (Suriname)



*Twelve Plus Group:*

- Ms. M. Grande (Italy)
- Mr. U. Lechte (Germany)

The Board also elected Mr. M. Bouva (Suriname) as its President.

## **5. Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians**

The Governing Council elected the following member for a five-year term ending in April 2024:

- Mr. J. Kim (Republic of Korea).

## **6. Committee on Middle East Questions**

The Governing Council re-elected Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada) as President for a one-year term ending in April 2020.

It also elected the following members for a four-year term ending in April 2023:

- Ms. M. Mokitimi (Lesotho)
- Ms. A.P. Boateng (Ghana).

## **7. Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law**

The Committee elected as its President Ms. A. Vadai (Hungary) for a one-year term ending in April 2020 and Mr. M. Rogers (Zambia) for the following term ending in April 2021.

The Governing Council elected the following two members for a four-year term ending in April 2023:

- *Asia-Pacific Group:* Ms. F. Hosseini (Islamic Republic of Iran)
- *Eurasia Group:* Mr. H. Hovhannisyan (Armenia).

## **8. High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism**

The Governing Council elected the following members for a four-year term ending in April 2023:

*African Group:*

- Ms. M.N. Mensah-Williams (Namibia)
- Mr. O. Tinni (Niger)
- Mr. A. Tuyaga (Burundi)
- Ms. J. Oduol (Kenya)
- (Vacancy)

*Arab Group:*

- Ms. A. Al Qubaisi (United Arab Emirates)
- Mr. A. Abdel Aal Sayed Ahmed (Egypt)

*Asia-Pacific Group:*

- Ms. S. Jannat Marri (Pakistan)
- Ms. A. Husin (Malaysia)
- Mr. K. Jalali (Islamic Republic of Iran)
- Mr. G. Chen (China)

*Eurasia Group:*

- (Vacancy)
- (Vacancy)

*Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC):*

- Ms. I. Passada (Uruguay)
- Mr. V.V. Suárez Díaz (Dominican Republic)
- Mr. J.F. Merino (El Salvador)

*Twelve Plus Group:*

- Mr. R. Lopatka (Austria)
- Mr. R. del Picchia (France)
- Mr. G. Migliore (Italy)
- Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland)
- (Vacancy).

**9. Group of Facilitators for Cyprus**

The Governing Council elected Ms. L. Quartapelle (Italy) as Facilitator.

**10. Bureaux of the Standing Committees**

The Standing Committees elected the following members for a two-year term (renewable) in their respective Bureaux ending in April 2021.

Standing Committee on Peace and International Security*African Group:*

- Ms. P. Ikourou Yoka (Congo) – first term

*Arab Group:*

- Mr. A. Eissa (Sudan) to complete the first term of Sudan (end of term: March 2020)
- Ms. A. Al Jassim (United Arab Emirates) to complete the first term of the United Arab Emirates (end of term: March 2020)

*Asia-Pacific Group:*

- Ms. O. Navaan-Yunden (Mongolia) – first term
- Mr. S.A. Arbab (Pakistan) to complete the second term of Pakistan (end of term: October 2020)

*Eurasia Group:*

- Ms. S. Grigoryan, (Armenia) – first term
- Mr. P. Tolstoy (Russian Federation) – first term

Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade*Arab Group:*

- Ms. W. Bani Mustafa (Jordan) – second term
- Mr. A. Al-Khrbeed (Iraq) to replace Mr. M. Al-Juboori (Iraq), to complete the first term of Iraq which ends in March 2020.

*Asia-Pacific Group:*

- Ms. S. Jannat Marri (Pakistan) – first term

*Eurasia Group:*

- Mr. A. Boshyan (Armenia) to replace Mr. A. Simonyan (Armenia), to complete the first term for Armenia ending in March 2020.

*Twelve Plus Group:*

- Ms. S. Dinică (Romania) – second term

Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights*African Group:*

- Mr. A. Niyongabo (Burundi) – second term
- Mr. H. Bekalle-Akwe (Gabon) – to complete the first term of the former Bureau member from Gabon, who is no longer a parliamentarian. This first term ends in March 2020.



*Arab Group:*

- Ms. A. Talabani (Iraq) – first term

*Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC):*

- Ms. C.L. Crexell (Argentina) – first term

*Twelve Plus Group:*

- Mr. D. Marie (France) – first term
- Mr. S. Spengemann (Canada) – second term

Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

*African Group*

- Mr. P. Akamba (Uganda) – first term

*Asia-Pacific Group*

- Mr. U. Nyam-Osor (Mongolia) – first term

*Eurasia Group:*

- Mr. S. Gavrilov (Russian Federation) – second term

*Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC):*

- Mr. J.C. Romero (Argentina) – second term.

## **11. Rapporteurs to the 142<sup>nd</sup> Assembly**

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security appointed Ms. C. Roth (Germany) as Rapporteur for the subject item entitled *Parliamentary strategies to strengthen peace and security against threats and conflicts resulting from climate-related disasters and their consequences*. It mandated the IPU President to conduct consultations to identify a second rapporteur.

The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade appointed Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium), Mr. P. Mariru (Kenya) and Ms. S. Dinică (Romania) as co-Rapporteurs for the subject item entitled *Mainstreaming digitalization and the circular economy to achieve the SDGs, particularly responsible consumption and production*.

## Media and communications

### Media coverage

The IPU communications team issued three press releases and two Presidential Statements during the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly. The releases were sent to 1,000 international media outlets worldwide in English, French, Spanish and Arabic. They were also sent to all the Members to encourage them to disseminate further.

IPU Communications organized opening and closing press conferences with the Qatari hosts with the participation of the Shura Council Speaker, the IPU President and the IPU Secretary General. Both were well attended by local media, particularly the closing where there were also some foreign correspondents.

National and regional press covered the Assembly extensively in state outlets such as the Gulf Times, the Qatar Tribune and the Qatar Peninsula, as well as on Qatar TV. There was also some coverage on Al Jazeera and some international media, particularly from China, Russia, and the Middle East. Latin American press covered Assembly developments related to the crisis in Venezuela and its delegation in Doha.



### Social media



The IPU's social media accounts saw big hikes in numbers and engagement thanks to hashtags such as #IPU140, particularly on the new Instagram account which currently had over 600 followers. The number of overall followers on Twitter increased significantly to over 21,000 including many MPs. The Facebook account made steady progress too with an additional 100 followers making a total of over 2,460 followers.

One of the most popular @IPUparliament tweets, with 900 per cent engagement, including 44 retweets and 73 likes, was: "Welcome to the parliaments of the world' HH Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani declares the #IPU140 Assembly open in Doha, #Qatar".

Another tweet that broke records in terms of engagement was the IPU Secretary General's retweet of the President's tweet in reference to members of the Venezuelan delegation who were unable to travel to the Assembly. The tweet received 225 retweets and 138 likes as well as a number of comments.



### Photographs and selfie box

The IPU official photographers at the Assembly produced hundreds of photographs that were posted at regular intervals on the IPU Flickr pages for participants to download and share.

The "For democracy. For everyone" Selfie Box was a popular feature of the Knowledge Fair with over 1,500 pictures taken (slightly less compared with the 2,000 at #IPU139 which was part of the UN Human Rights campaign to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). There was a 25 per cent transformation rate of delegates clicking through to the links to the IPU website in the email sent to them containing their picture, 53 per cent clicked through to Instagram and 21 per cent on Twitter.



### Video

The Communications team interviewed a dozen MPs and experts to prepare a short video on the highlights of the Assembly which should be available in the weeks to follow. The host also interviewed a number of delegates on video for use on social media.

## Membership of the Inter-Parliamentary Union\*

### Members (179)

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe

### Associate Members (12)

Andean Parliament, Arab Parliament, Central American Parliament (PARLACEN), East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), European Parliament, Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS), Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO), Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Parliament of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

\* As at the close of the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

## Agenda, resolutions and other texts of the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly

1. Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly
2. Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
3. General Debate on the theme *Parliaments as platforms to enhance education for peace, security and the rule of law*
4. *Non-admissibility of using mercenaries as a means of undermining peace and violating human rights*  
(Standing Committee on Peace and International Security)
5. *The role of fair and free trade and investment in achieving the SDGs, especially regarding economic equality, sustainable infrastructure, industrialization and innovation*  
(Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade)
6. Reports of the Standing Committee
7. Approval of the subject items for the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and for the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade at the 142<sup>nd</sup> IPU Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs
8. Amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules
9. Call for urgent international action to support Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe hit by Cyclone Idai

## Doha Declaration

### *Parliaments as platforms to enhance education for peace, security and the rule of law*

*Endorsed by the 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly  
(Doha, 10 April 2019)*

We, Members of Parliament from 160 countries and over two dozen regional parliamentary organizations, meeting in Doha, Qatar, at the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, recognize the importance of education as a platform for enhancing peace, security and the rule of law.

Peace, security and the rule of law are enduring objectives of the international community. They are the preconditions for people to pursue happy and meaningful lives and maximize their socioeconomic potential as individuals, as family and community members, and as engaged citizens. Despite persistent efforts to develop robust national and international institutions and mechanisms that enable the non-violent settlement of disputes and disagreements, many forms of conflict continue to plague almost all our societies. Unilateral measures taken by States against other States without authorization of the international community can also have a negative impact on security, stability and people's livelihoods. We appreciate that sustaining peace, providing security and ensuring the rule of law remain goals that require our undivided attention.

Different forms of violence characterize the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Military interventions, terrorism, transnational organized crime, cyberattacks, civil wars, armed insurgencies and gang violence all seem to indicate a world of ever-greater danger and insecurity. Contrary to popular belief, however, most lethal violence does not occur in conflict zones. According to the Small Arms Survey's *Global Violent Deaths 2017*, at least 560,000 people died violently in 2016, but only about 99,000 (18%) were killed in war zones. Such statistics highlight that we need to rethink the way we conceive of peace, security and the rule of law internationally.

Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reminds us of the link between **education** and **peace**. Moreover, education is recognized as a fundamental human right. It reinforces the idea that education is about more than turning individuals into active agents of the productive system: it also creates a sense of citizenship and community belonging. Education is about helping people to understand the world, participate in public life, and ultimately guarantee social cohesion based on common values. Education is also the common denominator that helps level the field for women and men, rural and urban dwellers, and that ensures equal opportunities for all in society.

**As Parliamentarians, we are committed to supporting mechanisms and financing measures that work towards promoting education as a platform for enhancing peace, security and the rule of law, in line with the SDGs, and in particular SDG 4.** This support includes:

***Enabling equitable access to education for all.*** We recognize that access to education is limited by significant social barriers and are therefore committed to:

- Adopting national legislation that guarantees education as a universal right delivered through accessible and inclusive public and private services, in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant international instruments;
- Encouraging the adoption of legislative measures to achieve the full realization of the right to education, individually and through international assistance and cooperation;
- Ensuring that by 2030, all children and adolescents complete a full cycle of early childhood development, primary and secondary education, in line with [SDG 4, target 4.1](#);



- Putting in place educational facilities, with adequate funding at all levels (pre-primary, primary, secondary and post-secondary) to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged children, young people, adults, migrants, refugees and internally displaced communities;
- Making vocational and higher education more accessible, including by expanding the number of scholarships and affordable loans available to individuals, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- Building and upgrading education facilities that are child-, disability- and gender-responsive, and that provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all;
- Eliminating gender disparities in education and ensuring equal access to all levels of education for women, girls, men, boys and vulnerable sectors of the population, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, internally displaced persons, refugees, economic migrants and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, including by addressing the root causes of their underrepresentation in education, such as stigma, discrimination, violence and lack of resources or adequate infrastructure;
- Ensuring that education is also made available to prisoners to facilitate their reintegration into society.

**Facilitating access and providing quality education.** As lawmakers, we have the means to create a legal framework and a regulatory environment that not only guarantees equitable access to education, but also ensures quality education for all. Everyone residing on a particular State's territory must be provided with quality education. This is essential for fostering greater respect for democratic values,<sup>1</sup> for sustaining democracy,<sup>2</sup> and for ensuring the equal participation of women and men in political life and their well-being.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, we are committed to:

- Promoting, in line with [SDG 4, target 1](#), governmental policies and regulations guaranteeing free, equitable and quality education for all (women and girls, men and boys);
- Ensuring that education is integrated into a comprehensive national development plan;
- Expanding adult learning and education opportunities as part of an approach to lifelong learning, especially among those who have been denied access to education in the past;
- Increasing the availability of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation, especially among vulnerable or disadvantaged communities;
- Promoting the development of teaching curricula that foster social inclusion, tolerance, gender equality and a culture of peace and mutual understanding;
- Promoting governmental policies and regulations which ensure that people on the move are included in national education systems, including systems for recognition of prior learning achievements and qualifications.

**Promoting productive civic engagement through global citizenship education (GCED).** This creates a sense of belonging to the global community, with its members experiencing solidarity and collective identity at the local, national and global levels. In this regard, we are committed to:

- Ensuring, in line with [SDG 4, target 7](#), that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development and productive civic engagement;
- Offering extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for young people to get involved in politics through their schools and communities, and at the national level, including by encouraging those below the voting age to participate in student governments and youth parliaments;
- Designing and implementing programmes that provide children, youth, adults and those from marginalized and disadvantaged groups with the opportunity to obtain instruction—in the classroom and through community service—on civic engagement, human rights, gender equality, government, history, law and economics in ways that promote critical thinking and social responsibility, and inhibit the teaching of hate or discrimination of any kind;

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<sup>1</sup> Resolution on *The implementation of educational and cultural policies designed to foster greater respect for democratic values*, 89<sup>th</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Conference, New Delhi, 17 April 1993, <http://archive.ipu.org/conf-e/89-2.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> *Universal Declaration on Democracy*, 98<sup>th</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Conference, Cairo, 16 September 1997, <http://archive.ipu.org/cnl-e/161-dem.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> Resolution on *Education and culture as essential factors in promoting the participation of men and women in political life and as prerequisites for the development of peoples*, 105<sup>th</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Conference, Havana, 6 April 2001, <http://archive.ipu.org/conf-e/105-2.htm>.



- Supporting education that promotes the goals of transitional justice in post-conflict societies and is sensitive to the legacies of the past in a way that prevents atrocities from happening again;
- Encouraging national consultations and awareness-raising campaigns with our constituencies to promote global citizenship, and intercultural and interfaith dialogue and respect;
- Promoting inter-parliamentary cooperation that supports global citizenship education programmes, including through student and youth union exchange and cooperation initiatives.

**Supporting non-formal education (NFE).** This provides an alternative avenue for lifelong learning and skills development by offering educational opportunities to all. Our commitments include:

- Ensuring, in line with [SDG 4, target 3](#), equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including at university level;
- Expanding the number of scholarships available to individuals, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, for enrolment in vocational training, and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes;
- Eliminating gender disparities and facilitating equal access to vocational training for women, girls, men, boys and vulnerable sectors of the population;
- Building and upgrading non-formal education facilities that are child-, disability- and gender-responsive, and that provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments;
- Increasing the supply of qualified vocational training professionals, including through international cooperation, especially in vulnerable or disadvantaged communities;
- Establishing, in consultation with civil society stakeholders, a coherent system of accreditation and quality monitoring for non-formal education.

**Protecting education systems in situations of conflict or insecurity.** According to the 2018 report *Education under Attack* by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, there were more than 12,700 attacks on schools between 2013 and 2017, harming more than 21,000 students and educators in at least 70 countries. Acknowledging the importance and urgency of this situation, we are committed to:

- Urging governments to endorse the *Safe Schools Declaration* which gives States the opportunity to express broad political support for the protection and continuation of education in armed conflict;
- Ensuring that national legal frameworks for the protection of education facilities (schools, universities, institutes, etc.) in situations of conflict or insecurity address education-related violations;
- Providing sustainable funding for international programmes, led by organizations such as UNRWA, UNHCR, UNICEF and UNESCO, that ensure that refugee children have access to quality education;
- Raising awareness of education-related violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) by including IHL principles and the *Safe Schools Declaration* in the education of children and adults, and by emphasizing the protection of education in the training of national armed forces and associated state and non-state actors;
- Developing a comprehensive policy for protecting schools in situations of conflict or insecurity, and engaging all concerned governmental institutions, state security providers, educational and civil society organizations, at all levels, to develop and implement this policy;
- Ensuring that state security forces and non-traditional armed actors do not place checkpoints and military facilities close to schools and educational facilities;
- Engaging in dialogue with state security forces and other armed actors so that they do not use schools and educational facilities for military purposes, including the storage, possession and use of weapons in those facilities;
- Developing and implementing measures to ensure safe transportation and passage of students and educational personnel on routes leading to and from formal and non-formal educational facilities, and to ensure the physical protection of the educational premises themselves, including by using technology that could include early warning systems;

- During times of armed conflict or insecurity and where access to education facilities is limited, planning for and providing adequate resources to ensure the alternative delivery of education where appropriate and available (for example, community-based schools or distance-learning); this would help ensure continuity of and access to education during times of armed conflict or insecurity;
- Encouraging collaboration with and support from community organizations and local committees to develop school-based protection measures, including through educational protection committees.

In adopting this Declaration, we acknowledge that, to varying degrees, all of our societies are having to tackle manifestations of intolerance, marginalization and exclusion. As noted by the United Nations Secretary-General, in order to achieve peace "*we must teach our children love before others teach them hate*". As lawmakers, we recognize that the provision of accessible and quality education for all is a crucial component in this regard. Not only does education provide individuals with tangible skills that enable productive employment, but it also develops life skills that foster civic engagement and reduce the probability that people will resort to violence to resolve conflict. In a constantly changing world, we need to exercise our legislative, oversight and budgetary prerogatives to make sure that education is adaptive and well placed to meet the challenges that our societies face.

## **Non-admissibility of using mercenaries and foreign fighters as a means of undermining peace, international security and the territorial integrity of States, and violating human rights**

*Resolution adopted by consensus\* by the 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly  
(Doha, 10 April 2019)*

The 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

*Reaffirming* the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations concerning the strict observance of the principles of sovereign equality, political independence, the territorial integrity of States, the inviolability of internationally recognized borders, the self-determination of peoples, the non-use of force or threat of use of force in international relations, the non-interference in affairs within the domestic jurisdiction of States, and the promotion of and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

*Recalling* the definitions of mercenaries contained in Article 47 of Additional Protocol I to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and Article 1 of the 1989 International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries,

*Also recalling* that Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Conventions is applicable in international armed conflicts and that the International Convention on Mercenaries is applicable in all armed conflicts,

*Noting* that there is no international legal instrument regarding foreign fighters or foreign terrorist fighters, and no commonly accepted legal definition of these terms; and that the Human Rights Council Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the rights of peoples to self-determination uses the following definition for foreign fighters: "individuals who leave their country of origin or habitual residence and become involved in violence as part of an insurgency or non-State armed group in an armed conflict",

*Considering* that The Montreux Document on Pertinent International Legal Obligations and Good Practices for States related to Operations of Private Military and Security Companies during Armed Conflict of 17 September 2008 defines private military and security companies as private business entities, irrespective of how they define themselves, that provide military and/or security services that include, in particular, armed guarding and protection of persons and objects, such as convoys, buildings and other places; maintenance and operation of weapons systems; prisoner detention; and advice to or training of local forces and security personnel,

*Also considering* that the personnel, employees and managers of private military and security companies are persons employed by, through direct hire or under contract, a private military and security company,

*Aware* of the fact that the activities of private military and security companies are, in most cases, in keeping with relevant legal obligations and good practices,

*Reaffirming* that the personnel of private military and security companies are obliged, regardless of their status, to comply with applicable international humanitarian law and the State's obligations under international human rights law, and are subject to prosecution if they commit acts recognized as crimes under applicable national or international law; and furthermore, that private military and security companies have a responsibility to respect human rights and international humanitarian law, to take action to stop abuses by their personnel and to provide for or cooperate in processes to provide an effective remedy to victims,

*Recalling* relevant United Nations General Assembly Resolutions, including resolution 71/182 of 19 December 2016, and Human Rights Council resolutions 15/12 of 30 September 2010, 15/26 of 1 October 2010, 18/4 of 29 September 2011, 21/8 of 27 September 2012, 24/13 of 26 September 2013, 27/10 of 25 September 2014, 30/6 of 1 October 2015, 33/4 of 29 September 2016, 36/3 of 28 September 2017 and 39/5 of 27 September 2018, as well as all resolutions adopted by the

\* The delegations of Armenia, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Norway, Romania and Sweden expressed a reservation on the entire resolution.

Commission on Human Rights in this regard, the European Parliament resolution of 4 July 2017 on private security companies, the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers (2010), and the Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa (1977),

*Also recalling* the United Nations Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security (1325, 1888, 1960) and, in particular, resolution 1820, which recognizes that all forms of sexual violence in armed conflicts can constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity,

*Expressing grave concern* at the danger that the activities of mercenaries constitute to peace and security in various parts of the world, in particular in areas of armed conflict, and at the threat they pose to the integrity of and respect for the constitutional order of the affected countries,

*Also expressing grave concern* at the scores of human rights violations perpetrated by mercenaries and foreign fighters, including those employed by private military and security companies, against the civilian population, including extrajudicial killings, rape, enslavement of women and children, torture, enforced disappearance and abductions, as well as pillaging and arbitrary arrest and detention,

*Deploring* the disturbing trend of violence, including sexual violence such as rape as a weapon of war, against vulnerable groups such as women and children, and dismayed at the extremely difficult recovery facing survivors who, once they have returned to their homes, suffer harsh treatment, including stigmatization and abandonment by spouses and other relatives,

*Noting with concern* that children are increasingly becoming victims of mercenaries and foreign fighters, including those employed by private military and security companies, be they forcibly recruited as child soldiers or used for sexual slavery or other purposes,

*Firmly believing* that bringing to justice perpetrators of human rights violations, and ensuring that victims of human rights violations are being made aware of their rights and guaranteed full access to justice and remedies, are crucial to building peace,

*Reaffirming* that the use of mercenaries and their recruitment, financing, protection and training in armed conflicts, and of foreign fighters, including those hired by private military and security companies in armed conflicts, are causes of grave concern to all States and that they violate the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

*Condemning* any State that permits, promotes or tolerates the recruitment, financing, training, assembly, transit or use of mercenaries and foreign fighters, and the use of the private sector and private military and security companies with the objective of violating human rights and disrupting and/or undermining the territorial integrity of sovereign States within their internationally recognized borders and their constitutional order,

*Remaining concerned* over state-sponsored recruitment of mercenaries with the purpose of undermining the territorial integrity, sovereignty and constitutional order of other States,

1. *Decides* to cooperate closely with the United Nations General Assembly with the aim of developing and adopting common legal criteria for determining the legal definition of mercenaries and foreign fighters; and in this regard, invites the Human Rights Council Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the rights of peoples to self-determination to develop, on the basis of existing international legal documents, such criteria and to submit them for consideration to the United Nations General Assembly;
2. *Urges* all parliaments to take legislative measures to ensure that their nationals do not take part in the recruitment, assembly, financing, training, protection or transit of mercenaries or foreign fighters, including those employed by private military and security companies, in the violation of human rights and international humanitarian law, and in the planning of activities designed to destabilize the situation in any State or to dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States;
3. *Calls on* parliaments to amend their existing legislation, so as to prevent and punish the recruitment, assembly, financing, training, protection or transit of mercenaries or foreign fighters, including those employed by private military and security companies, who engage in activities designed to destabilize the situation in any State and/or violate human rights and international humanitarian law;

4. *Also calls on* parliaments to enact legislation to promote the prohibition of the recruitment, training, hiring or financing of foreign fighters, including those employed by private military and security companies, intervening in armed conflicts with a purpose of destabilizing constitutional regimes and/or violating human rights and international humanitarian law;
5. *Encourages* parliaments to establish national regulatory mechanisms for registering activities aimed at hiring former servicemen or active duty personnel on leave as imported military assistance in order to ensure that the imported services do not impede the enjoyment of human rights, do not violate human rights or international humanitarian law in the recipient State, and are not designed to undermine the constitutional order or territorial integrity of that State;
6. *Invites* the parliaments of States which have not yet done so, to consider taking the necessary action to accede to or ratify the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries;
7. *Calls on* parliaments and governments to enact provisions of the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries in national legislation in order to eliminate mercenary activities and to further monitor implementation of the Convention;
8. *Urges* States to take into account women's rights, gender equality and the special needs of women and girls in all peace and security efforts, and stresses the importance of the equal participation of men and women in these efforts;
9. *Stresses* the importance of the participation of women as negotiators and the contribution of women and girls from local communities for inclusive and long-lasting peace;
10. *Condemns* the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict by all actors, and invites parliaments to amend respective legislation so as to criminalize such practices in national legislation;
11. *Strongly condemns* the policies aimed at instilling militant/combative attitudes and mindsets among children;
12. *Condemns* mercenary activities in areas of ongoing armed conflicts and in future conflicts after the adoption of this Resolution, and the threat they pose to the integrity of and respect for the constitutional order of sovereign States, to international peace and security, and to human rights and international humanitarian law;
13. *Also condemns* violations of international humanitarian law and of human rights by foreign fighters, including those hired by private military and security companies, and the threat they pose to the integrity of and respect for the constitutional order of sovereign States, to international peace and security, and to human rights and international humanitarian law;
14. *Calls upon* States to hold liable those who hire private military and security companies, such as governmental officials, whether they are military commanders or civilian superiors, as well as executives of private military and security companies, for crimes under international law committed by foreign fighters hired by such companies and under their effective authority and control, as a result of their failure to properly exercise control over such foreign fighters in accordance with international law;
15. *Also calls upon* States to introduce measures enabling them to monitor the activities of private military and security companies that are carried out not only on their territory but, with respect to their national companies, activities that are carried out in other countries;
16. *Further calls upon* States to take special measures to protect women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence in situations of armed conflict, and address accountability gaps and impunity as regards criminal prosecution for sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by mercenaries, foreign fighters, including private military and security company employees, and of all those that sponsor them;
17. *Condemns* any form of impunity granted to perpetrators of violations of international law as part of their mercenary activities and to those responsible for the use, recruitment, financing and training of mercenaries, and urges all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law, to bring them, without discrimination, to justice;

18. *Also condemns* any form of impunity granted to executives of private military and security companies involved in violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, and urges all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law, to bring them, without discrimination, to justice;
19. *Further condemns* any form of impunity granted to foreign fighters and to those responsible for the use, recruitment, financing and training of foreign fighters for their violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, and urges all States, in accordance with their obligations under international law, to bring them, without discrimination, to justice;
20. *Calls upon* parliaments, in accordance with international law, to cooperate closely with the objective of bringing to justice those accused of mercenary activities, as well as those who are foreign fighters, including executives of private military and security companies, who have committed violations of international humanitarian law or of human rights, of holding them accountable and having them tried by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal, in compliance with international human rights standards and international humanitarian law;
21. *Also calls upon* parliaments to adopt clear and precise legislation to strengthen access to full effective legal assistance, support and remedies for victims of violations of international law committed by mercenaries, foreign fighters and private military and security company employees;
22. *Decides* to remain seized of this matter.



## The role of fair and free trade and investment in achieving the SDGs, especially regarding economic equality, sustainable infrastructure, industrialization and innovation

### *Resolution adopted unanimously by the 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly (Doha, 10 April 2019)*

The 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

*Noting* that in September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/L.1) and that the Agenda includes 17 ambitious goals and 169 accompanying targets integrating economic, social and environmental imperatives into a framework designed to guide government action through to 2030,

*Recognizing* that the rules and forms of trade and investment will influence the successful pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and that conducting trade on a fair and free basis in a predictable and congenial business environment will deliver sustainable and equitable outcomes, it follows that parliaments should play a key role in working to that end, and in measuring and communicating that progress,

*Acknowledging* the work of the IPU in examining the role trade and investment can play in sustainable development, including at the 112<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly (Manila, 2005) which noted "the role of parliaments in establishing innovative international financing and trading mechanisms to address the problem of debt and achieve the Millennium Development Goals", and, more recently, the 128<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly (Quito, 2013) which called on "parliamentarians and the IPU to play a pivotal role in advocating for fair trade as a means of ensuring sustainable development",

*Also acknowledging* the resolution adopted at the 136<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly (Dhaka, 2017) stressing the importance of women's financial inclusion for the achievement of the SDGs,

*Taking into account* the specific trade-related targets within the SDGs, namely: Target 17.10, "Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda"; Target 17.11, "Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020"; and Target 17.12, "Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access",

*Referring* to rules and standards for responsible business conduct, such as the OECD *Guidelines for multinational enterprises* and the UN *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* unanimously endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011,

*Being mindful* that, in addition to the specifically trade-related targets, there is an array of results of other targets that will be influenced by international trade and investment, including: Target 8.2, "Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high value added and labour intensive sectors"; Target 8.A, "Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries"; Target 9.3, "Increase the access of small scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets"; and Target 10.A, "Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization agreements",

*Noting* the ratification of the Trade Facilitation Agreement of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the full implementation of which the WTO estimates could add half a percentage point to global annual Gross Domestic Product, with gains likely to accrue disproportionately to developing countries in particular, including to least developed countries,

*Paying due regard* to the work of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), especially the six-stage action plan for investing in the SDGs/2030 Agenda contained in the 2017 publication *Mobilizing investment for the Sustainable Development Goals*, and the 2015 publication *Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development*,

*Noting* the value that trade has for increasing the social and economic empowerment and participation of women in the economy, including women's entrepreneurship,

*Recognizing* that, as a global community, we need to change production and consumption patterns to reduce resource consumption, greenhouse gas emissions and environmental damage, with special regard to water resources, and that, on that basis, a focus on improving fair and sustainable trade does not contradict the objectives of reducing waste and preventing resource depletion and greenhouse gas emissions, and does not underrate the benefits of circular economies,

*Noting* that, while negotiating, signing and consenting to trade and investment arrangements is often the prerogative of the executive, parliaments have an important role to play in ensuring that trade liberalization leads to inclusive domestic growth and poverty reduction through policies that promote market access for all and the broad sharing of the benefits of trade,

*Mindful* that global trade might replicate and even reinforce the developmental status quo and existing inequalities, including gender inequalities, and recognizing that the vertical integration of manufacturing and supply chains by multinational corporations might reduce competition and consign less developed nations to lower value-added and primary production activities,

*Acknowledging* the concerns that communities have about the impact of globalization in terms of workforce displacement and other harmful distortionary effects, especially in subsistence industries like agriculture, and noting the potential for such concerns, if unaddressed, to create political pressure that has the tendency to lead to the unhelpful practice of isolationism, chauvinism and nativism,

1. *Reaffirms* the vital importance of a rules-based, transparent, equitable and non-discriminatory multilateral approach to trade and investment centred on the WTO and arbitration mechanisms that seek to deliver fair and sustainable development outcomes, especially as outlined in the broad goals and specific targets contained within the SDGs/2030 Agenda;
2. *Also reaffirms* the contribution that fair, free and sustainable trade, and properly regulated foreign investment, can lead to reducing poverty, inequality, instability and conflict, to building economic capacity, self-sufficiency, international cooperation and peace, and to fighting global warming;
3. *Underlines* the importance of integrating sustainable consumption and production into trade and investment legal frameworks, policies and regulations as a means to make progress towards sustainable development;
4. *Calls on* parliaments to address women's underrepresentation in the economy, especially in the technology, finance and trade sectors, through the education of girls, gender-responsive education and training, and affirmative action policies, and to ensure women's participation in decision-making in these sectors;
5. *Supports* the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) as a partnership between least developed countries, international agencies, donors and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), especially the work to create a framework for mainstreaming trade into national development strategies at the three principal levels of policy, institutions and resourcing;
6. *Encourages* parliaments to ensure that Aid for Trade funding is provided and applied to support genuine economic development and trade in developing nations, especially for least developed countries, through various channels including the EIF, and that such funding has regard to the initiatives within the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) approach adopted by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG);

7. *Urges* the inclusion within trade arrangements of standards for responsible business conduct in general and, more specifically, in relation to workers' rights and workplace health and safety matters, and the inclusion of standards in relation to environmental protection and the fight against global warming and in favour of human rights, and calls for the wider application of such standards in future with effective compliance mechanisms and a gender-responsive focus, including on fair working conditions for women and equal pay;
8. *Underlines* that these standards for responsible business conduct should be implemented throughout the entire value chain;
9. *Calls on* parliaments to see to it that environment and climate-change aspects are duly taken into account in international trade policies, with particular focus on measures aimed at removing obstacles to market access for green products and services;
10. *Also calls on* parliaments to be particularly mindful of government programmes so as to continue to identify concrete solutions that will remove barriers to trade and investment in renewable energy;
11. *Further calls on* parliaments to task their respective governments to conduct a periodic review of existing national trade and investment arrangements, and to address any insufficient alignment in present arrangements between trade and investment, industrial policy, and sustainable development;
12. *Also calls on* parliaments to ensure that trade-related domestic legal and regulatory systems are transparent, efficient and accessible to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, including through the implementation of the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement;
13. *Also calls on* individual members of parliament to adopt one or more SDGs and to use their adopted SDG(s) as a guideline in their parliamentary work, promoting the implementation of the goals and preventing policy incoherencies;
14. *Encourages* parliaments to take account of emerging concerns about investor-state dispute resolution clauses, whose purpose is to allow foreign companies to claim compensation for damages resulting from changes in national laws and policies, and of ongoing efforts to reform investor-state dispute resolution, safeguarding the right to regulate in the interest of public health, environmental protection and human rights, while providing effective protection for responsible foreign investment;
15. *Urges* parliaments and governments to focus on the delivery of infrastructure and digital technology that can unlock trade opportunities in developing countries, and allow existing industries to graduate towards higher value-added production, rather than simply facilitate the export of lower-value resources for incorporation into a value chain that may reinforce current disparities;
16. *Calls on* parliaments to examine the means by which infrastructure projects are planned and assessed at the national, regional and local level, in consultation with concerned communities, including women, with a view to ensuring that those projects are of sufficient quality, aligned with a set of priorities that includes formal reference to the SDGs, and are of benefit to everyone, particularly rural women;
17. *Underscores* the need to allocate more resources for quality education in order to increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship, as a means of fostering industrial development and innovation;
18. *Calls on* parliaments to ensure an enabling legislative framework and the necessary support for government programmes to deliver effective digital communication and finance infrastructure, noting that e-commerce and access to finance and internationally competitive communication technology is just as important as traditional forms of "hard" infrastructure, and is key to unlocking development potential in least developed countries and to addressing gender gaps in access to digital communication and financial services;

19. *Also calls on* parliaments to stimulate relevant parties to take a key interest in sector-specific foreign direct investment allocation, especially in sectors that have the propensity to reduce poverty and economic hardship, as enshrined in the SDGs/2030 Agenda;
20. *Urges* parliaments to ensure that legislative and policy frameworks recognize and seek to alleviate the barriers that women, youth and vulnerable communities face in accessing markets and benefitting from trade liberalization, with the goal of empowering these groups and achieving fair and equitable outcomes;
21. *Also urges* parliaments to enact relevant legislation and policy frameworks to enable small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to enter the international supply chain by creating a supportive business environment for SMEs and building their human, technical and financial capacities so that they can understand policies and operations in global supply chains and respond profitably to their requirements;
22. *Calls on* parliaments to take considerable interest in the soundness of the financial systems of all countries, since effective and efficient industrialization, innovation and sustainable infrastructure are, to a large extent, premised on sound and resilient financial systems;
23. *Urges* parliaments to promote legislation and policies that comprehensively address the key drivers of export diversification, whose role is crucial in transforming economies and achieving the SDGs, particularly in developing countries in Africa and in least developed countries; and in this regard, invites parliaments to focus on building productive capacities, increasing the share of manufacturing value-added and diversifying the structure of domestic production, as well as on infrastructure development encompassing transportation, ICT and energy, particularly renewable energy.

**Call for urgent international action to support  
Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe hit by Cyclone Idai**

**Results of the roll-call vote on the request of the delegation of the Netherlands  
for the inclusion of an emergency item**

**R e s u l t s**

Affirmative votes.....	1,011	Total of affirmative and negative votes ..	1,160
Negative votes .....	149	Two-thirds majority.....	773
Abstentions .....	99		

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Afghanistan	Absent			Haiti	Absent			Philippines	Absent		
Albania	Absent			Hungary	13			Poland	15		
Angola	14			Iceland	10			Portugal	13		
Argentina	Absent			India	20			Qatar		11	
Armenia	Absent			Indonesia		22		Republic of Korea	17		
Austria	10			Iran (Islamic Republic of)		19		Republic of Moldova	Absent		
Azerbaijan	Absent			Iraq	9		6	Romania	14		
Bangladesh			20	Ireland	7		4	Russian Federation	20		
Belarus	Absent			Italy	17			Rwanda	12		
Belgium	13			Japan	20			Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	10		
Benin	Absent			Jordan		12		Samoa	Absent		
Bhutan	10			Kazakhstan	Absent			San Marino	10		
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)			10	Kenya	15			Sao Tome and Principe	10		
Botswana	11			Kuwait		11		Senegal			10
Brazil	22			Kyrgyzstan	Absent			Serbia	12		
Bulgaria	Absent			Lao People's Dem. Republic	12			Seychelles	10		
Burkina Faso	13			Latvia	11			Sierra Leone	10		
Burundi	12			Lebanon		11		Singapore	12		
Cabo Verde	10			Lesotho	11			Slovenia	11		
Cambodia	6		7	Liechtenstein	8			Somalia	13		
Cameroon	Absent			Luxembourg	8			South Sudan	Absent		
Canada	15			Malawi	Absent			Spain	Absent		
Central African Republic	10			Malaysia	10			Sri Lanka	Absent		
Chile	13			Maldives	Absent			Sudan			15
China	23			Mali	13			Suriname	8		2
Costa Rica	Absent			Malta	Absent			Sweden	13		
Côte d'Ivoire	Absent			Marshall Islands	10			Switzerland	12		
Croatia	11			Mexico	20			Tajikistan	Absent		
Cuba	Absent			Micronesia (Fed. States of)	8			Thailand	18		
Cyprus	3		7	Monaco	Absent			Timor-Leste	11		
Czech Republic	13			Mongolia	Absent			Tonga	10		
Denmark	Absent			Morocco	13			Trinidad & Tobago	Absent		
Djibouti			10	Mozambique	13			Tunisia		13	
Ecuador	Absent			Myanmar	17			Turkey		18	
El Salvador		10		Namibia	11			Turkmenistan	Absent		
Estonia	11			Nepal	Absent			Uganda	15		
Eswatini	11			Netherlands	13			Ukraine	Absent		
Ethiopia	Absent			New Zealand	11			United Kingdom	18		
Fiji	11			Nicaragua			8	United Republic of Tanzania	Absent		
Finland	12			Niger	Absent			Uruguay	Absent		
France	18			Nigeria	20			Uzbekistan	Absent		
Gabon	Absent			North Macedonia	Absent			Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep. of)	15		
Gambia (The)	Absent			Norway	12			Viet Nam	19		
Georgia	Absent			Oman		11		Zambia	13		
Germany	19			Pakistan	Absent			Zimbabwe	13		
Ghana	10			Palestine		11					
Greece	13			Panama	Absent						
Guatemala	Absent			Paraguay	Absent						
Guinea-Bissau	11			Peru	Absent						

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.

**Ensuring international protection of Palestinian people,  
rejecting Israeli authority over the occupied Golan Heights, promoting the values of peaceful  
coexistence among people and religions and combatting all forms of racism and intolerance**

**Results of the roll-call vote on the request of the delegations of  
Indonesia, Kuwait, Morocco and Turkey for the inclusion of an emergency item**

**R e s u l t s**

Affirmative votes .....	491	Total of affirmative and negative votes ...	869
Negative votes .....	378	Two-thirds majority .....	579
Abstentions .....	390		

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Afghanistan		Absent		Haiti		Absent		Philippines		Absent	
Albania		Absent		Hungary		13		Poland	5		10
Angola		14		Iceland			10	Portugal		6	7
Argentina		Absent		India			20	Qatar	11		
Armenia		Absent		Indonesia	22			Republic of Korea			17
Austria		10		Iran (Islamic Republic of)	19			Republic of Moldova		Absent	
Azerbaijan		Absent		Iraq	15			Romania			14
Bangladesh	20			Ireland	11			Russian Federation	20		
Belarus		Absent		Italy		17		Rwanda			12
Belgium		13		Japan		20		Saint Vincent and the Grenadines			10
Benin		Absent		Jordan	12			Samoa		Absent	
Bhutan			10	Kazakhstan		Absent		San Marino		10	
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	10			Kenya			15	Sao Tome and Principe	3	7	
Botswana			11	Kuwait	11			Senegal	10		
Brazil			22	Kyrgyzstan		Absent		Serbia			12
Bulgaria		Absent		Lao People's Dem. Republic	6		6	Seychelles		10	
Burkina Faso			13	Latvia		11		Sierra Leone	10		
Burundi	12			Lebanon	11			Singapore	6		6
Cabo Verde			10	Lesotho			11	Slovenia		11	
Cambodia			13	Liechtenstein		8		Somalia	13		
Cameroon		Absent		Luxembourg		8		South Sudan		Absent	
Canada		15		Malawi		Absent		Spain		Absent	
Central African Republic	10			Malaysia	10			Sri Lanka		Absent	
Chile	8		5	Maldives		Absent		Sudan	15		
China	23			Mali			13	Suriname	5		5
Costa Rica		Absent		Malta		Absent		Sweden		13	
Côte d'Ivoire		Absent		Marshall Islands		10		Switzerland		12	
Croatia		11		Mexico	20			Tajikistan		Absent	
Cuba		Absent		Micronesia (Fed. States of)		8		Thailand	9		9
Cyprus	6		4	Monaco		Absent		Timor-Leste			11
Czech Republic		13		Mongolia		Absent		Tonga			10
Denmark		Absent		Morocco	13			Trinidad & Tobago		Absent	
Djibouti	10			Mozambique			13	Tunisia	13		
Ecuador		Absent		Myanmar			17	Turkey	18		
El Salvador	10			Namibia		11		Turkmenistan		Absent	
Estonia		11		Nepal		Absent		Uganda			15
Eswatini			11	Netherlands		13		Ukraine		Absent	
Ethiopia		Absent		New Zealand			11	United Kingdom		18	
Fiji	11			Nicaragua	8			United Republic of Tanzania		Absent	
Finland		12		Niger		Absent		Uruguay		Absent	
France		18		Nigeria	20			Uzbekistan		Absent	
Gabon		Absent		North Macedonia		Absent		Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep. of)	5		10
Gambia (The)		Absent		Norway		12		Viet Nam	19		
Georgia		Absent		Oman	11			Zambia			13
Germany		19		Pakistan		Absent		Zimbabwe		13	
Ghana			10	Palestine	11						
Greece	9		4	Panama		Absent					
Guatemala		Absent		Paraguay		Absent					
Guinea-Bissau		11		Peru		Absent					

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.



## Call for urgent international action to support Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe hit by Cyclone Idai

*Resolution adopted by consensus\* by the 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly  
(Doha, 9 April 2019)*

The 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

*Deeply concerned* about the humanitarian catastrophe in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe since Cyclone Idai hit these countries causing widespread flooding through the region, killing many people, leaving thousands missing or injured, destroying homes, affecting more than a million lives, displacing hundreds of thousands of people and causing a rising death toll,

*Considering* that it is too early to gauge the magnitude of the devastation, that the number of victims is expected to rise, and that the World Health Organization has warned of a "second disaster" if potentially lethal waterborne diseases like cholera spread in the devastated region,

*Noting* that few countries could adequately respond to a disaster of this magnitude (the World Meteorological Organization projects that Idai will be among the worst weather-related disasters in the southern hemisphere), and certainly not three of the world's poorest countries, let alone Mozambique, which are in the midst of a debt crisis and whose annual GDP is around US\$ 12 billion,

*Acknowledging* that these countries were already vulnerable to disaster because of long lasting droughts and failed rains, due to changing weather conditions linked to global warming that has led to extreme rainfall and rising sea-levels and triggered deadly storms, such as Cyclone Idai,

*Welcoming* the measures and efforts taken by countries and aid organizations providing relief, food, temporary shelters, water-treatment devices and medicines, and knowing that widespread devastation and poor infrastructure hamper rescue and humanitarian operations from reaching all affected people,

*Referring* to the UN Secretary-General's request for a quick response from the international community to the UN flash appeal issued on 25 March 2019 for US\$ 282 million of emergency aid to Mozambique for a three-month period, and to the revised appeals for Zimbabwe and Malawi,

*Noting* the vulnerability of women, children, people with disabilities and the elderly in this situation, and also noting the risks of children in the aftermath of the cyclone being sold into slavery by human traffickers or forced into early marriage by families struggling to survive,

*Acknowledging* that extreme weather events are most likely to become more frequent, severe, devastating and widespread and could be prevented or moderated by actions from the international community today,

*Recalling* the Paris Agreement that entered into force on 4 November 2016, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015), which provide the foundation for sustainable, low-carbon and resilient development under a changing climate,

*Looking forward* to the UN Climate Summit in September 2019 as an important opportunity to raise ambition and establish plans for achieving the Paris Agreement goals,

*Referring* to the IPU's own commitments to advance the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 (Hanoi Declaration 2015), to ensure parliaments hold governments to account in implementing effective measures to achieve these goals while leaving no one behind, in particular Goal 6 on clean water and sanitation, Goal 3 on good health and well-being, and Goal 7 on affordable and clean energy, and acknowledging that these disasters further disadvantage the affected countries' abilities to achieve the SDGs,

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\* The delegation of Turkey expressed a reservation on preambular paragraph 10 and operative paragraph 3.

1. *Calls on* parliamentarians to urge their governments that have not already done so to support the UN flash appeals for Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe, according to the values of the United Nations, and to contribute in an appropriate manner by ensuring that adequate human and financial resources are dedicated to the countries concerned;
2. *Also calls on* the United Nations, aid organizations and the international community to remain focused on the most vulnerable in the flood-ravaged areas without clean water, especially women, children, people with disabilities and the elderly, to support them in rebuilding their livelihoods and strengthening their capacity to care for their families, and to pay special attention to the needs of children, girls, women and other vulnerable groups at risk of kidnapping, trafficking and sexual exploitation;
3. *Urges* all parties, whether or not they have signed the Paris Agreement, to do their utmost to achieve its goals and to present their progress and future ambitions at the UN Climate Summit in September 2019 as well as their long-term climate changes to the United Nations in the course of 2020, and particularly urges parties to invest in mitigation and adaptation across vulnerable countries;
4. *Also urges* high-income economies to provide more finance, technical and capacity-building assistance to middle and low-income economies to help them better cope with climate change;
5. *Calls upon* national parliaments to urge their governments to take a leading role and effective measures to counter global warming, raise awareness about the effects of climate change and adopt a more sustainable way of living;
6. *Urges* the global community, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, to support the affected countries in developing comprehensive national resilience mechanisms, strengthening disaster risk reduction and prevention, and enhancing disaster preparedness for effective responses, and to "build back better" in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction, and calls on the governments of the countries concerned to also invest in risk-reduction measures and societal resilience;
7. *Also urges* the global community, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) and together with governments and the private sector in disaster-prone countries, to invest in climate-resilient development programmes related to key livelihood security topics of people living in high-risk areas, with a focus on SDGs 1 (poverty eradication), 2 (food security), 3 (health), 5 (gender equality), 6 (water and sanitation), 7 (access to affordable energy), 8 (good jobs), 11 (resilient communities) and 13 (climate action);
8. *Calls on* IPU parliamentarians to work with government in partnership with the private sector to gradually move towards clean and renewable energy.

## Report of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

*Noted by the 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly  
(Geneva, 9 April 2019)*

### Debate on follow-up to previous IPU resolutions

The debate took place on Monday 8 April. Mr. A. Niyongabo (Burundi) took the chair for the first part of the session, which focused on parliamentary action to follow up on three resolutions adopted by the IPU in recent years:

- 2015: *Democracy in the digital era and the threat to privacy and individual freedoms*
- 2013: *The use of media, including social media, to enhance citizen engagement and democracy*
- 2009: *Freedom of expression and the right to information.*

Fifteen delegates shared information about action taken in their parliaments, such as the adoption of new legislation. They also discussed further perspectives on how the issues have evolved since the resolutions were adopted. Delegates argued that the big Internet platforms needed to work closely with governments to prevent, or limit, misuse of those platforms. Governments, meanwhile, needed to continue to build public confidence by acting with full transparency and avoiding any suspicion of trying to manipulate digital spaces out of political interest. Mr. Niyangabo closed the first part of the session by drawing attention to the newly published IPU handbook *Freedom of expression for parliaments and their members: Importance and scope of protection*, and encouraged all delegates to take inspiration from the good practices outlined in the publication.

Committee Vice-President Ms. A. Gerkens (Netherlands) took the chair for the second part of the session, an expert hearing on parliamentary action to combat disinformation and ‘fake news’. The experts were Mr. T. Venturini (France, Centre for Internet and Society, Centre national de la recherche scientifique), Ms. S. Joshi (India, Verification specialist at *Proto* and co-founder of *Khabar Lahariya*, India's only digital rural news network) and Mr. P. Nakov (Principal Scientist, Qatar Computing Research Institute).

Ms. Gerkens questioned the experts about the different facets of disinformation. All concurred that falsified information had existed since long before the creation of digital media. Many of the laws needed to fight disinformation were already in place, such as laws on defamation, hate speech and the traditional media. However the advent of digital media had created two significantly new dimensions. Firstly, there were the services provided by the major advertising platforms (Google, Facebook etc) to micro-target audiences based on a wide range of characteristics. That was made possible by the huge amount of data that those platforms gathered about their users. Secondly, there was the way in which social media platforms made it easy to share content at high speed and with an unlimited number of people. These developments provided the context in which disinformation could spread further and faster than ever before.

Mr. Venturini argued that ‘junk news’ was a better term than ‘fake news’. Using the analogy with ‘junk food’, junk news could be addictive. Users knew that it might not be good or accurate, but they got enjoyment and satisfaction from consuming and sharing it. Ms. Joshi described the way misinformation spread among rural communities in India, and the influence it can have. Election times were particularly sensitive. Political actors were building networks of thousands of WhatsApp groups, managed by community leaders. Those groups were a powerful way to shape public opinion in villages and communities. Steps had been taken to introduce a fact-checking service to verify information distributed via these WhatsApp groups, but the number of messages vastly exceeded the capacity to check all information for accuracy.

Mr. Nakov noted that junk news was being used as a political weapon. Powerful actors used disinformation, particularly around elections. The goal might not always be to directly influence the outcome of an election. Other possible goals included creating conflict in society by exacerbating existing tensions, such as along religious, racial or cultural lines. At the same time, the functioning of social media platforms encouraged users to adopt extreme opinions, as these were the most likely to attract attention from journalists and other users. That tended to damage the quality of dialogue overall.

Nine delegates asked questions and made observations on the dangers of disinformation and junk news. A range of potential solutions emerged from the discussion. In the long term, actions to increase media literacy among children, but also throughout peoples' lives, would improve awareness and lower the risks. In the short term, parliamentarians could increase pressure on the social media platforms to engage seriously with the problem of disinformation. Parliamentary inquiries could bring more information into the public domain. Regulation would likely become necessary, possibly at a regional or international level. Platforms had to make available for public scrutiny the algorithms they used to determine what content was shown to users, similar to the requirement for pharmaceutical companies to test new drugs before they could be released to the market. Quality journalism was part of the solution and should be encouraged.

Ultimately, it would be desirable for digital platforms to change their model, moving from maximizing user attention (and therefore advertising revenue) to maximizing quality content. The issue of disinformation was complex, and required a multi-dimensional response. Parliaments should be cautious about legislating too quickly, which could potentially generate other problems, including through legislation that placed undue limits on the freedom of expression. While the task could seem overwhelming, it had been observed in recent months that public pressure had led to increased cooperation between digital platforms and governments. It was important to keep that pressure up.

**Preparatory debate on the next resolution: *Achieving Universal Health Coverage by 2030: The role of parliaments in ensuring the right to health***

The debate took place on Tuesday 9 April with the Committee Vice-President Ms. A. Gerken (Netherlands) in the chair. The Committee endorsed the proposal of the IPU President to appoint Ms. M. Carvalho (Brazil) as co-Rapporteur for the next resolution, alongside Mr. H. Millat (Bangladesh) and Mr. C. Lohr (Switzerland). The debate was introduced by the three Rapporteurs as well as Mr. Z. Mirza, Director, Health System Development (Regional Office for Eastern Mediterranean, World Health Organization) and Ms. V. Dagnimisom Koutou, Regional Advocacy Advisor for the Sahel (Save the Children).

The Rapporteurs and panellists outlined that universal health coverage (UHC) was both a human right and a development issue. It was a political choice, and the smart thing to do. It enhanced human capital and socioeconomic welfare. UHC was understood as ensuring that all people and communities could access the vast array of health services they needed, and that those services were of sufficient quality to be effective, while ensuring that using such services did not expose the user to financial hardship. The issue of accessibility and leaving no one behind underpinned the concept of UHC. Financing was at the heart of the UHC debate, and something that should be a priority for parliaments on which to act. The resolution would come at an opportune time to prompt parliamentary action, as its adoption should follow the high-level meeting on UHC at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2019.

During the debate, 33 delegates from all geopolitical groups spoke. Delegates highlighted the need for the provision of people-centered health services without discrimination, including for marginalized and vulnerable groups, whether they were or not they were nationals. UHC had to be comprehensive and include information and prevention. A particular focus must be placed on maternal, newborn and child health, as well as mental health and the preparedness to address sanitary and humanitarian emergencies. Achieving UHC would also require international solidarity and cooperation, while ensuring national ownership of health systems and budgets. Delegates further highlighted that UHC was interconnected with other issues such as extreme poverty and environmental degradation.

The Chair invited all Members to assist the Rapporteurs in drafting the resolution by providing written contributions by the deadline of 20 April 2019.

**Elections**

The Committee elected new members to its Bureau (see page 29).

## Report of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

*Noted by the 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly  
(Doha, 9 April 2019)*

The President of the Committee, Mr. J.C. Romero (Argentina), opened the session.

The summary records of the previous session held at the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly were adopted. The President announced the nomination of Mr. P. Akamba (Uganda) and Mr. U. Nyam-Osoz (Mongolia) to the Bureau. Absent any objection from the floor, the two members were confirmed.

The President set the stage for the session, which was dedicated to a review of the SDGs in view of the July session of the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development. He noted that while some countries were showing considerable progress on some SDGs, the world as a whole was falling behind on implementation and no country was on track to achieve all the goals. It followed that parliaments needed to push harder for implementation through oversight and legislation. The President announced the two panels of the session.

### Panel 1: Parliamentary follow-up on the SDGs

Mr. K. Al Bakkar (Jordan), Mr. A. Rozas (Argentina), and Ms. K. Jabre, Director, Division of Programmes (IPU), presented. Their remarks and the ensuing discussion with participants painted a picture of parliamentary engagement with the SDGs that was promising but still lacking in many important respects. Testimonials were heard from parliamentarians representing Bangladesh, China, Cyprus, Iran (Islamic Republic of), North Macedonia, Tunisia, and Viet Nam.

As a recent IPU survey of 89 parliaments showed, roughly 50 per cent of parliaments had taken some steps to institutionalize the SDGs, such as setting up a dedicated parliamentary body, a coordination mechanism or a system of focal points. Forty-three per cent of parliaments had reported having mainstreamed the SDGs in the work of their committees. Where national multi-stakeholder consultative mechanisms were in place, 42 per cent of parliaments had participated in such mechanisms. Fifty six countries that had participated in the survey had submitted Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) to the HLPF since 2016, 43 per cent of which had consulted their respective parliaments in the preparation of their reports. About half of MPs and their staff had received some kind of SDG training. Overall, these results showed that parliaments were taking the SDGs more seriously than they had taken the previous generation of global goals, the MDGs. Still, within each parliament, many inconsistencies could be found.

In many cases, parliamentary oversight had helped ensure that national budgets and legislation aligned well with national plans for the SDGs. Some parliaments had supported legislative reforms to devolve responsibility for social and environmental policies to regions and municipalities, which could help with citizens' consultations and engagement. In other countries, legislation had been introduced to incentivize public-private partnerships around the SDGs, institute an ombudsman, establish a parliamentary budget office, or make government information more accessible to the public.

A recurring institutional challenge that parliaments faced with regard to SDG implementation was lack of proper data. Some participants noted that, in addition to institutional constraints, many parliaments were contending with a weak economy, growing public debt and unemployment that limited policy space for the SDGs. Conflicts, migrant movements and environmental disasters that were all becoming more frequent because of climate change were forcing policy-makers to divert resources away from the SDGs.

On the plus side, as parliaments worked to make themselves fit for purpose with regard to the SDGs, they had gained oversight capacities that would serve them well in all policy domains and for years to come.

### Panel 2: Thematic discussion on *Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality*

There were presentations from Ms. R. Wijeratne (Sri Lanka), Mr. C. Chauvel (Team Leader, Inclusive Political Processes, Governance and Peacebuilding, UNDP) and Mr. N. Ahmed (Executive Strategy Advisor, Oxfam International). The discussion anticipated the main theme of the HLPF session this year

with a particular focus on governance (SDG 16) and inequality (SDG 10). Interventions were made by Bangladesh, France, Iraq, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Kuwait, Namibia, Oman, Qatar, Samoa, Turkey and Zimbabwe.

Growing inequalities were a leading cause of public disenchantment with politics. A solid majority of the public worldwide believed in representative democracy and in the importance of elections. In practice however, people felt alienated from their own governments. More than ever before parliaments and organizations such as the IPU and UNDP had to work to build effective, inclusive and accountable institutions that people could believe in.

Income and wealth inequality were not a natural phenomenon but the result of bad economic policies over the last forty years. Unbridled deregulation and liberalization had made it easier for the rich to get richer and, in the process, to gain political influence. From that position of power, moneyed elites had pursued self-interested policies such as reducing tax rates for the wealthy and cutting budgets for social programmes, further widening the gap between the *haves* and the *have-nots*.

The good news was that inequality could be reversed with progressive policies to raise wages and ensure the rich paid their fair share. Other ways to spread the wealth and expand opportunity included increasing investment in public goods such as health care and education, particularly for girls, as well as promoting entrepreneurship. Fundamentally, what was needed was a rethink of the economic model where the direct objective was not growth per se but human well-being for all.

Achieving gender equality in social, economic and political spheres should be a top priority for all governments. Gender equality was not just a matter of justice. It was a good policy prescription to make the economy work for everyone.

Some participants noted that inequality between developed and developing countries deserved as much attention as inequality within countries. Development cooperation (aid) had to continue to play a role in levelling the playing field for developing countries. Investment and trade rules that put developing countries at a disadvantage must be changed.

As the session drew to a close, participants were informed of the Parliamentary Forum the IPU will organize at the HLPF on 15 July. Parliamentarians were encouraged to join their national delegations to the HLPF and to respond to the IPU survey on their engagement in national reviews.



## **IPU Presidential Statement on Parliamentary Diplomacy**

*Endorsed by the IPU Governing Council at its 204<sup>th</sup> session  
(Doha, 10 April 2019)*

The IPU was founded on the importance of parliamentary diplomacy and dialogue. Parliamentary diplomacy is an essential part of international cooperation, helping to build bridges between countries and peoples, and seeking to contribute a parliamentary perspective to global governance as well as to the promotion of peace.

The use of political sanctions against parliamentarians legally representing their national parliaments and their people is unacceptable.

We believe in the value of open and unrestricted dialogue between parliamentarians from all over the world. IPU Assemblies and official meetings are essential forums to resolve differences through meaningful exchange. All parliamentarians from IPU Member Parliaments should be allowed to attend IPU Assemblies and other inter-parliamentary forums, unhindered by any restrictions or sanctions. The ultimate goal of the IPU is to achieve peace.

## **IPU Presidential Statement on the Golan Heights**

*Endorsed by the IPU Governing Council at its 204<sup>th</sup> session  
(Doha, 10 April 2019)*

The IPU stands for the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war. The IPU was founded 130 years ago on the values of peace and non-use of force in international relations.

We condemn the recent US recognition of the Golan Heights as part of Israel. We are convinced that the US announcement moves the world further away from achieving a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

The US recognition of the Golan Heights runs counter to UN Security Council resolution 497, which, inter alia, discourages strongly any attempt by Israel to "impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights" and considers such attempts as "null and void and without international legal effect".

On behalf of the IPU, I launch a strong appeal for all parties to the conflict in the Middle East to refrain from any unilateral action that would fan the flames of conflict. We, as parliaments or parliamentarians, should resolve to work ever more robustly to contribute to peace through genuine dialogue.

## Cooperation with the United Nations system

List of activities undertaken by the IPU from 15 September 2018  
to 15 March 2019

Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 204<sup>th</sup> session  
(Doha, 10 April 2019)

### Democracy and Human Rights

The IPU completed a two-year preparatory process for the Global Compact for Migration with a parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the UN Intergovernmental Conference held in Marrakesh, Morocco, on 10 and 11 December. Organized in cooperation with the Parliament of Morocco, the parliamentary meeting was held in Rabat on 6 and 7 December 2018. It concluded with a political declaration whereby parliamentarians pledged to help implement the Global Compact by promoting fact-based political discourse, devising adequate policies and legislation, exercising parliamentary scrutiny of such policies and legislation, and promoting regional and international dialogue.

On 18 September, the IPU contributed to a side event convened by the Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the United Nations Office in Geneva in the context of the 39<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Human Rights Council. The event focused on the impact of corruption on the full enjoyment of human rights at all levels. This provided an opportunity to share with the broader UN community in Geneva the main findings of the recent IPU-UNDP Global Parliamentary Report on Oversight.

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and the IPU continued their project of assistance to the Parliament of Myanmar. The two organizations also continued their collaboration in support of the parliaments of Djibouti, Georgia, and Vanuatu.

In February 2019, the IPU and UNDP began talks on ways to strengthen synergies between the Organization's parliamentary strengthening programmes in the light of UNDP's on-going restructuring. The question of maintaining a focal point for parliaments and the IPU at UNDP New York headquarters was also discussed. As part of this process it was decided that the Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations would need to be assessed through a yearly progress report.

The IPU worked closely with UNDP in 2018 to prepare [metadata that describes the methodology for measuring SDG indicator 16.7.1](#), "Proportions of positions (by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service, and judiciary) compared to national distributions". The IPU-UNDP metadata focuses exclusively on national legislatures. At a meeting of the UN Inter-Agency and Expert Group on the SDG Indicators in Stockholm from 5 to 8 November 2018, the assembled representatives of national statistical commissions approved the proposed methodology, reclassified this indicator from Tier III to Tier II status, and agreed to make the IPU custodian of the part of the indicator relating to national legislatures [SDG16.7.1(a)].

On 22 and 23 November 2018, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) organized with IPU's support the second session of the UN Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law. The Forum was chaired by the IPU Secretary General and was attended by government officials, parliamentarians, civil society representatives and academia. It identified good examples of parliamentary engagement on human rights, existing and potential challenges for parliaments in the area of human rights and ways to address them as well as further avenues for cooperation between the UN and parliaments.

### Gender equality

On 25 September 2018, the IPU Secretary General addressed a meeting entitled *Levelling the Law for Women and Girls by 2030*. The meeting was organized by the UN High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment, UN Women and Global Citizens. On the 28 September, the IPU Secretary General participated in the meeting *Gender Responsive Assemblies: An agenda for concrete action* hosted by the IPU in collaboration with the International Gender Champions, a UN-related initiative, where the *Gender Responsive Assemblies Toolkit* was launched. The IPU contributed to the design and drafting of the Handbook.

On 8 October 2018, in New York, the IPU participated in a meeting convened by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, the OHCHR, UN Women, and the Permanent Missions of Canada and Switzerland on the theme *Ending violence against women in politics*.

On 19 October 2018, in Geneva, the IPU organized a Workshop on the role of parliamentarians in ensuring implementation of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), focusing on the economic empowerment of women. The event brought together representatives from 15 parliaments from Africa, the Americas, the Arab region and the Pacific, who interacted with international experts, including CEDAW members and a UN Women representative.

On 28 February 2019, the IPU took part in an event organized by UN Women in Lebanon, focusing on the issue of violence against women in politics. The head of IPU's Gender Partnership Programme spoke at the event to present the findings of IPU's research on violence against women in parliament.

On 13 March 2019, the IPU and UN Women organized the regular parliamentary meeting at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York. The meeting focused on the main theme of the Commission, namely social protection, public services and infrastructure delivery for women and girls. The results of the meeting were presented to the CSW as an official IPU contribution. In addition, the IPU and various partners organized three side events of the CSW on violence against women, women in decision-making, and women in politics. On 12 March, parliamentarians also took part in the special High Level Event of the President of the General Assembly entitled *Women in Power*.

On 12 March the new IPU-UN Women World Map *Women in Politics: 2019* was released at a press conference at UN Headquarters in New York. The President of the IPU was among the presenters and fielded questions from the UN correspondents.

The IPU pursued its close collaboration with the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee). It briefed the CEDAW Committee at its October 2018 and February 2019 sessions on the state of women's political participation and of parliamentary engagement with CEDAW as regards the countries under review. It also held meetings with Committee members as part of the joint CEDAW-IPU Working Group. On 8 March 2019, the IPU and the CEDAW Committee issued a joint statement on the importance of achieving gender parity as a means to fulfil CEDAW and the Sustainable Development Goals.

In addition, several national activities carried out by the IPU included members of the CEDAW Committee, and aimed to advance national-level implementation of the Convention through the work of parliament. Such national seminars were held in Kenya and Djibouti in November 2018 and in Turkey in December 2018.

The IPU also pursued its programmatic collaboration with UN Women, in particular through joint IPU-UN Women projects of technical support to the parliaments of Turkey and Tanzania, focusing on gender equality and women's political empowerment.

At the regional level, the IPU, the Arab IPU and the Egyptian House of Representatives held a regional seminar on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and gender equality in Egypt in September 2018. Speakers included representatives from UN Women, UNDP and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

### **Youth empowerment**

On 14-15 December 2018, the IPU and the Parliament of Azerbaijan organized the 5<sup>th</sup> Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Baku on the theme *Promoting sustainability, protecting the interests of future generations*. The Conference explored three subtopics: the role of youth in environmental protection; sustainable consumption and production; and prioritizing youth empowerment. Representatives from the International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UNDP participated as panellists and actively contributed to the debates. Attended by around 130 young MPs from 43 countries, the Conference was an opportunity for the young MPs to share views and experiences and to reflect together on innovative solutions for the prosperity and well-being of future generations.

### **International peace and security**

On 8 October 2018, the IPU participated in the Mandela Peace Summit—a special event of the UN General Assembly. The IPU Permanent Observer at the UN delivered a speech underscoring the role of parliamentarians in creating the political conditions for peace.

The 2019 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, a joint event of the IPU and the United Nations, was held on 21 and 22 February in New York. Entitled *Emerging challenges to multilateralism: A parliamentary response*, the hearing was designed partly as a contribution to on-going UN reforms,

many of which focus particularly on the UN's conflict prevention and peacekeeping mandate. More broadly, the hearing delved into the reasons for growing scepticism in multilateralism and how to address it. The President of the General Assembly, the co-convener, spoke at the opening and closing sessions along with the President of the IPU. The UN Secretary-General also addressed the parliamentarians in a special segment of the Hearing. Over 200 parliamentarians were in attendance.

From 26 to 28 February the IPU in cooperation with the House of Representatives of Egypt, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) held a Regional Conference for the Middle East and North Africa entitled *The role of parliamentarians in addressing the threat of foreign terrorist fighters and associated challenges*. Attended by high-level delegations from the entire region, the conference generated fruitful discussions on the opportunities and challenges faced by parliaments in countering terrorism and preventing extremism leading to terrorism with a special focus on the threat posed by Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF). This conference was the first in a series of capacity-building activities of the IPU–UN Joint Programme guided by the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG).

Cooperation continued with UNOCT and UNODC towards the implementation of the IPU–UN Joint Programme—supported by a substantial financial contribution from the United Nations—in the area of counter-terrorism (the focus being on addressing the root causes) and the prevention of violent extremism. In order to institutionalize the cooperation between the three institutions, an IPU-UNOCT-UNODC Memorandum of Understanding is expected to be signed by the principals of the three organizations in the coming months.

The IPU, together with the Security Council 1540 Committee and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) pursued consultations with a view to convening a new regional meeting on the implementation of UNSC resolution 1540 targeting parliaments of the Pacific region. This event will aim to raise awareness of the resolution among parliamentarians, encourage an exchange of experiences and facilitate the exchange of good legislative and regulatory practices.

Discussions were held with the Director General of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) and the President of the United Nations Conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons (the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations) for the IPU to assist in promoting the ratification of both the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Strategies for these promotion campaigns are being discussed.

On 15 October 2018, during the 139<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, the IPU Standing Committee on Peace and International Security organized a panel discussion to raise awareness on the United Nations Secretary-General's new disarmament agenda "Securing our Common Future". The panel featured officials from UNODA, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the President of the Arms Trade Treaty Conference of States Parties. Consultations are under way for follow-up to the panel, in the form of a workshop on the comprehensive approach to arms control and non-proliferation.

Headed by the President of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs, Senator Juan Carlos Romero of Argentina, an IPU delegation participated in the 8<sup>th</sup> Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) on 19 and 20 November 2018 in New York. The Forum's overarching theme was *Commit2Dialogue: Partnerships for Prevention and Sustaining Peace*. The IPU delegation took the opportunity to meet with the new High Representative of UNAOC, Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos, a former parliamentarian from Spain. The IPU delivered a statement to the Group of Friends of UNAOC.

### **Sustainable development**

The IPU organized a number of regional seminars on achieving the SDGs for parliaments of the following regions: the Middle East and North Africa, Latin America, Commonwealth of Independent States, the Caribbean, the Twelve Plus geopolitical group and East Asia. These events offered a platform for participants to share experiences, identify challenges as well as opportunities and discuss concrete solutions to achieving the SDGs at the national and regional levels. The seminars saw the participation of various UN representatives—mainly from UNDP, UN Women, UN CEDAW Committee, UN ESCWA, UNESCO, UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment)—who participated as panellists in a number of sessions mainly focusing on SDGs implementation, governance, gender equality and education.

From 22 to 24 October, the IPU President and a group of MPs participated in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) World Investment Forum in Geneva. A special side event for parliamentarians was held on the first day of the Forum and provided an opportunity to highlight key questions of SDGs financing. Parliamentarians also participated in a special tripartite dialogue event. The IPU President addressed the opening of the forum and also participated in a Davos-like debate with heads of state, the President of the UN General Assembly, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD and high level experts.

The IPU and the Polish Parliament organized a Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the 24<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties (COP24) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The meeting was attended by some 200 delegates from more than 50 countries. Delegates examined how to put in place the legal frameworks to implement the Paris Agreement and create enabling environments for climate-related investments. They stressed the importance of regular reviews of national commitments on reducing greenhouse gases to ensure that they are in line with the latest scientific knowledge, as well as the monitoring of emissions, and verification of measures taken by governments.

To support parliaments in the national implementation of the Paris Agreement, the IPU and UN Environment launched a project to build the capacity of parliamentarians to help accelerate the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the Nationally Determined Contributions. Four parliaments were selected to benefit from this support in 2019, with the first workshop taking place in the Parliament of Zimbabwe on 8 March 2019.

On 27 September 2018, the IPU President addressed the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Non-communicable diseases. Her intervention built on the input of the IPU Advisory Group on Health at a previous hearing in preparation for the high-level meeting. On 22 February 2019, the WHO, with support from the IPU, held a special briefing on universal health coverage (UHC) for parliamentarians attending the annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations. The briefing was part of the preparations for a High-level Meeting on UHC, scheduled for 23 September, to which the IPU is invited to contribute pursuant to a General Assembly resolution. The IPU Secretary General addressed the meeting which was attended by 40 members of parliament. In addition, the IPU helped disseminate a survey on universal health coverage to parliamentarians whose results will feed into the negotiations for a political declaration for the forthcoming high-level meeting.

On 24 and 25 January 2019, the IPU helped co-organize with the UN ESCWA, UNDP and the Islamic Development Bank Group, the Arab Regional Parliamentary Forum on the 2030 Agenda. The Forum aimed to raise awareness of parliamentarians' role in the implementation, review and follow-up of the SDGs in the Arab region. The Forum focused on ways of reaching out to a wider net of MPs and on how parliaments in the region can exchange best practices on the 2030 Agenda.

In view of the annual session of the UN High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development, to be held from 16 to 19 July 2019, the IPU and the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) discussed upgrading the parliamentary event at the forum from a side event to a special event. This would help raise the visibility of the event and of the role of parliamentarians in the implementation of the SDGs. The annual survey of parliaments of the 51 countries participating in this year's Voluntary National Review was launched on 20 November 2018 with a deadline of 1 June 2019. The IPU also contributed input to one of the UN reports for the HLPF session, on empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality.

On 17 January 2019, the IPU participated as an observer in the first meeting of the reconstituted UN SDG Strategy Hub, which is chaired by the UN Deputy Secretary-General. The Strategy Hub brings together several UN system agencies and departments along with global civil society and private sector actors in an effort to promote the SDGs to the wider public.

The IPU and UNDP continued to support SDG self-assessments in parliaments through the IPU-UNDP SDG Self-Assessment Toolkit. In October, the Parliament of Sri Lanka assessed its capacity for implementing the SDGs and outlined a tailored action plan thanks to the assistance of the IPU and UNDP. During the reporting period the Parliament of Argentina began plans for a workshop using the IPU-UNDP toolkit and the UNDP Regional Hub for Arab States expressed its interest in partnering with the IPU to conduct parliamentary SDG assessments based on the toolkit in Somalia, Tunisia and Jordan.



On 17 and 18 December 2018 the IPU collaborated with UN Viet Nam and the National Assembly of Viet Nam in organizing a national workshop on the SDGs. The conference aimed to build understanding of the SDGs amongst not only the National Assembly members but also Government stakeholders and sub-national elected representatives. This event gave the National Assembly the opportunity to present the translated version of the IPU/UNDP SDGs toolkit.

As a member of the Steering Committee of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), the IPU participated in the 16<sup>th</sup> Committee meeting held in New York on 30 November 2018. It further organized a group of parliamentarians to attend a special meeting on private sector engagement for development cooperation on 17 and 18 January 2019 in Paris. Together with other members of the GPEDC, the IPU began preparations jointly with the UN High-level Political Forum in New York for a Senior Leadership Meeting on development cooperation scheduled for 13 and 14 July.

Work on a new guidance note for parliamentarians on development cooperation continued during this period. The note will be published as a joint IPU-UNDP publication by mid-2019.

An issue brief on the green economy was finalized in close cooperation with UN Environment. *Shades of Green: an introduction to the green economy for parliamentarians* was produced as an IPU publication to help parliamentarians understand the most important elements of the green economy and how they interact with one another. The issue brief will be introduced at the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Qatar.

On 23 and 24 November 2018, the IPU, in collaboration with the ILO, and with the support of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Parliament and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), organized a regional seminar for parliamentarians in Abuja. The seminar took stock of the implementation of the recommendations of a previous regional seminar held in May 2016 at the same venue. Participants shared good practices and, taking into account challenges they were confronted with during the implementation phase, sought to readjust parliamentary related strategies for targeted actions.

As a member of the SUN Movement Lead Group, the IPU Secretary General participated in the Group's meeting on 26 September 2018 in New York, in which he made a commitment on gender equality and women's and girls' social and economic empowerment. He also participated in the SUN Executive Committee Retreat on 29 January 2019 in Geneva.

On 29 October 2018, the IPU President delivered remarks at the opening ceremony of the Global Parliamentary Summit, organized in Madrid by FAO, the Spanish Parliament, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), and the Latin America and the Caribbean Parliamentary Front against Hunger. She underlined the key role of parliaments in addressing nutrition challenges and IPU's engagement with international partners to advance the nutrition agenda.

In the lead-up to the UN General Assembly, the IPU President took part in the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) Accountability Breakfast, held on 23 September 2018 in New York. She highlighted IPU's engagement on gender equality and women's and girls' rights, providing examples of parliamentary actions that resulted in improved sexual and reproductive health outcomes. During the launch of the 2018 report of the Every Woman, Every Child (EWEC) Independent Accountability Panel on 27 September 2018, the IPU Secretary General spoke of the role of parliaments in accountability for women's, children's and adolescents' health. On 28 September 2018, the IPU President took part in the meeting of the High Level Steering Group for *Every Woman, Every Child*, to which she was appointed in July 2018.

From 11 to 13 December, the IPU participated with a delegation of parliamentarians in the Partners' Forum of the PMNCH in New Delhi, including a Parliamentary Conclave chaired by the IPU President and a parallel session on the role of parliamentarians in accountability co-organized with PMNCH, World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development. The IPU President also addressed the Forum's 1200 participants during the high-level opening ceremony, stressing the many remaining challenges on women's, children's and adolescents' health, and calling on parliamentarians to play a prominent role in improving health outcomes for vulnerable and marginalized populations.

### **International trade**

The IPU and the European Parliament organized the annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization (WTO) held on 6 and 7 December 2018, at WTO Headquarters in Geneva. The Conference was co-Chaired by Ms. Margaret Mensah-Williams, Chairperson of the

National Council of Namibia, and Mr. Bernd Lange, Member of the European Parliament and Chairperson of the Committee on International Trade. It focused on the overall theme of the way forward for the WTO. Some 250 participants from 55 national parliaments, regional parliaments and representatives of Permanent Missions in Geneva pleaded in favour of increased effectiveness and legitimacy of the WTO. They called for urgent action to address the ongoing deadlock of the WTO Dispute Settlement Body and to strengthen the multilateral trading system to make it more beneficial to the people. They reiterated their commitment to an equitable international trading system, based on free trade, to encourage global economic growth and sustainable economic development, job creation and to ensuring welfare for all.

### **Senior-level interaction**

The IPU President participated in the opening of the 73<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly session the week of 23 September 2018. In this context, she attended the UN Secretary-General luncheon for heads of State and heads of delegations.

The head of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Mr. Michael Møller represented the UN Secretary-General at the first Preparatory Committee for the 5<sup>th</sup> World Conference of Speakers of Parliament on 8 and 9 February 2019. Senior officials from other UN agencies based in Geneva were also in attendance and contributed to the discussion on the role of the IPU-UN partnership in advancing global commitments and in strengthening multilateralism.

The IPU President and Secretary General met with the UN Secretary-General on 21 February 2019 to review recent initiatives, including preparations for the 5<sup>th</sup> World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, parliamentary support to address major humanitarian crises, joint IPU-UN efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism, and the further strengthening of the UN-IPU partnership. The IPU delegation also included three members of parliament: Speaker Al Mahmoud of Qatar, the host of the 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly; Ms. Susan Kihika of Kenya, Chair of the IPU Bureau of Women MPs; and Ms. Safa Al-Hashem of Kuwait, Vice President of the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs; as well as the IPU Permanent Observer at the United Nations and the Director for Member Parliaments and External Relations. The UN delegation included the Deputy Secretary-General, as well as officials of the UNSG's Executive Office and the Department of Political Affairs.

During this reporting period, the IPU President and the IPU Secretary General held a number of bilateral meetings with senior UN officials, including the UN Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Commissioner General, to discuss ways to enhance cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations.

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## **Report of the Committee on Middle East Questions**

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 204<sup>th</sup> session  
(Doha, 10 April 2019)*

The Committee held two sittings, on 6 and 9 April 2019. The Committee's President Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada), Ms. B. Grouwels (Belgium), Mr. H. Julien-Laferrière (France), Mr. A.N.M. Al-Ahmad (Palestine), Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland), attended both of the sessions. Mr. R. De Roon (Netherlands) and Mr. A.A. Jama (Somalia) attended the sitting on 6 April 2019.

Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada) was unanimously re-elected as President of the Committee.

The Committee heard a report on the latest general developments in the Middle East, including in Israel and Palestine, Libya, Syria and Yemen. The situation in Libya had been very unstable in the past few months, and increasingly so in the past few days. The members welcomed a presentation from the head of the Libyan delegation for a better understanding of the situation on the ground. She underscored the gravity of the immediate situation and called for the urgent support of the IPU.

Regarding Yemen, members concurred that the situation was dire. They strongly encouraged the Secretariat to provide a platform to discuss this issue with the wider membership of the Organization. They further wished to dedicate more time at future Committee meetings to Yemen more specifically.

Turning to Syria, the Committee heard that the 11<sup>th</sup> round of the Astana peace process had concluded with a decision to step up joint efforts to prevent violations of the ceasefire in the last major rebel-held bastion of Idlib and to work towards the first meeting of the constitutional committee to be held in early 2019. However, President Trump's recognition of Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights had disturbed relations, resulting in uncertainty over how the situation in the region would develop.

Due to the dissolution of the Knesset in December 2018, the Committee had had to postpone its visit to the region. Members once again stressed the importance of visiting the region in the near future and hoped that, in any case, this would take place before the next Assembly. Also in December 2018, President Mahmoud Abbas had called for the dissolution of the Palestine Legislative Council. Elections were expected to take place soon and the Committee recommended forming an election-observation delegation from among its members. This was very much welcomed by the Palestinian Committee Member. He pointed out that Israel had been withholding Palestinian tax revenue, which constituted a clear violation of many agreements between the two parties and a violation of international law. He called for international protection of the Palestinian people in light of the most recent developments. The Committee took note of the remarks of the Palestinian Committee Member and reiterated the importance of complying with international resolutions, including those related to the establishment of the Palestinian State in accordance with the two-state solution, United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 2334 on the settlements, UN General Assembly resolution 194 on Palestine refugees, and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

In the context of its Peace Programme, the Committee had the opportunity to hear from Mr. Larive, a French Parliamentarian, who is running an initiative on behalf of the French IPU group to include a permanent science-focused structure at the IPU. He indicated that it could initially take the form of a working group comprising several MPs from IPU Member Parliaments who would meet regularly to discuss scientific and technological issues. The Committee members agreed on the important role that parliamentarians had to play in setting ethical boundaries for science and technology and establishing a legal framework to ensure that machines and technology did not gain the upper hand to the detriment of humans. In view of its desire to build bridges between parliamentary and scientific communities, the Committee expressed its full support for the French initiative and reaffirmed its support for the Peace Programme as a whole.

On 9 April, the Committee heard from Mr. Abdirahman Aynte, the UNRWA Director of Partnerships, and two student parliamentarians from the UNRWA schools, Ms. Hanan Abu Asbah and Mr. Ahmad Baker (15 years old). They explained that UNRWA had been established by a UN General Assembly resolution to carry out direct relief and works programmes for Palestine refugees. UNRWA was unique in that it had been delivering quasi-governmental services to Palestine refugees for almost 70 years. Last year's funding crisis had strongly jeopardized the services of the agency, including schools, and through this, the education of about 530,000 students. The two student parliamentarians expounded on the importance of guaranteeing education for Palestine refugees to foster respect and work towards lasting peace.

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## Report of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 204<sup>th</sup> session  
(Doha, 10 April 2019)*

The Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL Committee) met on Sunday 7 April 2019. Representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also attended. At the close of the meeting, the Committee elected as its chair Ms. A. Vadai (Hungary) for a one year term. It also elected Mr. M. Rogers as chair for the following year. The Committee paid tribute to Ms. N. Ali Assegaf, outgoing chair.

### **Follow-up to the resolution on the emergency item adopted at the 137<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly**

The emergency item resolution, *Ending the grave human crisis, persecution and violent attacks on the Rohingya as a threat to international peace and security and ensuring their unconditional and safe return to their homeland in Myanmar*, adopted at the 137<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in St. Petersburg, calls on the IPU IHL Committee "to explore appropriate and practical measures to be undertaken by the global parliamentary community to address the situation of the Rohingya people and provide a peaceful and sustainable solution to the crisis".

The Committee discussed follow up to the resolution. The Parliament of Myanmar submitted written reports on the situation and progress achieved. The Committee also received additional information from UNHCR and the ICRC.

The Committee held a dialogue session with the delegation of Myanmar and expressed its thanks to the Parliament for engaging with the Committee for a second time. The dialogue session was very useful. It allowed the Committee to better understand this complex situation and know more about the initiatives taken in Myanmar. The Committee highlighted the importance of having a better grasp of the reality in Myanmar. It encouraged the Parliament of Myanmar to pursue its involvement in the resolution of this tragedy, and play its role of monitoring and overseeing the government, and reaching out to populations to improve the situation.

The Committee is keen to continue this positive dialogue and expressed a wish to carry out a mission in the coming months to Myanmar to gain a better understanding of the reality and see how the IPU can support the Parliament in its work. A formal request will be sent to the Parliament as follow up.

### **Cooperation with the UNHCR**

UNHCR briefed the Committee on the latest developments regarding the global campaign to end statelessness. In 2019 UNHCR will hold a ministerial event on statelessness to mark the midway point in the 10 year campaign. This event will be an opportunity to take stock of all the achievements up to that point and to give States and others credit for advances made. It will also be an opportunity for States to pledge to make additional specific steps to address statelessness. Pledges to work towards law reform will be a critical part of this event. It will be important for parliamentarians to be involved in consultations domestically in the run up to the ministerial event and support their Governments to make pledges in that regard.

There are more than 10 million stateless people around the world and the campaign aims to put an end to that situation. This objective is feasible by reforming laws, eliminating gender discrimination in nationality laws, implementing adequate policies and processes, and ensuring birth registration for all. The Committee welcomed the production of the IPU-UNHCR handbook *Good practices in nationality laws for the prevention and reduction of statelessness*. It encouraged parliaments to widely disseminate it and make use of this short practical tool to engage in reform.

The 10 action points of the *Global Action Plan to End Statelessness* can be found below. To submit pledges, parliaments and governments are invited to go to the following website:

<https://www.unhcr.org/ibelong/high-level-segment-statelessness/>

### **Cooperation with the ICRC**

The year 2019 marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 (GC70). It is an opportunity to profile the protective power of this important body of law whilst highlighting the urgent need to take action when it is not respected. There are plenty of examples of how IHL delivers for men and women every day: a wounded person is allowed through a checkpoint, a child receives necessary food, detainees are able to send a message to their families, and many other examples which may not always be visible to the public. In such instances, it is clear that respect for IHL is possible and that its implementation makes a meaningful difference. Created for the worst of times, the Geneva Conventions preserve the core of our common humanity.

Recent years have witnessed many shocking violations of IHL. The capacity of IHL to provide real protection for the victims of today's complex armed conflicts has been questioned by some, and significant challenges certainly lie ahead. The Committee therefore decided to dedicate its open session at the 141<sup>st</sup> Assembly in Belgrade to a special event on the Geneva Conventions.

**Committee membership**

The Committee noted that two of its members had been absent for two or more consecutive sessions. In accordance with the Rules, these members will be notified that their seats are now declared vacant. Elections will be held for these seats at the next Assembly.

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**#IBelong Campaign (2014-2024): Global Action Plan to End Statelessness**

- **Action 1:** Resolve existing situations of statelessness
- **Action 2:** Ensure that no child is born stateless
- **Action 3:** Remove gender discrimination from nationality laws
- **Action 4:** Prevent denial, loss or deprivation of nationality on discriminatory grounds
- **Action 5:** Prevent statelessness in case of State succession
- **Action 6:** Grant protection status to stateless migrants and facilitate their naturalization
- **Action 7:** Ensure birth registration for the prevention of statelessness
- **Action 8:** Issue nationality documentation to those with entitlement to it
- **Action 9:** Access to the UN Statelessness Conventions
- **Action 10:** Improve qualitative and quantitative data on statelessness populations

## Statistics of the Gender Partnership Group

**Status of participation of women delegates at the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the IPU (at 9 April 2019)**

**Composition of delegations of IPU members at the last eight IPU statutory meetings  
(October 2015 - present)**

Meeting	Total delegates	Total/percentage of women delegates		Total delegations	Total/percentage of all-male delegations (2 or more)		Total all-female delegations (2 or more)	Total single-sex delegations (2 or more)	Total single-member delegations (male and female)
		Total	Percentage		Total	Percentage			
Doha (09/04/19)	721	219	30.3	147	16	11.8	0	16	12
Geneva (10/18)	751	247	32.9	149	17	12.1	4	21	9
Geneva (03/18)	745	227	30.5	148	18	12.7	3	21	6
St. Petersburg (10/17)	829	249	30.0	155	17	11.8	1	18	11
Dhaka (04/17)	612	193	31.5	126	11	9.6	1	12	12
Geneva (10/16)	693	228	32.9	141	15	11.5	3	18	11
Lusaka (03/16)	636	190	29.9	126	19	15.8	0	19	6
Geneva (10/15)	647	210	32.5	133	12	9.9	2	14	12

## Single-sex, multi-member delegations of IPU members present in Doha (status on 9 April 2019)

N°	Country	Doha 04/19			Geneva 10/18			Geneva 03/18			St. Petersburg 17			Dhaka 17			Geneva 16			Lusaka 16			Geneva 15		
		Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total
1	Central African Republic	0	2	2	0	1	1	absent			0	1	1	0	1	1	suspended			suspended			suspended		
2	El Salvador	0	2	2	1	0	1	1	4	5	1	4	5	0	2	2	1	3	4	absent			1	3	4
3	Eswatini	0	4	4	absent			absent			0	2	2	1	4	5	0	2	2	not affiliated					
4	Georgia	0	6	6	1	2	3	1	5	6	absent			1	3	4	absent			absent			1	1	2
5	Kyrgyzstan	0	2	2	absent			absent			1	3	4	absent			0	1	1	absent			absent		
6	Liechtenstein	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	2	2	absent			1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	2
7	Luxembourg	0	2	2	absent			absent			0	3	3	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	2	2	absent		
8	Maldives	0	4	4	absent			0	3	3	1	5	6	1	4	5	0	4	4	1	4	5	0	1	1
9	Malta	0	3	3	1	1	2	0	2	2	0	3	3	0	1	1	absent			0	2	2	absent		
10	Micronesia	0	3	3	0	2	2	0	4	4	0	4	4	absent			0	3	3	0	3	3	0	4	4
11	Morocco	0	7	7	0	4	4	0	8	8	0	8	8	1	4	5	0	4	4	1	7	8	3	5	8
12	Poland	0	4	4	3	3	6	2	2	4	absent			2	2	4	1	4	5	2	2	4	0	1	1
13	Sierra Leone	0	3	3	1	2	3	absent			absent			1	0	1	absent			2	3	5	absent		
14	Spain	0	3	3	3	1	4	2	4	6	1	4	5	2	3	5	absent			2	4	6	2	2	4
15	Tunisia	0	4	4	2	2	4	2	1	3	1	1	2	absent			2	1	3	1	0	1	1	0	1
16	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	0	2	2	2	6	8	2	6	8	1	4	5	3	5	8	3	5	8	1	5	6	2	5	7

## Single-member delegations of IPU members present in Doha (status on 9 April 2019)

N°	Country	Doha 04/19			Geneva 10/18			Geneva 03/18			St. Petersburg 17			Dhaka 17			Geneva 16			Lusaka 16			Geneva 15			
		Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	Total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	
1	Belarus	0	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	5	6	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	0	2	2
2	Bulgaria	1	0	1	1	1	2	2	1	3	2	2	4	absent			0	2	2	0	2	2	absent			
3	Haiti	0	1	1	0	2	2	absent			0	4	4	absent			0	1	1	0	2	2	0	2	2	
4	Malawi	0	1	1	2	3	5	1	1	2	1	7	8	1	4	5	1	3	4	1	2	3	absent			
5	Marshall Islands	0	1	1	absent			absent			suspended			suspended			suspended			suspended						
6	Nicaragua	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	absent			1	0	1	absent			absent			
7	Paraguay	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	absent			absent			absent			absent			
8	Philippines	0	1	1	2	7	9	2	3	5	3	5	8	0	2	2	3	5	8	absent			1	5	6	
9	Republic of Moldova	0	1	1	2	0	2	2	0	2	1	1	2	absent			absent			absent			1	0	1	
10	Samoa	0	1	1	0	1	1	absent			0	1	1	0	1	1	absent			absent			absent			
11	Tonga	0	1	1	0	1	1	absent			absent			absent			absent			absent			absent			
12	Trinidad and Tobago	1	0	1	absent			absent			absent			absent			absent			absent			absent			



## Delegations with 40 to 60 per cent of women parliamentarians

The countries are ordered according to the percentage of women parliamentarians in their delegations at the 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly. There are a total of 35 gender-balanced delegations out of 147 delegations (23.8%) of IPU members attending the 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly (as at 9 April 2019).

### Countries with 40 to 49.9 per cent women parliamentarians (11):

- Angola (40%)
- Belgium (40%)
- China (40%)
- Cyprus (40%)
- Denmark (40%)
- Ethiopia (42.9%)
- Greece (40%)
- Japan (40%)
- Sri Lanka (40%)
- Sudan (44.4%)
- Ukraine (44.4%)

### Countries with 50 per cent women parliamentarians (19):

- Afghanistan
- Armenia
- Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
- Congo
- Cuba
- Czech Republic
- Dominican Republic
- Equatorial Guinea
- Fiji
- Finland
- Guinea Bissau
- Iceland
- India
- Libya
- Mongolia
- Mozambique
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Senegal
- Uruguay

### Countries with 51 to 60 per cent women parliamentarians (5):

- Canada (60%)
- Hungary (60%)
- Mexico (60%)
- Netherlands (60%)
- Peru (60%)

## Calendar of future meetings and other activities

*Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 204<sup>th</sup> session  
(Doha, 10 April 2019)*

Second Regional Seminar on achieving the SDGs for the Twelve Plus Group	LISBON (Portugal) 7-8 May 2019
Information seminar on the structure and functioning of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for English-speaking participants	GENEVA 14-17 May 2019
Second Regional Seminar on achieving the SDGs for the Parliaments in the Asia-Pacific Region	ULAANBAATAR (Mongolia) 27-28 May 2019
Regional workshop on the Parliament's contribution to the work of the World Trade Organization (WTO) for parliaments of Eastern and Central Europe, and Central Asia organized by the WTO, the IPU and the European Parliament	VIENNA (Austria) 27-29 May 2019
Regional workshop on the Parliament's contribution to the work of the World Trade Organization (WTO) for parliaments of the Asia-Pacific region organized by the WTO, the IPU and the European Parliament	Singapore 11-13 June 2019
Fourth Interregional Seminar on Parliamentary Capacity Building and the further implementation of the SDGs	BEIJING (China) 12-14 June 2019
IPU-UNDP Workshop on parliament's self-assessment for the SDGs	NEW YORK 17 July 2019
14 <sup>th</sup> Workshop of Parliamentary Scholars and Parliamentarians organized by the Centre for Legislative Studies at Hull University and sponsored by the IPU	WROXTON (United Kingdom) 27-28 July 2019
Parliamentary Forum at the UN High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development (HLPF)	NEW YORK July 2019 (dates to be confirmed)
Leadership seminar	MEXICO CITY (Mexico) 19-28 August 2019
Sixth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians	Paraguay September 2019 (dates to be confirmed)
Regional seminar on parliaments and the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1540 for Pacific Island Parliaments	WELLINGTON (New Zealand) 19-20 September 2019
44 <sup>th</sup> session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO	GENEVA 7 October 2019
Parliamentary session within the framework of the annual WTO Public Forum	GENEVA 8 October 2019
141 <sup>st</sup> Assembly and related meetings	BELGRADE (Serbia) 13-17 October 2019
Second Regional seminar on achieving the SDGs for the Parliaments of the Caribbean	Trinidad and Tobago November 2019 (dates to be confirmed)

Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the 25 <sup>th</sup> UN Climate Change Conference (COP25)	Chile December 2019 Venue and date to be confirmed
Speakers' Summit in the context of the G20	Japan 2019 Venue and date to be confirmed
Regional workshop on the Parliament's contribution to the work of the World Trade Organization (WTO) for African English-speaking parliaments organized by the WTO, the IPU and the European Parliament	GABORONE (Botswana) 2019 (dates to be confirmed)
Workshop for parliamentary human rights committees	GENEVA 2019 (dates to be confirmed)
Technical briefing for parliamentarians at the World Health Assembly	GENEVA 2019 (dates to be confirmed)
Regional seminar on the contribution of parliament to the promotion and the protection of the rights of the child on the occasion of the CEMAC Parliamentary session	MALABO (Equatorial Guinea) (dates to be confirmed)
Fifth South Asian Speakers' Summit on achieving the SDGs	Maldives 2019 (dates to be confirmed)
Capacity-building workshop on counter-terrorism and violent extremism for the Sahel Region	NIAMEY (Niger) 2019 (dates to be confirmed)
Regional workshop on implementing the Global Compact for Refugees	Kenya 2019 Venue and dates to be confirmed
Sub-regional seminar on SDGs and Gender for Central Asian Countries	2019 Venue and dates to be confirmed
Workshop on comprehensive disarmament	2019 Venue and dates to be confirmed
Capacity-building workshop on countering terrorism and violent extremism for the Asia-Pacific Group	2019 Venue and dates to be confirmed
Third Roundtable convened by the Committee on Middle East Questions 2019	2019 Venue and dates to be confirmed
Regional seminar on achieving the SDGs for African Parliaments	2019 Venue and dates to be confirmed
First Global Parliamentary Summit on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism	2019 Venue and dates to be confirmed
Third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments	2019 Venue and dates to be confirmed
Information seminar on the structure and functioning of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for Spanish-speaking participants	2019 Venue and dates to be confirmed

Capacity-building workshop on counter-terrorism and violent extremism for the Eurasia Group	2019 Venue and dates to be confirmed
Annual parliamentary meeting at the Commission on the Status of Women	NEW YORK March 2020 (dates to be confirmed)
142 <sup>nd</sup> Assembly and related meetings	GENEVA 15-19 April 2020
Parliamentary Conference on the occasion of the WTO Ministerial Conference	NUR-SULTAN (Kazakhstan) June 2020 (dates to be confirmed)
Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament	VIENNA (Austria) August 2020 (dates to be confirmed)
Seventh Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians	TBILISI (Georgia) 2020 (dates to be confirmed)
Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations	NEW YORK 2020 (dates to be confirmed)
143 <sup>rd</sup> Assembly and related meetings	Rwanda 2020 Venue and dates to be confirmed
144 <sup>th</sup> Assembly and related meetings	Kenya 2021 Venue and dates to be confirmed
World Conference on interfaith and inter-ethnic dialogue	Russian Federation 21 May 2022

## Agenda of the 141<sup>st</sup> Assembly

*(Belgrade, Serbia, 13-17 October 2019)*

1. Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the 141<sup>st</sup> Assembly
2. Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
3. General Debate
4. *Achieving universal health coverage by 2030: The role of parliaments in ensuring the right to health*  
(Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights)
5. Reports of the Standing Committees on Peace and International Security; Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade; and United Nations Affairs
6. Approval of the subject item for the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights at the 143<sup>rd</sup> IPU Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs
7. Amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules