



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

CL/194/SR.1
20 May 2014

Summary records of the Governing Council

194th session

17 and 20 March 2014

Geneva (*Centre international de Conférences de Genève*)

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First session

Monday, 17 March 2014

The meeting was called to order at 9.15 a.m., with the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Mr. Abdelwahad Radi (Morocco), in the Chair.

A video message from Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, was screened, in which he congratulated the IPU on its achievements and the approaching landmark of its 125th anniversary.

Item 1 of the agenda

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (CL/194/A.1)

The revised provisional agenda, contained in document CL/194/A.1, was adopted.

Item 2 of the agenda

APPROVAL OF THE SUMMARY RECORDS OF THE 193rd SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL (CL/193/SR.1)

The summary records of the 193rd session of the Governing Council, contained in document CL/193/SR.1, were approved.

Item 3 of the agenda

QUESTIONS RELATING TO IPU MEMBERSHIP AND OBSERVER STATUS

(a) Requests for IPU membership (CL/194/3(a)-P.1)

The President said that discussions had been conducted with parliaments in regions where the IPU was under-represented, such as the Pacific and the Caribbean, with the result that expressions of interest had been received from the Parliaments of Guinea, Guyana and Turkmenistan. The Parliament of MERCOSUR in Latin America had also communicated its interest in acquiring Associate Member status with the IPU.

The Executive Committee had additionally welcomed and favourably considered a formal request for membership from the Parliament of Tonga. He therefore took it that the Council wished to approve the decision, set out in document CL/194/3(a)-P.1, to admit the Legislative Assembly of Tonga as a Member of the IPU.

It was so decided.

The President welcomed the Legislative Assembly of Tonga into the IPU membership, which now comprised 164 parliaments as a result.

Lord Fakafanua (Tonga), expressing his pride in the milestone of his country's IPU membership, presented a brief outline of Tonga, the only surviving constitutional monarchy in the South Pacific. With a local population of 103,000 dispersed among 30 of 150 islands and a cultural history dating back some 3,000 years, it was a proud nation that had never been colonized, although it had remained a British Protectorate for almost 70 years. In a paradigm shift and as part of a major political and constitutional reform, its late King had surrendered his executive powers to the common people in 2010. Given the parliamentary commitment to gender equality, the hope was that women would for the first time ever win seats in the second parliamentary elections

scheduled for November 2014. The upcoming Practice Parliament for Women was indeed set to encourage women's participation in the democratic process and challenge prevailing cultural norms. Voter awareness campaigns on gender equality were also seen as key to the success of Tonga's budding democracy. Committed to maintaining cultural values and fostering a representative democracy built on the integrity, transparency and accountability represented by the IPU, his Parliament subscribed to the IPU's objectives and was consequently honoured to join the organization.

(b) Situation of certain Members

The Secretary General informed the Council that, as part of its work under the present sub-item of the agenda, the Executive Committee had considered progress reports on the situation in countries undergoing transition or experiencing difficult circumstances, which currently included the Central African Republic, Fiji, Haiti, Libya and Venezuela. The exercise provided opportunities for adapting, as necessary, the IPU technical support programmes provided to the parliaments in those countries and for emphasizing dialogue and inclusiveness as important foundations of democracy.

The President added that, in its customary discussion of the situation of certain Members, the Executive Committee had observed that many parliaments were struggling in the current times of economic austerity to pay their assessed contributions to the IPU and indeed other international organizations. Three Members, namely Djibouti, Mauritania and Sierra Leone, were over three years in arrears and consequently at risk of losing their IPU membership unless those arrears were settled at the very latest before the next session in October 2014. All Members were urged to make timely payments of their contributions.

Item 4 of the agenda

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

(a) On his activities since the 193rd session of the Governing Council
(CL/194/4(a)-R.1)

The President delivered his report on his activities since the 193rd session of the Governing Council, as contained in document CL/194/4(a)-R.1.

(b) On the activities of the Executive Committee

The President said that most of the subjects discussed by the Executive Committee during its two full days of deliberations would be reported on under other items of the agenda. Concerning the mid-term review of the IPU Strategy for 2012-2017 prepared by Global Partners Governance, the Executive Committee had decided to share the executive summary and conclusions with the geopolitical groups for debate at their respective meetings and would discuss the resulting feedback on follow-up at its last sitting of the current session.

The Executive Committee had decided that the IPU's 125th anniversary should be marked by celebrations on the exact date, 30 June 2014, at the House of Parliaments. Throughout June, the IPU flag would be raised on Geneva's Mont-Blanc bridge and smaller flags would adorn the city's buses. More immediately, a celebratory reception for all delegates to the Assembly was to be hosted that evening by the Swiss Inter-Parliamentary Group. The Executive Committee would also later revisit a proposal that a joint commemorative statement be prepared, in collaboration with the IPU communications team, for use at events staged by national parliaments.

Lastly, the Executive Committee had devoted an entire session to interviewing in camera the five short-listed candidates for the post of IPU Secretary General. After lengthy deliberation, it had decided to put forward for election on 20 March the following candidates: Mr. Martin Chungong (Cameroon, Deputy Secretary General), Ms. Shazia Rafi (Pakistan) and Mr. Geert Versnick (Belgium).

The Council took note of the report of the President.

Item 5 of the agenda

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON
THE ACTIVITIES OF THE IPU FOR 2013**

(a) *Annual report of the Secretary General*

The Secretary General, outlining the content of his annual report, said that the IPU's wide-ranging activities in 2013 were succinctly described in the various sections of the report, which covered work undertaken to: address issues of global concern at the 128th and 129th Assemblies; establish the new Forum of Young Parliamentarians; promote peace and reconciliation in troubled regions and individual countries; defend parliamentary democracy and build democratic parliaments, which the IPU was uniquely placed to do; defend the human rights of parliamentarians, including through more field-oriented working methods; push forward children's rights through such means as birth registration; enhance the IPU's existing credentials as a gender-sensitive institution; advance women's representation; implement the Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments; end violence against women; deepen the relationship with the United Nations; place central focus on sustainable development; drive momentum for change on trade; sustain action on maternal and child health; and maintain an effective response on HIV and AIDS. The report also provided information on the IPU's structures, in addition to a transparent and user-friendly summary of its financial results, while its logo and colour coding exemplified the visual identification policy being implemented under the new IPU communications strategy.

He further highlighted the largely positive progress accomplished in the area of women's representation by citing statistics from the newly launched *Women in Politics: 2014* map, a joint IPU-UN Women publication providing information on women in ministerial positions, parliament and the highest positions of State, as well as on portfolios held by women ministers and world and regional averages of women in parliament. The evident trends indicated that the remaining glass ceiling for women parliamentarians could be broken sooner than anticipated if efforts to ensure women's greater participation in politics were intensified. As to the IPU's own goal of gender equality within its ranks, he was pleased to report that the promise he had made on his election as Secretary General had not only been fulfilled but exceeded in that women now outnumbered men among the IPU staff at each and every level.

The President, noting that the present annual report would be the Secretary General's last, thanked him for the consistently high quality of the reports he had produced throughout his term of office.

(b) *Annual reporting exercise by Members*
(CL/194/5(b)-R.1)

The Secretary General drew attention to the information reported by IPU Members, set out in document CL/194/5(b)-R.1, concerning follow-up action taken with respect to IPU resolutions, Assemblies and other initiatives. The annex to the document additionally contained interesting examples of the impact and outcomes of such action. The information received through annual reporting was extremely useful for comparative purposes and all parliaments were therefore urged to participate in the exercise.

The Council took note of the annual report of the Secretary General.

Item 6 of the agenda

REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED MEETINGS

(a) *Regional conference on "The role of parliaments in conflict prevention and management in West Africa"*
(CL/194/6(a)-R.1)

Mr. J.A. Agbre Touni (Côte d'Ivoire) delivered the report, as contained in document CL/194/6(a)-R.1, on the debate at the regional conference hosted by his country's National

Assembly on the chosen theme. Also to be found in the report were details of the recommendations formulated by participants for the benefit of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the ECOWAS Parliament, national parliaments, governments and civil society.

**(b) Regional workshop for Pacific parliaments on
“Modern parliaments: The Pacific perspective”
(CL/194/6(b)-R.1)**

Lord Fakafanua (Tonga) delivered the report on the two-day regional workshop for Pacific parliaments, held in November in the Tongan capital, as contained in document CL/194/6(b)-R.1, emphasizing in particular the outcome statement setting out key points for guiding action in support of democratic development in the Pacific region and the need to enact gender equality legislation or revise existing laws in order to eliminate discriminatory provisions.

**(c) Eighth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament
(CL/194/6(c)-R.1)**

Ms. R. Kadaga (Uganda) delivered the report on the Eighth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament, held in New York on 12 and 13 November 2013 and attended by 14 women speakers of parliament, as contained in document CL/194/6(c)-R.1.

**(d) Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations
(CL/194/6(d)-R.1)**

The Secretary General reported that the annual Parliamentary Hearing held at the United Nations in November 2013 had focused on the post-2015 development framework over four sessions, as summarized in document CL/194/6(d)-R.1, which had been circulated to the Member States of the United Nations. The first session, building on the Quito Communiqué, had been devoted to the subject of sustainable development as a new economic model and the path to well-being; the second to gender as a linchpin of development; the third to the place of democratic governance among the new goals for sustainable development; and the fourth to the preparation of parliaments for implementation of the new post-2015 development agenda.

**(e) Bali session of the Parliamentary Conference on WTO
(CL/194/6(e)-R.1)**

Ms. N. Ali Assegaf (Indonesia) said that the Indonesian House of Representatives had been proud to support the Bali session of the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization (WTO), detailed in document CL/194/6(e)-R.1, and expressed the hope that its success would promote the WTO's external transparency, including to parliamentarians, as well as provide a strong and effective parliamentary dimension to WTO negotiations. She urged parliamentarians to work for the realization of the significant gains expected across the global economy as a result of the all-important “Bali Package” agreed at the Ninth WTO Ministerial Conference. Parliaments must also continue to play their role of ensuring the implementation of commitments such as those made under that package and carry out effective oversight of international trade negotiations in the context of the post-Bali agenda.

**(f) Briefing on governance as an element of the post-2015 development agenda
(CL/194/6(f)-R.1)**

The Secretary General, introducing the report on a briefing on governance (CL/194/6(f)-R.1) that had taken place as a side event at the eighth session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals established by the United Nations General Assembly, said that the lively discussion had promoted awareness among negotiators of the need to include democratic governance as an element of the post-2015 development agenda. There were three key arguments for doing so: governance was considered an important priority by participants in My World, the United Nations global survey for a better world; it was a comprehensive goal that would generate the critical mass needed for delivery; and it was an end in itself and a reflection of human rights in addition.

(g) Regional follow-up seminar on "The role of parliamentarians in the implementation of Universal Periodic Review recommendations"
(CL/194/6(g)-R.1)

Mr. V.-A. Steriu (Romania) delivered the report on the regional follow-up seminar on the selected topic, hosted in Bucharest by the Romanian Parliament in February 2014, as contained in document CL/194/6(g)-R.1.

(h) Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the 58th session of the Commission on the Status of Women
(CL/194/6(h)-R.1)

Mrs. M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia) said that, as described in document CL/194/6(h)-R.1, the parliamentary meeting had addressed the topic of gender equality in the post-2015 development agenda with a view to providing a parliamentary contribution to the debates of the Commission of the Status on Women. Drawing on lessons learned from the efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals, participants had identified the requirements set out in the document for ensuring, among others, gender-sensitive mainstreaming of sustainable development goals through the legislative and oversight processes. As likewise mentioned in the document, two informal side events had been organized by the IPU around the session of the Commission, at which the *Women in Politics: 2014* map had also been launched.

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

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

The Secretary General announced that a quorum of 130 had been established, in accordance with Rule 33.2 of the Statutes, on the basis of the participation of 258 delegates in the present meeting.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.

* * * *

Second session

Thursday, 20 March 2014

The meeting was called to order at 9.15 a.m., with the President of the IPU, Mr. Abdelwahad Radi (Morocco), in the Chair.

A commemorative video "Reflections on the IPU" was screened, in which IPU Members spoke of the organization's work and achievements over its 125-year history.

Item 16 of the agenda

ELECTION OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

(CL/194/16-Inf)

The President drew attention to the note on the voting procedure for the election of the IPU Secretary General, set out in document CL/194/16-Inf. The voting would be conducted by secret ballot and, in accordance with rule 30.2 of the Rules of the Governing Council, the results would be ascertained by two tellers appointed by the Council. Having decided that the tellers should be members of geopolitical groups with no candidate running for the post of Secretary General, the Executive Committee had proposed as tellers Mr. Z. Sanduka (Palestine) from the Arab Group and Mrs. M.E. Lournaga (Uruguay) from the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean. He took it that the Council wished to approve the proposal.

It was so decided.

The President invited the three short-listed candidates, in alphabetical order, to present themselves and their visions for the IPU.

Mr. M. Chungong, Deputy Secretary General, expressed thanks for the support he had received for his candidature and assured Members that, sharing and understanding as he did their vision of the IPU as an international institution embodying the core values of democracy, dialogue and peace in furtherance of global security, the IPU would be in safe hands were he to be elected as its next Secretary General. In that event, his mission in mobilizing the IPU's resources would be to capitalize on his career experience in the areas of parliamentary affairs, multilateralism and advocacy in order to bring the world's 47,000 parliamentarians to the international forefront; strengthen parliamentary capacities; promote diversity, inclusiveness and equitable access to IPU services; address financing challenges; and further develop the IPU's relations with the United Nations. His institutional memory could also be usefully brought to bear in working with the new future President of the IPU to achieve that mission.

Ms. S. Rafi (Pakistan) said that she was honoured to be standing as the first woman candidate for the post, for which she was well qualified by virtue of the relations she had established with the United Nations system and with parliaments during her term of office at Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), where she had been the first and only female Secretary-General and the first person from an Islamic country to hold the position. Results achieved under her tenure at PGA had included the passage of international treaties and conventions, successful promotion of the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court, and the implementation of United Nations conference agendas. If elected, she would seek to develop work on the rule of law, including strengthening of legal regimes against gender-based violence. Her experience in such areas as arms trade regulation, peace-building, preventive diplomacy, conflict mediation, gender equality and women's empowerment was likewise fully relevant to the IPU's work.

Mr. G. Versnick (Belgium) said that, if elected, he would seek not only to consolidate the gains already achieved by the IPU through the dedication of its staff but also to overcome key challenges, specifically the need to increase the IPU's visibility among the overwhelming majority of parliamentarians not involved in its work, the pressure to accomplish more with only limited resources, and the potential loss of committed Members. Guided by the IPU governing bodies, the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, he would propose to address those interlinked challenges on the basis of three priorities: improved IPU communication, including through new media; more targeted implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2012-2017; and development of a strategy for boosting IPU membership. As a former parliamentarian who had extensively engaged in the IPU, he understood the workings of parliaments and of the organization itself, which he fully respected and admired and to which he was fully committed.

The Secretary General explained the voting procedure described in document CL/194/16-Inf.

A vote was taken by secret ballot, with Mr. Z. Sanduka (Palestine) and Mrs. H.E. Lournaga (Uruguay) acting as tellers.

Number of ballot papers	:	352
Invalid ballots	:	0
Number of valid ballots	:	352
Required majority	:	177

Number of votes obtained:

- Mr. M. Chungong
(Deputy Secretary General) : 199
- Ms. S. Rafi (Pakistan) : 79
- Mr. G. Versnick (Belgium) ; 74

Having obtained the required majority and the largest number of votes, Mr. M. Chungong (Deputy Secretary General) was elected to serve as Secretary General of the IPU for a four-year term, from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2018.

The President congratulated Mr. Chungong on his election, which was a sign of well-deserved confidence, and wished him every success in furthering the IPU ideals of peace, democracy, prosperity, equality and justice. He looked forward to working with him towards that goal and again paid tribute to the outgoing Secretary General and his staff.

Mr. M. Chungong, Deputy Secretary General and Secretary General elect, said that he was deeply humbled by the expression of support manifested in the winning outcome of his first-ever bid for public office. His belief in the IPU had never wavered since his first introduction to the organization, 30 years earlier, as an inexperienced technocrat. The lessons learned from working with distinguished politicians since that time had paved the way for his successful election, which he construed as a mandate for steering the IPU into safer and ever more successful waters.

Expressing profound gratitude to all those who had firmly believed in him, not least his wife and children, in addition to his loyal country, Cameroon, and the IPU geopolitical groups, he pledged to work as a universal Secretary General for the supreme interests of a universal organization and the 47,000 parliamentarians it represented. He commended his two friendly competitors on their strong and legitimate campaigns and paid a special tribute of thanks to the present Secretary General, who had been his mentor, teacher, friend and supporter of his work at the IPU. He looked forward to working with him for a smooth transition on 30 June and to building thereafter on his accomplishments. He likewise extended his thanks to the IPU President for his warm friendship, support and leadership and to the IPU staff for creating a propitious environment for his election success. He concluded with an expression of confidence in the ability of the IPU, in its 125th anniversary year, to meet the challenges before it and the expectations of its Members.

Mr. M. Niat Njifenji (Cameroon), expressing gratitude to all those who had voted for his compatriot, said that he had been explicitly delegated by the Cameroonian Head of State to lend full support to the Deputy Secretary General's election campaign in Geneva. A country of peace, fraternity and understanding between peoples, Cameroon would continue to lend that support to its citizen in his work at the helm of an organization fighting for global peace, democracy and security. He would surely prove himself equal to the heavy tasks before him.

Item 3 of the agenda
(continued)

QUESTIONS RELATING TO IPU MEMBERSHIP AND OBSERVER STATUS

(c) Observer status

The President, announcing that a request for observer status had been received from the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), said he took it that the Council wished to approve the request.

It was so decided.

Item 4 of the agenda
(continued)

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

(b) On the activities of the Executive Committee

The President announced that the Executive Committee had decided to extend the term of the External Auditor, the Swiss Federal Audit Office, for a further three years. It had also designated Mr. Robert Walter (United Kingdom) to chair the legacy Staff Pension Fund and briefly discussed requests concerning the nomination of candidates for the Nobel Peace Prize.

The Secretary General, adding to the information already provided at the previous sitting on preparations for celebrating the IPU's forthcoming 125th anniversary, said that the Executive Committee had decided to convene in Geneva on the anniversary date, 30 June 2014, in order to mark the occasion and also officiate the handover to the new Secretary General. Parliaments were urged to commemorate the day likewise by celebrating the IPU's work in their service, for which purpose they would be provided with official materials, including a pamphlet describing and depicting 10 of the IPU's most significant achievements over its 125-year history and an exhibit identical to the one to be displayed by Lake Geneva around the time of the 131st Assembly.

The Council took note of the report of the President.

Item 7 of the agenda

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IPU STRATEGY FOR 2012-2017

Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada), speaking in her capacity as rapporteur of the Executive Committee on the mid-term review of the IPU Strategy for 2012-2017, said that the Executive Committee had considered the report of the external valuers and noted that a wider, more diverse and more representative sample of views had not been garnered. It had therefore deferred its consideration of the recommendations contained in the report until the geopolitical groups had discussed them during the Assembly. At its last sitting, the Committee welcomed the overall positive findings of the report of the external evaluators, which noted the usefulness of the Strategy as a tool for defining much-needed parameters for the IPU's wide scope of work and underscored the IPU's continuing satisfactory performance, despite limited resources. Looking ahead, the Committee noted that the international community was negotiating a post-2015 development agenda. The IPU was contributing to those negotiations and proposing that democratic governance be included as a stand-alone goal and mainstreamed throughout all goals. It was also proposing that parliaments be closely linked to implementation of the agenda through their legislative and accountability functions.

For that reason, the Committee had decided to defer any modification of the Strategy until the new agenda had been agreed. That would also give the Committee more time to conduct an in-depth evaluation of some of the report's recommendations, while itself recommending that the new Secretary General prepare an action plan for the development of a new strategy for the period 2016-2020 on the basis of the outcome of that evaluation. In the interim, the Secretary General and the Sub-Committee on Finance would formulate an action plan for substantially reducing Members' assessed contributions and raising funds through voluntary contributions and expanded IPU membership. The Secretary General would also outline a budget for 2015 that contained options for lowering the overall budgetary funding from assessed contributions, to be discussed initially by the Sub-Committee in May and again in late June 2014. The Executive Committee would review those activities at its session on 30 June 2014.

The Executive Committee further recommended that the implementation of strategic directions 1 (Better parliaments, stronger democracies) and 3 (The IPU as a more effective instrument of parliamentary cooperation) be prioritized in the preparation of budgets for the coming years. Within strategic direction 1 and with specific reference to objective 1 (Strengthen democracy through parliaments), it encouraged parliaments and development partners to emulate the IPU's pioneering role in providing support to the Parliament of Myanmar. The IPU's work with the United Nations was another budgeting priority, particularly in the light of the negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda.

Concerning objectives 5 (Build parliamentary support for international development goals) and 6 (Contribute to peace-building and conflict prevention), the Executive Committee called for increased focus on activities where parliaments had a clearly identified legislative and/or oversight role to play in the achievement of specific development outcomes. It emphasized the need to strengthen the new IPU communication strategy and improve IPU management, taking note of the evaluators' recommendations to treat as a means to an end objectives 7, 8 and 9 (respectively: Achieve universal membership and enhance relations with Members; Enhance the IPU's visibility through a modern communications strategy; and Improve operational management, governance and internal oversight). It proposed to revisit those issues in preparing the next strategy and called on all Members to lend active support to the IPU's fund-raising efforts.

The Council took note of the oral report on implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2012-2017.

Item 8 of the agenda

COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM
(CL/194/8-R.1)

The Secretary General drew attention to document CL/194/8-R.1, which contained a brief account of activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system from 15 October 2013 to 15 March 2014. Among others, it covered the IPU's continuing efforts to provide a parliamentary perspective to the post-2015 development agenda; the annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations; preliminary consultations on preparations for the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in 2015; and specific activities in cooperation with numerous United Nations bodies and organizations, such as UN Women, UNDP, UNAIDS, the World Health Organization and the World Trade Organization. As mentioned in the document, a draft resolution on interaction between the United Nations, parliaments and the IPU was to be considered by the United Nations General Assembly in May 2014. Members were therefore urged to advocate with their national authorities for co-sponsorship of the draft resolution in New York.

Mr. K. Graham (New Zealand), taking into account climate change issues and such upcoming events as the UN Climate Change Summit in September 2014, suggested that climate protection or climate policy be introduced as an additional thematic area of cooperation with the United Nations.

The President said that the suggestion would be borne in mind.

The Council took note of the report on cooperation with the United Nations.

Item 9 of the agenda

FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR 2013
(CL/194/9-R.1 to R.3)

The Secretary General, introducing the financial results and audited financial statements set out in document CL/194/9-R.1, recalled that it was now the second consecutive year in which the financial statements had been prepared in full compliance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards, including three newly adopted standards that had inter alia given rise to a 50-year amortization of the interest-free loan offered by the Swiss Confederation for the IPU headquarters building. The balance sheet had therefore been adjusted accordingly. Highlighting the figures that accounted for the total operating surplus of CHF 571,905 and the increase in the Working Capital Fund to CHF 8,414,638 at 31 December 2013, he drew particular attention to the expenditure on strategic directions 1, 2 and 3, amounting to 38, 10 and 38 per cent of the total, respectively, which indicated that the budget prioritization in 2013 was similar to that recommended by the Executive Committee for coming budgets.

Turning to the financial situation of the IPU at 31 January 2014, described in document CL/194/9-R.3, he expressed confidence that the organization would remain on track to meet its target insofar as overall expenditures were already slightly under budget and current arrears so few as to make for the highest collection of contributions in recent history.

Mr. A. Horváth (Hungary) observed that the ambitions for the fledgling IPU had provoked budgetary concerns among founder Members such as Hungary but had been fully vindicated by the IPU's long record of achievements, which continued to prove the organization's worth to its membership. The IPU moreover received the seal of approval from non-political and not-for-profit organizations, as indicated by their contributions to its financing.

Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), Internal Auditor, presenting the report contained in CL/194/9-R.2, which he had prepared in conjunction with his fellow Internal Auditor from the United Republic of Tanzania, highlighted the fact that voluntary contributions had swelled IPU revenues by a healthy 3 per cent in 2013. Expenditure had risen by some 6 per cent, however, while the operating surplus was lower by 40 per cent, due in particular to increases in activities, staffing costs and outsourced services. The IPU might therefore wish to consider developing its activities to the maximum within the available resources and avoid outsourcing as much as possible.

Mr. H.R. Mohamed (United Republic of Tanzania), Internal Auditor, continuing the presentation, read out the conclusions set out in the report, which recommended approval of the accounts for 2013 and stated inter alia that the IPU's sound financial position could be reinforced by additional increases in voluntary contributions and careful expenditure in the furtherance of global democracy and rule of law.

The President said he took it that the Council wished to approve the financial administration of the IPU and its financial results for 2013.

It was so decided.

Item 10 of the agenda

**ACTION BY THE IPU TO STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACY AND
PARLIAMENTARY INSTITUTIONS**

The Secretary General reported that the IPU had continued its work on developing standards for strengthening democracy and parliamentary institutions. Indeed, it had a unique knowledge of the workings of parliaments worldwide that it was able to deploy for the benefit of individual Members, such as the Parliament of Myanmar. In that context, he expressed gratitude to UNDP for its cooperation in implementing the IPU support programme, which had been singled out in the mid-term review of the IPU Strategy for 2012-2017 as a cost-effective model, soon in fact to be emulated in Egypt. Other areas of focus had included the transformation of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians into a more agile body working more extensively in the field in order to further the resolution of cases under its consideration. Efforts had also been directed, with positive results, to the promotion of gender equality and wider application of the Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments adopted at the 127th Assembly in Quebec. Further details of the actions mentioned were available in his annual report.

The Council took note of the oral report on action by the IPU to strengthen democracy and parliamentary institutions.

Item 11 of the agenda

ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES

(b) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

(i) Election of one titular member

(CL/194/11(b)-P.1)

The President said that the candidature of Mr. A.A. Gueye (Senegal) had been received for the position of titular member of the Committee. He took it that the Council wished to elect the proposed candidate to that position.

It was so decided.

(ii) Report of the Committee
(CL/194/11(b)-R.1)

Mr. J.P. Letelier (Chile), President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, presenting the report of the Committee on the cases detailed in document CL/194/11(b)-R.1, said that, at its meeting on 15 March 2014, the Committee had held talks with 11 delegations and sources, whom he thanked for their time; such talks were essential for enhancing the Committee's understanding of the cases before it and for expressing its concerns and exchanging views. He conveyed the Committee's apologies to the Indonesian delegation for having been unable, on account of its extremely hectic schedule, to meet with the delegation as intended. The Indonesian House of Representatives was a valued partner of the Committee, which would certainly welcome the opportunity to meet with its delegation at the 131st Assembly in October.

Following a practice begun in 2013, the Committee had worked hard to establish a database for collecting and sharing information on the cases under its consideration, which currently amounted to 86 cases concerning 270 parliamentarians in 43 countries. At its recent meeting alone, it had examined the situation of 158 parliamentarians from 21 countries. Of those individuals, almost 50 per cent were from Africa, 30 per cent were from Asia, almost 70 per cent were opposition members and 8 per cent were women. Although freedom of expression was a direct or indirect concern in almost each case, lack of due process in proceedings against members of parliament, arbitrary arrest and detention, and undue invalidation, suspension, revocation or other acts obstructing the exercise of the parliamentary mandate ranked, in that order, as the most frequent abuses reported to the Committee. The cases covered by the draft resolutions before the Council focused in addition on other grave crimes, such as torture and murder. The Committee also dealt with many other serious cases that would not form part of his presentation but with respect to which the concerns expressed remained valid.

BURUNDI

In Burundi, the Committee continued to follow a number of long-standing cases of assassinations of parliamentarians that had arisen in the 1990s, during the war. The authorities of Burundi had reiterated their commitment to submit those cases to a Truth and Reconciliation Commission but the process for establishing such a Commission had been marred by repeated delays for over 10 years. Draft legislation finally sent to the Parliament in 2013 had yet to be adopted. Convinced that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was critical to the consolidation of peace, reconciliation and the democratic process in Burundi, the Committee reiterated its hope that an independent, legitimate and credible Commission would be established in the near future.

In the cases of the former parliamentarians of Burundi who had been subjected to criminal proceedings, the Committee was pleased to report that Mr. Gérard Nkurunziza had finally been tried, acquitted and released after being held in pretrial detention for over five years. In the case of Mr. Radjabu, now the only former parliamentarian who remained in detention, the Committee once again expressed the hope that a solution would soon be found in spite of the recent rejection of his request for a retrial. A video message had been received from Mr. Nkurunziza in which he thanked all IPU members for their support, stating that:

"I am honoured to thank sincerely the IPU for the support it has shown me since my arbitrary arrest and detention until my case wrongly brought against me by the authorities in Bujumbura was closed. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to kindly request this prestigious institution to redouble its efforts to bring pressure to bear on the President of Burundi, Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, so as to stir his conscience and release the Honourable El Hadj Hussein Radjabu, who has served more than half of the sentence imposed on him. I thank you."

The video message from Mr. Gérard Nkurunziza was screened.

The Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of 12 parliamentarians.

CAMEROON

In Cameroon, the Committee had been following the case of Mr. Ambassa Zang since 2010. Mr. Ambassa Zang, a former member of the National Assembly, had been accused of misappropriating public funds while he was Minister of Public Works. From the outset, the Committee had been concerned about the fairness of the criminal proceedings. In October 2013, the Committee had been pleased to learn that the matter was pending before the Budgetary and Financial Discipline Council, a process that allowed Mr. Ambassa Zang to appoint a lawyer to represent him in his absence, given that he had obtained political asylum abroad. However, the Committee was concerned about allegations that due process was not being followed in that Council's handling of the case. It would continue to monitor the case closely in the hope that Mr. Ambassa Zang could be reunited with his family and his home country after living abroad for nearly five years.

The Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Dieudonné Ambassa Zang.

CHAD

In early May 2013, four members of the National Assembly of Chad had been arrested and charged in violation of their parliamentary immunity. All parliamentary groups of the National Assembly of Chad, under the chairmanship of their Speaker, had rallied together in an unprecedented move to defend the fundamental rights of their members. The very welcome news was that, as a result, the case had now been resolved and the members of Parliament had all been exonerated. The Committee had therefore decided to close the case and expressed its sincere gratitude to the National Assembly of Chad for its exemplary action.

Mr. M. Kadam (Chad), sharing the Chadian experience of the effective role played by parliamentary oversight in the promotion and protection of human rights, delivered the following statement:

"Mr. President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. In February 2008, Chad was shaken by events you have all heard of. A famous opposition parliamentarian called Yorongar was caught up in this upheaval and had to leave the country. The IPU assured his return to Chad and has since 2008 worked to secure reparation for him for the injustice he has suffered. On 1 May 2013, six members of parliament were in one way or another charged for their connection with to a conspiracy to overthrow the institutions of the Republic. Two members were apprehended in violation of the parliamentary immunity vested in them under the Constitution. Four others were heard, as requested by the judge, and detained. Comprising 188 parliamentarians from 30 political parties and composed of 6 large parliamentary groups, the National Assembly of Chad mobilized itself. In a show of outcry, all the groups rallied together to challenge this procedure, which flouts the provisions of the Constitution. Once again, the IPU had to come to our rescue and the President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, Mr. Kassoum Tapo, travelled to Chad. As indicated in the document before us, and since the judge has ordered that the case be dismissed, today we would like to take this opportunity to thank the IPU for being by our side until this case was closed. Today, by virtue of this dismissal, our colleagues are free. I would like to emphasize that two of them were not prosecuted. This is a clear example of international solidarity to which the Parliament of Chad signed up in 2011, which it did well to do. I just wanted to share with this Assembly this act of international solidarity. I would like to conclude, as we unfortunately mentioned the Central African Republic, by citing one of its former politicians who cried out "Vae soli: Woe be unto him who is alone". That is why, dear friends, we really think that the IPU is an instrument for us; it is an organization that is at our side because the protection of human rights is the best shared thing in the world. We absolutely want to bear witness to that. Thank you."

The Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of five parliamentarians.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Committee continued its examination of 5 cases concerning a total of 33 members and former members of the National Assembly. It was particularly concerned by the lack of progress in the case of Mr. Diomi Ndongala in that no steps had been taken by the authorities to resolve the case, despite recommendations to that effect adopted after national political consultations held in September 2013. On a more positive note, the Committee had been informed that Mr. Muhindo Nzangi, who like Mr. Ndongala remained in detention, was eligible for political amnesty under a recent amnesty law and that the Speaker of the National Assembly had pledged to do all in his power to ensure that he was granted amnesty. Outstanding concerns remained in other cases: the Committee was deeply concerned about the security situation of Mr. Mythondeke and called upon the competent authorities to ensure his safety and that of his family. In the case of Mr. Chalupa, the Committee was gratified to report that he had received a presidential pardon and was released. It remained concerned about the deprivation of Mr. Chalupa's Congolese nationality, however, and urged the Congolese authorities to take appropriate measures to resolve that last pending issue in the case.

The Council unanimously adopted the four draft resolutions relating to, respectively the case of Mr. Pierre Jacques Chalupa, the case of Mr. Eugène Diomi Ndongala, the case of Mr. Dieudonné Bakungu Mythondeke and the case of Mr. Muhindo Nzangi.

ZAMBIA

The first-ever case of alleged violations of human rights against several Zambian parliamentarians revolved primarily around respect for freedom of association of parliamentarians. The Committee thanked the Zambian parliamentary authorities for their helpful cooperation, as well as the Speaker's actions aimed at avoiding a repeat of past incidents. The Zambian parliamentary authorities had accepted the Committee's offer for a future mission, an initiative aimed at providing a better understanding of the complexities of the case, shedding light on the many questions surrounding it and enabling the Committee to consider the perspectives of all concerned parties.

The Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of 18 parliamentarians.

ZIMBABWE

In Zimbabwe, the cases of Mr. Sikhala, Mr. Madzore and Mr. Chamisa had been under consideration for years. Mr. Sikhala and Mr. Madzore had both been tortured by police officers and Mr. Chamisa had been beaten up by State security agents in full view of police officers, who had not reacted. Although all perpetrators had been clearly identified, the authorities of Zimbabwe had not only failed to take effective action to hold to account the State officials responsible but had also promoted some of those officials and disregarded all attempts by the victims to obtain justice and reparation. The Committee had concluded that the Parliament of Zimbabwe had equally failed to exercise its oversight function effectively and to fulfil its duty to ensure the protection of its members.

However, the Committee was unable to continue its examination of the cases of Mr. Madzore and Mr. Chamisa and had therefore decided to close them in the absence of response from the sources in the cases to the communications addressed to them for an extended period of time. It nevertheless underscored that the decision in no way diminished the imperative for the authorities to hold to account the perpetrators in all three cases and that it would continue to pursue the case of Mr. Sikhala.

The Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of three parliamentarians.

COLOMBIA

In the case in Colombia involving Mr. Galán, the Committee welcomed developments in the pursuit of justice in bringing his murderers to account but was nevertheless concerned about judicial delays with regard to some suspects allegedly involved in the crime. The Committee had also addressed the extremely grave issue of the assassination of members of the Unión Patriótica.

While welcoming progress made in the case of Mr. Manuel Cepeda, it nevertheless remained deeply concerned at the lack of progress in some of the other murder cases.

Impunity must not prevail in Colombia, a timely lesson considering the Committee's third case in the country, where very serious threats had been made against current members of parliament, in particular Mr. Iván Cepeda. The Committee was alarmed at the assassination threats and had underlined the need for the authorities to take all necessary measures to ensure that Mr. Cepeda - as well as all parliamentarians under threat - was provided with adequate security. The historical precedents of assassination in Colombia were too shocking for threats not to be investigated with the utmost urgency.

The Committee was committed to closely monitoring progress in each of those cases, to which end it had proposed a follow-up mission to Colombia.

The Council unanimously adopted the three draft resolutions relating to, respectively, the case of six parliamentarians, the case of Mr. Luis Carlos Galán Sarmiento and the case of five parliamentarians.

ECUADOR

Fifteen years having passed since the high profile murders of Mr. Jaimie Ricuarte Hurtado Gonzalez and Mr. Pablo Vicente Tapia Farinango, the Committee remained deeply concerned that the masterminds of the crime had still not been identified, nor all of the alleged perpetrators brought to account. The Committee welcomed the arrest of one of the assailants upon his arrival in Italy. Noting, however, that he had yet to be extradited to Ecuador, it expressed the hope that he would be back on Ecuadorian soil without delay. In order to ensure that justice was served despite the protracted time since the murders had occurred, the Committee reaffirmed its hope that the Ecuadorian authorities broadly interpreted their criminal jurisprudence to allow for continued pursuit of the alleged perpetrators.

The Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of two parliamentarians.

VENEZUELA

Another first-time case related to 14 members of the opposition in Venezuela. Two of those members had been suspended from parliament and had their parliamentary immunity lifted, with the same fate pending in the case of two others threatened with criminal proceedings, thereby bringing to five the number of opposition members of parliament in the dock. The parliamentary authorities and the source disagreed on the factual and legal basis for that action, including the procedure for lifting parliamentary immunity. While that might be perfectly normal, it was worrying that the National Assembly, rather than the judicial authorities, was apparently taking an active part in bringing criminal accusations against members of the opposition, thus substantiating the view that the criminal cases were motivated by political rather than legal considerations. The Committee believed that a visit to Venezuela could be very helpful in promoting a better understanding of the complex issues at hand and was hopeful that the Venezuelan authorities would soon agree to the visit.

Ms. G.V. Requena (Venezuela), supported by **Mrs. Y. Ferrer Gómez (Cuba)**, **Mr. D. Vintimilla (Ecuador)** and **Mr. A. Romanovich (Russian Federation)**, expressed a reservation to paragraphs 3 and 4 of the draft resolution, which was intended to serve as no more than a preliminary factual report on the situation. The conclusions set out in those paragraphs were thus premature and inappropriate, embodying as they did subjective value judgements. The National Assembly acted in conformity with the Venezuelan Constitution and was committed to continuing the cooperation with the Committee that it had thus far demonstrated by attending hearings and providing requested materials. It was concerned, however, by the breach of confidentiality represented in the leaking of the draft resolution through the social media in advance of its formal submission to the Council. In the light of the inevitably sensitive nature of the Committee's work, the role of such media in those circumstances merited careful consideration.

The President said that the reservation was noted.

The Council adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of 14 parliamentarians.

IRAQ

The Committee had been informed that, in the case of the assassination of Mr. Al-Obaidi, former Vice-Chairman of the parliamentary human rights committee, an al-Qaida affiliate had been prosecuted and held to account. The Committee has also been seized with a new case of extremely serious concern, that of Mr. Al-Alwani, a member of the Iraqiya bloc of the Council of Representatives who had been arrested on 28 December 2013 in Ramadi during a raid conducted on his home in the middle of the night by Iraqi forces. The Council of Representatives had thus far been unable to obtain any information on the fate of its member, who was deprived of any visiting rights in detention and may have been exposed to torture. The Speaker of the Council of Representatives had further confirmed that his parliamentary immunity had been violated. The Committee was deeply concerned about Mr. Al-Alwani's health and physical integrity and appealed to the Iraqi authorities urgently to provide the Council of Representatives with all appropriate information about his fate and fully to respect and protect his fundamental rights.

The Council unanimously adopted the two draft resolutions relating to, respectively, the case of Mr. Hareth Al-Obaidi and the case of Mr. Ahmed Jamil Salman Al-Alwani.

MALAYSIA

The Committee's examination of the cases of two prominent opposition leaders, Mr. Anwar Ibrahim and Mr. Karpal Singh, was especially timely considering their recent conviction before the Malaysian courts. The IPU had monitored both cases very closely, sending a trial observer to both proceedings. Only a few days before the present sitting, Mr. Anwar Ibrahim had been sentenced to a five-year prison term on a sodomy charge. The Committee was extremely concerned about the outcome of his trial, particularly the use of a rarely used law as the basis of his conviction, the rushed manner in which the final hearings were conducted and organized, and the accordingly curious timing of that rushed decision, which had occurred in the lead-up to an important election in which Mr. Ibrahim was campaigning. The Committee would continue closely to monitor Mr. Ibrahim's appeal at the Federal Court and hoped that justice would be guided by the rule of law and not by extra-legal concerns.

In the case of Mr. Singh, the Committee was appalled that the sedition act, an antiquated colonial law already committed to appeal by the Malaysian Prime Minister, had served as the basis of a conviction against statements made that fell clearly within the parameters of free speech. It was furthermore deeply concerned that Mr. Singh would lose his seat were the conviction to be upheld on appeal.

The conviction of both those opposition leaders not only violated their own respective individual human rights but also led to the unjust dispossession of the political voices of millions of Malaysians. By condemning opposition leaders, the Malaysian authorities had also condemned the people they represented.

The Council unanimously adopted the two draft resolutions relating to, respectively, the case of Mr. Anwar Ibrahim and the case of Mr. Karpal Singh.

PAKISTAN

In Pakistan, the Committee was pleased to report that progress had been accomplished. It remained concerned, however, that almost two years after the events, the persons who had attacked Mr. Fatyana's residence in June 2012 remained at large, even though their identities were known to the competent authorities. The Committee appreciated that the Parliament of Pakistan continued to monitor the case and wished to be kept informed of any developments.

The Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of Mr. Riaz Fatyana.

PALESTINE/ISRAEL

The Committee had examined all the cases concerning Palestinian parliamentarians detained or imprisoned by Israeli authorities. In the cases of Mr. Marwan Barghouti and Mr. Ahmad Sa'adat, the Committee regretted that it had nothing new to report. In addition to calling for their release and reaffirming the view that their trials did not meet fair trial standards, the Committee also expressed its concern that the Israeli authorities had continued to deny visitation rights, notably with fellow Palestinian parliamentarians.

The Committee had also examined the cases of up to six parliamentarians in administrative detention and two who were facing criminal proceedings. While pleased to note that two parliamentarians had been released, the news was bittersweet in that Palestinian parliamentarians remained subject to renewed arrest thereafter, lending weight to claims that the use of such detention was arbitrary. In light of the Committee's concerns over the practice of administrative detention, the Committee reiterated its hope that invitations to attend judicial reviews of members in administrative detention would soon materialize.

Mr. Z. Sanduka (Palestine), lamenting the practice of re-arresting released prisoners and also that of removing Palestinian lawmakers from their home city of Jerusalem, thanked the Committee for its efforts, which must be intensively pursued in order to secure the release of the remaining Palestinian members of parliament in detention and meanwhile ensure that they enjoyed full visitation rights.

The Council unanimously adopted the three draft resolutions relating to, respectively, the case of Mr. Marwan Barghouti, the case of Mr. Ahmad Sa'adat and the case of 11 parliamentarians.

TURKEY

A delegation of the Committee had been able to conduct an on-site mission to Turkey from 24 to 27 February 2014. The full mission report would be shared with the Council, together with the comments of all parties, during its next session in October 2014. It presently had before it preliminary observations on the mission, which had been fully endorsed by the Committee.

The Committee was particularly satisfied that all the parliamentarians, except one, had been released and sworn into parliament following recent decisions of the Constitutional Court, and it awaited the decision of the Court on the situation of the member of parliament who remained in detention to date. The Committee had noted with interest the ongoing efforts of the Turkish authorities to resolve some of the outstanding issues in the cases. It trusted that appropriate measures would be taken in the coming months to ensure full respect for the fundamental rights of the parliamentarians concerned to a fair trial and to freedom of expression and association.

The Council unanimously adopted the draft resolution relating to the case of 10 parliamentarians.

In conclusion, he paid tribute to the German Bundestag and the European Parliament for exemplifying the principle of parliamentary solidarity in their communications with the Committee. The importance of parliamentary solidarity as a key pillar of the Committee's work could not be understated. When members of parliament were under threat, the activation of solidarity from colleagues not only had an extremely positive concrete impact on any individual case but also enhanced the Committee's mutual engagement and strengthened the role of the parliamentarian as a whole. It was indispensable and could make all the difference in advancing the serious cases under its consideration.

The Council took note of the Committee's report.

Item 12 of the agenda

131st IPU ASSEMBLY (GENEVA, 12-16 OCTOBER 2014)
(CL/194/12-P.1)

The President announced that the 131st Assembly would take place from 12 to 16 October 2014, thus avoiding any conflict with key religious festivals, and said he took it that the Council wished to approve the list of observers to that Assembly, contained in document CL/194/12-P.1.

It was so decided.

Item 13 of the agenda

FUTURE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MEETINGS
(CL/194/13-P.1)

(a) Statutory meetings
(CL/194/13(a)-R.1)

The President announced that, following the Zambian offer to host the 134th Assembly, an IPU mission had conducted a visit to Lusaka in February 2014, as reported in document CL/194/13(a)-R.1, and found the necessary facilities to be in place. He therefore took it that the Council wished to approve Lusaka as the venue for the 134th Assembly scheduled from 19 to 23 March 2016.

It was so decided.

(b) Specialized meetings and other events

The Secretary General said that, as indicated in the list of specialized and other meetings contained in document CL/194/13-P.1, approval was sought for three additional meetings. Aimed at finalizing a set of common principles for parliamentary development practitioners with a view to their adoption at the 131st Assembly, the first meeting was to be funded from external sources, as was the second, namely the first-ever Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians. The budget set aside for offsetting the IPU's carbon footprint and for climate change-related activities would be used to fund the third meeting, to be held in Lima, Peru, in December 2014, which entailed a resumption of the IPU practice of convening parliamentary meetings on the sidelines of global climate changes negotiations and was therefore relevant to the New Zealand suggestion put forward under agenda item 8 (Cooperation with the United Nations system).

He additionally urged parliamentarians to participate in the impending April meeting, to be held in Bolivia, at which a parliamentary contribution to the 2014 World Conference on Indigenous Peoples would be prepared, including through taking stock of the progress achieved by parliaments in ensuring that the right to free, prior and informed consent was observed in every step leading to the adoption of legislative and administrative measures affecting minorities and indigenous peoples, as recommended in the Chiapas Declaration of 2010.

The President said he took it that the Council wished to approve the list of specialized and other meetings.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

Third sitting

Thursday, 20 March 2014

The meeting was called to order at 2.40 p.m., with the President of the IPU, Mr. Abdelwahad Radi (Morocco), in the Chair.

A commemorative video “Reflections on the IPU” was screened, in which IPU Members spoke of the organization’s work and achievements over its 125-year history.

Item 11 of the agenda
(continued)

ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES

(a) **Meeting of Women Parliamentarians** (CL/194/11(a)-R.1 and R.2)

Ms. B. Amongi (Uganda), titular regional representative member of the Coordinating Committee of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, reporting on the Nineteenth Meeting of Women Parliamentarians held on 16 March 2014, highlighted the Meeting’s contribution to the Assembly through its successful proposal of amendments to the draft resolutions of the Second and Third Standing Committees following its discussion of the respective topics. It had also debated priorities for women’s rights and gender equality in the context of the post-2015 development agenda and welcomed the improved situation of women in politics, while at the same time emphasizing the continuing obstacles to women’s political participation. Paying warm tribute to the outgoing Secretary General for having so effectively championed women’s empowerment and gender equality, she expressed the hope that the Secretary General elect would deliver on his pre-election promise to appoint a woman as his deputy. Lastly, she requested that an extraordinary session of the Meeting be convened in June 2014, prior to the Executive Committee meeting, in the interest of a systematic contribution to the work of the IPU.

The President, drawing attention to the list of newly elected officers of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, set out in document CL/194/11(a)-R.2, said that the list should additionally include Ms. O. Timofeeva (Russian Federation) as a substitute member for the Eurasia Group.

(c) **Committee on Middle East Questions**

(i) **Election of one titular and two substitute members** (CL/194/11(c)-P.1 to P.3)

The President said that the candidature of Ms. D. Pascal-Allende (Chile) had been received for the position of titular member of the Committee, together with those of Mr. A. Al-Ahmad (Palestine) and Ms. C. Vienne (Belgium) for the two substitute member positions. He took it that the Council wished to elect all three proposed candidates to those positions.

It was so decided.

(ii) **Report of the Committee**

Lord Judd (United Kingdom), President of the Committee on Middle East Questions, reported that, in a participatory and constructive exchange of views at its meeting on 16 March 2014, the Committee had revisited its mandate and renewed its commitment to facilitate dialogue

between the parties to the conflict. It had also agreed to take practical steps to advance the dialogue by holding round-table discussions with Palestinian and Israeli parliamentarians and lawmakers from other parliaments in the region, as well as experts and civil society actors on such topics as the region's water, youth and gender equality. It had entrusted the Secretary General with developing a detailed agenda for the first session through consultations with the parties involved. Following an informative briefing on detained members of the Palestinian parliament by the President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, the Committee had decided that such briefings should feature regularly on its agenda. It had likewise decided to broaden its future debates, starting with an invitation to parliamentarians from countries affected by the Syrian crisis to discuss with it the repercussions for the region and beyond. The Committee looked forward to working with the new Secretary General towards its concrete objectives and had indeed been encouraged at its recent meetings by the evident keenness of the concerned parties to achieve progress on that score.

(d) Group of Facilitators for Cyprus

(i) Election of one Facilitator
(CL/194/11(d)-P.1)

The President said that the candidature of Mr. M. Sheerit (Israel) had been received for the position of a Facilitator of the Group. He took it that the Council wished to elect the proposed candidate to that position.

It was so decided.

(ii) Report of the Group
(CL/194/11(d)-R.1)

The President drew attention to the report of the meeting of the Group of Facilitators for Cyprus, held on 15 March 2014, as contained in document CL/194/11(d)-R.1.

(e) Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

(i) Election of three members
(CL/194/11(e)-P.1)

The President said that the candidature of Mr. S. Owais (Jordan) had been received for the position of member of the Committee for the Arab Group. He took it that the Council wished to elect the proposed candidate to that position.

It was so decided.

(ii) Report of the Committee
(CL/194/11(e)-R.1)

Ms. G. Cuevas Barrón (Mexico), President of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, delivered the report of the Committee, as contained in document CL/194/11(d)-R.1, which outlined the discussions held at its meeting on 17 March 2014 on the issues of refugee protection, internally displaced persons and statelessness.

(f) Gender Partnership Group
(CL/194/11(f)-R.1)

The Secretary General, speaking on behalf of the Gender Partnership Group, which had not convened during the present Assembly owing to the absence of two of its members, drew attention to the statistical information, set out in document CL/194/11(f)-R.1, reflecting the status of participation of women delegates at the present Assembly. The 214 female delegates in attendance constituted a record number but, at 30.4 per cent, their proportion among the total of 705 delegates, also a record number, was lower than in the past and could therefore be bettered.

Efforts should also be made to further reduce the total number of single-sex delegations to below the indicated figure of 16 and to ensure that single-member delegations, which stood at 14, were no longer invariably male, bearing in mind that sanctions were applicable to delegations for repeated occurrences of those two scenarios.

(g) Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS and Maternal, Newborn and Child Health
(CL/194/11(g)-R.1)

Ms. T. Khumalo (Zimbabwe), Vice-President of the Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS and Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, drew attention to document CL/194/11(g)-R.1, which described the activities of the Advisory Group over the past year, adding that at its meeting on 17 March 2014, the Group had approved a strategic approach to the IPU's work on HIV/AIDS and maternal, newborn and child health that focused on cross-pollinating activities. It had also urged the promotion of evidence-based dialogue concerning the impact of legislation on access to health services, an issue of grave concern that could perhaps be usefully addressed in a dedicated session at the 131st Assembly. The Group had additionally discussed preparations for the parliamentary meeting to be held at the forthcoming 20th International AIDS Conference in Melbourne and had furthermore sponsored a side event on increasing children's access to HIV treatment for children, which parliaments could do much to promote, including with the assistance of the new IPU publication on the subject. Congratulating the new Secretary General on his election, she expressed the hope that HIV/AIDS would continue to hold a central place on the IPU agenda.

(h) Forum of Young Parliamentarians
(CL/194/11(h)-R.1)

Mr. D. Vintimilla (Ecuador), member of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, reporting on the meeting of the Forum held on 17 March 2014, as described in document CL/194/11(h)-R.1, said that the 60 or so participants had focused their discussions on future activities, including implementation of the draft rules and working modalities of the Forum, the provision of a youth overview for input into the draft resolutions of Standing Committees, elections at the 131st Assembly for membership of the Forum's Board, and youth participation in such events as the first-ever Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in October 2014. The three candidates for the post of Secretary General had also informed participants of their intentions for supporting and enhancing youth participation in parliament. Indeed, the IPU was proving its keenness overall to engage young persons in the promotion of peace and democracy.

**Report on activities relating to the theme "Promoting the child's best interest:
The case of migrant children"**

Ms. G. Guevara Espinosa (Mexico), Chairperson of the Migration Committee of the Senate of Mexico, reporting on activities organized during the current Assembly relating to the theme of migrant children, spoke about an organized visit to an immigration reception centre for unaccompanied migrant children in Lausanne. During the visit, participants had been briefed on the administration's work in such areas as data collection, access for migrant children to education and cultural activities, the fate of those children on attainment of majority, and their reintegration in their countries of origin, including with the assistance of a returnee aid fund. An expert panel discussion had also been organized on the same theme, culminating in recommendations for parliaments on various issues, including legislation on access to basic services for all children, sharing of best practices, standards and guidelines for guardians, and enhanced cooperation between countries of destination and origin.

The Council took note of the reports on the activities of committees and other bodies.

Item 14 of the agenda

AMENDMENTS TO THE STATUTES AND RULES

(a) Meeting of Women Parliamentarians
(CL/194/14(a)-P.1)

The President drew attention to the amendments to the Rules of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, set out in document CL/194/14(a)-P.1, which had been unanimously endorsed by the Meeting. He took it that the Council wished to approve those amendments.

It was so decided.

(b) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians
(CL/194/14(b)-P.1)

The President drew attention to the revised Rules and Practices of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, set out in document CL/194/14(b)-P.1, which had been proposed in order to take into account the Committee's new working methods. He took it that the Council wished to approve those revised Rules and Practices.

It was so decided.

(c) Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU
(CL/194/14(c)-P.1.rev)

The President drew attention to the draft rules and working modalities of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, set out in document CL/194/14(c)-P.1.rev, which had been elaborated by the Forum, considered by the Executive Committee and revised accordingly. He took it that the Council wished to approve those draft rules and working modalities.

It was so decided.

Item 15 of the agenda

ELECTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
(CL/194/15-P.1 and P.2)

The President said that the candidatures of Ms. S. Atallahjan (Canada) and Mr. N. Lammert (Germany) had been received for the two positions on the Executive Committee vacated by members who were no longer parliamentarians. He took it that the Council wished to elect the proposed candidates to those positions for terms expiring, respectively, in October 2014 and October 2015.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.35 p.m.