



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

CL/203/SR.1  
11 January 2019

# Summary records of the Governing Council

## 203<sup>rd</sup> session

15 and 18 October 2018

*Geneva (Centre international de Conférences Genève)*

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# First sitting

Monday, 15 October 2018

*The meeting was called to order at 9.20 a.m., with Ms. G. Cuevas Barron (Mexico), President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), in the Chair.*

Item 1 of the agenda

## ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (CL/203/A.1.rev)

**The revised provisional agenda (CL/203/A.1.rev) was adopted.**

Item 2 of the agenda

## APPROVAL OF THE SUMMARY RECORDS OF THE 202<sup>nd</sup> SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL (CL/202/SR.1)

**The summary records of the 202<sup>nd</sup> session of the Governing Council (CL/202/SR/1) were approved.**

Item 3 of the agenda

## PROPOSALS FOR THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE 139<sup>th</sup> ASSEMBLY

*The President*, recalling the usual practice of nominating the IPU President to preside over IPU Assemblies taking place in Geneva, where there was no host parliament, said she took it that the Council would wish her to serve as President of the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

**It was so agreed.**

Item 4 of the agenda

## FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE IPU (CL/203/4-R.1)

*Ms. A. Lorber-Willis, Director of the Division of Support Services*, presenting the report on the financial situation of the IPU at 30 June 2018 (CL/203/4-R/1), outlined the information set out therein, including with respect to income, expenditures, receipts, arrears of contributions and cash flow.

Responding to questions posed by *Mr. A. Jasem Ahmad (United Arab Emirates)*, she said that parliaments from small island developing States continued to receive financial assistance on request from the IPU through the Parliamentary Solidarity Fund; that the IPU, with support from the geopolitical groups, was engaged in ongoing efforts to reduce the amount of arrears in contributions, with positive results in that some payments had recently been received and more were anticipated in the coming days; and that estimates for future expenditures on activities were set out in the draft consolidated budget for 2019 (CL/203/5-P.1).

Item 5 of the agenda

## 2019 DRAFT CONSOLIDATED BUDGET (CL/203/5-P.1)

*Mr. R. del Picchia (France)*, Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance, presenting the 2019 draft consolidated budget (CL/203/5-P.1) prepared with the usual guidance from the Sub-Committee and recalling the existing cap on assessed contributions, said that any unforeseen additional costs incurred in 2019 in connection with the holding of the 140<sup>th</sup> and 141<sup>st</sup> Assemblies and of the two preparatory meetings for the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament

would be offset by drawing from the Working Capital Fund. Some activities included in the President's vision would be funded from the core budget. Extrabudgetary funding would be required, however, to implement some of the other activities developed in line with the President's vision for the IPU. The Executive Committee had unanimously endorsed the draft consolidated budget, which he therefore recommended to the Council for approval.

**The Secretary General** said in addition that voluntary contributions were expected to generate some 25 per cent of the total consolidated budget for 2019, in which context he outlined the information on grants and funding arrangements set out in section 2.3 of the document under consideration. He furthermore encouraged others to follow the example of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, which continued to second senior staff members to the IPU Secretariat for two-year periods, thereby helping to promote implementation of the IPU Strategy.

**Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal)** asked about funding of the High-level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG), bearing in mind that proposed Terms of Reference for the Group had yet to be placed before the Council for consideration and approval.

**The Secretary General** said that the Executive Committee was expecting to finalize at its upcoming meeting its proposal concerning those terms of reference, which would accordingly be presented to the Council at its next sitting. He explained that, while the budget for 2019 included funding for the counter-terrorism activities forming part of the IPU's core work, it made no provision for any expenses relating to the functioning of the HLAG.

**The President**, confirming that situation, recalled the Council's decision at the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly that the HLAG should proceed with its activities on a provisional basis, pending approval of terms of reference to be reviewed by the Executive Committee and submitted to the Council for consideration at the present Assembly.

**The Secretary General**, responding to a request for clarification from **Mr. N. Anzour (Syrian Arab Republic)** and a related comment from **Mr. A. Najafi Khoshrandi (Islamic Republic of Iran)**, said that no political pressure or influence could be brought to bear on the IPU concerning the use of voluntary contributions, which was subject to strict guidelines set by the Governing Council and reflected in the funding agreements concluded with donors. In short, such contributions could be employed only in activities consistent with the values and principles upheld by the IPU, which was furthermore accountable to its Members on that score. He stood ready to share with them all pertinent information on the subject, including the guidelines mentioned.

**Ms. R. Kavakci Kan (Turkey)** asked about steps taken by the Secretariat to address cases of Members with outstanding dues.

**Ms. A. Albasti (United Arab Emirates)** and **Ms. V.L. Martins (Timor-Leste)** requested further information about the sources of voluntary contributions to the Gender Partnership Programme.

**Ms. M. Osman Gesour (Sudan)** asked why capacity-building support was not available to parliaments in all regions and what criteria must be fulfilled in order to receive such support.

**The Secretary General**, replying to those questions, said more assessed contributions had recently been received and that the situation was therefore not as bleak as it might appear. The Executive Committee nonetheless regularly examined in particular the situation of Members with long-standing arrears, which were often due to political or economic reasons beyond their control. It furthermore continued to engage with such Members in the interest of securing payment of their dues, including perhaps by way of instalments. Members with two years of arrears in the payment of their contributions were subject to the provisions of Article 5.2 of the IPU Statutes, concerning the loss of certain rights, while those with three years of arrears were liable under Article 5.3 to suspension of their affiliation to the IPU.

Concerning voluntary contributions to the Gender Partnership Programme, he said that discussions were under way to extend beyond 2018 the support provided by the Canadian Government and to renew that previously received from Irish Aid. That apart, all activities provided for in the budget included a gender mainstreaming component. Through its capacity-building programmes, the IPU furthermore worked actively to promote women's representation in parliament and enhance their ability to deliver once in office. Its assistance in those and other spheres was provided on the basis of needs identified by the requesting parliament, wherever located. No regions were ever favoured to the detriment of others.

**The President** said she took it that the Council wished to approve the 2019 draft consolidated budget.

**It was so decided.**

**The President** paid tribute to Mr. del Picchia for his excellent work throughout his term of office as Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance, which was about to end.

Item 6 of the agenda

**REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT**

**(a) On her activities since the 202<sup>nd</sup> session of the Governing Council**  
(CL/203/6(a)-R.1)

**The President**, in providing with the aid of a slide presentation an overview of the activities she had conducted since the previous session of the Governing Council, as fully described in her report on the subject (CL/203/6(a)-R.1), said that her work was constantly guided by the commitments she had made to Members and urged her fellow parliamentarians to increase their involvement in the work of the IPU for a better world and the greater good of humanity.

**(b) On the activities of the Executive Committee**

**The President** said that most of the subjects addressed by the Executive Committee during its two days of intense and productive discussions in Geneva would be reported on under the relevant items of the agenda and recalled that the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly had concluded with unfinished business relating to the current agenda of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights. In that context, she drew attention to the legal opinion annexed to document EX/280/5(a)-Inf.1, available on the IPU website, which the IPU had commissioned at the request of delegations having objected to a proposal to include in that agenda a panel discussion on *The role of parliaments in ending discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and ensuring respect for the human rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons*. She explained that a vote would be taken in plenary to decide whether the Assembly was empowered to change agendas and workplans adopted by the Standing Committees. In the event of a vote in the affirmative, a second vote would subsequently be held to determine whether the proposed panel discussion should take place during the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly but with the proviso that no resolution on the subject would result therefrom.

Announcing that two memorandums of understanding had been developed with, respectively, the Roll Back Malaria Partnership to End Malaria and the World Health Organization, she said she took it that the Council wished to endorse the decision of the Executive Committee recommending the signature of both memorandums.

**It was so decided.**

After further reporting that the Executive Committee had reviewed and approved the Secretary General's contract and had taken note of various staff movements within the IPU Secretariat, she said that the Executive Committee was scheduled to complete its work on the penultimate day of the Assembly, including with respect to such matters as the terms of reference of the High-level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG) and options for an alternative venue to Buenos Aires for the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly. She would therefore deliver a further report on its activities at the next sitting of the Council.

**The Governing Council took note of the report of the President.**

**ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM**

**The Secretary General** announced that, in accordance with Rule 34.2 of the Rules of the Governing Council, the quorum of 112 was established for the 203<sup>rd</sup> session on the basis of the participation of 222 Members or substitutes in the current first meeting of the Council.

*The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.*

## Second sitting

Thursday, 18 October

*The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m., with Ms. G. Cuevas Barron (Mexico), President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), in the Chair.*

**A minute's silence was observed in memory of the victims of the previous day's attack at a college in Crimea and of other similar attacks having taken place at schools and colleges in countries elsewhere.**

### Item 7 of the agenda

#### **INTERIM REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE IPU SINCE THE 202<sup>nd</sup> SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL (CL/203/7-R.1)**

*The Secretary General*, presenting an overview of activities undertaken since March 2018 in implementation of the IPU Strategy, as described in his interim report (CL/203/7-R.1), said that the latter contained information on activities conducted, future activities and next steps for IPU Members in relation to each strategic objective. It should furthermore be read in conjunction with the report of the President on her activities since the 202<sup>nd</sup> session of the Governing Council (CL/203/6(a)-R.1). Also annexed to his report was a checklist of activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system, the number of which evidenced the growing partnership between the IPU and the United Nations aimed at harnessing their respective resources to deliver on outcomes. Indeed, in May 2018, the United Nations General Assembly had adopted a landmark resolution on *Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union*, which sought to enhance UN cooperation with the IPU in meeting common objectives. It had additionally instituted 30 June of each year as the International Day of Parliamentarianism.

**The Governing Council took note of the interim report of the Secretary General.**

### Item 8 of the agenda

#### **QUESTIONS RELATING TO IPU MEMBERSHIP AND OBSERVER STATUS**

##### **(a) Requests for IPU membership and observer status**

*The Secretary General* said that no new requests for affiliation or observer status had been received and that the membership therefore remained at 178. The quest for universal membership continued, however. In that context and with a view to possible affiliation to the IPU, the Parliament of Kiribati was attending the current Assembly as an observer and the Parliament of Jamaica was due to participate in a forthcoming IPU regional seminar. Non-Members were indeed encouraged to engage in similar fashion with the IPU and thereby acquaint themselves with its work in support of parliaments.

##### **(b) Situation of certain parliaments**

*The Secretary General*, reporting on the situation of certain Members and additionally communicating the related decisions recommended by the Executive Committee for approval by the Governing Council, said with respect to Eritrea, the first of the situations reviewed by the Executive Committee, that the IPU had established contact with the Permanent Mission of Eritrea in Geneva as part of its efforts to ascertain the whereabouts of the 11 parliamentarians whose cases remained before the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. Another positive development lay in the recent improvement in the country's relations with Ethiopia. With hopes thus raised that the Parliament would end its many years of inaction and join the IPU membership, the Executive Committee had decided to continue monitoring the situation and engaging with partners to establish the fate of the missing parliamentarians.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, following numerous delays, dates had finally been set for presidential and parliamentary elections in December 2018 and for Senate elections in March 2019. The Executive Committee had therefore decided to monitor the situation and to urge the authorities to adhere to the planned election schedule, in which event the IPU hoped soon to be interacting with a full-fledged parliament.

In Guinea-Bissau, where in-fighting within the ruling party had created a stalemate, the Parliament had reconvened, in April 2018, after a two-year hiatus and would sit until the next elections. In the light of that development, the Executive Committee encouraged the country's authorities to work towards the organization of elections and had decided to continue providing of capacity-building assistance to the Parliament.

In Libya, the situation remained worrisome, with two parliamentary institutions continuing to function in parallel. The Tobruk-based House of Representatives was officially recognized as the legitimate parliament and was indeed a Member of the IPU, albeit an inactive one. It now appeared that presidential and parliamentary elections would be further postponed beyond March 2019, pending the establishment of a reliable electoral roll. The Executive Committee had therefore decided to continue monitoring the situation and to encourage the prompt organization of those elections.

In the case of Thailand, where a transitional legislative assembly had been in place since the military takeover in 2016, the requisite electoral laws under the country's new Constitution had recently been passed, with the result that elections were likely in the first quarter of 2019. The Executive Committee had taken note of those promising developments, which also included the widening of political and media freedoms, and looked forward to the establishment of a full-fledged parliament in the near future.

In Yemen, the Parliament elected in 2003 continued to function in the absence of any subsequent parliamentary elections and consisted of two factions, one based in Sana'a and the other in Aden. A unified delegation was attending the current Assembly, however, thanks to the IPU's efforts to bring together the two factions through dialogue with a view to facilitating resolution of the Yemeni conflict and addressing the humanitarian situation precipitated by that conflict. The Committee had taken note of developments and supported the IPU's engagement with the delegation.

**Ms. F. Hosseini (Islamic Republic of Iran)** said that the key objective on that score should be to ensure that the Yemeni delegation included members of each faction.

**The Secretary General** said that the IPU would continue to work towards that ultimate goal of full inclusiveness, which was currently complicated by the conflict situation in Yemen and the dispersal of Yemeni parliamentarians around the world. The IPU therefore also aimed to promote the country's return to normalcy and an end to the prevailing humanitarian crisis.

**A delegate from Yemen** said that the legitimate standing of the Yemeni Parliament was indeed a vital issue but also noted the Iranian role in the conflict, including with respect to the non-delivery of humanitarian aid. Iranian interference in the domestic affairs of Yemen must stop.

**The Secretary General**, resuming his report, recalled with respect to the situation in Burundi that the elections held in 2015 had led to civil unrest and political instability. The IPU had for many years provided assistance to the Burundian Parliament and, in response to the request of the Burundian authorities for its help in mediation, he had recently conducted a fact-finding mission to the country. He had witnessed little evidence of any military presence or instability around the country and found that the ruling and opposition parties were looking ahead to presidential and parliamentary elections in 2020. He had consequently recommended the establishment of a consensual road map by Burundians towards such elections and indeed full implementation of the vital Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. The Executive Committee had accordingly decided to continue IPU assistance to the Burundian Parliament, including in matters relating to gender equality and the Sustainable Development Goals, and likewise to advocate for assistance with the work of the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

**Mr. P. Nyabenda (Burundi)** said that IPU missions of the type described by the Secretary General were a welcome practice to be fully encouraged and that the IPU assistance mentioned was vital to laying the foundations for stability in Burundi.

**The Secretary General**, speaking about Cambodia, said that the situation was gravely worrying in view of the country's shrinking political space, the redistribution of parliamentary seats won by the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) to unelected individuals, and the recent



conduct of an election judged to be neither free nor fair. The CNRP had furthermore been dissolved and its members banned from engaging in political activity, all of which called for a robust stand by the IPU. The Executive Committee had therefore expressed its support for the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians in its related case work and for the outcomes of that work.

**The President** said that she wished to set the record straight after it had come to her attention that she had been quoted in the Cambodian media outlet Fresh News as stating that she wholeheartedly congratulated and highly valued the success of the Cambodian election in 2018 as an indication of real democracy at work. She asserted categorically that she had never made any such statement and had thus been misrepresented. At the current Assembly, she had shared with parliamentarians from the Cambodian ruling and opposition parties the IPU's concerns about the deteriorating human rights situation in Cambodia. She had also conveyed a request to the Cambodian authorities for the IPU to conduct a fact-finding mission to the country.

**Mr. V. Chheang (Cambodia)** expressed disappointment that the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians had once more disregarded the mass of credible information again provided to it by his delegation, choosing instead to rely on information from politically motivated sources to produce a draft decision that was biased and heedless of Cambodian needs on the ground. The July election had been hailed as unprecedented in terms of the high voter turnout and political diversity of candidates and had also been certified as free and fair by a multitude of observers. The absence of one former political party, however, had led the Committee to take a negative view of an election conducted in an orderly and peaceful manner indicative of the deep-rootedness of democracy and human rights in Cambodian society. In Cambodia, offenders were prosecuted for their crimes by the independent judiciary enshrined in the Constitution. As to Mr. Kem Sokha, he had been transferred in an act of humanity from pre-trial detention to residence in his own home under judicial supervision. No Cambodian law allowed for house arrest. Furthermore, the individuals named by the Committee in connection with its draft decision on Cambodia were no longer members of the Cambodian Parliament. His delegation rejected that decision.

**The Secretary General**, reporting on the case of Maldives, said that events following the opposition victory in the country's recent presidential election had inspired hope insofar as parliamentarians arrested and imprisoned without due process under the previous regime had been released and reinstated to office. The Executive Committee had taken note of those positive developments and resolved that IPU assistance to the Maldives Parliament should continue, together with the work of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians on the Maldivian cases before it.

In Nicaragua, the Parliament was functioning normally but there were growing calls for President Ortega to step down in the face of the many civilian casualties of the widespread social violence. The IPU had reached out to the Parliament to offer its good offices to address the crisis, the need for which, together with the provision of preventive assistance, had been stressed by the Executive Committee.

**Ms. A.P. Alonso Gómez (Nicaragua)** said that her Parliament had frequently reported to the IPU from the outset on its responses to the crisis, which included its establishment of the Truth, Justice and Peace Commission to uncover the facts behind the events with a view to restoring peace through dialogue. Her delegation would gladly furnish the IPU with a copy of the Commission's report.

**Mr. P.F. Casini (Italy and honorary IPU President)** said that the IPU stood for democracy and freedom, which it must continue to pursue at all costs in Nicaragua for the sake of its credibility.

**The Secretary General**, turning to the situation in South Sudan, said that the world's newest State had been riven by conflict since its establishment in 2011. The two protagonists, however, had recently reached an agreement to extend the term of the current Parliament until elections in July 2021 in order for transitional arrangements accommodating the interests of all parties to take root. The Executive Committee had taken note of those positive developments and encouraged the South Sudanese authorities and Parliament to adhere to the agreement.

In the Syrian Arab Republic, the conflict continued, albeit at a lesser intensity. The IPU's Working Group on Syria had not yet conducted its anticipated mission to the country but was monitoring the situation and engaging with the Syrian authorities in the interest of contributing towards a resolution of the conflict for the benefit of the Syrian people. The Executive Committee had decided that the Group should continue its monitoring and report back to it in due course.

**A delegate from the Syrian Arab Republic** said that Syrians alone were qualified to determine their country's future through intra-Syrian dialogue, without foreign interference. The IPU could play its part by first dispatching a mission to engage with the Syrian Parliament in what would be a space free of misinformation. The Syrian crisis was rooted in terrorism funded by external sources and in efforts by terrorism-supporting States to meddle in Syrian domestic affairs and create instability and insecurity. The situation was further exacerbated by foreign military interventions and unilateral economic sanctions targeted at the Syrian people. The IPU must proceed from those facts and work in cooperation with the Syrian Parliament, which represented all sectors of Syrian society.

**The Secretary General**, speaking with respect to Turkey, said that the situation would be fully covered in the report to be delivered to the Council on the cases before the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. In her recent meeting with the President of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, the President of the IPU had indeed raised human rights issues. The Executive Committee had decided to encourage the Committee to pursue its work relating to the cases of Turkish parliamentarians and to engage with the Turkish authorities with a view to organizing a mission to Turkey at the earliest possible opportunity.

**The President** confirmed that the President of the Turkish Parliament had been responsive to her requests on behalf of the IPU, including with regard to the organization of such a mission to meet members of both the ruling and opposition parties in Turkey.

**A delegate from Denmark**, welcoming that positive news, asked whether the mission would also seek to visit imprisoned parliamentarians, such as former presidential candidate Mr. Selahattin Demirtaş.

**The President** said she had made it clear to the Turkish delegation that any IPU mission would wish to engage with parliamentarians whose cases had been taken up by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. In addition to members of the latter, furthermore, such a mission would include members of the Executive Committee and the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights.

**Ms. I.R. Medina (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)**, welcoming the possibility of a mission to Turkey, said that host authorities should place no obstacles in the way of such missions once approved.

**Ms. R. Kavakci Kan (Turkey)**, likewise welcoming the potential IPU mission to Turkey, said that claims to the effect that the ruling party in Turkey excluded Kurdish citizens were untrue. That party in fact received more Kurdish votes than did any other.

**The Secretary General**, referring to the case of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, said that the disagreement between the Venezuelan Government and the National Assembly recognized as an IPU Member had been played out on the streets and prompted a dire economic crisis, with civilians as the victims. Since 2013, the IPU had sought in vain to conduct a fact-finding mission to the country with a view to playing a role in resolving the situation. The Executive Committee had decided to remain seized of the case and to insist on the need for such a mission.

**The President** said that, as a Latin American, she was proud to announce that the opportunity for such a mission was now ripe following her previous day's meeting with the Venezuelan delegation to the Assembly.

**Ms. I.R. Medina (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)** from the ruling party, said that the Venezuelan Bloque de la Patria had long been committed to ending injustice in her country and that President Maduro would surely welcome an IPU mission. The Venezuelan opposition had done its utmost at the current Assembly to prevent her and others from speaking the truth about their country's situation as a victim of unilateral measures imposed by the United States and others and of lies spread by the world's media. A fact-finding mission would unveil that truth.

**Another delegate from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** representing the political opposition said that the Venezuelan opposition likewise welcomed the proposed mission. The IPU could then witness the reality for itself and draw its own conclusions.

**The President** said that the Venezuelan authorities were expected in the coming days to set a date for the mission as a first step towards finalizing the details. She hoped that the mission would take place before the next Assembly and to have further positive news to report at that time.

**Mr. P.F. Casini (Italy and honorary IPU President)** said it was welcome news that all Venezuelan parties were in agreement concerning the requested IPU mission.

**The President**, turning to the situation in the Korean Peninsula, said that the meetings of the delegations from the People's Democratic Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea at the 138<sup>th</sup> Assembly had testified to the IPU's effectiveness as a platform for building bridges and creating dialogue.

**The Secretary General** said that, at the current Assembly, both delegations had reported on steps taken at the parliamentary level towards resolving the Korean conflict and reiterated their commitment to working together with the IPU to achieve that goal.

**The President** said that the two delegations were to be congratulated on the progress thus far accomplished and read out a presidential statement on recent developments in the Korean Peninsula.

**The Governing Council endorsed the presidential statement and took note of the information communicated to it in respect of the situation of the parliaments mentioned and approved the recommendations of the Executive Committee concerning those parliaments.**

Item 9 of the agenda

**REPORTING BY MEMBERS ON IPU-RELATED ACTIVITIES**

(CL/203/9-R.1)

**Ms. A. Filip, Director of the Division for Member Parliaments and External Relations of the IPU**, presenting an overview of the annual reporting exercise by IPU Members concerning action taken to follow up on IPU resolutions, Assemblies and other initiatives, said that, as detailed in document CL/203/9-R.1 on the subject, the overall response rates had improved in 2018 (67% versus 30-40% prior to 2017) following the introduction of the new reporting modality likewise detailed in the document. Reporting was not merely a formal requirement but also underscored the role of the IPU as a global forum for parliamentary discussion, cooperation and action with a beneficial impact on legislative work at the national level. She highlighted some of the examples of good parliamentary practices and actions set out in the annex to the document and drew attention to the list of Members who would be requested to submit national reports in 2019. She looked forward to a further improvement in the response rate towards the goal of 100 per cent.

**The President**, echoing that sentiment, said that voluntary reports would again be welcome in addition to the reports from the Members selected to participate in the next annual exercise.

Item 10 of the agenda

**REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED MEETINGS**

**(a) 12<sup>th</sup> Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament**  
(CL/203/10(a)-R.1)

**Ms. B. Guzmán Gómez (Plurinational State of Bolivia)** delivered the report contained in document CL/203/10(a)-R.1 on the 12<sup>th</sup> Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament held in Cochabamba, Plurinational State of Bolivia, on 25 and 26 April 2018.

**(b) Regional seminar on *Parliamentary cooperation for sustainable development: Combating poverty and promoting health care***  
(CL/203/10(b)-R.1)

**Mr. M. Mijatovic (Serbia)** delivered in conjunction with a video the report on the two-day regional seminar held in May 2018, in Belgrade, as set out in document CL/203/10(b)-R.1.

**(c) Technical briefing on *The role of parliamentarians in achieving universal health coverage and global health security as two sides of the same coin***  
(CL/203/10(c)-R.1)

**Mr. C. Seuhoro (Rwanda)** presented the report contained in document CL/203/10(c)-R.1 on the one-day technical briefing held in May 2018, in Geneva, saying that the discussion was enriched by the diverse range of contributions from the panellists listed in the document, with an emphasis on strong parliamentary action to ensure effective legislative and other measures for the advancement of health programmes and interventions.

**(d) Third South Asian Speakers' Summit on achieving the SDGs: *Promoting regional parliamentary cooperation for sustainable, equitable and green economic growth***  
(CL/203/10(d)-R.1)

**Mr. A. Kumarasiri (Sri Lanka)** delivered in conjunction with a video the report on the two-day Third South Asian Speakers' Summit held in July 2018, in Colombo, as contained in document CL/203/10(d)-R.1.

**(e) Parliamentary side event at the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) *Mobilizing parliaments for the SDGs***  
(CL/203/10(e)-R.1)

**Mr. S. Chiheb (Algeria)**, presenting the report set out in document CL/203/10(e)-R.1 on the two-day parliamentary side event held in July 2018, in New York, to coincide with the most recent HLPF meeting, said that participants had concluded from their discussion that the move towards a green economy was essential for the sake of human well-being.

**(f) Interregional Seminar on Parliamentary Capacity-Building and the further implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: *Implementing the SDGs through South-South Parliamentary Cooperation***  
(CL/203/10(f)-R.1)

**Ms. L. Cai (China)**, in introducing a video of the two-day interregional seminar held in September 2018 in Beijing and described in document CL/203/10(f)-R.1, said that her Parliament was firmly committed to continuing its contribution towards sustainable development through parliamentary cooperation.

**(g) Regional Seminar on the Sustainable Development Goals and Gender Equality for the Parliaments of the Middle East and North Africa**  
(CL/203/10(g)-R.1)

*Ms. F. Benbadis (Algeria)* delivered the report on the two-day seminar held in September 2018, in Alexandria, Egypt, as contained in document CL/203/10(g)-R.1.

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

Item 11 of the agenda

**ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES**

**(a) Forum of Women Parliamentarians**  
(CL/203/11(a)-R.1)

*The President* informed the Council that, in accordance with the Rules of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. S. Kihika (Kenya), former Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, had assumed the position of President in place of Ms. U. Karlsson (Sweden), who was no longer a member of parliament. Ms. Kihika would serve a four-year term, ending in March 2022, as would Ms. A. Albasti (United Arab Emirates), who had been elected as Second Vice-President. The position of First Vice-President remained vacant.

*Ms. S. Kihika (Kenya)*, President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, in presenting the report contained in document CL/203/11(a)-R.1 on the 28<sup>th</sup> session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians held in Geneva on 18 March 2018, outlined the discussion and outcomes of the panel discussion held on gender equality in science and technology, as well as the Forum's contribution to the work of the Assembly, in particular its inputs to the draft resolution developed by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, which related to migration. She called on all parliamentarians to support the Forum in its crucial mission to foster social equality.

**(b) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians**  
(CL/203/11(b)-R.1 and R.2)

*Ms. D. Solórzano (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)*, Vice-President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, reporting on the activities of the Committee at its recent session in Geneva, said that the Committee had reviewed increasingly worrying human rights situations at the current session. Some countries were seeing repression of opposition parliamentarians on an unprecedented scale and the undermining of the institution of parliament itself. The Committee had had on its agenda the cases of 328 members of parliament in 15 countries. Of the parliamentarians whose cases were examined, 39 per cent were from Asia, 24 per cent from Europe, 18 per cent from the Americas, 6 per cent from the Middle East and North Africa, and 3 per cent from Africa. Twenty per cent of the cases concerned women parliamentarians and 82 per cent concerned opposition members.

The 19 draft decisions to be presented to the Council involved 295 parliamentarians in 13 countries. Among the 295 parliamentarians facing violations around the world, 60 were from Venezuela and 60 from Turkey. Regrettably, the number of colleagues facing repression due to their parliamentary work was constantly on the rise.

**AFRICA**

**Democratic Republic of Congo**

The Congolese authorities had made a commitment to release Mr. Diomi Ndongala and Mr. Franck Diongo and all the other political prisoners listed in the political agreement of 31 December 2016. All political forces had agreed to their release to ensure that the upcoming legislative and presidential elections on 23 December 2018 would be inclusive and fair. As both men were still in detention following flawed trials, the Committee again called for their immediate release and asked the global parliamentary community to help them regain their freedom.

**The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the cases of Mr. Eugène Diomi Ndongala and Mr. Franck Diongo.**

## **Mauritania**

The Committee wished to present the new case of a Mauritanian parliamentarian, Mr. Mohamed Ould Ghadda, who had spent one year in custody without trial. He had been targeted for his criticism of the Government. Currently at liberty but under judicial supervision, Mr. Ould Ghadda was liable to imprisonment of 10 to 20 years if convicted. The Committee called on the Mauritanian authorities either to drop the charges against him or to hold a public and impartial trial as soon as possible, in which case it intended to send an observer to attend the trial.

**The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Mohamed Ould Ghadda.**

## **Senegal**

The Committee also wished to bring attention to the new case of Mr. Khalifa Ababacar Sall from Senegal. Mr. Sall was serving a five-year prison sentence for alleged corruption. The Committee was concerned about judicial irregularities that had undermined his trial in first and second instances, which had been noted by the Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and which gave greater credence to the complainant's allegations that Mr. Sall's prosecution was politically motivated. The Committee hoped that Mr. Sall's final appeal would be independently and impartially conducted.

**The Governing Council adopted by consensus the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Khalifa Ababacar Sall.**

*Ms. M. Diaye (Senegal)* said that more circumspection and parliamentary solidarity was required concerning the case of Mr. Sall. While the National Assembly had indeed voted to lift Mr. Sall's parliamentary immunity, he had never in fact denied the corruption charges against him. Respect for justice, the rule of law and human rights prevailed in Senegal, an esteemed ECOWAS member. The case was still under investigation and a final court decision had yet to be pronounced. The Committee's decision was therefore premature.

## **Uganda**

In Uganda, five members of Parliament had been violently arrested on 14 August 2018, together with 29 other people, in the district of Arua, after President Yoweri Museveni's convoy was reportedly pelted with stones. According to credible reports, two of the parliamentarians had been tortured by the security forces and all five had been expeditiously charged with treason, which in Uganda carried the death penalty.

The Committee commended the Parliament of Uganda, and its Speaker, for its swift and decisive action to establish the facts, condemn the torture and other serious violations of the rights of members of parliament, and demand immediate accountability.

The Committee shared the Parliament's concern at the lack of accountability of the security officers responsible. It concurred with the Parliament of Uganda that an attack against an individual member of parliament was an attack against the entire house of parliament and that impunity affected the ability of parliament to fulfil its role as an independent democratic institution.

It therefore urged all branches of power to respect and protect the rights of parliamentarians. It wished to send a delegation to Uganda as soon as possible to meet with all the relevant authorities and the five parliamentarians affected in the case. It trusted that the Parliament of Uganda would authorize the mission promptly and hoped that all three branches of power would cooperate so that the mission could contribute to finding solutions. It also proposed to send an observer to monitor the parliamentarians' trial to ensure that due process was respected.

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

## EUROPE

### Russian Federation

At the current session, the Committee had also examined for the first time a complaint concerning a United States travel ban against 18 current and former Russian parliamentarians. The complainant considered the ban to be a unilateral coercive measure that violated the fundamental rights of parliamentarians as it prevented them from exercising their duties. The Committee, which had a very specific mandate, had concluded that the complaint did not concern a violation of human rights but rather raised important matters affecting the conduct of international parliamentary diplomacy, which would merit further discussion by the IPU Executive Committee.

**Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland)** said she was surprised that the Committee should have drawn such a conclusion insofar as the imposition of individual sanctions on parliamentarians entailed a breach of their fundamental human right to freedom of movement, with disastrous repercussions on their ability to perform their parliamentary activities. Citing the Minsk Declaration adopted in 2017 by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which called on participating States to guarantee and safeguard, at all times, the rights of parliamentarians to fully exercise their mandate, she called on the Committee to review its decision instead of merely referring the matter to the Executive Committee.

**Mr. K. Kosachev (Russian Federation)** said that he was among the group of Russian parliamentarians recently placed, without explanation, on the United States Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List. Having no connections of any kind with the United States, he saw no reason for his inclusion on the List other than his status as a member of the Russian Parliament. The human rights implications extended far beyond a simple travel ban; his listing alongside the likes of terrorists and drug traffickers was immensely damaging to his personal and professional reputation. United States persons were furthermore prohibited from dealing with anyone on the List, which undoubtedly also contained the names of parliamentarians from other countries.

He therefore advocated reaffirmation of the statement endorsed by the Governing Council at its 197<sup>th</sup> session in October 2015, in which the President of the IPU had reiterated "the IPU's firm belief in the value of open and unrestricted dialogue between parliamentarians from different political, economic and social systems as a means of promoting understanding and resolving differences" and could not "agree with the use, by any country, of political visa sanctions aimed at members of parliament duly designated by their parliaments to attend IPU meetings".

He called on the Executive Committee to discuss the matter further in the light of that statement and hoped that the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians would also take up the issue from the human rights perspective. The IPU must condemn the imposition of individual sanctions on parliamentarians as a practice that conflicted with the values it upheld.

**The President** proposed in response that the Governing Council should reaffirm the IPU presidential statement quoted by Mr. Kosachev; that the Executive Committee should take up the suggestion of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians to discuss the matter further; and that the IPU should explore possible measures for ensuring that IPU Members enjoyed the same non-discriminatory visa regimes as those applied to delegates participating in United Nations and other international conferences around the world.

**It was so agreed.**

**A delegate from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that the IPU must indeed reject all unilateral measures that ran counter to the Charter of the United Nations and human rights instruments.

### Turkey

**Ms. D. Solórzano (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), Vice-President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians**, resuming her report, said that there was regrettably no progress to report in Turkey. The Committee was monitoring the situation of the members of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), almost all of whom were accused of being terrorists or of supporting terrorists since the peace process between the Turkish Government and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) had broken down in 2015.

Hundreds of trials were ongoing. Some parliamentarians had received prison sentences and lost their parliamentary mandate. Ten members and former members were still detained. Many had obtained or were seeking political asylum abroad. The Committee had very serious concerns about the fairness of the proceedings and about violations of freedom of expression and freedom of association. An IPU observer had been able to follow the trial proceedings in the case of one of the parliamentarians.

The Turkish authorities denied the allegations and asserted that there was no HDP witch-hunt in Turkey, no Kurdish issue and no conflict in south-eastern Turkey. In their view, they were facing a major terrorism threat from the PKK and considered that the members of the HDP supported and praised the PKK violent actions. They fully trusted the independence of their judiciary to handle the matter.

The Committee had long asked for a fact-finding mission to Turkey. At the last Assembly, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey had finally approved its request. The mission had been cancelled, however, due to the early elections held in June. Since that time, the Parliament had failed to provide the Committee with a response.

The Committee deeply regretted that the Turkish authorities were challenging the objectivity of its assessments but were not allowing it to verify the facts on the ground. It believed that a mission to Turkey would help it to better understand the situation. It was also convinced that its mission could be successful only if it were allowed to meet with the parliamentarians in prison and with the judicial authorities. It therefore continued to urge the Turkish authorities to authorize its mission on that basis.

Lastly, the Committee addressed its sincere thanks to IPU Members, such as the Nordic parliaments, and many individual parliamentarians, who had informed it of the actions they had undertaken to express parliamentary solidarity in the present case and to seek the resolution of the case.

**The President** said that, as she had stated earlier, a mission to Turkey had already been agreed in principle. In addition to herself, it would include members of both the Executive Committee and the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

**A delegate from Turkey** expressed disappointment that the Committee appeared to have accepted the complainant's allegations as statements of fact while largely overlooking the abundance of information provided to it by her delegation, which included members of all political parties in Turkey. The Committee's report begged the question of what activities were considered to be within the rights of parliamentarians. Clearly, the right to freedom of expression did not extend to the incitement of violence or terrorism. Her delegation would continue to work with the IPU in the hope of progress and had indeed been heartened by the IPU's support for the Turkish Parliament when attacked by the Fethullah Gülen movement, a recognized terrorist organization, for there was nothing more important than the right to life.

**A delegate from Denmark** said that, in violation of Turkish law and despite written assurances from the Turkish authorities, Danish representatives had been prevented from observing trials, including that of Mr. Selahattin Demirtaş. He therefore hoped that future trial observation missions would not encounter similar restrictions on their entry to the Turkish courts.

**Ms. D. Solórzano (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), Vice-President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians**, said that the Committee welcomed the news concerning the organization of a mission to Turkey and looked forward to meeting with all parties in order to ascertain the facts of the cases before it.

**A delegate from Turkey** said that she and her parliamentary colleagues would work to ensure the smoothness of trial observations but that final decisions on court-related matters lay with the Ministry of Justice.

**The President** said that the agreement to the mission was a positive step forward and also boded well for the success of future trial observation missions.

**The Governing Council adopted by consensus the draft decision relating to the case of 60 Turkish parliamentarians.**



## AMERICAS

### Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

**Ms. D. Solórzano (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), Vice-President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians**, said that, in compliance with Rule 10 of the Rules of the Committee, another Committee member had been designated to report on the case concerning parliamentarians who were nationals of her country.

**Ms. A. Jerkov (Serbia), member of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians**, continuing the report on that basis, said that the Committee was deeply concerned about the apparent impunity with which opposition members of the National Assembly had been and continued to be repressed. Such intimidation ranged from physical attacks, arbitrary arrests and detention, politically motivated proceedings, lack of respect for parliamentary immunity, the arbitrary revocation and suspension of parliamentary mandates, and the arbitrary confiscation of passports. The Committee urged the authorities to stop such harassment.

The Committee also remained deeply concerned about the continued efforts to undermine the Venezuelan National Assembly. It urged the relevant authorities to respect the National Assembly's powers and to provide it with the necessary funding.

There were many individual situations of concern in Venezuela, but if the Committee had to mention one, it would be the situation of Mr. Juan Requesens, who was currently in detention. His case was yet another example of total disregard for parliamentary immunity. There were serious indications that he may have been drugged to testify against himself. The Committee was also concerned about the fact that he was kept at the headquarters of the intelligence services and in poor conditions, with very limited contact, if any, with his family. The Committee urged the authorities to address those matters without delay and to inform it of the facts that supported the charges against him.

Lastly, the Committee believed that the human rights mission to Venezuela remained more urgent than ever. It urged the authorities finally to accept the mission it had been requesting since 2013.

**Mr. J.J. Marín Laya (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)** said that he was a member of the Venezuelan Bloque de la Patria and the United Socialist Party, both of which were fully committed to dialogue in support of the rights of the Venezuelan people. The country's dire food and medicine shortages had been prompted by the illegal blockade imposed on the nation, which was also threatened with United States military action. He welcomed the prospect of an IPU mission to Venezuela so as to enable the Committee, through unimpeded interaction with citizens on the ground, to draw objective conclusions concerning what he considered to be inaccuracies and omissions in its report. Indeed, the report neither mentioned the release of numerous opposition parliamentarians nor reflected the truth about the violence. It also relied on baseless complaints. He therefore rejected the Committee's report and the related draft decision.

**Mr. N. Evans (United Kingdom)** said it was curious that an oil-rich country should have such rampant inflation and citizens fleeing in their millions. While there was ample video evidence to portray the reality of the situation in Venezuela, it was important for the IPU to gauge that situation on the ground for itself. The IPU stood for democracy, which was currently lacking in Venezuela, where legitimate parliamentarians had been side-lined by the Government and remained without pay for three years. Those of them attending the Assembly had required assistance to do so, which was an act of bravery in view of the consequences that might await them on their return home. He called for concerted efforts to ensure that the rights of legitimate parliamentarians were upheld.

**The President** said that she had recently had an encouraging meeting with members of the Venezuelan delegation, with the result that she would be contacting the Venezuelan authorities in the coming days with a view to organizing a mission to the country.

*Mr. K. Kosachev, Vice-President of the IPU, took the Chair.*

**A delegate from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** said that the arbitrary detention of opposition parliamentarians in Venezuela was a violation of their constitutionally guaranteed right to an independent and impartial trial. An IPU mission was overdue and would firmly establish the reality of the abuses to which duly elected parliamentarians were subjected.

**A delegate from Portugal** said that the political crisis, insecurity and lack of basic needs for daily survival in Venezuela had prompted many Venezuelans of Portuguese origin to seek refuge in Portugal. The proposed IPU mission must take place at the earliest possible opportunity in the interest of pursuing dialogue aimed at achieving tolerance and respect for the rights of all parliamentarians as an important matter of principle.

**The President** said that a report on the outcome of the IPU's efforts in Venezuela would be provided at the next Assembly.

**The Governing Council adopted by consensus the draft decision relating to the case of 60 Venezuelan parliamentarians.**

**Ms. M.Y. Ferrer Gómez (Cuba)** said that her delegation wished to express its reservation to the decision in that it failed to reflect the reality of the situation, as the IPU mission would see for itself.

**The President** said that note was taken of that reservation, as well as of those expressed by the delegations of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Nicaragua and Serbia (written statement submitted subsequently).

**Ms. A. Jerkov (Serbia)**, member of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, welcomed the positive developments concerning an IPU mission, which she said would count on receiving the valuable support needed for it to verify the facts on the ground and resolve the cases before it through meaningful interaction with the Venezuelan authorities, parliamentarians and citizens.

*The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.*

## Third sitting

Thursday, 18 October

*The meeting was called to order at 2.55 p.m., with Ms. G. Cuevas Barron (Mexico), President of the IPU, in the Chair.*

Item 11 of the agenda  
(continued)

### ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES

**(b) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians**  
(CL/203/11(b)-R.1)  
(continued)

**Ms. D. Solórzano (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), Vice-President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians**, resumed her presentation of the work of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, and reported on the cases that the Committee had examined in Asia and the Middle East.

#### Afghanistan

The Committee had considered the case of Fawzia Koofi and her sister Maryam, both of whom were opposition members of parliament and advocates of women's rights in Afghanistan, who had been arbitrarily deprived of their right to stand in the forthcoming parliamentary elections. That decision to deprive them of that right had been done without respect for due process. The Committee recommended that the two women should be afforded the opportunity to appeal the decision before the courts. The Committee also wished to send a delegation to Afghanistan to engage with the relevant stakeholders.

**The Governing Council adopted unanimously the decision relating to the cases of Fawzia and Maryam Koofi.**

## **Cambodia**

The situation in Cambodia, which remained very serious, had been under the Committee's consideration since 2013. The Committee had before it the case of 57 opposition parliamentarians who had been stripped of their parliamentary mandate and banned from participating in political life, including Mr. Sam Rainsy – former leader of the Cambodian National Rescue Party - and Mr. Kem Sokha - the leader of that opposition party - against whom judicial proceedings on groundless criminal charges were still ongoing. The Committee was particularly concerned about Kem Sokha's state of health, which had deteriorated dramatically, and about his continued detention under house arrest. It therefore wished to send a delegation to Cambodia to engage with the authorities on the matter. The Committee called on the Cambodian authorities to release Kem Sokha and allow him to reconstitute his political party and to ensure respect for the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

A filmed message from Mr. Sam Rainsy was shown, in which he thanked the IPU for its continuing efforts to defend the 55 parliamentarians from his party who remained deprived of their right to stand for election. As the only opposition party in Cambodia, his view was that his party had been dissolved and all democratically won seats in Parliament had been confiscated and redistributed. As the opposition had been prohibited from standing for election, the ruling party currently held all seats in Parliament. The National Assembly was thus not legitimate and did not represent the will of the Cambodian people.

**Mr. Sem Yang (Cambodia)** said that his delegation rejected the Committee's draft decision and the video message from Mr. Sam Rainsy. It was not within the Cambodian Parliament's remit to authorize a visit from an IPU delegation; that was a matter for the courts. The draft decision as presented constituted a violation of the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign States, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The 57 individuals named in the Committee's draft decision were no longer members of parliament following recent elections, and the case was thus no longer within the Committee's mandate. The Executive Committee should review the work of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians to ensure that it was without bias, and in that spirit a recorded message from the Cambodian authorities, which had been transmitted to the Secretariat, should also be shown.

**Mr. P.F. Casini (Italy)** said that parliamentarians must live in freedom, with full enjoyment of the right to fulfil their parliamentary mandate, travel and engage with their constituents. He expressed his delegation's full support for the work of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

**The Governing Council adopted by consensus the decision relating to the case of 57 Cambodian parliamentarians.**

## **Malaysia**

The Committee noted with satisfaction the progress made in Malaysia, where Mr. Anwar Ibrahim, the former Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister of Malaysia, who had been imprisoned for several years on false charges of sodomy, had received a full pardon, been released from detention, and had returned to parliamentary life. The Committee proposed that the case pertaining to Mr. Ibrahim should therefore be closed.

A recorded message from Mr. Ibrahim was shown, in which he thanked the IPU for its unwavering support and its outstanding achievements in countering authoritarianism. He expressed his continued commitment to the work of the IPU and to upholding fundamental human rights for all, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

**The Governing Council adopted unanimously the decision to close the case of Mr. Anwar Ibrahim.**

The Committee also had before it the case of 16 opposition members of the Malaysian Parliament. The Committee was pleased to note that seven of those parliamentarians were no longer subject to sedition charges or investigations, and it welcomed the progress made towards settling the remaining cases. The Committee proposed closing its examination of 12 of the cases, while continuing its examination of the remaining four cases.

**The Governing Council adopted unanimously the decision.**

### **Maldives**

In March 2018, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians had sent a mission to the Maldives following the declaration of a state of emergency. Positive developments over recent weeks, including the release of all detained parliamentarians, and the reinstatement of the parliamentary mandates – which had been arbitrarily revoked – of four parliamentarians, had met the concerns raised in the Committee's mission report. The Committee hoped that the ruling party and the opposition would make genuine use of parliament as the platform for discussing differences and seeking solutions.

**The Governing Council adopted unanimously the decision relating to the closure of the case of 50 parliamentarians in the Maldives.**

### **Philippines**

Senator Leila de Lima, an opposition member, human rights defender and critic of the campaign under President Duterte to kill drugs users and dealers, had been imprisoned on charges of drug trafficking. The Committee believed that such treatment was an attempt to silence her, and therefore called for her immediate release. The Committee had met with the Philippine delegation to the present IPU Assembly and had subsequently agreed to amend the draft decision with regard to Ms. de Lima's case, deleting the expression of regret that the parliamentary authorities had not responded to IPU requests for information.

A new case had been brought before the Committee, relating to Mr. Antonio Trillanes, who had been arrested and charged with staging a coup d'état in 2003. Although he had received an amnesty in 2010, in August 2018 President Duterte had decided that the conditions of that amnesty had not been met, and had ordered Mr. Trillanes' re-arrest. It was likely that such a decision had been taken in response to Mr. Trillanes' open criticism of the President. The Committee wished to request a visit to the Philippines and that an IPU observer be allowed to attend Mr. Trillanes' trial. Having met with the Philippines delegation to the Assembly, the Committee wished to remove from the draft decision the reference to a lack of cooperation on the part of the Philippines authorities.

**Mr. R. Recto (Philippines)** expressed his delegation's objections to the procedures employed by the Committee, which had led to the unbalanced views reflected in the two draft decisions currently before the Governing Council. His delegation had not been given due notice of the meetings at which the cases would be discussed. It had expressly requested copies of the minutes of those meetings and had asked to be allowed to participate in the deliberations of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, but had been denied both of those requests. It seemed ironic that when Ms. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, the current Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Philippines, had been detained for five years, the IPU had paid no attention to the case. The IPU should take a more consistent approach to its work on the human rights of parliamentarians. An official letter was being prepared, stating the concerns and objections of the Philippines delegation. Given that the Philippines delegation was cooperating with the Committee, the adoption of the two draft decisions should be deferred, pending continued fact-finding and consultations.

**Mr. Chilin Baima (China)** said that the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign States was enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The IPU must uphold that principle.

**The Governing Council adopted by consensus the decisions relating to the cases of Ms. Leila de Lima and Mr. Antonio Trillanes, as amended.**

### **Palestine/Israel**

The Committee had before it three particularly worrying cases of Palestinian parliamentarians being held in Israeli prisons: that of Marwan Barghouti who had been in detention for more than 16 years since his arrest with no prospect of release; that of Ahmad Sa'adat who had been in detention for 12 years on politically-motivated charges; and the cases of 25 parliamentarians who had been apprehended by Israeli defence forces in 2006 and transferred to Israeli prisons, where they had since been held in administrative detention. The Committee

called for the release of all of the parliamentarians, pending which it also wished to conduct a visit to their places of detention. Their imprisonment had not been in line with due process. The Committee urged the Israeli authorities to respond to its requests for a report on the conditions of detention; to cease to repeatedly detain members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, and to end the practice of administrative detention.

**The Governing Council adopted unanimously the decisions relating to the cases of Marwan Barghouti, Ahmad Sa'adat, and the situation of a further 25 Palestinian parliamentarians detained in Israeli prisons.**

#### **Palestine**

The Committee had before it the case of 12 parliamentarians whose parliamentary immunity had been lifted following a decision by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in December 2016 and whose salaries had been suspended on the instructions of the Ministry of Finance. The Committee had also considered the case of Mr. Mohamed Yusuf Chaker Dahlan, who had been deprived of his parliamentary immunity and subjected to arbitrary proceedings. The Committee hoped that the members of the Palestinian Legislative Council would be afforded the guarantees that they should enjoy.

**Mr. Q. Khader (Palestine)** said he wished to give assurances that all parties in the Palestinian Legislative Council had expressed their reservations to the lifting of parliamentary immunity, which was not permitted according to the Constitution. The exceptional circumstances in which the Palestinian Legislative Council operated made it difficult, however, to reverse the decision, which had been taken by the Constitutional Court. Every effort was being made to resolve the situation and to put an end to such practices.

**The Governing Council adopted unanimously the decision pertaining to the case of Mohamed Yusuf Chaker Dahlan and the case of 12 Palestinian parliamentarians.**

#### **(c) Committee on Middle East Questions** (CL/203/11(c)-R.1 and 11(c)-P.1 to P.4)

**Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada), President of the Committee on Middle East Questions**, delivered the report on the work of the Committee, as contained in document CL/203/11(c)-R.1. The Committee had been updated on the situations in Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, and had heard the views of Israel and Palestine on several recent developments in the Middle East region, in particular the announcements by the United States Administration to end all funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the passing of a law by the Israeli Knesset defining the State of Israel as the nation of the Jewish people. The Committee had discussed science as an enabler of dialogue and had heard two presentations: one on the crisis in Yemen and one on the situation on the ground in Jordan. Members of the Committee had concluded that they wished to undertake a visit to the region to heighten their understanding of the realities on the ground, in particular in refugee camps in Jordan.

**Mr. Q. Khader (Palestine)** expressed his delegation's satisfaction with the work of the Committee and its unwavering efforts. He regretted, however, that the Committee had not stated its position on the attempts to deprive UNRWA of resources and on the law adopted by the Knesset defining the State of Israel as the nation of the Jewish people. Both of those issues had a significant impact on the Palestinian people, undermining their rights. The Committee should have issued a stronger message with regard to both matters.

**Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada)**, President of the Committee on Middle East Questions, invited Mr. Khader to take the matter up with the Committee at its next meeting.

**The President** announced that the Governing Council was required to elect four members of the Committee on Middle East Questions. Candidatures had been received from Mr. R. De Roon (Netherlands), Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland), Mr. J.G. Correa (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) and Mr. A.A. Jama (Somalia).

**The Governing Council took note of the report and elected the four candidates.**

**(d) Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law**  
(CL/203/11(d)-P.1 to P.4)

**Ms. M. Haj Hassan Osman (Sudan)**, Rapporteur for the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, recalled that at the 138<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly, a resolution had been adopted on the situation of the Rohingya population from Myanmar. The Committee had held a consultation with representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to discuss the situation on the ground. The situation had not improved, with continued mass migration flows into Bangladesh, which were putting a severe strain on the resources of the host country. Decisive action must be taken to ensure that all Rohingya refugees were provided with appropriate documentation and that the necessary measures were taken to protect them against sexual violence. One in three people trying to cross the border would not be granted refugee status. Every effort must therefore be made to address the situation in Myanmar and provide support to Bangladesh. IPU Member Parliaments should do their utmost to implement the resolution adopted in St. Petersburg. The Committee would conduct a fact-finding mission, and would report back to the Governing Council at a future session. She drew attention to the *Guide to international refugee protection and building state asylum systems: Handbook for Parliamentarians No. 27*, which had been published jointly by the IPU and UNHCR in 2017. The IPU had an important role to play in changing the lives of those who had suffered the most.

**The President** said that the Governing Council must elect five members of the Committee. To date, candidatures had been received from Ms. G.C. Bañuelos (Mexico), Mr. R. Mwewa (Zambia), Ms. A. Vadai (Hungary) and Mr. J. Wilson (Australia).

**The Governing Council took note of the report and elected the four candidates.**

**(e) Gender Partnership Group**  
(CL/203/11(e)-R.1)

**The President** informed the Governing Council that the Executive Committee had appointed Ms. A. Albasti (United Arab Emirates) as Chair of the Group, to replace Ms. U. Karlsson (Sweden), who was no longer a member of parliament.

**Mr. K. Kosachev (Russian Federation)**, Rapporteur for the Gender Partnership Group, presented the report on the work of the Group (CL/203/11(e)-R.1). The Group had examined the composition of the delegations to the 139<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly and had found that of the 145 delegations present, 140 were comprised of at least two delegates. Of those 140 delegations, 21 were single-sex, with 17 composed exclusively of men and four composed exclusively of women. The Group had agreed to consider ways to encourage delegations to include men and women, including the imposition of sanctions, such as reducing the number of votes per single-sex delegation in the Governing Council to one (from two) and to impose a reduction in the number of votes in the Assembly if a Member Parliament was represented by a single-sex delegation for two consecutive years (rather than three). The Group had also agreed to monitor Assembly attendance more closely. It had acknowledged the work of the IPU under the International Gender Champions initiative and welcomed the recent launch of the toolkit on gender-responsive parliaments. The Group had recommended that the IPU should prepare a code of conduct for gender-sensitive assemblies and other meetings. It had discussed how to support the progress of women parliamentarians around the world, and had decided to engage with parliaments in which women accounted for less than 5 per cent of membership. The Group had also taken note of the work of the IPU with regard to combating violence against women in parliament, the study of which had been prepared and published recently in cooperation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). All IPU Member Parliaments should disseminate the study widely and implement the recommendations contained therein.

**The Governing Council took note of the report.**

**(f) Advisory Group on Health**  
(CL/203/11(f)-R.1)

**Mr. S. Jaiswal (India)**, Rapporteur for the Advisory Group on Health, presenting the report on the work of the Advisory Group, said that the Group had been pleased to note the conclusion of cooperation agreements between the IPU and WHO, and between the IPU and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health. The Advisory Group had agreed to review the forthcoming

IPU handbook on women's, children's and adolescents' health, and had provided guidance for the preparation of a handbook on nutrition, which would be issued jointly by the IPU and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), with support from the WHO, the SUN Movement and other partners. The Advisory Group had also welcomed the finalization of a publication on child, early and forced marriage in Africa, which was due to be published by the end of 2018. Lastly, the Group had expressed its support for the proposal to include universal health coverage as a subject item for a resolution to be considered at the 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly.

**The Governing Council took note of the report.**

**(h) Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU**  
(CL/203/11(h)-R.1)

**Ms. M. Osoru (Uganda)**, President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU, presented the report on the work of the Forum. The Forum had monitored youth participation rates in the present IPU Assembly, which remained low; 65 per cent of delegations included one young parliamentarian. Assessing the situation of youth participation globally, the Forum had noted that only two per cent of the world's parliamentarians were under the age of 30. The time had therefore come to move from words to action and the Forum was therefore calling for an international target for youth representation in parliament. Taking into consideration the fact that youth populations as a proportion of the whole population varied from country to country, and following advice from academic experts, the Forum was proposing three targets for national parliaments to achieve by 2035: 1) a minimum of 15 per cent of parliamentarians under the age of 30; 2) a minimum of 35 per cent of parliamentarians under the age of 40; and 3) a minimum of 45 per cent of parliamentarians under the age of 45. Those targets, which should also be gender equal, would encourage parliaments to develop strategies to enhance youth participation. The Fifth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, which would be held in Azerbaijan in December 2018, was the next major international meeting on the calendar for young parliamentarians.

**The Governing Council took note of the report.**

**(i) High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism**  
(CL/203/11(i)-R.1)

**Ms. A. Al Qubaisi (United Arab Emirates)**, Chairperson of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, recalled that the High-Level Advisory Group had been established at the instruction of the Governing Council at its 201<sup>st</sup> session in St. Petersburg in 2017, and that despite a lack of agreement on its composition and Terms of Reference, had been mandated to continue its work by the Governing Council at its 202<sup>nd</sup> session. The Group had therefore held its third meeting on 14 October 2018, in which it had provided feedback on the draft trilateral agreement between the IPU, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Office on Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT). It was hoped that the agreement would be concluded by the end of 2018. The Group had been apprised of the table of pledges of cash or in-kind contributions for supporting its work, and had been informed that the United Nations had agreed to provide at least 50 per cent of the funding required for any joint programmes.

Members of the Group had heard an update on planned activities and events, including a global parliamentary summit on counter-terrorism to be held in 2019, organized jointly by the IPU and the United Nations. The summit would be used to launch a global parliamentary network to share knowledge, information and best practices on counter-terrorism as a platform to foster cooperation between national parliaments. It would be made easily accessible through a web-based platform, including a database of counter-terrorism legislation. Regional capacity-building workshops would be organized, including on flows of foreign terrorist fighters and on preventing radicalization. In September 2018, the Chairperson had met with Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the UNOCT, who had expressed his support for the work of the Advisory Group and his Office's keenness to cooperate at every level.

During the present Assembly, an interactive side event had been held on the role of parliaments in combating terrorism and violent extremism, including a panel discussion in which participants had been briefed on the counter-terrorism work of various United Nations agencies and other international organizations. Presentations had also been given on trends in terrorism and on the cultural misuse of terrorism, and real stories and experiences had been shared by victims of terrorism, including two young people who had survived abduction by Boko Haram. Terrorism knew no borders and no religion and could only be eliminated by joint action and a spirit of solidarity.

**A short film was shown, illustrating the role and activities of the IPU with regard to counter-terrorism.**

*The President* said that in reviewing the terms of reference of the Advisory Group, the Executive Committee had decided to expand the Group's membership to 21 members, who rather than being appointed, would be nominated by the geopolitical groups. If approved by the Governing Council, the new Terms of Reference would come into effect at the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly. The Executive Committee had recommended that the Governing Council should allow the Group to continue its work in its present composition until the next Assembly. The geopolitical groups would thus be requested to submit their candidatures for membership of the Advisory Group at the 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly.

*Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal)*, supported by *Mr. I. MacDonald (Australia)* said that while he agreed that the High-Level Advisory Group was necessary, its Terms of Reference still required further refinement. The agenda of the Group should be drawn up by the Group Chairperson in consultation with the Secretary General of the IPU, not vice versa as was currently stipulated. The Advisory Group should have the status of a sub-committee of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, rather than being a subsidiary of the Governing Council, to broaden its membership further. The Twelve Plus Group had been ready to submit its candidatures but had been informed that its nominations would not be required until the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly. The Group's activities should therefore be suspended until its proper composition had been established.

*The President* explained that the Twelve Plus Group had been the only geopolitical group that had met since the Executive Committee had issued the revised draft Terms of Reference with the proposed new rules for the composition of the Advisory Group. The other geopolitical groups would therefore be unable to consider their nominations until the next Assembly.

*Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland)* commended the Chairperson of the High-Level Advisory Group for her excellent leadership and proposed deleting the reference to Article 21(f) of the IPU Statutes from the Group's revised draft Terms of Reference.

*Mr. K. Kosachev (Russian Federation)*, supported by *Mr. A.A. Jama (Somalia)*, *Mr. A. Abdel Aal (Egypt)* and *Mr. M. Alghanim (Kuwait)*, said that interrupting the Advisory Group's work until its new membership had been elected would be tantamount to dissolving it, and would result in the loss of more than six months of activity. The Advisory Group should therefore continue to function with its current composition under the chairmanship of Ms. Al Qubaisi. The proposed revisions to the draft Terms of Reference constituted an improvement; as revised, the Terms of Reference were more transparent and inclusive.

*Ms. Al Qubaisi (United Arab Emirates), Chairperson of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism*, said that the Group was working effectively and in a dedicated manner, despite the challenges before it. Violent extremism was on the rise and must be addressed as a matter of extreme urgency; a hiatus in the work of the Advisory Group would be detrimental to its productivity and effectiveness. She urged the Governing Council to therefore allow the Group to continue its work, and called for an effective transition plan to allow the existing and new members of the Group to work together to ensure that the Group's work could proceed without disruption.

**The Governing Council approved the proposed revised draft Terms of Reference of the High-Level Advisory Group.**

*Mr. R. del Picchia (France)* said that there seemed to be a clear majority in favour of allowing the Advisory Group to continue its work. All geopolitical groups should prepare their nominations for membership of the Group by the next IPU Assembly.

**It was so agreed.**



Item 12 of the agenda

**140<sup>th</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY**

**The President** said that the Parliament of Argentina had informed the IPU that it was no longer in a position to host the 140<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly. An alternative offer had been received from the Parliament of Qatar. On examining the offer, the Executive Committee had agreed that two criteria should be met: the financial capacity to host the meeting outside Geneva; and visa guarantees to allow members of all delegations to participate. The Executive Committee therefore recommended that the Governing Council should approve the offer in principle, pending a favourable report of the technical exploratory mission to ensure that the requisite facilities were in place and that the aforementioned visa guarantees had been received from the Qatari authorities.

**It was so agreed.**

**Mr. N. Anzour (Syrian Arab Republic)** requested that due note be taken of his delegation's reservations to that decision. Qatar had funded terrorism and thereby contributed to the suffering of millions of civilians. As representatives of the Syrian people, his parliament could not turn a blind eye to the crimes committed by Qatar against the Syrian Arab Republic.

**Mr. A. Al Mahmoud (Qatar)**, thanking the Governing Council for its support, said that he hoped the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Doha would afford an opportunity for the world's parliamentarians to learn more about the people and culture of Qatar. Every effort would be made to ensure the successful and smooth running of the Assembly and to ensure that all needs would be met.

**Mr. N. Evans (United Kingdom)** expressed his delegation's appreciation to the Parliament of Qatar for stepping in to host the 140<sup>th</sup> Assembly at the last moment.

Item 13 of the agenda

**FUTURE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MEETINGS**

(CL/203/13-P.1)

**(a) Statutory Meetings**

**The President** announced that the Parliament of Serbia had offered to host the 141<sup>st</sup> IPU Assembly in Belgrade in October 2019. The Executive Committee recommended that that the Governing Council should accept that offer in principle, pending a favourable report of the technical exploratory mission to ensure that the requisite facilities were in place and that the appropriate visa guarantees had been received from the Serbian authorities.

**It was so agreed.**

**Mr. M. Mijatovic (Serbia)** thanked the Governing Council with entrusting his Parliament to host the 141<sup>st</sup> IPU Assembly.

**The Secretary General** added that despite the change of venue for the 140<sup>th</sup> and 141<sup>st</sup> Assemblies, the dates of the two sessions would remain unchanged. Provided the findings of the two technical exploratory missions were favourable no further action by the Governing Bodies would be required.

**(b) Specialized meetings and other events**

**The Secretary General**, drawing attention to the table of forthcoming specialized meetings contained in document CL/203/13-P.1, said that the Governing Council had already approved most of the meetings listed, and the necessary funds had been set aside. A potential meeting of Speakers of Parliament during the next G20 Summit, which was due to take place in Japan, had not been included in the schedule, but could be added pending the result of consultations in April 2019. Regarding the Sixth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, a date and place were still to be set; a hosting offer had been received from Georgia for 2020.

**The Governing Council approved the proposed schedule of specialized meetings.**

Item 14 of the agenda

**APPOINTMENT OF TWO INTERNAL AUDITORS FOR 2019**  
(cf Rule 41 of the Governing Council)  
(CL/203/14-P.1)

**The President** recalled that at its previous session, the Governing Council had appointed Mr. V. Macedo (Portugal) as internal auditor for the 2018 accounts.

The Governing Council had received the candidature of Mr. R. del Picchia (France) for the position of internal auditor for the 2019 accounts. In the absence of any comments or objections she took it that the Council wished to appoint Mr. del Picchia as internal auditor for the 2019 accounts.

**It was so decided.**

Item 15 of the agenda

**AMENDMENTS TO THE IPU STATUTES AND RULES**  
(CL/203/15-P.1)

**The President** drew attention to the package of proposed amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules (CL/203/15-P.1), which had been prepared by the Vice-President of the Executive Committee. All consultations on the proposed amendments had been conducted in a timely manner, and all relevant documents circulated as appropriate. All proposals for sub-amendments had been withdrawn. In the absence of any comments or objections she would take it that the Council wished to adopt the proposed amendments.

**It was so decided.**

Item 16 of the agenda

**ELECTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

(cf. Article 21(k) of the Statutes and Rules 37, 38 and 39 of the Rules of the Governing Council)  
(CL/203/16-P.1 to P.3)

**The President** announced that the Governing Council was called upon to elect three members of the Executive Committee to replace Ms. F. Benbadis (Algeria), Mr. R. del Picchia (France) and Mr. S. Suzuki (Japan), whose terms had come to an end. Candidatures had been received from Mr. G. Gali Ngothé (Chad) for the African Group, Mr. G. Chen (China) for the Asia-Pacific Group and Mr. M. Grujic (Serbia) for the Twelve Plus Group. In the absence of any comments or objections, she would take it that the Governing Council wished to elect those three candidates to the Executive Committee.

**It was so decided.**

Item 17 of the agenda

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**The President** announced that a preparatory committee would need to be constituted to prepare the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament. Membership of the committee would be by appointment of the geopolitical groups. Thus far, all but two nominations had been received. Vacancies remained for the Eurasia and Twelve Plus groups. Representatives of the Executive Committee, the Forum of Young Parliamentarians and the Forum of Women Parliamentarians would also participate in an ex officio capacity. The preparatory committee would begin its work in February 2019. In the absence of any comments or objections she would take it that the Governing Council wished to proceed with the establishment of the committee.

**It was so decided.**

**The Secretary General** paid tribute to the work of Ms. Dominique Gilliéron, a longstanding member of the Secretariat, who was due to retire from the Organization and who had contributed significantly to the work of the IPU throughout her career.

**The President** declared the 203<sup>rd</sup> session of the Governing Council closed.

*The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.*