

203rd session of the Governing Council

(Geneva, 15 and 18 October 2018)

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1. Membership of the IPU

At its sitting on 15 October, the Governing Council noted that there had been no formal requests for affiliation, reaffiliation or observer status. Membership thus remained at 178 national parliaments. Discussions were advancing with Kiribati, which was attending the Assembly as an observer, and with Jamaica, with a view to future affiliation and reaffiliation respectively.

The Council was apprised of the situation of certain parliaments and took note of relevant recommendations made by the Executive Committee with regard to each of those parliaments. It was informed of the IPU's efforts to facilitate the participation of the Parliament of Kiribati in the 139th Assembly with a view to future affiliation and of other small island developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean at a forthcoming regional Seminar in the Caribbean on climate change and disaster risk reduction.

2. Financial situation of the IPU

The Governing Council received a report on the financial situation of the IPU as at 30 June 2018 and an updated list of unpaid contributions. As at 14 October 2018, four Members (Dominican Republic, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, and Mauritania) and one Associate Member (Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union) had arrears of two full years and were subject to voting sanctions. Two Members (Honduras and Papua New Guinea) were subject to suspension due to arrears of three or more years. The Executive Committee did not recommend the suspension of those two Members as amendments would be adopted by the Governing Council at its current session concerning the suspension of membership rights rather than suspension of their membership status. The Secretary General noted that long-term arrears were problematic and were regularly followed up by the Secretariat. The Presidents of the geopolitical groups were also encouraged to follow up on any arrears of the Members within their respective groups.

The Council took note that the income and expenditure of the IPU were close to target for the first half of the year and were projected to remain within the overall budget until the end of the year.

3. Draft programme and budget for 2019

The Council received the consolidated budget proposal for 2019. Reporting on behalf of the Executive Committee, the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Finance, Mr. R. del Picchia (France), explained that the budget proposal had been prepared under the supervision of the Sub-Committee on Finance and was in accordance with its guidelines.

The initial draft of the regular budget for 2019 had reflected an imbalance of expenditure over income of CHF 290,000 due to the projected costs of the 2019 Assembly in Argentina, the preparatory costs

for the next World Conference of Speakers of Parliament and the financing of certain activities within the President's vision. Cost savings had subsequently been found which had reduced the imbalance and, in order to avoid increasing Members' contributions in 2019, a provision of CHF 190,000 was proposed to be authorized from the Working Capital Fund (to be used only if required). The 2019 budget included an envelope of CHF 140,000 specifically for priority activities geared towards realizing the President's vision. Mr. R. del Picchia noted that a change of Assembly venue from Argentina would involve a revision of the costs which, in any case, should not exceed the adopted budget.

The Secretary General informed the Council of the efforts to mobilize voluntary funds from external sources. Several long-term funding agreements were coming to an end and their renewal was under discussion. Voluntary funds were important in contributing to the costs of supporting IPU programmes and resources were always mobilized in line with the IPU's guidelines relating to voluntary contributions. IPU programmes were open to all Members and not focused on any particular region.

The Governing Council approved the 2019 budget of CHF 16,187,300. The approved budget and scale of contributions for 2019 are presented here:

https://www.ipu.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019_consolidated_budget.pdf

4. Implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2017-2021

The Council took note of a comprehensive interim report by the Secretary General on progress made on implementation of the eight strategic objectives, as well as concrete actions that Members could take to accelerate their realization, including the hosting of future IPU events.

5. Cooperation with the United Nations system

The Council reviewed the activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system from 15 March to 15 September 2018, which would henceforth be subsumed into the Secretary General's report in the form of an annex. The IPU had also worked together with the United Nations towards common objectives in a range of political processes. A number of meetings had been held and publications produced.

It noted that, among other developments, the UN General Assembly resolution adopted in May 2018 on *Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union* proclaimed 30 June as the International Day of Parliamentarism, starting in 2018. That was a landmark achievement for MPs all over the world.

6. Recent specialized meetings

The Governing Council took note of the results of the 12th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament (<https://www.ipu.org/event/12th-summit-women-speakers-parliament>); the Regional Seminar on *Parliamentary Cooperation for Sustainable Development: Combating Poverty and Promoting Health Care* (<https://www.ipu.org/event/regional-seminar-parliamentary-cooperation-sustainable-development-combating-poverty-and-promoting-health-care>); the Technical Briefing on *The role of parliamentarians in achieving universal health coverage and global health security as two sides of the same coin* (<https://www.ipu.org/event/technical-briefing-role-parliamentarians-in-achieving-universal-health-coverage-and-global-health-security-two-sides-same-coin>); the Third South Asian Speaker's Summit on achieving the SDGs (<https://www.ipu.org/event/third-south-asian-speakers-summit-achieving-sdgs>); the Parliamentary Side Event at the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) (<https://www.ipu.org/event/parliamentary-side-event-un-high-level-political-forum-sustainable-development-hlpf>); the Third Interregional Seminar on *Parliamentary Capacity-Building and Further Implementation of the SDGs: Implementing the SDGs through South-South Parliamentary Cooperation* (<https://www.ipu.org/event/interregional-seminar-parliamentary-capacity-building-and-further-implementation-sustainable-development-goals-implementing-sdgs-through-south>); and the Regional Seminar on the Sustainable Development Goals and Gender Equality for Parliaments of the Middle East and North Africa (<https://www.ipu.org/event/regional-seminar-sustainable-development-goals-and-gender-equality-parliaments-middle-east-and-north-africa>).

The Council took note of initial preparations for the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament scheduled for 2020. The event would not take place at UN Headquarters in New York as the previous edition had, due to visa restrictions on some countries. An alternative venue was being actively sought and an inclusive and transparent process for nominating members to the Preparatory Committee of

the Conference had been completed. The Governing Council subsequently approved the composition of the Preparatory Committee based on the nominations received from the geopolitical groups (see list here: <https://www.ipu.org/sites/default/files/documents/annex-candidates-prepcom-5wcsp.pdf>).

7. Activities of committees and other bodies

At its sitting on 18 October, the Governing Council took note of the reports on the activities of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, the Committee on Middle East Questions, the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, the Gender Partnership Group, the Advisory Group on Health, the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU and the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG).

The Council endorsed the amended Terms of Reference of the HLAG (see <https://www.ipu.org/sites/default/files/documents/annex-hlag-tor.pdf>), aimed at making the Group more inclusive and balanced, and decided to allow the Group in its current composition to pursue its work until the next Assembly, by which time nominations from the geopolitical groups would have been received. The expanded composition of 21 members would be based on the formula used for the composition of the Preparatory Committee of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, i.e. Executive Committee geopolitical group allocation plus one per group.

The Council also approved 19 decisions submitted by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (<https://www.ipu.org/download/5702>), noting the reservations of Cambodia, the Philippines, Turkey and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of, ruling party) concerning the cases in their respective countries and by Bolivia (Plurinational Republic of), Cuba, Nicaragua and Serbia concerning the case of Venezuela.

8. Future inter-parliamentary meetings

The Governing Council gave its provisional approval to hold the 140th Assembly in Doha (Qatar) in 2019 and the 141st Assembly in Belgrade (Serbia) in October 2019 provided that the following three requirements were fulfilled: (1) a favourable technical mission report conducted by the Secretariat on the availability of conference and related facilities; (2) the confirmation by the Parliament of Qatar to absorb all additional costs related to the holding of a second Assembly abroad in 2019; and (3) the provision of guarantees by the authorities of the host countries to provide entry visas to all delegates invited to participate in the Assembly.

The Council approved the list of future meetings and other activities to be funded by the IPU's regular budget and by external sources (see list here <https://www.ipu.org/sites/default/files/documents/annex-future-meetings.pdf>).

9. Amendments to the Statutes and Rules

The Governing Council approved a package of amendments to the Statutes and Rules proposed by the Executive Committee (see <https://www.ipu.org/sites/default/files/documents/annex-amendments.pdf>).

10. Elections to the Executive Committee

The Governing Council elected the following three members to the Executive Committee for a four-year term ending in October 2022:

- Mr. G. Gali Ngothé (Chad) for the African Group;
- Mr. G. Chen (China) for the Asia-Pacific Group;
- Mr. M. Grujic (Serbia) for the Twelve Plus Group.