



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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131st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. Opening of the Assembly

The 131st Assembly opened on the morning of Monday, 13 October 2014, at the *Centre international de Conférences de Genève* (CICG). Mr. A. Radi (Morocco), President of the IPU, chaired the proceedings. In his opening remarks, he said that 2014 marked the 125th anniversary of the IPU, a fact that made the current Assembly very special. Also, on a more personal note, he would be presiding over the deliberations as IPU President for the last time.

Mr. Radi said he was proud to have been at the helm of a body that had grown from a handful of parliamentarians, at its inception in 1889, into a truly global organization comprising 166 national parliaments. The IPU had much to be proud of: during his term of office, it had adopted its first ever Strategy, co-published the ground-breaking *Global Parliamentary Report* dealing with the evolving relationship between citizens and parliaments, adopted the *Plan of Action for Gender-Sensitive Parliaments*, implemented structural reforms and established the Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

Yet, notwithstanding the Organization's many accomplishments, he cautioned the participants against complacency. Democracy was very much a work in progress and was clearly ailing, as evidenced by the conflicts and terrorist attacks in many parts of the world.

The IPU was developing a robust strategic partnership with the United Nations and was working on a new cooperation agreement that would place their institutional relationship on a stronger footing. Mr. Radi acknowledged the presence of Mr. Michael Møller, Acting Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, in whom the IPU had a strong supporter.

The IPU President said he was especially pleased with the choice of theme for the General Debate at the current Assembly: *Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women*. That issue had been particularly important to him throughout his term of office. It was telling that, in 2014, gender equality was still an issue open to debate and that no country could claim to have achieved it.

He set the tone for the General Debate by stressing that the achievement of gender equality was a prerequisite for progress, global peace and security, poverty eradication and sustainable development. The unequal balance of power between the sexes provided fertile ground for violence against women, a scourge which spared no nation and which must be strongly condemned and combated. That effort would require a change in mentality and a solid, rigorously implemented legal framework.

Mr. M. Møller, Acting Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, commended the outgoing President of the IPU on a successful term of office and expressed his appreciation for Mr. Radi's firm commitment to partnership and collaboration with the United Nations in the effort to advance parliamentary democracy. He assured the IPU of his full support and welcomed Mr. Martin Chungong in his new role as IPU Secretary General.

He was concerned at the threats to peace and stability in, inter alia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq, Ukraine, Gaza and South Sudan. There was a growing sense that the rules of the game that had been so painstakingly put into place over decades through negotiation and consensus-building were changing and that "might" was starting to equal "right".

The violent extremism perpetrated by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) marked a dramatic change in the terrorist threat, and the spread of Ebola had added another layer of complexity to the political, economic and humanitarian challenges of the day.

The common denominators linking many of those challenges included poor governance, human rights abuses, disenfranchised individuals and groups, injustice and failed leadership, all of which led to an unravelling of the social fabric. As institutions, parliaments represented avenues for the inclusion of views from all sectors of society; and as individuals, parliamentarians could serve as advocates of moderation, agents of empowerment and guardians of human rights and the rule of law.

In 2015, the United Nations would be celebrating its 70th anniversary and the IPU would be holding the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament. A major challenge for both Organizations would be to establish a universal and transformative post-2015 development agenda, a project on which the United Nations looked forward to collaborating with the IPU.

Reaching out to and empowering youth would be critical given the record number of unemployed young people and their overwhelming sense of disenchantment and frustration. He welcomed the theme of the General Debate and made a compelling case for gender equality, saying: “There can be no peace without the full engagement of women – it is as simple as that”.

2. Participation

Delegations from the parliaments of the following 147 countries, including four non-Members attending as Observers with a view to future affiliation, took part in the work of the Assembly:¹

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

The following Associate Members also took part in the Assembly: the Andean Parliament, the Arab Parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA), the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

Observers comprised representatives of: (i) the United Nations system: the United Nations, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the International Labour Office (ILO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UN Women and the World Health Organization (WHO); (ii) the World Trade Organization (WTO); (iii) the Council of Europe, the International Organization for Migration (IOM); (iv) the African Parliamentary Union (APU), the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), the Association of Senates, Shooras and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World (ASSECAA), the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), the Maghreb Consultative Council, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries (TURKPA), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and Russia and the Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Member States (PUIC); (v) Socialist International; (vi) the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the World Future Council (WFC) and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND).

Of the 1,410 delegates who attended the Assembly, 707 were members of parliament. Those parliamentarians included 47 presiding officers, 48 deputy presiding officers and 227 women (32.1%).

¹ For the complete list of IPU Members, see page 29

3. Choice of an emergency item

On 13 October, the President informed the Assembly that nine requests had been received to include an emergency item on the agenda, as follows:

- *Commitment by the parliaments of the world to recognize the rights of the Palestinian people, proposed by Ecuador;*
- *The role of parliamentarians in fighting terrorism and building an international partnership through the United Nations and other international organizations to eradicate extremism and promote cooperation and tolerance among the world's civilizations and peoples as a basis for international peace and security, proposed by the United Arab Emirates;*
- *The role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in addressing the terrorism and extremism of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al Nusrah Front (ANF) and other terrorist groups, proposed by the Syrian Arab Republic;*
- *The role of the IPU and national parliaments in formulating and implementing national action plans to combat all forms of exploitation linked to human trafficking, in particular the trafficking of women and children, proposed by Morocco;*
- *The role of the IPU in encouraging and supporting an initiative aimed at ensuring international protection for the Palestinian people under occupation until a two-State solution is achieved, in the light of the latest Israeli military aggression on Gaza, proposed by Palestine;*
- *Commitment by the world's parliamentarians to promote a multilateral legal framework for restructuring countries' sovereign debt with a view to achieving a more stable and predictable international financial system, proposed by Argentina;*
- *The role of parliaments in supporting implementation of UN Security Council resolution 2178 and international support to address the humanitarian disaster caused by the terrorist attacks in Iraq and Syria, proposed by Chile;*
- *The role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in promoting the UN Charter to resolve conflicts in a just manner and counter the growing threat of terrorism, proposed by the Islamic Republic of Iran;*
- *The role of parliaments in supporting an immediate and robust international response to the Ebola epidemic and in enacting laws ensuring an effective response to and preparedness for Ebola and other infectious disease outbreaks, proposed by Belgium and Zambia.*

The delegations of Morocco and the Islamic Republic of Iran withdrew their proposals before the vote. The delegations of Ecuador and the United Arab Emirates merged their proposal to:

- *The role of parliamentarians in countering terrorism, terrorist groups such as the so-called Daesh and massive violence against civilians and in building an international partnership through the United Nations and other international organizations.*

The Assembly held a roll-call vote on the final list of six items (see pages 43 to 48). The proposal put forward jointly by Belgium and Zambia, which had received the required two-thirds majority and the highest number of positive votes, was adopted and added to the agenda as Item 7.

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

(a) General Debate: Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women

The General Debate was introduced with a short video message from the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, who congratulated President Radi on his excellent service and applauded the IPU's focus on achieving gender equality and ending violence against women. He said that both were central to reaching the MDGs and succeeding with the post-2015 development agenda. The UN "HeForShe" campaign brought together men from all walks of life to end that affront to humanity. He applauded the IPU for advocating greater political representation of women and counted on the Organization to help bring the voices of women and girls to the legislatures of the world.

For three days, the representatives of 116 Member Parliaments, four regional parliamentary organizations and five other Permanent Observers spoke on the theme.

The General Debate provided an opportunity for parliamentarians to exchange views on fundamental questions in order to strengthen their national activities and to prepare a joint message from parliaments and the IPU, given that 2015 would see the establishment of new sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action. Members described the strategies and actions that had been implemented in their countries in order to achieve gender equality and combat violence against women and vowed to become agents of change.

On the afternoon of 13 October, the Assembly heard a video message from Ms. E. Watson, UN Women Goodwill Ambassador, launching the “HeForShe” Campaign. The Campaign was an effort to create a widespread movement of support for gender equality by encouraging men and boys to advocate for women’s rights, support the movement towards gender equality and combat discrimination. After her statement, the IPU President, Mr. A. Radi, and the IPU Secretary General, Mr. M. Chungong, announced that they were joining the Campaign and urged all the men present to follow their lead by signing the pledges that had been made available to the participants.

Ms. P. Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, addressed the Assembly during an interactive debate held on the morning of 14 October. Given that parliamentarians worked on behalf of all citizens and of humanity, she called on them to continue to adopt and implement policies aimed at empowering women, intensify the fight against discrimination, create an enabling environment for women’s full participation in economic and political life, facilitate strict application of the legislation criminalizing violence against women and ensure regular monitoring in those areas. She urged the participants to seize the historic opportunity to ensure the success of the fight for gender equality, including by working to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda included ambitious, measurable targets in that regard. Following her statement, she replied to delegates’ questions on the contribution of the IPU and parliaments to the work of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Those related specifically to the promotion of women’s participation in politics and limitations on the value of mediation in responding to domestic violence.

Mr. M. Paymar, Member of the Minnesota House of Representatives (USA), addressed the Assembly on the “Duluth Model”, which called for a coordinated community response to domestic violence based on the need to ensure the victims’ safety and prosecute the perpetrators. That model was effective and saved lives by ensuring coordinated action by first responders – the police, the civil and criminal justice systems and the medical and social professions – and holding them responsible for implementation of the law. It was urgent to break the silence about our societies, which produced violent men and turned a blind eye to trafficking in children and women, and to convince men and boys to engage in non-violent and respectful relationships with women.

Ms. C. Compaoré, First Lady of Burkina Faso, who had received on behalf of her country a World Future Policy Award the previous day for exemplary policies to combat violence against women, addressed the Assembly on the morning of October 15. Her statement focused on the elimination of female genital mutilation (FGM), a harmful practice that violated the fundamental rights of women and girls and, in particular, their right to life, to physical, psychological and mental integrity and to health, including sexual and reproductive health. She called on the participants to surmount the reluctance to completely ban FGM evidenced by its medicalization and its practice outside the borders of countries that had prohibited it.

(b) Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

(i) *Activities during the 131st Assembly*

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security held two sittings on 13 and 15 October. In the absence of a Committee President, Ms. Z. Drif Bitat (Algeria), Vice-President, took the chair.

At its first sitting, the Committee held a hearing on the implementation of the 2008 IPU resolution on *The role of parliaments in striking a balance between national security, human security and individual freedoms, and in averting the threat to democracy*, which had been adopted in Cape Town (South Africa) during the 118th IPU Assembly. The hearing opened with the statements of two speakers, Ms. B. Jónsdóttir (Iceland), who spoke as an expert on individual freedoms and human security, and Mr. P. Martin-Lalande (France), who focused on counter-terrorism and the effective implementation of paragraph 5 of the resolution.

At its second sitting, the Committee had a panel discussion on *Cyber warfare – A serious threat to peace and global security*, the topic of a resolution that was expected to be adopted by the 132nd IPU Assembly in Hanoi (Viet Nam). The Chair opened the meeting and introduced the experts, who made

presentations on the subject: Mr. A. Cederberg, Geneva Centre for Security Policy; Mr. D. Kerimi, World Economic Forum; Mr. L. Gisel, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); and Mr. M. Obiso, International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

For the report on the Standing Committee's activities during the 131st Assembly, see page 35.

(ii) Election of the Bureau and future work programme

The Bureau of the Standing Committee met on 14 October 2014. It established the Committee's work programme for the 132nd IPU Assembly. With regard to the preparation of a longer-term workplan, the Bureau decided to take time to consider the matter and, in a month, prepare a summary of ideas in order to submit a comprehensive proposal to the Committee at its next session.

The Bureau was informed of the candidatures received for the vacant seats and decided to recommend Mr. J.R. Tau (South Africa) for the post of President of the Committee and Mr. A. Omari (Morocco) for Vice-President. On 15 October 2014, the Committee approved those proposals. Nevertheless, one vacancy on the Bureau, from the Asia-Pacific Group, remained unfilled because no nomination had been received from that Group. Following the election to the Executive Committee of the representative from the African Group, the seat for that group became vacant. The Bureau therefore comprised 16 members (see page 25).

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

(i) Activities during the 131st Assembly

The Standing Committee held two sittings on 14 and 15 October, chaired by its President, Mr. R. León (Chile).

At the first sitting, the Committee discussed the draft Outcome Document of the Parliamentary Meeting to be held in conjunction with the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Peru in December. The Rapporteur of the Parliamentary Meeting, Mr. S. Tejada Galindo (Peru), submitted the pre-draft of the Outcome Document to the Committee for comments. The IPU Secretariat took note of the feedback provided and undertook to incorporate it into the draft document to be presented to the Parliamentary Meeting in Lima.

The first sitting introduced an innovative element: an interactive debate with private sector representatives. The debate focused on corporate investment in sustainable development and was organized jointly with the World Investment Forum of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The participants included Ms. L. Schreve, Head of Sustainable Lending at ING Bank, Mr. R. Milliner, B20 Sherpa for Australia, Mr. N. Boateng, Chief Executive Officer of Empretec, Ghana, Mr. S. Chowdhury (Bangladesh, MP) and Mr. D. Carter (New Zealand, MP).

At its sitting on 15 October, the Committee had a preliminary exchange of views on the subject item of the resolution to be adopted at the next IPU Assembly, *Shaping a new system of water governance: Promoting parliamentary action on water*. The topic was introduced by Mr. A. Iza, Head of the Environmental Law Programme, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Ms. E. Tranchez of Waterlex, Ms. N. Marino (Australia, MP) and Mr. F. Bustamante (Ecuador, MP).

For the report on the Standing Committee's activities during the 131st Assembly, see page 38.

(ii) Election of the Bureau and future work programme

There were four vacancies to fill on the Standing Committee Bureau: one for the Asia-Pacific Group; one for the Twelve Plus Group; and two for the Eurasia Group. The Committee approved the candidatures of Ms. S. Tioulong (Cambodia) and Ms. S. de Bethune (Belgium). No candidatures had been received from the Eurasia Group.

The Committee Bureau met in the morning of 14 October to discuss its current work and its work programme for 2015. The Bureau endorsed the proposal to organize a Parliamentary Meeting at the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, in March 2015 in Japan, subject to the availability of financial resources. It unanimously endorsed its members' activities outside IPU Assemblies, particularly field visits to assess the impact of IPU resolutions. It decided to organize a dedicated session on water governance at the 132nd Assembly in Hanoi. The Bureau members from Australia and Denmark agreed to lead efforts to conceptualize that event.

(d) Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights(i) *International law as it relates to national sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and human rights* (Item 4)

The Committee held sittings on 13, 15 and 16 October with its President, Ms. F. Naderi (Afghanistan), in the chair. At its first sitting, the draft resolution on *International law as it relates to national sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and human rights* was presented to the Committee by the co-Rapporteurs, Mr. A.J. Ahmad (United Arab Emirates) and Mr. P. Mahoux (Belgium). In the ensuing debate, 34 speakers took the floor, of whom 44 per cent were women.

The Committee started its deliberations on the text of the draft resolution in the afternoon of 13 October. It had before it 102 amendments submitted by 14 parliaments (Canada, China, Cuba, France, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Monaco, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom and Venezuela) and five amendments proposed by the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians.

The Committee initially worked in plenary but then decided to set up a drafting committee to pursue its work on 15 October. The drafting committee was chaired by the President of the Committee and was composed of parliamentarians from Algeria, Bahrain, Canada, China, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Jordan, Namibia, Peru, Switzerland, Thailand and Venezuela. The drafting committee considered most of the amendments that were before it, but decided to send four paragraphs back to the full Committee for its consideration.

At its plenary sitting later the same day, the Committee took a decision on the outstanding paragraphs, but was not in a position to go through the entire text of the resolution. That review was deferred to a supplementary sitting convened for the following morning.

At the Committee's final sitting on 16 October, a number of delegations reintroduced amendments that had been proposed within the statutory deadline, but which had been rejected during the drafting process. The Committee was consequently unable to conclude its work within the allocated time and decided to pursue its proceedings at the 132nd Assembly in Viet Nam, on the basis of the text that had been agreed thus far.

(ii) *Election of the Bureau and future work programme*

One vacancy on the Bureau, for a man from the Eurasia Group, remained unfilled, as no nominations had been received during the Assembly.

The Bureau met on 14 October to consider proposals for the Committee's agenda at upcoming Assemblies. It heard presentations from the delegations of Canada, Iceland, San Marino and Viet Nam. After discussion, the Bureau resolved to propose four subjects for the future agenda of the Committee.

At its third sitting on 16 October, the Committee agreed to the Bureau's proposal that the subject of the next resolution should be *Democracy in the digital era and the threat to privacy and individual freedoms*. It endorsed the proposal to appoint Ms. B. Jónsdóttir (Iceland) as co-Rapporteur, and requested the IPU President to carry out consultations with a view to identifying a second co-Rapporteur.

The Committee also agreed to the Bureau's proposal to place the following items on its agenda for the 132nd and 133rd Assemblies:

- Follow-up on implementation of the 2012 IPU resolution on *Access to health as a basic right: The role of parliaments in addressing key challenges to securing the health of women and children*
- Interactive debate on *The Convention on the Rights of the Child 25 years on: Are children's lives better?*
- Interactive debate on *Human trafficking and migration*.

(e) Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs(i) *Activities during the 131st Assembly*

The Standing Committee held three sittings, two on 14 October and one on 15 October, with its President, Ms. D.-T. Avgerinopoulou (Greece), in the chair

At the first sitting, the Committee held an interactive debate with the UN Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, Prof. A. de Zayas. The debate was moderated by the Standing Committee President.

At its second sitting, the Committee held another interactive debate, on the question of corporate influence on UN decision-making. The panel consisted of Ms. P. Bayr (Austria, MP), Mr. J. Kagone, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations Office at Geneva, and Mr. J. Martens, Director of the Global Policy Forum. The panel was moderated by Mr. A. Motter of the IPU Secretariat.

The Committee engaged in a third interactive debate at its last sitting, on 15 October, on the process leading up to the 2016 UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs, which would review progress on the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. The debate was co-moderated by Mr. A. Avsan (Sweden, MP) and Ms. L. Rojas (Mexico, MP). The panel comprised Mr. L. de Alba, Mexico's Ambassador to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Mr. J.-L. Lemahieu, UNODC Director, Policy Analysis and Public Affairs, and Swedish journalist Mr. E. de la Reguera.

For the report on the Standing Committee's activities during the 131st Assembly, see page 40.

(ii) Elections to the Bureau and future work programme

The Standing Committee Bureau had five vacancies, one for the African Group and two each for the Eurasia Group and the Asia-Pacific Group. The Committee accepted the proposals received from the Geopolitical Groups for new Bureau members as follows: Mr. S. Chiheb (Algeria), Ms. E. Nursanty (Indonesia) and Mr. J. Jahangirzadeh (Islamic Republic of Iran) (see page 26). It had received no candidatures from the Eurasia Group.

The Committee Bureau met on 13 October to discuss the Committee's current work and its 2015 work programme as well as the annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations in New York, which would take place on 19 and 20 November 2014. The Bureau decided to gather ideas for the 2015 programme of work and make a final decision at an extraordinary session to be convened on 21 November. It also decided to hold a joint meeting with the Sub-Committee on the future IPU-UN cooperation agreement, on 18 or 19 November. For its sittings at the 132nd Assembly in Hanoi, the Committee had two initial items for discussion: follow-up of an earlier field mission to Viet Nam and review of UN work with parliamentarians, particularly through parliamentary networks and associations.

(f) Debate on the emergency item

The role of parliaments in supporting an immediate and robust international response to the Ebola epidemic and in enacting laws ensuring an effective response to and preparedness for Ebola and other infectious disease outbreaks (Item 7)

The debate on the emergency item was held in the morning of Tuesday, 14 October, with the IPU President, Mr. A. Radi, in the chair.

Sixteen speakers took the floor during the debate. They expressed deep concern over what was one of the worst health disasters in recent history, affecting not only five countries in West Africa (Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone) but also several countries in Europe and North America. They underscored that Ebola was a global challenge and that the international community should therefore act swiftly to combat the epidemic.

Many speakers reiterated the need for immediate and coordinated action to support the countries affected, especially those with limited resources for fighting the epidemic effectively. They raised concerns about the Ebola patients in poverty-stricken communities and deplored the fact that many were dying even before being treated. Several participants underscored the need to isolate the Ebola virus rather than the countries affected, and urged other countries not to impose travel bans.

The participants also focused on the need to develop an effective vaccine and treatments, so as to prevent and cure Ebola, in cooperation with specialized international organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), and with the pharmaceutical industry. Others called on developed countries to help the countries affected develop effective health care infrastructure. One participant called on the international community to make trial medicines available to all countries affected by the virus.

The delegate from Guinea, a country directly affected by the virus, thanked his fellow parliamentarians for having voted to adopt the emergency item on Ebola. He called for further support and immediate action from the international community, underscoring that Ebola was not just a health concern; it was undermining already fragile economies and becoming a public safety issue.

At the end of the debate, the Assembly referred the emergency item to a drafting committee made up of representatives of Belgium, Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Mexico, Sudan, Sweden and Zambia.

The drafting committee appointed Ms. S. Tioulong (Cambodia) as its chair and Ms. L.A. Yace de Mel (Côte d'Ivoire), as its rapporteur. It met on 14 October to finalize the draft resolution.

On 15 October, the Assembly adopted the resolution unanimously.

5. Concluding session

At the last sitting in the afternoon of 16 October, the Assembly had before it the Outcome Document of the General Debate on *Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women* and the reports of the Standing Committees.

Ms. S. Atallahjan (Canada) and Mr. G. Monde (Zambia), representing women and men members of parliament and the younger generation of lawmakers, jointly made a bold call for parliamentary action to achieve gender equality and end violence against women. (See page 31.)

The Assembly noted that the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights had not been in a position to conclude its work within the allotted time on the draft resolution entitled *International law as it relates to national sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and human rights*. It therefore proposed that, on the occasion of the 132nd Assembly, the Committee resume its work on the basis of what had been agreed thus far. The Assembly took note of the reports of the other three Standing Committees (see pages 35-42).

In his concluding remarks, President Radi provided an overview of the highlights of the 131st Assembly. He read out a Statement of the Executive Committee condemning the alarming spread of terrorism and extremism and appealing for calm and peace, which were the only guarantees of a stable and secure future (see page 34). In closing, he reiterated his congratulations to his successor, Mr. S. Chowdhury, on his election by the Governing Council as President of the IPU and wished him every success in his new functions.

195th Session of the Governing Council

1. Election of the President of the IPU

Following two rounds of voting by secret ballot, the Governing Council elected Mr. Saber Chowdhury (Bangladesh) as IPU President for a three-year term ending in October 2017.

2. Membership and Permanent Observers of the IPU

At its sitting on 13 October, the Governing Council approved requests for reaffiliation from the National Assemblies of Madagascar and Guinea, thus bringing the overall membership of the IPU to 166 national parliaments.

The Council also approved a request for Permanent Observer status from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM).

It took note of the fact that the Executive Committee had reviewed the situation of observers based on an analysis of their actual participation in IPU Assemblies over the previous four years. It approved a set of recommendations by the Executive Committee made in the light of that analysis.

More specifically, the Council approved a revised list of Permanent Observers that would be invited automatically to all IPU Assemblies (see page 80). That list would be amended in the future only when and if necessary. The revised list did not include a number of organizations previously invited as observers that had not attended IPU Assemblies or engaged in any substantive dialogue or cooperation with the IPU for four or more consecutive years.

With regard to observers to be invited on a one-off basis in the light of Assembly agenda items, the Council decided that relevant invitations would be issued at the discretion of the IPU President, who would inform the Executive Committee accordingly. Regional intergovernmental organizations could be invited by the Council on an ad hoc basis, for example during the second Assembly of the year held in Geneva. The Council approved a number of related amendments to the text of the Practical modalities of the rights and responsibilities of observers at IPU meetings (see page 79).

Lastly, the Council endorsed the recommendation that the IPU should facilitate regular interaction with parliamentary organizations, assemblies and networks represented at IPU Assemblies, with a view to discussing issues of common interest, including cooperation with the United Nations. Such informal meetings should be integrated into the work programme of IPU Assemblies as a permanent feature having no financial implications for the Organization.

3. Financial situation of the IPU

The Governing Council received a comprehensive report on the financial situation of the IPU and an updated list of unpaid contributions. As at 14 October 2014, no Member had arrears of more than two full years and none was therefore subject to suspension, voting sanctions or reduced delegation size. The total amount of contributions in arrears was substantially reduced as compared with previous years.

The Council noted that the income and expenditure of the IPU were close to target for the first six months of 2014 and were expected to remain within the overall budget for the rest of the year. The first Assembly of 2014, the largest expense of the year to date, had been completed on budget.

Whereas voluntary funding totalling CHF 1.5 million was anticipated for 2014, the actual amount received had reached CHF 2 million by mid-year, with additional voluntary contributions being expected.

4. Programme and budget for 2015

The Council received the consolidated budget proposal for 2015. Reporting on behalf of the Executive Committee, the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Finance, Ms. S. Atallahjan (Canada), stated that the Sub-Committee had provided guidance and oversight to the Secretariat during the preparation of the budget. The Secretary General provided additional explanations of the budget. The format of the budget document had been modernized and brought in line with the IPU Strategy for 2012–2017. Additional information on the programme and budget could be found in the summarized logical framework contained in Section 5.

The budget had been prepared with a 3.4 per cent decrease in the level of assessed contributions at a time of continuing economic hardship for many Members. Despite that reduction in contributions, it included funding for additional activities requested by the Governing Council, namely: strengthening of the four Standing Committees, the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in 2015 and additional support for the Committee on Middle East Questions. Without the Speakers' Conference, the reduction in contributions would have been 6 per cent.

To avoid cutting IPU programmes and activities during preparations for the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, voluntary funding from external donors would be substantially increased, compensating for the reduction in Members' contributions. The Organization's budgeted income from voluntary funding for 2015 amounted to CHF 3.5 million, over 22 per cent of the total consolidated budget. That included generous multi-year grants from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the United Arab Emirates and Worldwide Support for Development (WSD). All Members were encouraged to make further efforts to promote resource mobilization for the IPU and its activities.

The Governing Council approved the consolidated 2015 budget of CHF 15,488,600. The approved budget and scale of contributions for 2015 may be found on pages 52 and 53.

5. Cooperation with the United Nations system

The Council took note of the activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system since the 130th IPU Assembly (see checklist of activities on page 57). The Secretary General underscored the significance of UN General Assembly Resolution 68/272 on *Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union*, which had been adopted with broad support in

May 2014. The resolution welcomed inter alia the convening of the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments at UN Headquarters in 2015, as part of the series of high-level meetings leading up to the UN Summit on the post-2015 development agenda.

The Council was also informed of the consultations on a new cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the IPU and the preparations for the annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations (19-20 November), which would focus in 2014 on ensuring a people-centred approach to the new SDGs. As part of its work to follow and inform global processes, the IPU was involved in shaping parliamentary input to, and holding parliamentary meetings on the occasion of, two important conferences to be held in December: the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Lima, Peru (COP20/CMP10) and the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons.

6. Implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2012–2017

In the context of discussions on the implementation of Strategic Objective 1, *Strengthen democracy through parliaments*, the Council approved the text of the *Common Principles for Support to Parliament* (see page 65). Prepared through a process of broad consultation with IPU partners and Member Parliaments, the Common Principles were designed to improve the relevance, sensitivity and effectiveness of the support offered to parliaments and ensure that the roles and responsibilities of all actors were transparent, mutually agreed and complementary. The Council invited IPU Member Parliaments to consider endorsing the Common Principles at the national level. A formal ceremony to publicly endorse and launch the Common Principles would take place at the 132nd IPU Assembly in Hanoi.

The Council took note of updates regarding implementation of Strategic Objective 2, *Advance gender equality*, and Strategic Objective 3, *Protect and promote human rights*. It also took note of information concerning the IPU's engagement in the UN-led consultations on the new set of SDGs. The Organization's work in that field fell within the remit of its Strategic Objective 5, *Build parliamentary support for international development goals*. The IPU had launched a campaign to press for the inclusion of democratic governance as one of the new SDGs.

As part of its discussion on the implementation of Strategic Objective 2, the Governing Council saw the launch of a new publication entitled *Atlas of Gender Quotas*. The fruit of collaboration between the IPU, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) and Stockholm University, the *Atlas* presented an overview of trends and challenges in the implementation of quotas and included profiles of 85 countries and territories with a detailed description of their respective quota systems.

7. Recent specialized meetings

The Governing Council took note of the results of the International Parliamentary Conference on *Parliaments and the rights of indigenous peoples* ([http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10\(a\)-r1.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10(a)-r1.pdf)), the Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation ([http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10\(b\)-r1.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10(b)-r1.pdf)), the World e-Parliament Conference 2014 ([http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10\(c\)-r1.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10(c)-r1.pdf)), the event to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the IPU ([http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10\(d\)-r1.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10(d)-r1.pdf)), the Regional follow-up seminar on *The role of parliamentarians in the implementation of Universal Periodic Review recommendations* ([http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10\(e\)-r1.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10(e)-r1.pdf)), the Parliamentary meeting at the 20th International AIDS Conference ([http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10\(f\)-r1.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10(f)-r1.pdf)), the Review of the draft Common Principles for Parliamentary Development ([http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10\(g\)-r1.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10(g)-r1.pdf)), the Ninth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament ([http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10\(h\)-r1.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10(h)-r1.pdf)), the Regional seminar for Asia-Pacific Parliaments on *Ending the cycle of violence against girls in Asia-Pacific* ([http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10\(i\)-r1.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10(i)-r1.pdf)), the Seminar for African parliaments on *Translating international human rights commitments into national realities: The contribution of parliaments to the work of the United Nations Human Rights Council* ([http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10\(j\)-r1.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10(j)-r1.pdf)), and the First IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, on *Taking Democracy to Task* ([http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10\(k\)-r1.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/195/10(k)-r1.pdf)).

8. Reports of plenary bodies and specialized committees

At its sitting on 16 October, the Governing Council took note of the reports on the activities of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians (see page 16), the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (see page 17), the Committee on Middle East Questions (see page 18), the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (see page 19), the Gender Partnership Group (see page 19) and the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU (see page 20).

The Council also endorsed 15 decisions taken by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (see pages 85 to 118).

9. 125th anniversary of the IPU

The Governing Council was informed of initiatives taken by the IPU to commemorate its 125th anniversary, on 30 June, which in reality was being marked by a year-long programme of events and activities. The IPU was capitalizing on that landmark anniversary not only to showcase some of its achievements over the past 125 years, but also to discuss contemporary challenges to democracy.

On 30 June, the IPU Executive Committee had convened in an extraordinary session, issuing a statement to commemorate the anniversary, and the United Nations Office at Geneva had hosted an interactive session entitled *Driving democratic change – IPU at 125 and beyond*. The IPU had published a colourful illustrated booklet to highlight its 125 years of democratic struggle for peace, organized an exhibition in one of the most emblematic places along the lakeside in Geneva, Quai Wilson, and made arrangements for all the public transport buses and trams in and around Geneva to carry a short promotional spot on the IPU during the two-week period around the dates of the 131st Assembly.

10. Future inter-parliamentary meetings

The Governing Council confirmed the decision to hold the 132nd IPU Assembly in Hanoi (Viet Nam), from 28 March to 1 April 2015. Those dates had been selected specifically so as not to clash with any major religious holidays.

In view of the expected discussion and adoption of a resolution on the item *Cyber warfare – A serious threat to peace and global security*, to be addressed as part of the agenda of the 132nd Assembly, the Council decided to invite the ITU as an observer on a one-off basis.

The Council took note of the fact that the Congress of the Republic of Colombia had expressed an interest in hosting the 133rd IPU Assembly in Cartagena de Indias, in October 2015. Holding a generally favourable opinion in this regard, the Council resolved to make its final decision contingent on two conditions. The first was the findings of an on-site visit by the IPU Secretariat to ascertain the availability of relevant facilities and infrastructure on the proposed Assembly site. The second was confirmation by the prospective host that all additional expenditures resulting from the transfer of the Assembly from Geneva to Cartagena – including staff travel and subsistence allowance costs – would be borne by it.

The Governing Council authorized the Executive Committee to give the provisional green light, should the said conditions be met, to allow the Colombian authorities to start planning for the event. The formal decision would be taken in Hanoi during the 132nd 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 page 82). Following the adoption of the list, a delegate of Japan took the floor to underscore the importance of the 2015 Global Meeting of Young Parliamentarians, to be held in Tokyo in May-June.

11. Tribute to the outgoing IPU President

Ms. N. Motsamai (Lesotho), speaking on behalf of the Executive Committee, paid tribute to the outgoing President, Mr. A. Radi. She was followed by representatives of the six Geopolitical Groups of the IPU, who praised Mr. Radi's long political career nationally and internationally, including as the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Morocco. His long-standing public service had been appropriately recognized by His Majesty the King of Morocco, Mohammed VI, who had bestowed upon him the nation's highest order. It was during Mr. Radi's term of office as the IPU President that the Organization had adopted its Strategy for 2012–2017, implemented structural reforms and established the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU.

The Secretary General, speaking on behalf of the Secretariat, also paid tribute to President Radi for his leadership and said that he and his colleagues had been privileged to work with him.

Having expressed its deep gratitude to President Radi for his unwavering devotion to the cause of the Organization, the Governing Council made him an Honorary President of the IPU.

270th session of the Executive Committee

1. Proceedings and decisions

The Executive Committee held its 270th session in Geneva on 10 and 15 October 2014. The President of the IPU chaired the meetings. The following members took part in the session at both sittings: Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada), Ms. S. Moulengui-Mouélé (Gabon), Ms. N. Motsamai (Lesotho), Ms. M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia) in her capacity as President of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, Mr. M. Rabbani (Pakistan), Mr. F. Drilon (Philippines), Ms. R. Kadaga (Uganda), Mr. R. Walter (United Kingdom) and Mr. R.M.K. Al Shariqi (United Arab Emirates). Ms. F. Diendéré-Diallo (Burkina Faso) and Mr. K. Dijkhoff (Netherlands) attended on 10 October, as well as Mr. H. Tajam substituting for Ms. I. Passada (Uruguay). Mr. V. Senko (Belarus) attended on 15 October and Ms. M.E. Larnaga, substituting for Ms. I. Passada on 15 October. Ms. G. Requena substituted for Mr. D. Vivas (Venezuela) at both sittings.

Mr. N. Lammert (Germany) was absent.

The Executive Committee made recommendations to the Governing Council on a number of items on the latter's agenda. At its sitting on 10 October, the Executive Committee examined requests for reaffiliation from the parliaments of Guinea and Madagascar and recommended that the Council approve them. It also expressed concern over the situation of the Parliament of Mauritania, which was over three years in arrears and accordingly liable for suspension. The Executive Committee was therefore pleased to take note, at its sitting of 15 October, that the Parliament of Mauritania had paid its arrears and thus regularized its situation.

The Executive Committee addressed a number of other points at the sitting of 10 October. It examined the situation of the parliament of Thailand. Noting that a transitional legislature had been put in place and that the three-stage roadmap to democracy was being implemented, the Committee saw no reason to call into question the parliament's membership.

It also examined the quadrennial report on the participation of Permanent Observers to IPU Assemblies and approved five recommendations on the matter (see Council section on page 11). It notably approved amendments to the rules governing Permanent Observers and decided that a single list of Permanent Observers would be drawn up rather than a separate one for each Assembly.

It heard the reports on the financial situation and the mobilization of voluntary funds, as well as recommendations concerning the 2015 draft programme and budget of the Sub-Committee on Finance (see Section 3). It designated the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Finance to present the 2015 budget to the Governing Council.

In connection with the implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2012-2017, it examined a number of matters that were subsequently referred to the Governing Council (see page 13), in particular endorsement of the Common Principles for Support to Parliament (see page 65).

The Executive Committee was informed of staff movements. The new Secretary General made the following changes in the Secretariat. Mr. M. Omar, an Egyptian national, had been appointed Senior Adviser on Middle East Questions and Resource Mobilization in the Executive Office.

Ms. S. Ahmidouch, a national of Trinidad and Tobago, had been assigned additional responsibilities as Chef de Cabinet in the Executive Office. She was currently also Head of Language Services.

Ms. K. Jabre, a Lebanese national, had been appointed Director of Programmes. Ms. M. Delos Santos, a Philippines national, had been promoted in the General Services category at the Office of the IPU Permanent Observer to the United Nations in New York. Organization of the Secretariat was work in progress.

At its sitting on 15 October, the Executive Committee expressed grave concern at the growing number of heinous terrorist attacks and the spread of extremism throughout the world. It decided to issue a statement on terrorism (see page 34).

Also at that sitting, the Committee was informed of the six Vice-Presidents appointed by the Geopolitical Groups for a period of one year. It elected Mr. F. Drilon (Philippines) as Vice-President of the Executive Committee (see page 24).

2. Sub-Committee on the future IPU-UN cooperation agreement

The Sub-Committee met in the afternoon of 11 October. The meeting was chaired by Ms. R. Kadaga (Uganda). The members pursued their deliberations on the way forward for a new IPU-UN cooperation agreement that would place the institutional relationship between the two Organizations on a stronger footing, as called for by UN General Assembly Resolution 68/272, and sought to clarify the IPU's status as an international organization under international law.

The Secretary General briefed the Sub-Committee on his most recent consultations with senior UN officials, ambassadors and legal experts, and proposed several courses of action which the Sub-Committee might wish to explore. It was agreed that the IPU Secretariat would draft the main elements it would like to see reflected in the new cooperation agreement, as a basis for discussion by the Sub-Committee at its next meeting. IPU Member Parliaments were also encouraged to provide input for those elements. A joint meeting of the Sub-Committee and the Bureau of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs would be held in New York in mid-November, in parallel with the annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations.

3. Sub-Committee on Finance

The Sub-Committee on Finance met on 9 October to prepare and facilitate the Executive Committee's consideration of the financial situation of the IPU, the draft programme and budget for 2015 and the status of voluntary funding. It advised the Executive Committee, which had been closely involved in overseeing preparation of the 2015 budget throughout the year, to recommend that the Governing Council adopt it.

The Sub-Committee elected three new members and, as the term of office of the Chairperson, Ms. S. Atallahjan (Canada), had ended, also elected Mr. R.M.K. Al Shariqi (United Arab Emirates) to serve as interim Chairperson until its next meeting, to be held in March 2015.

The recommendations of the two Sub-Committees were examined and endorsed by the Executive Committee.

Meeting and Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians

The Twentieth Meeting of Women Parliamentarians took place on 12 October 2014. A total of 133 women and 12 men from 86 parliaments attended.

The President of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia), chaired the Meeting, which was opened by the IPU President, Mr. A. Radi.

Ms. B. Amongi (Uganda) summed up the work of the Committee at its thirty-third session, held in Geneva in June 2014 on the eve of the celebration to mark the IPU's 125th anniversary, and at its thirty-fourth session, which had been held that morning. During the sessions, the Committee had prepared the contribution of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians to the 131st Assembly and heard the candidates for the post of IPU President.

The Meeting heard a report from the Gender Partnership Group, delivered by Ms. S. Atallahjan (Canada).

The participants were joined by the Secretary General of the IPU and the Secretary-General of International IDEA for a debate on electoral quotas for women. Quotas were one of the measures used to accelerate progress towards gender equality in politics. To be successful, however, they needed to be ambitious, adapted to the national electoral system and accompanied by sanctions mechanisms. Political parties had to play a greater role in paving the way for the election of women by fielding them as candidates, placing them in winnable positions on lists and appointing them to party leadership positions. The debate ended with the presentation of the *Atlas of Electoral Gender Quotas*, a publication produced jointly by the IPU, International IDEA and Stockholm University.

The participants discussed the future of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and agreed on actions to be taken to: (a) enhance the role of the Meeting, (b) give it greater visibility, and (c) use it to better mainstream gender at the IPU. They also agreed to launch a campaign to celebrate the Meeting's thirtieth anniversary in 2015. The Vietnamese delegation informed the participants that, as Viet Nam would be hosting the next Assembly, it would be preparing a special event to celebrate the Meeting in Hanoi.

As a contribution to the Assembly, the participants considered the subject item on the agenda of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, *International law as it relates to national sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and human rights*, from a gender perspective. The discussion was held in plenary and resulted in proposed amendments that were presented to the Standing Committee by Ms. B. Amongi (Uganda) and Ms. E. Abdulla (Maldives).

The afternoon session included a panel discussion on *The influence of women in parliament*. The panel began with statements by Ms. A. Ocles Padilla (Ecuador), Mr. M. Traoré (Burkina Faso), Ms. L. Alansari (Saudi Arabia), Ms. M. André (France), all parliamentarians, and Ms. M. Krook, Professor at Rutgers University. It was chaired by Ms. U. Karlsson (Sweden), Vice-President of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, and moderated by Ms. G. van Hall, a journalist with *Svenska Dagbladet*. The panellists stressed that women's political participation was a democratic imperative. Men and women should have the same political opportunities and the same say in political decision-making processes. However, it was also important to shed light on the influence of women on parliament. Progress had been made in terms of women's rights and gender equality, as evidenced by the legislative reforms, often driven by women legislators and adopted by many parliaments. More and more women were being elected to parliament and occupying leadership positions. However, cultural barriers, direct and indirect discrimination and stereotypes continued to challenge women's influence in parliament.

The Meeting then heard the candidates for the post of IPU President to obtain a better idea of the part gender issues would play in the programme of each of the candidates. All of the candidates undertook to advance gender equality at the IPU with a view to empowering women and promoting the women's agenda on the international scene.

The Meeting held a brief question-and-answer session with a member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Ms. P. Schultz, who highlighted recent developments regarding the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and some of the initiatives that parliaments could take in order to enhance national implementation.

Ms. S. Atallahjan (Canada) was elected substitute member of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians for the Twelve Plus Group. Vacant seats for members from the Asia-Pacific Group and the African Group were not filled as no candidatures had been submitted on time.

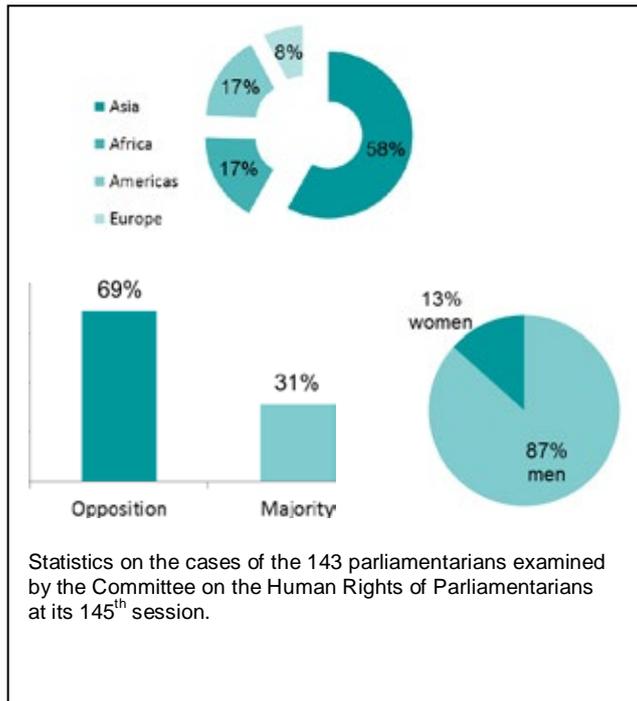
The Coordinating Committee met again on 16 October. It discussed at length the steps to be taken to enhance the role of both the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and the Coordinating Committee. It also began preparations for the next Meeting of Women Parliamentarians.

Subsidiary bodies of the Governing Council

1. Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

Mr. F.K. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Ms. A. Clwyd (United Kingdom), Ms. C. Giaccone (Argentina), Mr. A.A. Gueye (Senegal), Mr. K. Jalali (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. J.-P. Letelier (Chile) and Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland) participated in the 145th session of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, held from 11 to 15 October 2014.

During the session, the Committee held hearings with 11 delegations with a view to gaining a better understanding of the cases before it and to sharing its concerns with them. It also examined 31 cases concerning the situation of 143 members of parliament in nine countries. Of those cases, 58 per cent concerned members of parliament from Asia, 17 per cent members of parliament from Africa and the Americas and 8 per cent members of parliament from Europe. Thirteen per cent concerned women members of parliament and almost 70 per cent concerned opposition members of parliament. Freedom of expression was a direct or indirect concern in almost all the cases, with arbitrary detention or arrest, lack of due process in proceedings against members of parliament. Torture or ill-treatment, albeit on the decrease, was still among the concerns frequently examined by the Committee at the session.



The Committee was currently also examining serious cases in many other countries, namely Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Burundi, Chad, Ecuador, Eritrea, Iceland, Iraq, Lebanon, Madagascar, the Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Rwanda, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Togo, Venezuela, Yemen and Zimbabwe. In those cases, the Committee’s concerns remained valid.

The Committee submitted 15 decisions for endorsement by the Governing Council on cases concerning Cameroon, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Israel, Malaysia, Oman, Palestine/Israel, Turkey and Zambia.

2. Committee on Middle East Questions

The Committee held two sittings in addition to a lunchtime roundtable discussion about the crisis in the Middle East. The roundtable was attended by the President of the IPU and the Chairpersons of three IPU Standing Committees. The participants of the roundtable concurred on the gravity of the situation and lamented the gross human rights violations in the region. They agreed on the need to strengthen dialogue. The meeting covered the principle of intervention versus non-intervention; a growing sense of helplessness; the need to “repoliticize” the IPU; and the role of the IPU in confidence-building.

The Committee emphasized the importance of quality education based on humanitarian values to achieve enduring peace and stability. It stressed that the fundamental issue was one of hearts and minds. The Committee agreed that lasting solutions had to be inclusive and that it was self-defeating to deal only with those parties with whom it was easiest to talk. It noted consensus among its members and other stakeholders on the usefulness of the roundtable and the desirability of making that a regular feature of the Committee’s work.

At its two sessions, the Committee reiterated that its purpose was not to take sides but rather to facilitate dialogue and negotiation between the parties involved with a view to achieving lasting peace in the region. The main role of the Committee was to build bridges and examine the conflict in the broader context of the region from the angles of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights. It agreed that it was important to win the trust of the parties to the conflict in order to end the crisis.

The Committee stressed that women’s and children’s rights were an important part of the political process. The members favoured a roundtable approach between Israelis and Palestinians and called for the resumption of work on the water issue. It regretted the absence of the Israeli delegation, and expressed its willingness to continue to reach out to Israel. The Committee agreed to dispatch a mission

to the region to engage in dialogue with a cross-section of Knesset members in Jerusalem and PLC members in Ramallah, as well as to Gaza to meet the political representatives of the people and to see the realities faced by ordinary people.

3. Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

The Committee met on Monday, 15 October 2014. Representatives of the ICRC and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also attended as observers.

The participants discussed the plight of Syrian refugees after four years of conflict with no end in sight. The situation was having a tremendous impact not only in the Syrian Arab Republic, but also on the neighbouring countries hosting Syrian refugees. The Turkish delegation to the 131st Assembly provided additional information in that respect. The Committee met with the delegation of Iraq and discussed the question of the Syrian refugees and the issue of internally displaced persons as a consequence of acts perpetrated by ISIL. (See page 63.)

The representative of UNHCR said that 33 million people were currently displaced as a result of conflicts and human rights abuses. The Committee considered how it could use the recently launched joint IPU-UNHCR Handbook, *Internal Displacement: Responsibility and Action*, to help the countries and parliaments faced with such crises to enact effective legislation.

In recent years, there had been significant progress towards ratification of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Since 2011, there had been 18 accessions to the 1954 Convention and 24 to the 1961 Convention. UNHCR's Campaign to End Statelessness in 10 Years would be launched on 4 November 2014.

The Committee also drew attention to the updated IPU-UNHCR publication, *Nationality and Statelessness: A Handbook for Parliamentarians*, which had been launched at the 131st IPU Assembly. It encouraged parliamentarians to make use of the Handbook and to organize discussions on the problem of statelessness in their parliaments.

The representative of the ICRC briefed the Committee on the latest developments in the strengthening of international humanitarian law and the steps taken to update the joint ICRC-IPU Handbook for Parliamentarians, *Respect for International Humanitarian Law*. A first draft would be shared with Committee members in the coming weeks. In 2011, the ICRC had launched a major review of international humanitarian law, which had highlighted the need for better application and enforcement of the law. It was stressed that all efforts should be made to involve parliaments in clarifying and strengthening legislation.

4. Gender Partnership Group

The Gender Partnership Group held its 34th session on 11 and 15 October 2014. In attendance were Ms. S. Atallahjan (Canada), Ms. R. Kadaga (Uganda), Mr. R.M.K. Al Shariqi (United Arab Emirates) and Mr. H. Tajam replacing Ms. I. Passada (Uruguay). Ms. M.E. Lournaga (Uruguay) replaced Mr. Tajam at the 15 October sitting.

The Group reviewed the composition of the delegations present at the 131st IPU Assembly. Of the 707 delegates present, 227 (32.1%) were women. Of the 143 delegations present, 137 were composed of at least two delegates. Of those, 18 were composed exclusively of men (13.1%) and one exclusively of women. The all-male delegations were from the parliaments of Denmark, Guinea, Haiti, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Libya, Lithuania, Malta, Mauritania, Micronesia (Federated States of), New Zealand, Pakistan, Qatar, San Marino, Slovakia, Thailand, Tonga and Trinidad and Tobago. The delegation from the Parliament of Andorra was composed exclusively of women. Six delegations were subject to sanctions at the Assembly for being represented exclusively by men or women more than three times in a row: one for being composed exclusively of women – Nicaragua – and five exclusively of men: Guatemala, Kuwait, Malta, Micronesia (Federated States of) and Qatar.

The Group also monitored the participation of women in IPU bodies. The situation had visibly improved: most bodies had reached gender parity, and those that had not had a minimum of 40 per cent of women, as did the Executive Committee. The Group pointed out that some Geopolitical Groups did not have mixed representation on the Executive Committee and called on them to strive for gender parity.

The Group discussed implementation of the policy for mainstreaming gender at the IPU. It also discussed its own mandate and work, deciding to focus on strategies to enhance women's participation at the IPU and, in particular, on ways to ensure that both sexes were equally represented within delegations. The Group also encouraged the IPU to develop specific activities targeting men, with a view to heightening their awareness of gender equality issues.

In its review of parliaments with few or no women members, the Group noted that five parliamentary chambers currently had no women members. Three were in Pacific Island States [the Federated States of Micronesia, Palau (lower house) and Vanuatu], one in the Arab region (Qatar) and one in Latin America and the Caribbean (Senate of Haiti).

On Wednesday, 15 October, the Group met with the delegations from Tonga and Qatar. In view of the elections to be held in Tonga in November 2014, the Group encouraged Tonga to pursue its efforts to enhance women's participation in politics. It also noted the positive results of the IPU-supported nationwide public awareness campaign. The meeting with the delegation from Qatar focused on women's participation in the country's 35-member Advisory Council, to which no woman had ever been appointed. The Group recommended that the Advisory Council take action in cooperation with the Qatari Government to appoint women legislators. In response to an offer of support from the Group, the delegation invited the IPU to dispatch a mission to Qatar if it so wished.

5. Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU

The Forum of Young Parliamentarians met on Monday, 13 October 2014. The meeting was chaired by Mr. K. Dijkhoff (Netherlands), who handed over the presidency to the newly elected President of the Forum, Mr. F. Al-Tenaiji (United Arab Emirates) at the end of the meeting.

About 60 participants attended the Forum. Their average age was 35 years. Since the Forum was attended by more men than women, it decided to appeal to Member Parliaments to include young women in their delegations to the Forum in future.

The deliberations focused on the Forum's contribution to the work of the 131st Assembly, in particular the subject item being discussed by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, which was considered from the point of view of young people. The Forum members stressed the importance of taking into account young people and their specific needs, especially in times of conflict, and emphasized that young people should be protected from forced recruitment and should not be used as child soldiers. The Forum did not, however, submit any recommendations to the Committee.

It also discussed its contribution to the 132nd Assembly. It was agreed that youth overview reports would be submitted in due course to the Standing Committee co-Rapporteurs. Mr. D. Vintimilla (Ecuador) would prepare a report on young people's concerns with regard to *Cyber warfare – A serious threat to peace and global security*, the topic before the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security. Mr. B. Gatobu (Kenya), for his part, would prepare a similar report with regard to *Shaping a new system of water governance: Promoting parliamentary action on water*, to be submitted to the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade.

The members of the Forum met with the candidates for President of the IPU, who informed the young parliamentarians about their plans for the Organization if elected.

The Forum elected its first Board, which comprised one man and one woman under the age of 43 from each Geopolitical Group. Ms. M. Dziva (Zimbabwe) and Mr. R. Igbokwe (Nigeria) were elected from the African Group, Ms. T. Alriyati (Jordan) and Mr. F. Al-Tenaiji (United Arab Emirates) from the Arab Group, Ms. M. Alvarez (Philippines) and Mr. M. Hun (Cambodia) from the Asia-Pacific Group, Ms. C. Crexel (Argentina) and Mr. D. Vintimilla (Ecuador) from the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, and Mr. V. Gapšys (Lithuania) and Ms. M. Lugarić (Croatia) from the Twelve Plus Group. The two posts for the Eurasia Group remained vacant.

Some of the candidates who had not been nominated by their respective Geopolitical Groups objected to the candidate selection procedure used by their group, but nevertheless congratulated their colleagues who had been elected to the Board and pledged to support them.

The Board met separately to elect the President of the Forum. Mr. F. Al-Tenajji (United Arab Emirates) was elected unanimously. The Board also decided on its working modalities. Its members would meet in person during the Assemblies to prepare the work of the Forum and would communicate by electronic means between Assemblies. The Board would submit a report at the next meeting of the Forum. The members of the Board thanked Mr. K. Dijkhoff (Netherlands) for his personal investment in the creation and life of the Forum.

The Forum then turned to planning activities associated with IPU promotion of the participation of young people in politics. It took note of the very successful Global IPU Conference of Young Parliamentarians, held in Geneva on 10 and 11 October 2014. The next Conference of Young Parliamentarians would be held in Tokyo in May or June 2015, in partnership with the Parliament of Japan. A proposal was made to hold a meeting of young parliamentarians in Jordan on promoting a culture of peace and tolerance.

The UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Mr. A. Alhendawi, joined the young parliamentarians and assured them of his support. He invited them to attend meetings and discussions organized by the United Nations, including on the SDGs.

The delegation of Viet Nam recalled that the next meeting of the Forum would be held in March 2015 in Hanoi on the occasion of the 132nd Assembly.

Other meetings

1. Joint Meeting of the Bureaux of the Standing Committees and Presidents of the Geopolitical Groups

The Presidents of the IPU Geopolitical Groups and the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the IPU Standing Committees met on the morning of 12 October. The meeting was chaired by Mr. R. del Picchia (France), President of the Twelve Plus Group.

The participants considered a progress report entitled "Implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2012-2017: Revised format of IPU Assemblies and the functioning of the Standing Committees". Special attention was paid to the need to enhance the implementation of IPU decisions and resolutions and to the question of candidatures. Specifically, there was a need to ensure that a broader range of expertise was represented on the Bureaux and that their members were available to participate in intersessional activities. The role of young members of parliament at IPU Assemblies and within national delegations was also considered in light of the establishment of the new Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

The participants stressed the need for all the Standing Committees to adopt clear rules and guidelines so as to facilitate the adoption of resolutions, particularly as the aim was to have them negotiated in plenary rather than in the limited setting of drafting committees. In view of the large number of proposals, some of them related, that were submitted for the Assembly's consideration as emergency items, the Meeting examined options for better consultation and coordination in the lead-up to the voting.

The Presidents of the four Standing Committees briefed the participants on their Committees' future work programmes and stressed the need to allocate sufficient time to Bureau meetings during IPU Assemblies. The Presidents of the Geopolitical Groups then provided an overview of the organization of their Groups' work in preparation for and during the Assemblies, highlighting some of the challenges that they faced. The President of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean stressed the need to ensure that the Presidents of the Geopolitical Groups were better informed of, and more involved in, IPU activities in their respective regions. He requested the IPU Secretariat to examine the possibility of providing services for closed meetings of the Group Presidents on a regular basis.

There was general consensus on the importance of the Joint Meeting as a means of enhancing communication and coordination on issues of mutual interest, particularly the organization of work for IPU Assemblies, and it was agreed that the Meeting should be held again at the time of the Assembly in Hanoi (March 2015).

2. Open session of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

On 14 October 2014, the Committee to Promote International Humanitarian Law organized an open session debate on “Ensuring women’s rights in conflict situations”. The session was attended by representatives from 20 parliaments and was chaired by Ms. G. Cuevas Barrón, President of the Committee. Debates were introduced by Ms. B. Diop, Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and Chair of the Board of Femmes Africa Solidarité; Ms. C. Rapneau, from the ICRC; and Ms. M. Rees, Secretary General of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom.

The session focused on the specific challenges faced by women and girls in conflict situations in terms of respect for their rights, security and well-being. Participants highlighted that conflicts exacerbated existing gender inequalities and heightened women’s vulnerability to discrimination, exploitation and abuse. What was at stake when conflicts arose was women’s rights, status, access to health and security. Conflicts placed women and girls at a heightened risk of various forms of gender-based violence, especially sexual violence, forced and child marriage, sexual exploitation and abuse. Specific groups of women and girls, such as internally displaced persons and refugees, were even more at risk. As Major-General Patrick Commaert, who served as UN Commander for a UN peacekeeping mission said, “It is now more dangerous to be a woman than to be a soldier in modern conflict”.

Moreover, during and after conflicts women’s voices were often not heard and their interests marginalized, including during peace discussions and peace building. UN Security Council resolution 1325 needed to be implemented and General Recommendation 30 of the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations offered important guidelines. There was still much to be done as only 18 out of 300 peace agreements for 45 conflict situations in the 20 years since the end of the Cold War had addressed sexual violence in 10 conflict situations. Those figures attested to the need to ensure that women were part and parcel of peace discussions and peace-building.

Participants highlighted the importance of focusing on prevention and developing a strong legal framework that protected women from abuse. Laws alone were insufficient and adequate implementation mechanisms and services needed to be put in place. Women had to be informed of their rights and have the possibility to seek justice as well as easily accessible services tailored to their particular needs. Law enforcement agents and the military had to be trained too. More attention must be paid to the particular plight of women and girls in conflict situations, as well as a strong parliamentary response.

3. Side event on *Leaving no woman, child or adolescent behind: Accelerating parliamentary action in reducing maternal and child mortality to reach the Millennium Development Goals*

A side event was held in the afternoon of 15 October, with 42 parliamentarians, parliamentary advisers and representatives of international organizations in attendance. It was moderated by Ms. S. Ataulhjan (Canada), who informed participants that the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights had decided to review the implementation of the 2012 IPU resolution on *Access to health as a basic right: The role of parliaments in addressing key challenges to securing the health of women and children*, at the 132nd IPU Assembly.

Dr. M. Temmerman, Director of the Department of Reproductive Health and Research, WHO, and Mr. S. Kuruvilla, Senior Technical Officer - Knowledge for Policy at The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, provided their expertise. They described the key role parliamentarians played in accelerating progress on maternal, newborn and child health and how countries with the best performance had advanced across multiple sectors thanks to a clear political vision and strong guiding principles.

Ms. S.S. Chaudhury (Bangladesh) said that progress towards maternal and child health in her country had been driven by multisector activity, especially in infrastructure and information and communication technologies, and a strong political commitment to deliver on MDGs 4 and 5. Ms. A. Mukarugema (Rwanda) and Ms. D. Pascal Allende (Chile) said that their countries had made remarkable progress on

both MDGs thanks to political vision and substantial budget allocations for health services. They explained how near-universal health coverage dramatically increased the number of women and children receiving constant medical care.

A lively discussion ensued, with about 10 parliamentarians asking questions. It was generally agreed that it was essential to obtain recognition at the national level of the vital role women played in society, and that parliamentarians needed robust advocacy skills to promote women's and children's health nationally and internationally, had to oversee government action in that respect and to adopt the corresponding budget.

4. Future Policy Award Ceremony

For the second year in a row, the IPU teamed up with the United Nations and the World Future Council to designate the winners of the annual Future Policy Award. While the 2013 Award had celebrated best policies in the area of disarmament, the 2014 Award was dedicated to the world's best laws and policies for ending violence against women and girls.

The Award ceremony took place in the evening of 14 October, one of a series of events organized in the wings of the 131st IPU Assembly. An inspiring event, it was co-hosted by the President of the IPU, Mr. A. Radi, the Executive Director of UN Women, Ms. P. Mlambo-Ngcuka, and the Director of the World Future Council, Ms. A. Wandel. The ceremony highlighted visionary new approaches and achievements in policy-making and implementation. Awards were conferred on: the Council of Europe's Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Vision Award); the City of Duluth's Coordinated Community Response to Domestic Violence (Gold Award); Burkina Faso's legislation prohibiting female genital mutilation (Silver Award); and Austria's psychosocial and legal court assistance for victims of violence during criminal and civil procedures (Silver Award). Spain's legislation on integrated protection measures against gender violence and Bolivia's law against political harassment and violence against women received Honourable Mentions.

The Future Policy Award was particularly timely in the context of the Assembly's General Debate, on *Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women*, with several of the winning policies being presented to the broader parliamentary community.

Elections and appointments

1. IPU President

Four candidates ran for the post of IPU President: Ms. N. Ali Assegaf (Indonesia), Ms. B. Bishop (Australia), Mr. S. Chowdhury (Bangladesh) and Mr. A. Shahid (Maldives).

The candidate from the Maldives was eliminated in the first round of votes. In the second round, Mr. S Chowdhury obtained 169 votes, followed by Ms. B. Bishop with 95 votes and Ms. N. Ali Assegaf with 57.

The Governing Council consequently elected Mr. Saber Chowdhury (Bangladesh) President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for a three-year term ending in October 2017.

The outgoing President, Mr. A. Radi, was made an Honorary President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

2. Executive Committee

The Governing Council elected the following three new members of the Executive Committee to serve a four-year term ending in October 2018:

- Ms. Z. Drif Bitat (Algeria) to replace Ms. S. Moulengui-Mouélé (Gabon), whose term had ended;
- Mr. R. del Picchia (France) to replace Ms. S. Atallahjan (Canada), whose term had ended; and
- Mr. M. Uesugi (Japan) to replace Mr. P. Tanbanjong (Thailand), who was no longer an MP.

3. IPU Vice-Presidents

The Executive Committee elected the following six Vice-Presidents for a one-year term ending in October 2015:

- *African Group*: Ms. F. Diendere Diallo (Burkina Faso)
- *Arab Group*: Mr. R.M.K. Al Shariqi (United Arab Emirates)

- *Asia-Pacific Group*: Mr. F. Drilon (Philippines)
- *Eurasia Group*: Mr. V. Senko (Belarus)
- *Group of Latin America and the Caribbean*: Mr. D. Vivas (Venezuela)
- *Twelve Plus Group*: Mr. R. Walter (United Kingdom).

4. Vice-President of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee elected one of the IPU Vice-Presidents, Mr. F. Drilon (Philippines), as the Vice-President of the Executive Committee for a one-year term ending in October 2015.

5. Sub-Committee on Finance

The Executive Committee elected the following three new members to its Sub-Committee on Finance for a two-year term ending in October 2016:

- *African Group*: Ms. N. Motsamai (Lesotho)
- *Asia-Pacific Group*: Mr. M. Uesugi (Japan)
- *Twelve Plus Group*: Mr. R. del Picchia (France).

The Sub-Committee elected Mr. R.M.K. Al Shariqi (United Arab Emirates) as its interim Chairperson until the Sub-Committee's next meeting, to be held in March 2015.

6. Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

The Governing Council elected Mr. B. Fabritius (Germany) as a Committee member for a term ending in October 2019.

7. Committee on Middle East Questions

The Governing Council elected Mr. M. Tašner Vatovec (Slovenia) as a titular member for a four-year term ending in October 2018.

It also elected the following two substitute members to the Committee for a four-year term ending in October 2018:

- Mr. R. Munawar (Indonesia)
- Mr. F. Müri (Switzerland).

8. Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

Following the election that took place in the Governing Council, the current composition of the Committee is as follows:

		<i>Expiry of term</i>
President	· Ms. G. Cuevas Barrón (Mexico)	October 2016
<i>African Group</i>	· Ms. Y. Meftali (Algeria)	October 2016
	· Mr. E. Dombo (Uganda)	April 2016
<i>Arab Group</i>	· Ms. M. Osman Gaknoun (Sudan)	April 2017
	· Mr. S. Owais (Jordan)	April 2018
<i>Asia-Pacific Group</i>	Vacancy	
	Vacancy	
<i>Eurasia Group</i>	· Ms. V. Petrenko (Russian Federation)	April 2017
	Vacancy	
<i>Group of Latin America and the Caribbean</i>	<i>Current President</i>	
	· Mr. L.F. Duque García (Colombia)*	October 2018
<i>Twelve Plus Group</i>	Vacancy	
	· Ms. U. Karlsson (Sweden)	October 2015

* *Newly elected member of the Committee*

9. Group of Facilitators for Cyprus

The Governing Council elected Mr. P. Burke (Ireland) as a Facilitator.

10. Bureaux of the Standing Committees

Following elections that took place in the Standing Committees, the current composition of their respective Bureaux is as follows:

		<i>Expiry of term**</i>
Standing Committee on Peace and International Security		
President	· Mr. J.R. Tau (South Africa) *	October 2018
Vice-President	· Mr. A. Omari (Morocco)	March 2018
<i>African Group</i>	<i>Current President</i>	
	· Mr. P. Nzengué Mayila (Gabon)	March 2018
	<i>Vacancy</i>	
<i>Arab Group</i>	<i>Current Vice-President</i>	
	· Ms. S. Hajji Taqawi (Bahrain)	March 2018
	· Mr. A. Al-Ahmad (Palestine)	March 2018
<i>Asia-Pacific Group</i>	· Ms. S. Barakzai (Afghanistan)	March 2018
	· Mr. M. Hosseini Sadr (Islamic Republic of Iran)	March 2018
	<i>Vacancy</i>	
<i>Eurasia Group</i>	· Ms. K. Atshemyan (Armenia)	March 2018
	· Mr. M. Ashimbayev (Kazakhstan)	March 2018
	· Mr. A. Klimov (Russian Federation)	March 2018
<i>Group of Latin America and the Caribbean</i>	· Mr. R. Godoy (Argentina)	March 2018
	· Ms. G. Fermin Nuesi (Dominican Republic)	March 2018
	· Mr. Y. Jabour (Venezuela)	March 2018
<i>Twelve Plus Group</i>	· Ms. J. Durrieu (France)	March 2018
	· Mr. A. Neofytou (Cyprus)	March 2018
	· Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal)	March 2018
Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade		
President	· Mr. R. León (Chile)	March 2015
Vice-President	· Mr. O. Hav (Denmark)	March 2018
<i>African Group</i>	· Ms. C. Cerqueira (Angola)	March 2018
	· Mr. A. Cissé (Mali)	March 2018
	· Mr. H.R. Mohamed (United Republic of Tanzania)	March 2018
<i>Arab Group</i>	· Mr. J. Al Omar (Kuwait)	March 2018
	· Mr. Y. Jaber (Lebanon)	March 2018
	· Ms. Z. Ely Salem (Mauritania)	March 2018
<i>Asia-Pacific Group</i>	· Ms. N. Marino (Australia)	March 2018
	· Ms. S. Tioulong (Cambodia) *	October 2018
	· Mr. I.A. Bilour (Pakistan)	March 2015
<i>Eurasia Group</i>	· Mr. S. Gavrilov (Russian Federation)	March 2018
	<i>Vacancy</i>	
	<i>Vacancy</i>	
<i>Group of Latin America and the Caribbean</i>	<i>Current President</i>	
	· Ms. N. Huarachi Condori (Bolivia)	March 2018
	· Mr. F. Bustamante (Ecuador)	March 2015
<i>Twelve Plus Group</i>	<i>Current Vice-President</i>	
	· Ms. S. de Bethune (Belgium) *	October 2018
	· Ms. M. Obradović (Serbia)	March 2018
Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights		
President	· Ms. F. Naderi (Afghanistan)	March 2018
Vice-President	· Mr. J.M. Galán (Colombia)	March 2018
<i>African Group</i>	· Mr. J.A. Agbré Touni (Côte d'Ivoire)	March 2018
	· Mr. D.P. Losiakou (Kenya)	March 2018
	· Ms. A. Diouf (Senegal)	March 2018
<i>Arab Group</i>	· Ms. J. Nassif (Bahrain)	March 2018
	· Mr. R. Abdul-Jabbar (Iraq)	March 2018
	· Mr. Y. Assaad (Syrian Arab Republic)	March 2018

<i>Asia-Pacific Group</i>	<i>Current President</i>	
	· Ms. K. Lork (Cambodia)	March 2018
	· Mr. S. Mahmood (Pakistan)	March 2018
<i>Eurasia Group</i>	· Ms. A. Naumchik (Belarus)	March 2018
	· Ms. E. Vtorygina (Russian Federation)	March 2018
	<i>Vacancy</i>	
<i>Group of Latin America and the Caribbean</i>	<i>Current Vice-President</i>	
	· Ms. K. Sosa (El Salvador)	March 2018
	· Mr. A. Misiekaba (Suriname)	March 2018
<i>Twelve Plus Group</i>	· Ms. S. Koutra-Koukouma (Cyprus)	March 2018
	· Ms. L. Wall (New Zealand)	March 2018
	· Mr. C. Janiak (Switzerland)	March 2018
Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs		
President	· Ms. D.-T. Avgerinopoulou (Greece)	March 2018
Vice-President	· Mr. M. El Hassan Al Amin (Sudan)	March 2018
<i>African Group</i>	· Mr. S. Chiheb (Algeria) *	October 2018
	· Mr. M. Traoré (Burkina Faso)	March 2018
	· Ms. C.N. Mukiite (Kenya)	March 2018
<i>Arab Group</i>	<i>Current Vice-President</i>	
	· Ms. R. Benmassaoud (Morocco)	March 2018
	· Mr. A.O. Al Mansouri (United Arab Emirates)	March 2018
<i>Asia-Pacific Group</i>	· Ms. E. Nursanty (Indonesia)*	October 2018
	· Mr. J. Jahangirzadeh (Islamic Rep. of Iran)*	October 2018
	<i>Vacancy</i>	
<i>Eurasia Group</i>	· Mr. M. Margelov (Russian Federation)	March 2018
	<i>Vacancy</i>	
	<i>Vacancy</i>	
<i>Group of Latin America and the Caribbean</i>	· Ms. G. Ortiz González (Mexico)	March 2018
	· Ms. I. Montenegro (Nicaragua)	March 2018
	· Mr. J.C. Mahía (Uruguay)	March 2018
<i>Twelve Plus Group</i>	<i>Current President</i>	
	· Mr. D. Dawson (Canada)	March 2018
	· Ms. K. Komi (Finland)	March 2018

* Newly elected members of the Bureaux

** In accordance with the Rules of the Standing Committees, Members of the Bureau are elected for a term of two years and may be re-elected for a further period of two years. The date featuring in the column "Expiry of term" corresponds to the maximum possible duration of the mandate.

11. Rapporteurs to the 133rd Assembly

The Committee on Democracy and Human Rights appointed Ms. B. Jónsdóttir (Iceland) as a co-Rapporteur for the subject item *Democracy in the digital era and the threat to privacy and individual freedoms*.

In conformity with Rule 13.4 of the Rules of the Standing Committees, the President of the IPU was entrusted with pursuing consultations with a view to appointing the second co-Rapporteur at the earliest possible opportunity.

12. Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians

The Meeting of Women Parliamentarians elected Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada) as substitute member from the Twelve Plus Group.

13. Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU

The Forum elected its Board for a term ending in October 2016. The current composition of the Board is as follows:

President	· Mr. F. Al-Tenaiji (United Arab Emirates)
<i>African Group</i>	· Mr. R. Igbokwe (Nigeria)
	· Ms. M. Dziva (Zimbabwe)
<i>Arab Group</i>	<i>Current President</i>
	· Ms. T. Alriyati (Jordan)
<i>Asia-Pacific Group</i>	· Mr. Many Hun (Cambodia)
	· Ms. M. Alvarez (Philippines)
<i>Eurasia Group</i>	<i>Vacancy</i>
	<i>Vacancy</i>
<i>Group of Latin America and the Caribbean</i>	· Ms. C. Crexel (Argentina)
	· Mr. D. Vintimilla (Ecuador)
<i>Twelve Plus Group</i>	· Mr. V. Gapšys (Lithuania)
	· Ms. M. Lugarič (Croatia)

14. Internal Auditors for the 2015 accounts

The Governing Council appointed the following two internal auditors for the Organization's 2015 accounts:

- Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal)
- Mr. H.R. Mohamed (United Republic of Tanzania).

Media and communications

In keeping with the IPU Strategy to enhance the visibility of the Organization and its work, notably its Assemblies, and to help bridge the gap between the international work of parliamentarians and the general public, efforts were made in the process leading up to and during the 131st Assembly in Geneva. As a result, the IPU issued nine press releases relating to the 131st Assembly and to the First IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, which immediately preceded it. Prior to the event, two press briefings had been organized for journalists accredited to the United Nations Office at Geneva. One national delegation also held an official press conference, which was attended by some 20 journalists from the UN Press Corps, at the Assembly. More than 120 television, radio and print journalists and photographers, of whom 40 were accompanying the national delegations of eight countries, were accredited to the Assembly.

Initial media monitoring of the Assembly on the basis of limited open-source content on websites around the world revealed coverage in several languages, including English, French, Arabic and Vietnamese. Geographically, coverage was virtually global; only some parts of Africa and a few Central Asian and South-East Asian countries had little or no reporting.

Nearly 2,000 online articles and blogs mentioning IPU and the Assembly were posted over the Assembly period. More than 1,600 of these articles on websites, Facebook and blogs, with more than 520 million unique visitors, were posted during the Assembly period. The articles covered a wide range of issues, including the election of the new President, Ebola, terrorism, gender equality and violence against women, as well as the outcomes of bilateral discussions.

Television coverage of the Assembly was also very international. The IPU Communications team filmed four video news stories on the event and provided them to the European Broadcasting Union for distribution to 56 national television channels across Europe and many more in North Africa and Asia. The video stories included coverage of the admission of new Members, the proposed subjects for the emergency item, the emergency debate on Ebola, the Future Policy Award and the election of the new IPU President. Video footage was shared on YouTube. Television footage and stories were also filed by media accompanying national delegations.

About 30 interviews were organized with broadcasters, including BBC World Service, Voice of America, United Nations Radio and national television channels and print media.

For the sixth time, there was a Twitter event on the Assembly, using the #IPU131 hashtag with a live feed in the plenary. Social media monitoring revealed an increase over the previous Assembly in the number of people involved in the event, the number of tweets and the number of Twitter accounts reached: a total of over 3,600 posts using #IPU131 by more than 1,000 users. The most active periods were the opening and closing days of the Assembly, with tweets reaching more than 7.34 million accounts and leaving nearly 25 million impressions. IPU was mentioned on Twitter through its handle @IPUparliament in nearly 2.9 million tweets, reaching more than 6.5 million accounts with the potential to reach 18.7 million more. A Twitter event using #YoungMPs was organized for the Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, with more than 1,160 tweets using the hashtag posted by 655 users, reaching 1.84 million accounts. This activity generated some 300 new followers for @IPUparliament.

Flickr was again used widely to distribute photos of the Assembly to the media and the participants.

Five new publications produced by IPU, either alone or with partner organizations, were introduced during the Assembly: two Handbooks for Parliamentarians on *Implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and *Nationality and Statelessness*, respectively; *the Atlas of Electoral Gender Quotas*; *125 years of democratic struggle for peace*; and a compilation of citations from the outgoing President, *In his own words: Abdelwahad Radi*. Other publications were also available on the publications stand and 43 orders were received.

A video of the 125th anniversary exhibition, on display at the Quai Wilson in Geneva between 1 September and 19 October was shown at the publications stand and Members were photographed and approached for contributions to the online project *Faces of IPU*. A video spot on IPU was also shown on all buses and trams in Geneva for two weeks, around the dates of the Assembly.

Membership of the Inter-Parliamentary Union¹

Members (166)

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

Associate Members (10)

Andean Parliament, Arab Parliament, Central American Parliament (PARLACEN), East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), European Parliament, Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO), Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Parliament of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) and Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

¹ At the closure of the 131st Assembly

Agenda, resolutions and other texts of the 131st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the 131st Assembly
2. Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
3. General Debate on *Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women*
4. International law as it relates to national sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and human rights
(*Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights*)
5. Reports of the Standing Committees on Peace and International Security; Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade; and United Nations Affairs
6. Approval of the subject item for the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights at the 133rd IPU Assembly
7. The role of parliaments in supporting an immediate and robust international response to the Ebola epidemic and in enacting laws ensuring an effective response to and preparedness for Ebola and other infectious disease outbreaks

Outcome Document of the General Debate on the theme *Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women*

*Endorsed by the 131st IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)*

In October 2014, we members of parliament gathered at the 131st IPU Assembly on the theme: *Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women.*

Gender equality is at the heart of progress, peace and development. If we are committed to achieving peace and security in the world, ending poverty and achieving sustainable development, we must tackle this issue head-on.

No country today can claim to have achieved gender equality. Women account for half the world's population, yet they make up only 21.8 per cent of parliamentarians worldwide, they continue to earn systematically less than men for the same work, and over 31 million girls are prevented from attending primary school. Gender inequality holds all our countries back, and the struggle to overcome it must therefore be a priority for each and every one of us, both men and women.

Today, the scourge of violence against women is a key issue in every country and internationally. No nation is spared; the latest global and regional estimates by the World Health Organization show that one out of every three women worldwide has experienced intimate partner violence or sexual violence by someone other than a partner.

Whether in the public or the private sphere, violence against women and girls in all its forms and manifestations robs them of their dignity, violates their fundamental rights, damages their health, reduces their productivity and prevents them from achieving their full potential. It also has significant consequences for peace and security and a negative impact on development. We strongly condemn all forms of violence against women and girls.

Gender inequality and violence against women feed on each other. On the one hand, it is impossible to achieve equality between men and women without putting an end to violence against women; on the other, women's vulnerability to violence is heightened by unbalanced power relations between men and women. In order to address this problem, we must take into account the broader context of women's lives and the need to secure respect for all their fundamental rights.

Addressing violence against women is a complex issue that requires profound change. It means looking at power relations; confronting patriarchy, which permeates all aspects of our societies; changing mentalities; and challenging the social roles and stereotypes that we have internalized, including those related to men. It also means enabling women to take ownership of their lives, their bodies and their destinies since women who are empowered, including economically, are less vulnerable to abuse.

There is no one solution for achieving gender equality and putting an end to violence against women; instead, there are a variety of approaches that reflect the diversity of situations and national experiences. It is nevertheless within the reach of parliaments to develop key strategies and responses. If we have the commitment and the will, progress is an achievable goal.

The commitment to achieving gender equality and eradicating violence against women must first translate into the development of strong, comprehensive legislation that is non-discriminatory, supports women's empowerment and addresses all forms of discrimination. This means a legal framework with no loopholes, one that provides for the implementation of temporary special measures to level the playing field and facilitates gender mainstreaming. It also means a framework that is consistent with States' commitments under the international instruments on human rights and gender equality to which they are parties, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

We need comprehensive legislation that criminalizes all forms of violence against women and includes provisions on prevention, protection and support for the survivors and prosecution and punishment of the perpetrators. It must also take into account and meet the needs of different groups of women, especially the most vulnerable, including girls, migrant women and refugee women. This is an area in which progress has been achieved; for example, two thirds of the world's countries now have laws criminalizing domestic violence.

Putting laws into practice remains the key challenge. Appropriate mechanisms must be envisaged in domestic law and budgets must be scrutinized to ensure that adequate financial and human resources are allocated to the effective implementation of legislation.

In order for laws to meet the needs of the survivors of gender-based violence, easily accessible services are fundamental. Several States have established women's shelters, hotlines and "one-stop crisis centres" that provide survivors of gender-based violence with legal, medical and counselling services. Investment in a justice system based on the protection of women survivors and their rights is vital; specialized courts on domestic violence and sexual offences are invaluable in that regard. In addition, law enforcement agencies must be trained to focus on the protection and dignity of the survivors and to secure criminal evidence so that more women will feel that it is safe for them to report violence and seek justice.

Enhanced implementation requires a coordinated community-based response to violence in which all stakeholders – including governments, parliaments, police, prosecutors, judges, health-care providers, social workers, women's organizations and religious and community leaders – have a role to play.

Awareness of the laws is also crucial. Legislation must be disseminated and made easy for people to obtain and understand, including through education, translation into local languages and public debates. For policies to be successful, sustained and effective awareness-raising campaigns are vital. All citizens, whether men or women, boys or girls, must understand that there is nothing private about violence and that it cannot be truly eliminated without an understanding that its tolerance in any form is unacceptable. In some countries, the support, cooperation and understanding of traditional leaders will be key to the success of any awareness-raising campaign.

It is essential to monitor the implementation of laws and policies. The oversight role of parliamentarians is key and must be strengthened, including by building partnerships across parties and with civil society movements. Information is also essential to the drafting and enactment of effective laws and the assessment of their impact. To that end we, as legislators, need to build our national statistical capacities and gather sex-disaggregated data and to focus particularly on the number of reported cases of violence against women and on the implementation of household surveys.

The specific situation of vulnerable groups should be taken into account and addressed as a priority. In particular, women's vulnerability to abuse and violence rises sharply in times of crisis. Women and girls are the main victims of situations of armed conflict, which, together with terrorist acts, insecurity and violence linked to drug trafficking, heighten their vulnerability and place them at greater risk of gender-based violence and abuse in the form of rape, kidnapping, forced and early marriage, exploitation and sexual slavery. Women's bodies are directly targeted by these horrifying crimes and by the increasing use of sexual violence as a weapon of war.

In light of the alarming reports of current violations of women's rights in conflict situations, we must condemn such acts publicly and denounce the use of religion and culture to justify them. We must also take urgent action at the national, regional and international levels to protect women and ensure that the survivors are given support, that they have access to justice and reparation and that the perpetrators are prosecuted. In this context, States must continue to fulfil their international obligations under the relevant human rights instruments and must implement in full United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the Council's other resolutions on women, peace and security and general recommendation No. 30 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

Girls constitute another vulnerable group and face additional forms of violence, including female genital mutilation and other harmful practices, forced and early marriage, and murder in the name of so-called "honour". In developing countries, one third of all girls will be married before they turn 18 and 3.3 million girls are at risk of genital mutilation. In 50 per cent of cases, sexual attacks target girls aged 15 or even younger. Tailored responses to the specific needs of girls must be developed. As parliamentarians, we have the obligation to speak on their behalf and defend their right to a childhood free from fear and violence.

Change starts at birth. Education is a powerful equalizer; it is the key to transforming mentalities, addressing stereotypes and discrimination and building a culture of equality and tolerance. Girls' access to education is essential for their social and economic empowerment and security. Educating boys and girls on human rights and gender equality from an early age – for example, through the use of appropriate games, plays and stories – would help to instil non-violence and respect in relations between the sexes. Teaching and learning materials used in the schools must also be reviewed in order to remove stereotypes, and families must be engaged in order to raise awareness about women's rights and challenge social stereotypes. Parental education on women's rights and gender equality is also needed.

The media, including social media, can be major allies in educating and raising awareness. They must not perpetuate stereotypes and gender inequalities or appear to condone violence against women. With today's media reporting on acts of violence against women around the world, more and more people are becoming outraged by these crimes and calling for an end to impunity.

Achieving gender equality and ending violence against women is the responsibility of both men and women. The potential is there, and men are part and parcel of the solution; they should take an active part in the debate and stand up for women's rights. The silent majority of non-violent men must speak out now and assume their responsibilities alongside women.

Women's voices must also be heard. Women in leadership positions have the power to take specific action in response to the interests of and challenges faced by other women whose voices are not being heard or taken into account. However, women are still poorly represented in leadership positions and their presence in decision-making bodies must be increased; to that end, the adoption of temporary special measures should be considered.

Effective change requires both a strong institutional framework and national bodies with the power to take action. We must build our parliaments' capacity to put an end to violence against women and to achieve gender equality. Implementation of the IPU Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments should serve as a reference as we introduce reforms and strengthen our institutions.

In 2015, we will turn the page on the Millennium Development Goals and celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action. The period 2015 to 2030 must be the final battle in the centuries-old fight for gender equality, and we must meet the challenge. As members of parliament, we vow to make that goal a reality.

Statement by the Executive Committee on Terrorism

*Noted by the 131st IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)*

We, members of the Executive Committee, gathered for our 270th session in Geneva, wish to express our deep concern over the spread of terrorism in the world. As an organization committed to promoting democracy, human rights, peace and international security, the IPU condemns all forms of violence, especially acts of terror and intimidation committed against innocent civilians under any banner.

We express our dismay over the proliferation of terrorist acts and their disastrous consequences on entire regions and countries throughout the world. Such acts result in political instability, social unrest, insecurity, internal displacement and mass refugee movements, not to mention widespread death and destruction. The humanitarian impact of terrorist acts is untold.

We deplore the formation and proliferation of terrorist groups and organizations, as well as the provision of weapons and funds to such entities. We appeal to all IPU Members to make concerted efforts to stem the spread of terrorism and extremism. We also call on the media to play their part in reporting objectively and on parliamentarians, as opinion shapers, to play an active role in dispelling the myths surrounding extremist ideologies that may lead to terrorist acts.

We are unanimous in stating that terrorism in any form is indefensible. We appeal for calm and peace, which are the only guarantees of a stable and secure future for the next generations.

Report of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

*Noted by the 131st IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)*

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security met in Geneva from 13 to 15 October during the 131st IPU Assembly. In the absence of the elected President, Ms. Z. Drif Bitat (Algeria) took the chair.

At its first meeting, on 13 October, the Committee held its first hearing on implementation of the IPU resolution on *The role of parliaments in striking a balance between national security, human security and individual freedoms, and in averting the threat to democracy*, adopted in Cape Town in 2008. This resolution was selected not only because of its great current relevance, but because some 20 parliaments had postponed the implementation of several of its articles while fulfilling their statutory obligation to submit an annual report. The discussion was preceded by the statements of two speakers.

First, Ms. B. Jónsdóttir (Iceland) spoke as an expert on individual freedoms and human security. She stressed that the digital age and private life could be mutually exclusive and that, without privacy, there could be no functional democracy since the pillars on which it rested included private life, transparency, responsibility and freedom of expression. She herself had been a victim of human rights violations after co-producing a video that had been disseminated by Wikileaks.

Drawing a parallel between the ability of governments to spy on the citizens of other countries and the implementation of the 2008 resolution, she regretted the failure to implement paragraph 24 thereof, in which the Assembly “*Calls on parliaments to monitor the scope of surveillance and the amount of data collected by public and private organizations, to gauge any changes in the balance between the citizen and the State, and, in this process, to ensure that laws are framed and enforced in such a way as to take account of fast-moving technological developments*”. If that provision had been implemented by every parliament in the world, her privacy would not have been violated.

Mr. P. Martin-Lalande (France) spoke about counter-terrorism and his country’s legal arsenal, which evidenced the desire and the need to adapt continually to new forms of terrorism and to deal with its growing intensity. It was important to implement paragraph 5 of the resolution, in which the Assembly “*Urges national parliaments to enact effective anti-terrorism legislation, in keeping with the relevant international instruments and commitments, including the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and to assess such legislation at regular intervals so as to ensure that it is fully compatible with national security and individual freedoms*”. He also spoke of the need for strict monitoring of restrictions on public freedoms since counter-terrorism legislation was closely linked to the highly sensitive issue of individual freedoms. Legislators always sought to strike a balance between the prevention of crimes against the public order, including the safety of persons and property, and the exercise of constitutionally protected freedoms, including freedom of movement, the inviolability of the home, the confidentiality of correspondence and respect for private life.

The discussion gave all the participants an opportunity to express their views regarding the various aspects of the resolution. Several of them said that it was difficult to find the balance called for in the resolution, while others described the systems that their countries had put in place and the implications of those systems for national security and the protection of public freedoms.

At the close of the hearing, Ms. Jónsdóttir called on her colleagues to ensure that their countries’ laws were respected and that universal laws, such as the 2008 resolution, were implemented in order to defend the right to privacy and to protect citizens from universal surveillance.

Mr. Martin-Lalande, for his part, proposed that the IPU should continue to monitor the implementation of the 2008 resolution, including by drawing up an implementation scoreboard. Thus, the resolution could be discussed on a regular basis and kept alive by requesting Members to submit periodic reports.

The Committee met for the second time on the afternoon of 15 October with a panel discussion on the theme of cyber warfare, which was also the topic of the resolution that was expected to be adopted by the IPU at the 132nd Assembly in Hanoi (Viet Nam). The purpose of the discussion was to give Committee members an opportunity to learn about current issues related to cyber warfare and to exchange views with experts in the field. Ms. Z. Drif Bitat (Algeria), Vice-President, opened the meeting and introduced the experts who would make presentations during the two-and-a-half-hour discussion:

- Mr. Aapo Cederberg, Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)
- Mr. Danil Kerimi, World Economic Forum (WEF)
- Mr. Laurent Gisel, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- Mr. Marco Obiso, International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

She then gave the floor to Mr. Cederberg, moderator of the session.

The moderator introduced the topic, stressing the importance of a robust cyber policy in a domain that was crucial to wellbeing and security. He described various aspects of the subject in detail, explaining that cyberspace was an interactive domain made up of digital networks used to store, modify and communicate information. It included not only the Internet, but also the other information systems that supported businesses, infrastructures and services. It therefore included not only hardware, software, data and information, but also people, networks and the entire infrastructure that made social interaction possible. He then defined cyber security, which comprised five levels – civil, technical, economic, political, and military – and sought to overcome the problems that arose at each of those levels using effective tools for preventing and combating:

- cyber warfare;
- cyber terrorism;
- cyber espionage;
- cybercrime; and
- cyber activism.

In closing, he wondered whether cyber defence might become a new aspect of sovereignty and defence policy.

The other panellists were given the floor in order to address additional aspects of cyber warfare. In order to focus the debate on the main topic, the representative of the ICRC informed the Committee that international humanitarian law should be used to place limits on cyber warfare in order to protect civilians. He explained the concepts of “cyber attack” and “cyber warfare”, which could be used by different people to mean different things. The term “cyber attack” referred to broad data collection operations, such as industrial espionage, and other cybercrimes occurring outside the context of armed conflict. That kind of cyber attack was not covered by international humanitarian law. The term “cyber warfare”, on the other hand, referred to large data stream operations employed as methods of warfare. Those operations were intended to cause death, suffering and destruction during an armed conflict and thus fell within the scope of international humanitarian law.

The representative of the ICRC expressed concern that cyber warfare might have dramatic humanitarian consequences, resulting in high numbers of civilian casualties and significant property damage. Recalling the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I) of 1977, he said that there was no legal vacuum in cyber-space since, under article 36 of that instrument, any new weapon, means or method of warfare was subject to international humanitarian law. One challenge lay in the anonymity of cyberspace, which made it difficult for States to attribute acts of aggression to the perpetrators in a timely manner. A second challenge was the interconnectedness of cyberspace: the same networks, routes and cables were shared by civilian and military users, making it impossible to determine who owned what. It was therefore strongly recommended that States should apply the law of armed conflict under international humanitarian law to cyber warfare and should review their existing legislation in light of the development of new weapons.

The representative of the WEF recalled that cyberspace not only carried potential risks and threats to society; it also offered opportunities that had been unthinkable before the development of the Internet. The hyper-connectivity of the Web had had unintended consequences, and security had not yet caught up to its technological potential. Moreover, the costs of risks and product security had been overlooked at the outset. Since most network infrastructures are privately owned, it was crucial to include private stakeholders.

The representative of the ITU stressed the need to take a bottom-up approach and to ensure coordination at the national level in securing infrastructures. Unless countries had mechanisms for including all stakeholders at the national level, all efforts at the international level would fail. The solution lay in a combination of national coordination and international cooperation. It was also necessary to synthesize the various national perspectives and bring them to the international level.

The statements made by Committee members focused on the following issues:

1. Legal considerations, the importance of defining the terms “cyberspace” and “cyber warfare” in new national legislation and the need for new international conventions;
2. The need for international cooperation and, in particular, the role of international organizations and the importance of confidence-building measures at the national, bilateral and global levels;
3. Especially in the case of developing countries, the need for capacity-building programmes so that they could provide adequate technological responses;
4. The difficult balance between State security and individual freedom; young populations, in particular, would reject close regulation of the cybersphere;
5. The problematic issue of false information, especially in countries in conflict, where the Internet was often used to threaten opponents, spread panic and disseminate false information to the public.

There was general agreement on the need to take legislative measures at the national and international levels to secure the cybersphere. As an agent of change, the IPU was requested to promote best practices and facilitate discussions that would increase parliamentary awareness and lead to the drafting of relevant legislation.

The Bureau of the Standing Committee met on 14 October 2014. It established its work programme for the 132nd IPU Assembly, to be held in Hanoi, Viet Nam, in March 2015. At that Assembly, the Committee would first discuss the draft resolution on *Cyber warfare – A serious threat to peace and global security*. It would then consider the proposed amendments to the draft resolution in plenary with a view to submitting it to the Assembly for adoption. With regard to the preparation of a longer-term work plan, the Bureau decided to take time to consider the matter and, in a month, to prepare a synthesis of their ideas in order to submit a comprehensive proposal to the Committee at its next session.

The Bureau also considered the question of the successor to Mr. G. Schneemann (South Africa) as President of the Committee and proposed the election of Mr. J. R. Tau (South Africa) to replace him. It also proposed that Mr. A. Omari (Morocco) should be confirmed as Vice-President. On 15 October 2014, the Committee approved these proposals. Nevertheless, one vacancy on the Bureau, from the Asia-Pacific Group, remained unfilled because no nomination had been received from that Geopolitical Group. Following the election to the Executive Committee of the representative from the African Group, the seat for that group became vacant. The Bureau therefore comprised 16 members.

Report of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade

*Noted by the 131st IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)*

The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade held two sittings during the 131st Assembly, one on 14 October and one on 15 October, chaired by its President, Mr. R. León (Chile).

At the first sitting, the Committee discussed the draft Outcome Document of the Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Peru in December. The Rapporteur of the Parliamentary Meeting, Mr. S. Tejada Galindo (Peru), submitted the pre-draft of the Outcome Document to the Committee for comments. The IPU Secretariat took note of the feedback provided and would incorporate it into the document that would be presented to the Parliamentary Meeting in Lima. The Parliamentary Meeting will be organized by the IPU and the Congress of the Republic of Peru, with the support of the IPU Geopolitical Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC). The Outcome Document adopted at the Parliamentary Meeting would be presented to the United Nations Climate Change Conference.

The first sitting also comprised, for the first time ever at an IPU Assembly, an interactive debate with private sector representatives. The debate focused on corporate investment in sustainable development and was organized jointly with the World Investment Forum of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The participants included Ms. L. Schreve, Head of Sustainable Lending at ING Bank, Mr. R. Milliner, B20 Sherpa for Australia, Mr. N. Boateng, Chief Executive Officer of Empretec, Ghana, Mr. S. Chowdhury (Bangladesh, MP) and Mr. D. Carter (New Zealand, MP).

The debate highlighted the private sector's growing role in funding for development and called for closer interaction with parliamentarians to make development more sustainable, not just financially, but also in social, environmental and ethical terms. The participants agreed that parliamentarians in all countries had a critical role to play in creating stable and enabling environments for investment and private sector development. They underscored the importance of taking account of risks, particularly disasters, and the need for the private sector and governments to include a risk mitigation component as a key underlying component of sustainable development.

The panel emphasized that, in developing countries, the State had a central role in devising strategies to support the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as key drivers of development, particularly in Africa. SMEs today faced many obstacles, ranging from inadequate management skills to access to funding and technology. It was important for parliamentarians to understand the role of SMEs and their potential to spur growth, so that they could come up with strategies and plans to support their development. Such strategies should include access to financing, but also business advice, education, mentorship and other support programmes. Strong government strategy in this regard, accompanied by clear and transparent laws and policies, would also leave commercial banks more comfortable about dealing with start-ups.

The exchanges also included a useful reflection on the sometimes low capacity of parliaments to engage with the private sector and stimulate investments and private sector development. The private sector panellists admitted that they were not aware of those obstacles and acknowledged that the private sector had a relatively poor understanding of parliaments and vice versa. Both parliamentarians and the private sector representatives welcomed opportunities for further exchanges and expressed the hope that the IPU would continue to create them. Such exchanges were also critical in order to tackle other hindrances to development, such as corruption and illicit financial flows and trade.

The sitting on 15 October was dedicated to the debate on the subject item of the Committee's next resolution, *Shaping a new system of water governance: Promoting parliamentary action on water*. The subject item was introduced by Mr. A. Iza, Head of the Environmental Law Programme, International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Ms. E. Tranchez of Waterlex, Ms. N. Marino (Australia, MP) and Mr. F. Bustamante (Ecuador, MP). A total of 35 parliamentarians from 34 countries took part in the debate, highlighting different aspects of water governance at national, regional and international level and stressing the important role that parliaments played in all of them. At the end of the debate, the co-Rapporteurs reflected on the Committee deliberations and provided initial insight into how they would incorporate the input provided during the debate into the draft resolution.

The participants observed that the planet was running out of water, our most important resource for sustaining life and all ecosystems. The adoption of middle class lifestyles by developing countries moving up the income ladder, climate change and population growth would only exacerbate the water crisis. A strong water governance system was critical to supporting much needed conservation measures while making water accessible to all equitably and fairly. Most of the world's water reserves, whether situated in individual countries or across borders, were not being actively managed. One way to ensure they would be was to implement two key international conventions that most parliaments had already ratified.

Access to clean and affordable water should be considered a human right. Water itself had the right to be preserved, so that aquifers would have enough time to replenish themselves. As several countries had reported, lax regulations were at the root of water overconsumption. Concern to secure vital water supplies was a root cause of conflict between and within countries. As most water was used for agriculture, it would be important to shift to crops that were less water-intensive and generally reform agricultural practices with an eye to the best practices that traditional agriculture and modern methods had to offer.

Water governance must be established at all levels, from national to local. There was no single model of water governance and the overall context had to be considered. One approach that many speakers alluded to was based on the notion that water was a public good belonging to everyone and requiring strong government regulation to make sure it did not become a mere commodity. That model valued strong community involvement through water councils that included representatives of minority groups and the most vulnerable in society. In Ecuador, for example, water rights had been enshrined directly in the Constitution, and all essential water services had to be provided directly by the government or at least guaranteed by it.

Although several countries had achieved the water target of the Millennium Development Goals (many fewer had achieved the closely related sanitation target), much stronger action worldwide would be required to turn the tide. The current draft Sustainable Development Goals therefore included a stand-alone water goal. Parliaments were encouraged to actively support that goal as negotiations of the draft began in earnest next year.

In addition to the debates, the Standing Committee Bureau had four vacancies to fill, one by the Asia-Pacific Group, one by the Twelve Plus Group and two by the Eurasia Group. The Committee approved the candidatures of Ms. S. Tioulong (Cambodia) and Ms. S. de Bethune (Belgium). No candidatures were received from the Eurasia Group.

Report of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

*Noted by the 131st IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)*

The Committee held three panel discussions over two days, on 14 and 15 October. Ms. D.-T. Avgerinopoulou (Greece) introduced all the discussions in her capacity of President.

The first discussion took the form of **an interactive debate with the UN Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, Mr. A. de Zayas**. He drew from his reports to the UN Human Rights Council to argue for a deeper, more participatory form of democracy at both national and international level. He said that representative democracy had its inherent limitations: it only worked if parliamentarians were held accountable to their constituents. In too many countries, however, politicians fell prey to the influence of lobbies and other organized interests that were at variance with the popular will.

There were numerous illustrations of this, such as military and defence budgets that were not fully disclosed to the people and adopted without debate in parliament on the need to reduce military expenditure in order to invest more in education, health care and other public goods. Global military spending could easily be cut by, say, 10 per cent (of the current USD 1.3 trillion annually) if all countries agreed to do the same, which would leave no one at a disadvantage.

Mr. de Zayas suggested that measures to strengthen representative democracy should include providing more real choices when it came to candidates running for election and weakening the grip of party leaders on elected representatives. Referendums should be used more frequently to allow people to have a direct say in government.

The same democratic deficit found in many countries, both developed and developing, permeated the institutions of global governance, from the United Nations to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization. Those institutions should all be regrouped under the UN umbrella, and the United Nations itself needed to be made more accountable to the people. According to Mr. de Zayas, the constitution of a world parliamentary assembly of elected representatives would contribute to making the United Nations more responsive to the real concerns of people around the world. While that idea was accepted by one delegation in the room, it was rejected by another. The Committee President reminded participants of the core mandate of the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, i.e. to hold hearings with UN officials, shape parliamentary input to major UN processes, and examine UN operations with a view to enhancing accountability.

There was a clear sense in the ensuing discussion with members that Mr. de Zayas's perspective resonated in several regards. Questions were raised about the democratic deficit at the global level, which included a Security Council that did not fairly represent the global community, the fact that developing countries were not members of key international bodies, and the growing influence of unaccountable transnational corporations at the United Nations and other global institutions. None of that was likely to change unless parliaments acquired stronger oversight capacities and the political will to hold governments to account.

The Committee's second panel discussion dealt with **the question of corporate influence on UN decision-making**. The panel consisted of Ms. P. Bayr (Austria), Mr. J. Kakonge, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations Office at Geneva, and Mr. J. Martens, Director of the Global Policy Forum. Mr. A. Motter, of the IPU Secretariat, moderated.

The overall conclusion of the discussion was that parliaments ought to pay closer attention to the growing relationship between the United Nations and corporations. While there might be some scope for the United Nations to partner with the corporate sector either at the global level or within countries, it was imperative that all partnership agreements be subject to strict mandatory guidelines and to regular reviews. UN agencies and programmes should adopt a common standard for dealing with the corporate sector. Corporate funding of UN offices and field operations needed to be made more transparent through mandatory disclosure and conflict-of-interest rules.

The United Nations lacked a proper vetting system to make sure that the corporate entities it worked with upheld the highest standards, which must go well beyond the 10 core principles of the Global Compact. It was contradictory for corporations that did business with the United Nations to follow those core principles at the same time as they undermined development goals by looking for tax havens or advocated policies (e.g. oil and gas subsidies) that affected climate change and development efforts. Good corporate citizenship should be defined in terms of respect for tax laws and government regulations, human rights and public goods.

A more fundamental problem was the United Nations' growing reliance on the corporate sector to help establish global norms by including corporations on key advisory boards and other such decision-making bodies. Concomitant to that was the rising number of multi-stakeholder forums at the United Nations in which partners were invited to discussions with governments as if they were all on the same footing. Governments needed to better differentiate between partners and clarify that, in the final analysis, they were accountable to the people via their elected representatives. The institutional relationship between the United Nations and the IPU as a parliamentary organization could help strengthen that essential link between global and national levels of governance. By all accounts, the United Nations invested more resources in the relationship with the corporate sector than in that with parliaments. In an ideal scenario, the reverse should be the case.

The recent exponential growth in the number of corporate partnerships was closely linked to government cuts to the UN budget. The United Nations was being starved for resources, prompting it to reach out to the corporate sector for support for development-related initiatives. Corporations, for their part, tended to regard this as a good exercise in public relations and a way to ensure that the global regulatory framework remained fundamentally skewed in their favour. Corporations had long preferred a regime based on the principle of voluntary compliance with respect to human rights and other standards. It was also possible that some corporate partners wished to ensure that a market-based approach remained the preferred policy option when it came to guaranteeing fundamental rights such as access to water or food.

Yet, in what might amount to an important shift on the part of the United Nations, a 2014 Human Rights Council resolution called for a human rights instrument that was legally binding on transnational corporations and other business enterprises. If properly implemented, the resolution would also help fill a gap in many national jurisdictions where legislation on corporate behaviour was lax. Ultimately, it was at the national level that action was needed to strengthen the legal frameworks for good corporate behaviour at all levels and in all jurisdictions. Here again, parliaments had a central role to play.

The Committee's third, interactive, panel discussion considered the process leading up to the 2016 UN General Assembly Special Session that would review progress on the goals set in the 2009 ***Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem***.

The discussion was co-moderated by Mr. A. Avsan (Sweden) and Ms. L. Rojas (Mexico). The panel comprised Mr. L. de Alba, Mexico's ambassador to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Mr. J.-L. Lemahieu, UNODC Director, Policy Analysis and Public Affairs, and journalist Mr. E. de la Reguera, and examined the tension between the law enforcement versus the prevention and rehabilitation approach.

The moderators pointed out that failure to discuss the issue nationally and internationally meant that serious problems – deaths in developed and developing countries; incoherent regional policies that had an unintended impact on neighbouring States; collateral damage on women and children in poor communities; flourishing money laundering, corruption and organized crime – were not being addressed. Criminal enterprises were described as akin to multinationals in their scope and impact. Inaction was leading to greater inequality within and between nations.

In the ensuing discussion, the participants pointed out that, while some nations were discussing legalization to reduce harm and generate tax revenues, others bemoaned the lack of debate and understanding in parliaments, among the general public and in the media. They referred to the need for access to proper basic health care, pharmaceutical products, treatment and pain mitigation, and suggested that new policies had to be predicated on individual human rights and be solidly grounded in the post-2015 development agenda. Account had to be taken of economic and social issues, and regional approaches adopted.

International conventions on drugs did not allow national frameworks the flexibility to tackle drug issues in the light of the local context, history and traditions. The capacity of public health systems to deal with opiates and pain management had to be enhanced.

The participants expressed concern for transit countries that dealt with the consequences of inaction in consuming and producing countries, even though the distinction between the two was becoming less relevant in the wake of new developments, such as synthetic drugs that could be produced anywhere. They expressed a desire for further input, a flexible framework and the establishment of a coalition of the willing to work towards coherent strategies and implementation. The United Nations should involve more of its agencies, such as the World Health Organization, in tackling the problem, and each country should adopt a comprehensive approach, reducing consumption through education, treatment, supply restrictions, civil society awareness, enhanced security to combat corruption and a better legal framework. The impact of national policies at the grassroots level needed to be considered.

Mr. Lemahieu encouraged parliamentarians to post comments on the website of the UN General Assembly Special Session (www.ungass2016.org) and suggested that the IPU report on the panel discussion on *The legalization of drugs: Can it help curb organized crime?*, held at the 128th IPU Assembly (Quito, March 2013), should also be posted there. Mr. de Alba noted that the current panel discussion was the first global meeting he was aware of that included the views of parliamentarians from a cross-section of Member States. He expressed frustration at the growing tendency to negotiate international agreements by consensus through the UN process, as the result was agreements aimed at the lowest common denominator.

It was recommended that the IPU provide a forum for further engagement leading up to the UN General Assembly Special Session. Parliamentarians wanted to be involved and explicitly referenced in the relevant UN documents.

**The role of parliamentarians in countering terrorism, terrorist groups
such as the so-called daesh and massive violence against civilians
and in building an international partnership through
the United Nations and other International Organizations**

**Results of roll-call vote on the request of the delegations of Ecuador and the United Arab
Emirates for the inclusion of an emergency item**

Results

Affirmative votes	813	Total of affirmative and negative votes ...	857
Negative votes.....	44	Two-thirds majority.....	571
Abstentions	660		

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	
Afghanistan	14			Germany			19	Oman	10			
Albania		<i>Absent</i>			Ghana			14	Pakistan	21		
Algeria	15			Greece			13	Palestine	11			
Andorra	10			Guatemala		<i>Absent</i>		Panama			11	
Angola			12	Guinea			13	Paraguay		<i>Absent</i>		
Argentina	16			Guinea-Bissau			11	Peru		<i>Absent</i>		
Armenia	3		8	Haiti			13	Philippines		<i>Absent</i>		
Australia			14	Hungary	13			Poland			15	
Austria	12			Iceland	10			Portugal	13			
Bahrain	10			India			23	Qatar	8			
Bangladesh		<i>Absent</i>			Indonesia	20			Republic of Korea		<i>Absent</i>	
Belarus			13	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	18			Romania	14			
Belgium			12	Iraq		<i>Absent</i>		Russian Federation			20	
Benin	12			Ireland			11	Rwanda			12	
Bhutan			10	Italy	17			San Marino	5		5	
Bolivia		<i>Absent</i>			Japan	20			Saudi Arabia	14		
Bosnia and Herzegovina		<i>Absent</i>			Jordan	12			Senegal		10	
Botswana				Kazakhstan	13			Serbia	12			
Brazil	10		10	Kenya		14		Seychelles		<i>Absent</i>		
Burkina Faso			13	Kuwait	9			Singapore	11		1	
Burundi	12			Lao People's Dem. Republic			12	Slovakia		<i>Absent</i>		
Cabo Verde			10	Latvia		<i>Absent</i>		Slovenia	11			
Cambodia	13			Lebanon		<i>Absent</i>		South Africa			17	
Cameroon	13			Lesotho			11	Spain	10			
Canada		15		Libya		<i>Absent</i>		Sri Lanka		<i>Absent</i>		
Chad			13	Liechtenstein		<i>Absent</i>		Sudan			15	
Chile			13	Lithuania	11			Suriname		<i>Absent</i>		
China			23	Madagascar			14	Sweden	12			
Colombia	12		2	Malawi			13	Switzerland	12			
Costa Rica		<i>Absent</i>			Malaysia	14			Syrian Arab Rep.		3 10	
Côte d'Ivoire			13	Maldives	10			Tajikistan		<i>Absent</i>		
Croatia			10	Mali	13			Thailand			18	
Cuba	13			Malta		<i>Absent</i>		Timor-Leste	11			
Cyprus	10			Mauritius		<i>Absent</i>		Togo			12	
Czech Republic	13			Mexico	20			Tonga		<i>Absent</i>		
DR of the Congo			17	Micronesia (Fed. States of)			8	Trinidad & Tobago			11	
Denmark	12			Monaco		<i>Absent</i>		Turkey	12		6	
Djibouti		<i>Absent</i>			Mongolia		<i>Absent</i>		Uganda			13
Dominican Rep.			12	Morocco	15			Ukraine	10			
Ecuador	13			Myanmar	10			United Arab Emirates	11			
El Salvador	12			Namibia			11	United Kingdom	18			
Equatorial Guinea			11	Netherlands			13	United Republic of Tanzania	5	10		
Estonia	11			New Zealand	11			Uruguay	8	2		
Ethiopia	19			Nicaragua	8			Venezuela	13			
Finland	12			Niger			13	Viet Nam	15		4	
France	18			Nigeria	5		5	Zambia			13	
Gabon			11	Norway	12			Zimbabwe			13	
Gambia			10									
Georgia		<i>Absent</i>										

N.B. This list does not include delegations present at the session which were not entitled to vote pursuant to the provisions of Article 5.2 of the Statutes.

The role of the inter-parliamentary union in addressing the terrorism and extremism of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), AI Nusra Front (ANF) and other terrorist groups

Results of roll-call vote on the request of the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic for the inclusion of an emergency item

R e s u l t s

Affirmative votes.....	286	Total of affirmative and negative votes...	589
Negative votes	303	Two-thirds majority.....	393
Abstentions.....	929		

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	
Afghanistan			14	Germany		19		Oman	10			
Albania		<i>Absent</i>			Ghana	7		7	Pakistan	21		
Algeria			15	Greece			13	Palestine	11			
Andorra			10	Guatemala		<i>Absent</i>		Panama			11	
Angola			12	Guinea			13	Paraguay		<i>Absent</i>		
Argentina	16			Guinea-Bissau			11	Peru		<i>Absent</i>		
Armenia	6		5	Haiti			13	Philippines		<i>Absent</i>		
Australia		14		Hungary	13			Poland			15	
Austria			12	Iceland			10	Portugal			13	
Bahrain		10		India			23	Qatar		8		
Bangladesh		<i>Absent</i>			Indonesia	12		8	Republic of Korea		<i>Absent</i>	
Belarus	13			Iran (Islamic Republic of)	18			Romania		14		
Belgium			12	Iraq		<i>Absent</i>		Russian Federation	20			
Benin			12	Ireland			11	Rwanda			12	
Bhutan			10	Italy			17	San Marino	10			
Bolivia		<i>Absent</i>			Japan			20	Saudi Arabia		14	
Bosnia and Herzegovina		<i>Absent</i>			Jordan		12		Senegal		10	
Botswana				Kazakhstan	13			Serbia			12	
Brazil			20	Kenya		14		Seychelles		<i>Absent</i>		
Burkina Faso			13	Kuwait		9		Singapore			12	
Burundi			12	Lao People's Dem. Republic			12	Slovakia		<i>Absent</i>		
Cabo Verde			10	Latvia		<i>Absent</i>		Slovenia	11			
Cambodia			13	Lebanon		<i>Absent</i>		South Africa			17	
Cameroon			13	Lesotho			11	Spain		10		
Canada		15		Libya		<i>Absent</i>		Sri Lanka		<i>Absent</i>		
Chad			13	Liechtenstein		<i>Absent</i>		Sudan			15	
Chile			13	Lithuania			11	Suriname		<i>Absent</i>		
China			23	Madagascar			14	Sweden		12		
Colombia	14			Malawi			13	Switzerland		12		
Costa Rica		<i>Absent</i>			Malaysia	14			Syrian Arab Rep.	13		
Côte d'Ivoire			13	Maldives			10	Tajikistan		<i>Absent</i>		
Croatia			10	Mali			13	Thailand			18	
Cuba	13			Malta		<i>Absent</i>		Timor-Leste			11	
Cyprus			10	Mauritius		<i>Absent</i>		Togo			12	
Czech Republic			13	Mexico	8		12	Tonga		<i>Absent</i>		
DR of the Congo			17	Micronesia (Fed. States of)			8	Trinidad & Tobago			11	
Denmark		12		Monaco		<i>Absent</i>		Turkey		18		
Djibouti		<i>Absent</i>			Mongolia		<i>Absent</i>		Uganda			13
Dominican Rep.			12	Morocco		15		Ukraine			10	
Ecuador			13	Myanmar			10	United Arab Emirates		11		
El Salvador	12			Namibia			11	United Kingdom		18		
Equatorial Guinea			11	Netherlands			13	United Republic of Tanzania			15	
Estonia		11		New Zealand			11	Uruguay			11	
Ethiopia			19	Nicaragua	8			Venezuela	13			
Finland		12		Niger			13	Viet Nam	10		9	
France		18		Nigeria			10	Zambia			13	
Gabon			11	Norway			12	Zimbabwe			13	
Gambia			10									
Georgia		<i>Absent</i>										

N.B. This list does not include delegations present at the session which were not entitled to vote pursuant to the provisions of Article 5.2 of the Statutes.

**The role of the IPU in encouraging and supporting
an initiative aimed at ensuring international protection for the
Palestinian people under occupation until a two-state solution is
achieved, in the light of the latest Israeli military aggression on Gaza**

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

Results

Affirmative votes.....	524	Total of affirmative and negative votes ...	687
Negative votes	163	Two-thirds majority	458
Abstentions	831		

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Afghanistan			14	Germany		19		Oman	10		
Albania	<i>Absent</i>			Ghana			14	Pakistan	21		
Algeria	15			Greece			13	Palestine	11		
Andorra			10	Guatemala	<i>Absent</i>			Panama			11
Angola			12	Guinea			13	Paraguay	<i>Absent</i>		
Argentina			16	Guinea-Bissau			11	Peru	<i>Absent</i>		
Armenia			11	Haiti	13			Philippines	<i>Absent</i>		
Australia		14		Hungary	6		7	Poland			15
Austria			12	Iceland			10	Portugal	3	4	6
Bahrain	10			India	23			Qatar	8		
Bangladesh	<i>Absent</i>			Indonesia	20			Republic of Korea	<i>Absent</i>		
Belarus			13	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	18			Romania			14
Belgium	6		6	Iraq	<i>Absent</i>			Russian Federation	20		
Benin			12	Ireland	11			Rwanda			12
Bhutan			10	Italy			17	San Marino	5		5
Bolivia	<i>Absent</i>			Japan			20	Saudi Arabia	14		
Bosnia and Herzegovina	<i>Absent</i>			Jordan	12			Senegal	10		
Botswana				Kazakhstan	13			Serbia			12
Brazil	10		10	Kenya		14		Seychelles	<i>Absent</i>		
Burkina Faso			13	Kuwait	9			Singapore	12		
Burundi			12	Lao People's Dem. Republic			12	Slovakia	<i>Absent</i>		
Cabo Verde			10	Latvia	<i>Absent</i>			Slovenia	11		
Cambodia			13	Lebanon	<i>Absent</i>			South Africa	17		
Cameroon			13	Lesotho			11	Spain			10
Canada		15		Libya	<i>Absent</i>			Sri Lanka	<i>Absent</i>		
Chad			13	Liechtenstein	<i>Absent</i>			Sudan	15		
Chile			13	Lithuania			11	Suriname	<i>Absent</i>		
China	13		10	Madagascar			14	Sweden		12	
Colombia			14	Malawi			13	Switzerland		12	
Costa Rica	<i>Absent</i>			Malaysia	14			Syrian Arab Rep.	13		
Côte d'Ivoire			13	Maldives	10			Tajikistan	<i>Absent</i>		
Croatia			10	Mali	6		7	Thailand			18
Cuba	13			Malta	<i>Absent</i>			Timor-Leste			11
Cyprus	5		5	Mauritius	<i>Absent</i>			Togo			12
Czech Republic			13	Mexico	12		8	Tonga	<i>Absent</i>		
DR of the Congo			17	Micronesia (Fed. States of)			8	Trinidad & Tobago			11
Denmark			12	Monaco	<i>Absent</i>			Turkey	18		
Djibouti	<i>Absent</i>			Mongolia	<i>Absent</i>			Uganda			13
Dominican Rep.			12	Morocco	15			Ukraine			10
Ecuador	13			Myanmar			10	United Arab Emirates	11		
El Salvador	12			Namibia			11	United Kingdom		18	
Equatorial Guinea			11	Netherlands		13		United Republic of Tanzania	15		
Estonia			19	New Zealand			11	Uruguay			11
Ethiopia			12	Nicaragua	8			Venezuela	13		
Finland		18		Niger			13	Viet Nam	10		9
France			11	Nigeria			10	Zambia			13
Gabon			10	Norway		12		Zimbabwe			13
Gambia			10								
Georgia	<i>Absent</i>										

N.B. This list does not include delegations present at the session which were not entitled to vote pursuant to the provisions of Article 5.2 of the Statutes.

**Commitment by the world's parliamentarians to promote a
multilateral legal framework for restructuring countries' sovereign
debt with a view to achieving a more stable and predictable
international financial system**

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

R e s u l t s

Affirmative votes.....	286	Total of affirmative and negative votes...	574
Negative votes	288	Two-thirds majority.....	383
Abstentions.....	944		

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Afghanistan		14		Germany		19		Oman			10
Albania		<i>Absent</i>		Ghana			14	Pakistan			21
Algeria			15	Greece	3		10	Palestine			11
Andorra			10	Guatemala			<i>Absent</i>	Panama	11		
Angola			12	Guinea			13	Paraguay			<i>Absent</i>
Argentina	16			Guinea-Bissau			11	Peru			<i>Absent</i>
Armenia			11	Haiti			13	Philippines			<i>Absent</i>
Australia			14	Hungary			13	Poland		15	
Austria	6		6	Iceland			10	Portugal			13
Bahrain		10		India	23			Qatar			8
Bangladesh		<i>Absent</i>		Indonesia	12		8	Republic of Korea			<i>Absent</i>
Belarus			13	Iran (Islamic Republic of)			18	Romania			14
Belgium			12	Iraq			<i>Absent</i>	Russian Federation	10		10
Benin		12		Ireland			11	Rwanda			12
Bhutan			10	Italy			17	San Marino			10
Bolivia		<i>Absent</i>		Japan		20		Saudi Arabia		14	
Bosnia and Herzegovina		<i>Absent</i>		Jordan		12		Senegal			10
Botswana				Kazakhstan	13			Serbia			12
Brazil	20			Kenya		14		Seychelles			<i>Absent</i>
Burkina Faso			13	Kuwait		9		Singapore			12
Burundi			12	Lao People's Dem. Republic			12	Slovakia			<i>Absent</i>
Cabo Verde			10	Latvia			<i>Absent</i>	Slovenia			11
Cambodia			13	Lebanon			<i>Absent</i>	South Africa			17
Cameroon			13	Lesotho			11	Spain			10
Canada		15		Libya			<i>Absent</i>	Sri Lanka			<i>Absent</i>
Chad			13	Liechtenstein			<i>Absent</i>	Sudan	15		
Chile	13			Lithuania			11	Suriname			<i>Absent</i>
China			23	Madagascar			14	Sweden		12	
Colombia	14			Malawi			13	Switzerland		12	
Costa Rica		<i>Absent</i>		Malaysia			14	Syrian Arab Rep.	13		
Côte d'Ivoire			13	Maldives			10	Tajikistan			<i>Absent</i>
Croatia			10	Mali			13	Thailand			18
Cuba	13			Malta			<i>Absent</i>	Timor-Leste			11
Cyprus	10			Mauritius			<i>Absent</i>	Togo			12
Czech Republic			13	Mexico	12		8	Tonga			<i>Absent</i>
DR of the Congo			17	Micronesia (Fed. States of)			8	Trinidad & Tobago			11
Denmark			12	Monaco			<i>Absent</i>	Turkey			18
Djibouti		<i>Absent</i>		Mongolia			<i>Absent</i>	Uganda			13
Dominican Rep.			12	Morocco			15	Ukraine			10
Ecuador	13			Myanmar			10	United Arab Emirates		11	
El Salvador	12			Namibia			11	United Kingdom			18
Equatorial Guinea			11	Netherlands		13		United Republic of Tanzania		15	
Estonia		11		New Zealand			11	Uruguay	11		
Ethiopia	10		9	Nicaragua	8			Venezuela	13		
Finland		12		Niger			13	Viet Nam	15		4
France		18		Nigeria			10	Zambia			13
Gabon			11	Norway		12		Zimbabwe			13
Gambia			10								
Georgia		<i>Absent</i>									

N.B. This list does not include delegations present at the session which were not entitled to vote pursuant to the provisions of Article 5.2 of the Statutes.

**The role of Parliaments in supporting implementation of
UN Security Council resolution 2178 and international support
to address the humanitarian disaster caused
by the terrorist attacks in Iraq and Syria**

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

Results

Affirmative votes.....	415	Total of affirmative and negative votes ...	642
Negative votes	227	Two-thirds majority	428
Abstentions	876		

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Afghanistan		14		Germany		19		Oman			10
Albania		<i>Absent</i>		Ghana			14	Pakistan			21
Algeria			15	Greece	13			Palestine			11
Andorra			10	Guatemala		<i>Absent</i>		Panama	11		
Angola			12	Guinea			13	Paraguay		<i>Absent</i>	
Argentina	16			Guinea-Bissau			11	Peru		<i>Absent</i>	
Armenia			11	Haiti			13	Philippines		<i>Absent</i>	
Australia	14			Hungary	13			Poland			15
Austria			12	Iceland			10	Portugal			13
Bahrain		10		India			23	Qatar			8
Bangladesh		<i>Absent</i>		Indonesia	12		8	Republic of Korea		<i>Absent</i>	
Belarus	13			Iran (Islamic Republic of)			18	Romania	10		4
Belgium			12	Iraq		<i>Absent</i>		Russian Federation	20		
Benin			12	Ireland	11			Rwanda			12
Bhutan			10	Italy			17	San Marino	10		
Bolivia		<i>Absent</i>		Japan	20			Saudi Arabia		14	
Bosnia and Herzegovina		<i>Absent</i>		Jordan		12		Senegal			10
Botswana				Kazakhstan	13			Serbia			12
Brazil	20			Kenya		14		Seychelles		<i>Absent</i>	
Burkina Faso			13	Kuwait		9		Singapore	12		
Burundi			12	Lao People's Dem. Republic			12	Slovakia		<i>Absent</i>	
Cabo Verde			10	Latvia		<i>Absent</i>		Slovenia			11
Cambodia			13	Lebanon		<i>Absent</i>		South Africa			17
Cameroon			13	Lesotho			11	Spain	10		
Canada		15		Libya		<i>Absent</i>		Sri Lanka		<i>Absent</i>	
Chad			13	Liechtenstein		<i>Absent</i>		Sudan			15
Chile	13			Lithuania			11	Suriname		<i>Absent</i>	
China	23			Madagascar			14	Sweden		12	
Colombia	14			Malawi			13	Switzerland		12	
Costa Rica		<i>Absent</i>		Malaysia	14			Syrian Arab Rep.	13		
Côte d'Ivoire			13	Maldives			10	Tajikistan		<i>Absent</i>	
Croatia	7		3	Mali			13	Thailand			18
Cuba	13			Malta		<i>Absent</i>		Timor-Leste			11
Cyprus			10	Mauritius		<i>Absent</i>		Togo			12
Czech Republic			13	Mexico	20			Tonga		<i>Absent</i>	
DR of the Congo			17	Micronesia (Fed. States of)	8			Trinidad & Tobago			11
Denmark		12		Monaco		<i>Absent</i>		Turkey	12		6
Djibouti		<i>Absent</i>		Mongolia		<i>Absent</i>		Uganda			13
Dominican Rep.	12			Morocco			15	Ukraine			10
Ecuador			13	Myanmar			10	United Arab Emirates		11	
El Salvador	12			Namibia			11	United Kingdom		18	
Equatorial Guinea			11	Netherlands		13		United Republic of Tanzania			15
Estonia			11	New Zealand			11	Uruguay			11
Ethiopia			19	Nicaragua	8			Venezuela	13		
Finland		12		Niger			13	Viet Nam	15		4
France		18		Nigeria			10	Zambia			13
Gabon			11	Norway		12		Zimbabwe			13
Gambia			10								
Georgia		<i>Absent</i>									

N.B. This list does not include delegations present at the session which were not entitled to vote pursuant to the provisions of Article 5.2 of the Statutes.

The role of Parliaments in supporting an immediate and robust international response to the Ebola epidemic and in enacting laws ensuring an effective response to and preparedness for Ebola and other infectious disease outbreaks

Results of roll-call vote on the request of the delegations of Belgium and Zambia for the inclusion of an emergency item

R e s u l t s

Affirmative votes.....	1079	Total of affirmative and negative votes...	1221
Negative votes	142	Two-thirds majority.....	814
Abstentions.....	297		

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Afghanistan		14		Germany	19			Oman			10
Albania		<i>Absent</i>		Ghana	14			Pakistan			21
Algeria	15			Greece	13			Palestine			11
Andorra			10	Guatemala		<i>Absent</i>		Panama			11
Angola	12			Guinea	13			Paraguay		<i>Absent</i>	
Argentina			16	Guinea-Bissau	11			Peru		<i>Absent</i>	
Armenia			11	Haiti	13			Philippines		<i>Absent</i>	
Australia	14			Hungary	13			Poland	15		
Austria	8		4	Iceland	10			Portugal	13		
Bahrain		10		India	23			Qatar			8
Bangladesh		<i>Absent</i>		Indonesia	20			Republic of Korea		<i>Absent</i>	
Belarus			13	Iran (Islamic Republic of)			18	Romania	14		
Belgium	12			Iraq		<i>Absent</i>		Russian Federation	20		
Benin	12			Ireland	11			Rwanda	12		
Bhutan	10			Italy			17	San Marino	5		5
Bolivia		<i>Absent</i>		Japan	20			Saudi Arabia		14	
Bosnia and Herzegovina		<i>Absent</i>		Jordan		12		Senegal	10		
Botswana				Kazakhstan			13	Serbia	12		
Brazil	20			Kenya	14			Seychelles		<i>Absent</i>	
Burkina Faso	13			Kuwait		9		Singapore	6		6
Burundi	12			Lao People's Dem. Republic	12			Slovakia		<i>Absent</i>	
Cabo Verde	10			Latvia		<i>Absent</i>		Slovenia	11		
Cambodia	13			Lebanon		<i>Absent</i>		South Africa	17		
Cameroon	13			Lesotho	11			Spain	10		
Canada	15			Libya		<i>Absent</i>		Sri Lanka		<i>Absent</i>	
Chad	13			Liechtenstein		<i>Absent</i>		Sudan	15		
Chile			13	Lithuania	11			Suriname		<i>Absent</i>	
China	10		13	Madagascar	14			Sweden			12
Colombia	14			Malawi	13			Switzerland	12		
Costa Rica		<i>Absent</i>		Malaysia	14			Syrian Arab Rep.	13		
Côte d'Ivoire	13			Maldives	10			Tajikistan		<i>Absent</i>	
Croatia	10			Mali	13			Thailand	18		
Cuba	13			Malta		<i>Absent</i>		Timor-Leste	11		
Cyprus	5		5	Mauritius		<i>Absent</i>		Togo	12		
Czech Republic	13			Mexico	20			Tonga		<i>Absent</i>	
DR of the Congo	17			Micronesia (Fed. States of)	8			Trinidad & Tobago	1		10
Denmark		12		Monaco		<i>Absent</i>		Turkey	18		
Djibouti		<i>Absent</i>		Mongolia		<i>Absent</i>		Uganda	13		
Dominican Rep.	12			Morocco	10		5	Ukraine			10
Ecuador			13	Myanmar	10			United Arab Emirates		11	
El Salvador			12	Namibia	11			United Kingdom		18	
Equatorial Guinea	11			Netherlands	13			United Republic of Tanzania	15		
Estonia			11	New Zealand	11			Uruguay			11
Ethiopia	19			Nicaragua			8	Venezuela	13		
Finland		12		Niger	13			Viet Nam	19		
France		18		Nigeria	10			Zambia	13		
Gabon	11			Norway		12		Zimbabwe	13		
Gambia	10										
Georgia		<i>Absent</i>									

N.B. This list does not include delegations present at the session which were not entitled to vote pursuant to the provisions of Article 5.2 of the Statutes.

The role of parliaments in supporting an immediate and robust international response to the Ebola epidemic and in enacting laws ensuring an effective response to and preparedness for Ebola and other infectious disease outbreaks

*Resolution adopted unanimously by the 131st IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)*

The 131st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Expressing concern at the unprecedented Ebola outbreak that has affected West Africa in the past months, and *alarmed* at the numerous deaths that have resulted, especially of multiple members of the same family and in the most vulnerable groups, such as health-care workers and women,

Also expressing concern at the high risk that the virus will spread around the world,

Aware that the Ebola outbreak in West Africa may, according to the United Nations, become a humanitarian disaster with immeasurable consequences,

Recalling that the Ebola outbreak in West Africa has been designated a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the World Health Organization (WHO) and declared a threat to international peace and security by the United Nations Security Council,

Also recalling that, on 19 August 2014, the African Union Peace and Security Council invoked Article 6(f), on humanitarian action and disaster management, of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, and authorized the immediate deployment of ASEOWA (African Union Support to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa),

Further recalling that, on 18 September 2014, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 69/1 approving the establishment of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) to stop the outbreak, treat the infected, ensure essential services, preserve stability and prevent further outbreaks,

Aware that the non-governmental organizations at the forefront of the fight against Ebola, such as Doctors Without Borders and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, deem the international response dangerously insufficient,

Acknowledging nevertheless that many countries have already increased their funding and material support for the countries affected in West Africa and deployed personnel on the ground to help contain the outbreak,

Noting the measures taken by the States affected in response to the Ebola epidemic, but *aware* that the means that the governments concerned are able to mobilize may be insufficient, and that the shortcomings brought to light by the Ebola epidemic have revealed an urgent need for support,

Concerned that many countries continue to have poorly funded and weak health systems, outdated or inadequate health laws and regulations, and insufficient capacity under the International Health Regulations, and that this hampers national and international efforts to respond to outbreaks of infectious disease,

Bearing in mind that the countries concerned are already suffering shortages of food and drinking water and that their economies are collapsing as a result of disruptions to trade, commercial flights and agricultural activity,

Expressing concern that, as a result of inadequate investment in research, there is as yet no vaccine or effective specific treatment against the Ebola virus,

Taking into consideration that the achievements of the worst affected countries in terms of consolidating peace and development risk being wiped out by the Ebola epidemic, and *underscoring* that the epidemic is compromising the stability of those countries,

Noting the WHO advisory opinion on the negative consequences of the Ebola response, namely the isolation and stigmatization of the countries and region affected, and on the need for all countries, especially neighbouring States, to keep their borders open to goods and people, maintain air routes, strengthen national and regional preparedness, increase the exchange of information and reinforce their health systems,

Stressing that national, regional and international action and cooperation are required to check epidemics of serious infectious diseases and that a coordinated international response to the Ebola epidemic is therefore a vital and immediate need,

1. *Deplores* all loss of life in the Ebola epidemic;
2. *Expresses support* for the governments and populations concerned in West Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which have been severely affected by the Ebola outbreak;
3. *Demands* that all political parties in the countries concerned work together in unity and harmony to facilitate, without delay, free and safe access for humanitarian organizations and their staff to areas where the population needs them;
4. *Recognizes* that national leadership and ownership of the Ebola response in the countries concerned remains the guiding principle for international support, in keeping with their right to self-determination under the Charter of the United Nations;
5. *Applauds* the commitment and contribution of those battling the epidemic on the front lines, notably national and international humanitarian relief workers;
6. *Deeply regrets* the international community's slow and generally insufficient response and the time lost in drawing up an effective and coordinated strategy, while *acknowledging* that a number of States and international organizations have already provided critical assistance;
7. *Urges* the relevant United Nations bodies, especially WHO, which must play a lead role, to take all necessary emergency measures to reinforce their contribution to local, national, regional and international efforts to halt the outbreak of the Ebola virus;
8. *Welcomes* the establishment of UNMEER, which must work in close coordination with regional organizations such as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States;
9. *Calls on* the countries affected, responding countries and the international organizations active on the ground to work together closely and share information so as to enhance coordination and ensure effective control of the current outbreak;
10. *Calls on* the States that have the requisite means and on international donors to mobilize without delay essential financial resources and capacities, including medical and logistical means that can be deployed on the spot (personnel, supplies, means of transport), paying particularly close attention to the protection of women and children and of health workers entering into contact with infected persons;
11. *Vigorously condemns* the stigmatization of the countries concerned and their citizens, as this may exacerbate their humanitarian plight and have a negative impact on their economies;
12. *Appeals* to States, in particular those in the region, and all competent stakeholders providing the assistance required to deal with the Ebola epidemic to redouble their efforts to heighten public awareness, apply security and health protocols, and correct the misinformation circulating about the disease's transmission and the scope of the epidemic;
13. *Invites* parliaments to promote effective policies to combat the Ebola epidemic at national and international level;
14. *Also invites* parliaments to enact the legislation needed to improve health systems and emergency preparedness, with a view to boosting the capacity to deal with the serious public health and humanitarian crises that may result from an infectious disease outbreak;

15. *Urges* the pharmaceutical industry, the private sector, research institutions, philanthropic organizations and governments to invest in research on viable treatment options and vaccines to treat and prevent Ebola and to make them available at an affordable cost to affected populations, especially the poorest victims;
16. *Recommends* that plans be drawn up to help the countries affected recover quickly from the negative effects of the Ebola crisis based on the lessons currently being learnt;
17. *Also recommends* that the international community set up a rapid health response unit to cope with health crises of this kind and *urges* it to learn from the management of earlier epidemics/pandemics;
18. *Urges* States and the international community to conduct worldwide awareness campaigns to prevent fresh outbreaks of Ebola;
19. *Suggests*, with regard to international development cooperation, that public health – and the prevention of health crises – be added as a core priority to cooperation programmes.

IPU Budget for 2015

*Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)*

	2014 Approved Budget	2015 Approved Budget		
		Regular Budget	Other Sources	All Funds
REVENUES				
Assessed contributions	10,950,800	10,612,500		10,612,500
Working Capital Fund*	170,000	237,000		237,000
Staff assessment	987,000	1,000,300		1,000,300
Interest	100,000	108,200		108,200
Programme support costs	0	260,300	(260,300)	0
Other revenue	16,000	16,000		16,000
Voluntary contributions	1,522,600		3,514,600	3,514,600
TOTAL REVENUES	13,746,400	12,234,300	3,254,300	15,488,600
EXPENDITURES				
Stronger democracies				
1. Better functioning parliaments	2,051,800	1,432,500	1,171,000	2,603,500
2. Advance gender equality	1,007,900	735,700	760,400	1,496,100
3. Promote respect for human rights	1,311,100	1,032,900	416,300	1,449,200
Subtotal	4,370,800	3,201,100	2,347,700	5,548,800
International involvement				
4. Parliamentary dimension of multilaterals	925,000	882,700		882,700
5. International development goals	577,000		757,800	757,800
6. Peace building	105,000	40,000	409,100	449,100
Subtotal	1,607,000	922,700	1,166,900	2,089,600
Parliamentary Cooperation				
7. Enhanced Member relations	3,265,800	3,506,600		3,506,600
8. IPU visibility	966,900	967,800		967,800
9. Management and governance	870,200	849,700		849,700
Subtotal	5,141,900	5,324,100		5,324,100
Support Services	2,595,900	2,659,400		2,659,400
Other charges	142,000	127,000		127,000
Eliminations	(111,200)		(260,300)	(260,300)
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	13,746,400	12,234,300	3,254,300	15,488,600

Approved 2015 capital budget

Item	2014	2015
1. Replacement of computers	35,000	35,000
2. Furniture	15,000	15,000
3. Improved conference facilities	0	10,000
4. Website development	300,000	140,000
Total capital expenditures	350,000	200,000

Approved programme and budget for 2015

Scale of contributions for 2015 based on the UN scale of assessment

*Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)*

Country Name	UN 2013-2015	Approved 2015 scale	
	Per cent	Per cent	CHF
Afghanistan	0.005%	0.110%	11'600
Albania	0.010%	0.110%	11'600
Algeria	0.137%	0.280%	29'600
Andorra	0.008%	0.110%	11'600
Angola	0.010%	0.110%	11'600
Argentina	0.432%	0.630%	66'600
Armenia	0.007%	0.110%	11'600
Australia	2.074%	2.330%	246'300
Austria	0.798%	1.030%	108'900
Azerbaijan	0.040%	0.160%	16'900
Bahrain	0.039%	0.160%	16'900
Bangladesh	0.010%	0.110%	11'600
Belarus	0.056%	0.180%	19'000
Belgium	0.998%	1.240%	131'100
Benin	0.003%	0.100%	10'600
Bhutan	0.001%	0.100%	10'600
Bolivia	0.009%	0.110%	11'600
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.017%	0.130%	13'700
Botswana	0.017%	0.130%	13'700
Brazil	2.934%	3.170%	335'000
Bulgaria	0.047%	0.170%	18'000
Burkina Faso	0.003%	0.100%	10'600
Burundi	0.001%	0.100%	10'600
Cabo Verde	0.001%	0.100%	10'600
Cambodia	0.004%	0.110%	11'600
Cameroon	0.012%	0.120%	12'700
Canada	2.984%	3.220%	340'300
Chad	0.002%	0.100%	10'600
Chile	0.334%	0.520%	55'000
China	5.148%	5.280%	558'100
Colombia	0.259%	0.430%	45'400
Congo	0.005%	0.110%	11'600
Costa Rica	0.038%	0.160%	16'900
Côte d'Ivoire	0.011%	0.120%	12'700
Croatia	0.126%	0.270%	28'500
Cuba	0.069%	0.200%	21'100
Cyprus	0.047%	0.170%	18'000
Czech Republic	0.386%	0.580%	61'300
Dem. People's Republic of Korea	0.006%	0.110%	11'600
Democratic Republic of the Congo	0.003%	0.100%	10'600
Denmark	0.675%	0.900%	95'100
Djibouti	0.001%	0.100%	10'600
Dominican Republic	0.045%	0.160%	16'900
Ecuador	0.044%	0.160%	16'900
El Salvador	0.016%	0.120%	12'700
Equatorial Guinea	0.010%	0.110%	11'600
Estonia	0.040%	0.160%	16'900
Ethiopia	0.010%	0.110%	11'600
Finland	0.519%	0.730%	77'200
France	5.593%	5.700%	602'500
Gabon	0.020%	0.130%	13'700
Gambia	0.001%	0.100%	10'600

Country Name	UN 2013-2015	Approved 2015 scale	
	Per Cent	Per Cent	CHF
Georgia	0.007%	0.110%	11'600
Germany	7.141%	7.170%	757'800
Ghana	0.014%	0.120%	12'700
Greece	0.638%	0.860%	90'900
Guatemala	0.027%	0.140%	14'800
Guinea	0.001%	0.100%	10'600
Guinea-Bissau	0.001%	0.100%	10'600
Haiti	0.003%	0.100%	10'600
Honduras	0.008%	0.110%	11'600
Hungary	0.266%	0.440%	46'500
Iceland	0.027%	0.140%	14'800
India	0.666%	0.890%	94'100
Indonesia	0.346%	0.530%	56'000
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	0.356%	0.540%	57'100
Iraq	0.068%	0.200%	21'100
Ireland	0.418%	0.610%	64'500
Israel	0.396%	0.590%	62'400
Italy	4.448%	4.610%	487'200
Japan	10.833%	10.830%	1'144'700
Jordan	0.022%	0.130%	13'700
Kazakhstan	0.121%	0.260%	27'500
Kenya	0.013%	0.120%	12'700
Kuwait	0.273%	0.450%	47'600
Kyrgyzstan	0.002%	0.100%	10'600
Lao People's Democratic Republic	0.002%	0.100%	10'600
Latvia	0.047%	0.170%	18'000
Lebanon	0.042%	0.160%	16'900
Lesotho	0.001%	0.100%	10'600
Libya	0.142%	0.290%	30'700
Liechtenstein	0.009%	0.110%	11'600
Lithuania	0.073%	0.200%	21'100
Luxembourg	0.081%	0.210%	22'200
Madagascar	0.003%	0.100%	10'600
Malawi	0.002%	0.100%	10'600
Malaysia	0.281%	0.460%	48'600
Maldives	0.001%	0.100%	10'600
Mali	0.004%	0.110%	11'600
Malta	0.016%	0.120%	12'700
Mauritania	0.002%	0.100%	10'600
Mauritius	0.013%	0.120%	12'700
Mexico	1.842%	2.100%	222'000
Micronesia (Federated States of)	0.001%	0.100%	10'600
Monaco	0.012%	0.120%	12'700
Mongolia	0.003%	0.100%	10'600
Montenegro	0.005%	0.110%	11'600
Morocco	0.062%	0.190%	20'100
Mozambique	0.003%	0.100%	10'600
Myanmar	0.010%	0.110%	11'600
Namibia	0.010%	0.110%	11'600
Nepal	0.006%	0.110%	11'600
Netherlands	1.654%	1.920%	202'900
New Zealand	0.253%	0.420%	44'400
Nicaragua	0.003%	0.100%	10'600
Niger	0.002%	0.100%	10'600
Nigeria	0.090%	0.220%	23'300
Norway	0.851%	1.090%	115'200
Oman	0.102%	0.240%	25'400
Pakistan	0.085%	0.220%	23'300

Country Name	UN 2013-2015	Approved 2015 scale	
	Per Cent	Per Cent	CHF
Palau	0.001%	0.100%	10'600
Palestine		0.100%	10'600
Panama	0.026%	0.140%	14'800
Papua New Guinea	0.004%	0.110%	11'600
Paraguay	0.010%	0.110%	11'600
Peru	0.117%	0.260%	27'500
Philippines	0.154%	0.300%	31'700
Poland	0.921%	1.160%	122'600
Portugal	0.474%	0.680%	71'900
Qatar	0.209%	0.370%	39'100
Republic of Korea	1.994%	2.260%	238'900
Republic of Moldova	0.003%	0.100%	10'600
Romania	0.226%	0.390%	41'200
Russian Federation	2.438%	2.690%	284'300
Rwanda	0.002%	0.100%	10'600
Samoa	0.001%	0.100%	10'600
San Marino	0.003%	0.100%	10'600
Sao Tome and Principe	0.001%	0.100%	10'600
Saudi Arabia	0.864%	1.100%	116'300
Senegal	0.006%	0.110%	11'600
Serbia	0.040%	0.160%	16'900
Seychelles	0.001%	0.100%	10'600
Sierra Leone	0.001%	0.100%	10'600
Singapore	0.384%	0.580%	61'300
Slovakia	0.171%	0.330%	34'900
Slovenia	0.100%	0.240%	25'400
Somalia	0.001%	0.100%	10'600
South Africa	0.372%	0.560%	59'200
South Sudan	0.004%	0.110%	11'600
Spain	2.973%	3.210%	339'300
Sri Lanka	0.025%	0.140%	14'800
Sudan	0.010%	0.110%	11'600
Suriname	0.004%	0.110%	11'600
Sweden	0.960%	1.200%	126'800
Switzerland	1.047%	1.300%	137'400
Syrian Arab Republic	0.036%	0.150%	15'900
Tajikistan	0.003%	0.100%	10'600
Thailand	0.239%	0.410%	43'300
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	0.008%	0.110%	11'600
Timor-Leste	0.002%	0.100%	10'600
Togo	0.001%	0.100%	10'600
Tonga	0.001%	0.100%	10'600
Trinidad and Tobago	0.044%	0.160%	16'900
Tunisia	0.036%	0.150%	15'900
Turkey	1.328%	1.590%	168'100
Uganda	0.006%	0.110%	11'600
Ukraine	0.099%	0.240%	25'400
United Arab Emirates	0.595%	0.810%	85'600
United Kingdom	5.179%	5.310%	561'200
United Republic of Tanzania	0.009%	0.110%	11'600
Uruguay	0.052%	0.170%	18'000
Venezuela	0.627%	0.850%	89'800
Viet Nam	0.042%	0.160%	16'900
Yemen	0.010%	0.110%	11'600
Zambia	0.006%	0.110%	11'600
Zimbabwe	0.002%	0.100%	10'600

Member or associate member	UN 2013-2015	Approved 2015 scale	
	Per Cent	Per Cent	CHF
Andean Parliament		0.020%	2'100
Central American Parliament		0.010%	1'100
East African Legislative Assembly		0.010%	1'100
European Parliament		0.070%	7'400
Latin American Parliament		0.020%	2'100
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe		0.050%	5'300
Transitional Arab Parliament		0.010%	1'100
WAEMU		0.010%	1'100
CEMAC		0.010%	1'100
ECOWAS		0.010%	1'100
Total	100.00%	100.0%	10'593'700

Cooperation with the United Nations system

List of activities undertaken by the IPU from 15 March to 15 October 2014

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)*

United Nations

1. Following extensive consultations between the IPU and the United Nations, on 19 May 2014, the UN General Assembly adopted its biennial resolution on *Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union*. Sponsored by 87 countries, the resolution invites Member States to work regularly with the IPU to facilitate a parliamentary component to major UN conferences, so as to inform global talks and negotiations from a parliamentary perspective. It welcomes several new initiatives, notably the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, aimed at strengthening the relationship between the United Nations and the IPU and at maximizing political support for the outcome of next year's summit on the post-2015 development agenda. It also applauds the IPU's participation in two other forums: the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Youth Forum of the Economic and Social Council.
2. In a resolution adopted on 27 June 2014, the UN Human Rights Council officially endorsed the practice whereby governments promote the involvement of parliaments in all stages of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), the mechanism for evaluating the human rights situation in all UN Member States. Entitled *Contribution of parliaments to the work of the Human Rights Council and its universal periodic review*, the resolution also welcomes the IPU's efforts to contribute to the work of the United Nations and invites the High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide the Council with regular updates on the IPU's activities with regard to the work of the Council and its UPR.
3. Initial consultations were held with various UN officials – including from the offices of the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, the Sixth Committee and the Office of Legal Affairs – with regard to the new Cooperation Agreement between the IPU and the United Nations, which, as noted in the General Assembly resolution of 19 May 2014, should reflect progress and developments since 1996 (when the first Cooperation Agreement was signed) and should aim to place the institutional relationship between the two organizations on a stronger footing.
4. The IPU pursued its efforts to bring a parliamentary perspective to the design of the new set of sustainable development goals, advocating the inclusion of a governance goal. It spoke before the UN General Assembly's Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, which was tasked with preparing a first draft by July 2014, and worked closely with two UN Member States (Costa Rica and Greece) to incorporate the parliamentary perspective into the Open Working Group's recommendations. Although the Open Working Group's outcome document did not mention parliaments, it did deliver much of what the IPU had been asking for in terms of a stand-alone governance goal that contains a strong commitment to strengthening representative and accountable institutions at all levels.
5. The IPU worked closely with high-level UN officials in the lead-up to the Second Meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, which will be held at UN headquarters on 17 and 18 November 2014.
6. Pursuant to the UN General Assembly resolution of 19 May 2014, the IPU organized parliamentary delegations to two forums: the Youth Forum (2-3 June), which was attended by a delegation from the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU, and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (7-9 July). A parliamentary delegation also attended the final session of the Development Cooperation Forum for the 2012-2014 cycle, on 10 and 11 July. The parliamentarians participating in the three forums made presentations and the Secretary General was a lead discussant at the High-level Political Forum and the Development Cooperation Forum.
7. The IPU worked closely with the UN preparatory process for the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples. The IPU Secretary General held discussions with the Forum Chairperson and the President of the UN General Assembly on the World Conference outcome document. The IPU's input for the outcome document was based on consultations held with Member Parliaments. In addition, the IPU planned a side event, on 23 September, at which it was to launch a report on the participation of indigenous peoples in parliament and a joint IPU-UN publication, *Implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Handbook for Parliamentarians*.

8. Preparations have started for the 2014 Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, a joint IPU-UN event that will take place on 19 and 20 November. The Hearing this year will focus on how to ensure a people-centred approach to the implementation of the new sustainable development goals.
9. Preparations have also started for the one-day parliamentary meeting to be held on the occasion of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP20/CMP10), which will take place in December 2014 in Lima, Peru. The meeting is intended for parliamentarians attending the Climate Change Conference as part of their national delegations. It will offer them an opportunity to obtain first-hand information on the main issues involved and to interact with the government negotiators directly involved in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. In addition, the IPU Secretary General informed all Member Parliaments about the Climate Summit 2014, which was held at UN Headquarters in New York on 23 September.
10. The IPU and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) discussed the practical steps the IPU could take to help mobilize parliaments in support of Security Council resolution 1540, adopted in 2004 to stem the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction among non-State actors. A three-year project is under negotiation. It will be funded by UNODA.
11. The Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on Youth took part in the First IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, on 10 and 11 October in Geneva. The Conference brought together young parliamentarians in a bid to “take democracy to task”. In an effort to establish closer ties with the community of young parliamentarians, the Envoy on Youth was also expected to take part in the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians, on 13 October.
12. The IPU and the UN Department of Political Affairs coordinated efforts to help mark this year’s International Day of Democracy on 15 September. The theme for 2014, *Engaging young people in democracy*, was selected in consultation with the United Nations. The President of the IPU Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights participated in a panel discussion convened on 15 September in New York by the IPU, the United Nations, the International Peace Institute and International IDEA.

UN Women

13. The IPU continued to work closely with UN Women on support for the Equal Opportunities Commission of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey. The two organizations provided expert advice to the Commission on its review of a series of existing laws from the gender perspective, the aim being to eliminate discriminatory provisions against women and reduce inequality between men and women.
14. The IPU, UNDP, Australian Aid, UN Women and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat organized the first ever Practice Parliament for Women in Tonga, in April 2014. The Practice Parliament was held in preparation for Tonga’s general election set for November 2014 and aimed to encourage women’s participation in politics and to bring women together in a near-reality parliamentary setting to discuss issues affecting them.

UNDP

15. *MY World*, a global survey led by the UN Millennium Campaign to obtain people’s views on the new sustainable development goals, is being redesigned as a facility to track the goals’ future implementation. The IPU and the Millennium Campaign explored the possibility of applying the survey to parliaments around the world. IPU representatives also participated in a workshop on 14 July, in New York, to help flesh out new ideas for the second phase of *MY World*.
16. The IPU joined the dialogue on strengthening capacities and building effective institutions being spearheaded by UNDP and the International Labour Organization in the lead-up to the adoption of new sustainable development goals next year. The dialogue consists of a worldwide series of consultations with experts, development practitioners and policymakers on the institutional capacities that will be needed to advance the sustainable development goals post-2015. As part of this process, the IPU participated in an expert group meeting on 29 and 30 September 2014 in Germany.

17. Leading a group of parliamentary development practitioners that includes UNDP, the IPU is promoting the adoption of a set of common principles for parliamentary development, a series of guidelines enabling parliamentary development partners to improve the suitability and effectiveness of assistance to parliaments. As a key step towards finalization of the common principles, the IPU solicited the input of parliaments and interested practitioners via an online form. A consultation was held in Manila, Philippines, on 28 and 29 August, to which UNDP contributed.

18. The IPU continued to work closely with UNDP country offices, providing technical assistance and organizing capacity-building programmes for national parliaments. In the past six months this concerned the parliaments of Bangladesh, Guinea-Bissau, Myanmar, Pakistan, Trinidad and Tobago and Tunisia.

19. The IPU and UNDP supported the work of the Parliament of Bangladesh to enhance its gender-mainstreaming efforts, inter alia by setting up a technical research unit on gender issues.

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR),

20. In collaboration with OHCHR, the IPU and the Parliament of Uruguay organized a meeting for the Latin American parliaments to help mobilize stronger parliamentary involvement in the work of the UN Human Rights Council and its evaluation mechanism, the UPR. Held on 15 and 16 July in Montevideo, Uruguay, the meeting served to identify good parliamentary practice for working with the Council and for the promotion of human rights in general. It was organized pursuant to the Human Rights Council resolution of 27 June 2014 calling on governments to involve parliaments more actively in all stages of the UPR. The IPU and the OHCHR also organized a similar seminar for African parliaments on 29 and 30 September in Rabat, Morocco.

21. In keeping with usual practice, the IPU presented its report on women in politics and the involvement of parliament in the reporting process in the countries reviewed by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at the Committee's Fifty-eighth Session, held in July 2014.

Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

22. The IPU and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees launched the second edition of *Nationality and Statelessness: Handbook for Parliamentarians*, which was prepared with the cooperation of the IPU Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law. The Handbook highlights the main causes of statelessness and provides parliamentarians with a broad description of the international principles governing nationality and statelessness.

UNAIDS

23. Together with UNAIDS and UNDP, the IPU organized a parliamentary meeting at the XX International AIDS Conference, which took place from 20 to 25 July in Melbourne, Australia. About 70 parliamentarians participated in the meeting, which was held on 21 July, along with the heads of UNAIDS and UNDP and the Speaker of the Australian House of Representatives. The meeting adopted a set of ambitious recommendations to help guide the IPU's AIDS-related work in the years to come. The IPU-UNDP handbook, *Effective Laws to End HIV and AIDS: Next Steps for Parliaments*, was officially launched at the meeting.

24. In June, the IPU and UNAIDS signed a programme funding agreement, establishing a renewed framework for IPU-UNAIDS cooperation on strengthening parliamentary leadership for accelerated access to HIV treatment. The programme is building on successful examples of parliamentary work on HIV, including treatment, the aim being to heighten parliamentary engagement and capacity-building. It runs from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

25. In April 2014, the IPU took part in the Sixth International Parliamentarians' Conference on the Implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action. The Conference, which took place in Stockholm, was organized by UNFPA, the Swedish Parliament and the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development. The IPU Secretary General spoke at a plenary panel on how best to translate global visions and commitments into national law.

World Health Organization (WHO)

26. In April 2014, the IPU provided input for the annual report by the independent Expert Review Group on Women's and Children's Health (iERG). It highlighted its work with parliaments on maternal, newborn and child health in the previous 12 months at the country and regional levels. The iERG is an independent group of experts set up in 2011 by the UN Secretary-General to follow up implementation of the *Every Woman, Every Child* Strategy.

27. From 6 to 9 May 2014, the IPU, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), Save the Children and Family Care International together ran, under the auspices of Harmonization for Health in Africa, a capacity-building workshop for French-speaking African countries on budgeting for women's and children's health. The workshop was attended by more than 75 representatives of parliamentary health and budget committees, civil society, ministries of health and finance, the media and development agencies.

28. In September 2014, the IPU and the Parliament of Bangladesh organized a seminar in Dhaka for Asia-Pacific parliaments on *Ending the cycle of violence against girls in Asia-Pacific*. The seminar drew on a WHO study of existing legislation in Asia-Pacific countries related to violence against girls, including early marriage. Its deliberations will inform the study's final conclusions.

World Trade Organization (WTO)

29. Together with the European Parliament, on 1 October 2014 the IPU organized a parliamentary session within the framework of the annual Public Forum of the WTO). The theme of the session was *Post-Bali agenda: Where does parliamentary oversight fit in?* The WTO Public Forum is an annual public event at which participants from government, parliament, civil society, the business sector, academia and the media reflect on how the multilateral trading system works and analyse the institutional state of the WTO.

30. On 2 October 2014, the IPU hosted the 32nd Session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO.

Report of the Committee on Middle East Questions

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)*

The Committee decided to hold two sittings in addition to a lunchtime roundtable. The roundtable was attended by the President of the IPU, the Chairpersons of three IPU Standing Committees, the President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and the President of the Committee to Promote International Humanitarian Law.

The Committee met in the morning and afternoon of Sunday 12 October. Its proceedings were chaired by its President, Lord Judd. In attendance were: Ms. M. Green (Sweden), Vice-President of the Committee, Ms. Z. Benarous (Algeria), Ms. D. Pascal Allende (Chile), Ms. C. Guittet (France), Ms. C. Vienne (Belgium) and Mr. H. Franken (Netherlands). Mr. M. Sheerit (Israel), Mr. G. Farina (Italy) and Ms. M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia) were absent.

The first session was designed to be separate hearings with the Israeli and Palestinian delegations on the military operations conducted in Gaza in July-August 2014. A Palestinian delegation led by Mr. A. Al Ahmad was invited to present an overview of the latest developments in the region since the Committee's previous session.

He said that the abduction of three young Israeli settlers and the killing of a Palestinian teenager had sparked the latest crisis. Those tragic events had been followed by security raids on private homes in the West Bank and Jerusalem. At the end of June, the Israeli military had switched its operations to Gaza, where the 51-day attack had left thousands dead and over 15,000 injured.

Mr. Al Ahmad referred to the extensive international media coverage of the Gaza crisis and stressed that the occupation of Palestine was the root of the crisis and terrorism in the Middle East. He explained that the Palestinian leadership intended to refer its case to international organizations in a bid to seek international protection for the Palestinian people. He underscored that going to the International Criminal Court was a step the Palestinians did not wish to take for the time being in order not to provoke the United States and Israel and to give them a chance to implement their commitments.

He praised Sweden for its position on recognizing the State of Palestine. He told the Committee members that the way to help Palestine was to help Israel fulfil its international commitments because the real source of the problem was occupation.

The morning session was adjourned at 12 noon for the roundtable.

Lord Judd warmly welcomed the President of the IPU to the roundtable and invited him to address the meeting. The IPU President stated that the Middle East was the cradle of many great civilizations: from Egypt to Baghdad and Damascus. It was also where the three monotheist religions had been born. There was every reason, therefore, to solve the crisis in the region and sustain and preserve life there. He added that the Palestinian issue was at the heart of the conflict in the Middle East and the ultimate goal was to achieve an independent Palestinian State. Iraq and Syria suffered from terrorism, intolerance and extremism. There was a need to preserve human dignity and respect human rights.

Lord Judd said how good it was to have the Secretary General of the IPU at the meeting and invited him to moderate the proceedings of the roundtable. The Secretary General invited the Speaker of the Syrian Parliament, the Deputy Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament and the Deputy Speaker of the Jordanian Parliament for a hearing on the current situation in the Middle East.

The Speaker of the Syrian Parliament stressed that the Syrian People's Assembly was the only legitimate body entitled to make statements about the situation in Syria and the Syrian people, who were paying a high price for the terrorist acts committed by ISIL, Al Nusrah Front and the Army of Islam. He added that if the world was serious about effectively combating terrorism, the international community would have to cooperate with Syria and Iraq. The Syrian Government was fighting terrorism but was stymied in its efforts by the support, funds and weapons supplied to terrorist groups by some western and Middle Eastern countries.

He referred to UN Security Council resolution 2170, which called for respecting the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria. He emphasized that the Syrian Government rejected any regional intervention in Syria, especially the imposition of a buffer zone along its northern border, highlighting that the coalition had been formed outside the framework of the UN Security Council by countries that had contributed to the emergence of ISIL and the proliferation of terrorism.

The Speaker requested IPU support for a political solution to the conflict in Syria and for its national reconciliation efforts. He highlighted that Syria rejected any attempt to violate its sovereignty by forming new armed groups under the banner of a moderate opposition. The Speaker concluded by inviting the IPU to visit the region and ascertain the situation on the ground.

The Deputy Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament underscored the need to respect national sovereignty and territorial integrity and blamed regional politics for the situation in Iraq. He referred to the relevant UN Security Council resolutions on the arrival of foreign fighters and transfer of funds for extremist groups.

The Deputy Speaker of the Jordanian Parliament described the increasingly acute consequences of the regional conflict for Jordan. The basic population of 4 million had become 11 million with refugees from Palestine, Syria, Iraq and elsewhere. The social and political impact of this was potentially highly destabilizing.

The participants at the roundtable all made statements about the situation in the Middle East. They concurred on the gravity of the situation and lamented the gross human rights violations in the region. They also agreed on the need to strengthen dialogue.

The Committee members were pleased to hear that all the actors felt that the Committee and the IPU in general had a role to play and was relevant.

Points raised in the meeting covered the issues of: the principle of intervention versus non-intervention, a growing sense of helplessness; the need illustrated by the crisis to “repoliticize” the IPU; the role of the IPU in bridge- and confidence-building; the indispensability of field visits by the IPU to gain at least some first-hand experience on the ground; the imperative of a search for common ground; the humanitarian demands of the situation; the importance of national IPU delegations being more accountable to the Assembly on what they had done to promote and make effective the aspirations of IPU resolutions; the need to have a multidisciplinary approach and to avoid over-structured compartmentalization of the IPU in addressing issues as complex as those of the wider Middle East.

In thanking the Secretary General for having moderated such an interesting and challenging roundtable discussion, Lord Judd emphasized the importance of the quality of education based on humanitarian values if enduring peace and stability were to be ensured and the need to be honest with ourselves and face up to the question of why young people became alienated and attracted to extremism and of how they can be won back from despair.

He added that we must avoid driving them further into the hands of the ruthless leaders of extremism. The fundamental issue was one of hearts and minds. He also underlined that lasting solutions had to be inclusive and that it was self-defeating only to deal with those with whom it was easiest to talk.

The roundtable ended at 3 p.m. and the Committee began its afternoon sitting at 3.30 p.m.

The Committee President asked the members to observe two minutes of silence for the victims of the most recent conflict in Gaza and the wider region.

The Committee noted consensus among its members and other stakeholders on the usefulness of the roundtable and the desirability of making this a regular feature of the Committee’s work.

It was reiterated that the purpose of the Committee was not to take sides but rather to facilitate dialogue and negotiation between the parties involved with a view to achieving lasting peace in the region. In other words, it was there to build bridges.

The Committee highlighted the importance of examining the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the broader context of the region and from the angles of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights. It agreed that it was important to win the hearts and minds of the parties to the conflict in order to end the crisis.

The Committee stressed that women’s and children’s rights were an important part of the political process and its own work. The members favoured a roundtable approach between Israelis and Palestinians and called for the resumption of work on the water issue. The Committee took note of the donors’ conference on the reconstruction of Gaza currently taking place in Cairo.

The Committee regretted the absence of the Israeli delegation and expressed its willingness to reach out to Israel. It agreed to dispatch a mission to the region to engage in dialogue with a cross-section of Knesset members in Jerusalem and PLC members in Ramallah, as well as to Gaza to meet the political representatives of the people and to see something of the realities faced by ordinary people in the situation.

Noting that a number of proposals for an emergency item at the present IPU Assembly dealt with either the situation in Palestine or terrorism and extremism in the Middle East, the Committee President proposed that, in agreement with the Secretary General, two members of the Committee be invited to act in an advisory capacity on the drafting committee for the emergency item if the chosen topic was related to the situation in the Middle East. It was agreed that Ms. M. Green and Ms. Z. Benarous should undertake this on behalf of the Committee.

Report of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)*

1. The Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law met on Wednesday, 15 October 2014. Representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also attended.

Refugee protection, internally displaced persons and statelessness: Cooperation with UNHCR **Refugee protection**

2. The Committee discussed the plight of Syrian refugees after four years of conflict, with no end in sight. The situation was having a tremendous impact not only inside the Syrian Arab Republic but also on neighbouring countries hosting Syrian refugees. The many pressing problems that had arisen as a result included an increase in sexual and gender-based violence. This had driven families to adopt poor coping mechanisms, such as early marriage.

3. The refugee crisis was growing in magnitude with each passing day. There were currently more than 3 million Syrian refugees, **over half of whom were children** – a major protection concern. According to UNHCR figures for September 2014, there were 140,000 Syrian refugees in Egypt, 1.2 million in Lebanon (i.e. one in five people in Lebanon was currently a refugee), 620,000 in Jordan and over 1 million in Turkey, where refugees continued to arrive in large numbers owing to the siege of Kobani by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

4. The Committee heard about the protection concerns relating to Syrian refugees and the importance of continued advocacy for access to safety for the refugee population. The situation was dire, with tension between local populations and refugees growing as pressure on infrastructure mounted – no space in schools, lack of access to water, etc.

5. Solidarity was vital. UNHCR had devised an ambitious third-country resettlement programme from 2014 to 2016 for 130,000 Syrian refugees. Under the plan, 30,000 refugees would be resettled by the end of 2014, 50,000 in 2015 and another 50,000 in 2016. States other than those involved in the crisis had pledged 48,000 places – a generous but insufficient gesture.

6. The Committee called on:

- the parliamentary community to continue to place the tragic situation of Syrian refugees high on national and international political agendas, to raise awareness of the issue and to address it as a matter of urgency, including because of the risk of political instability it posed;
- the international community to continue helping host countries organize their response to the refugee influx with due regard for the refugees' protection needs and for international treaties;
- the members of the international community to continue to provide funding for refugee relief and to host countries, as very few pledges had materialized and funding had not come through;
- the broader international community to make a greater effort to offer resettlement opportunities in third countries;
- the IPU to pursue efforts to monitor the situation and to mobilize the parliamentary community in that regard.

Internally displaced persons

7. The Committee heard that 33 million people were currently displaced as a result of conflicts and human rights abuses. It discussed how it could use the Handbook entitled *Internal Displacement: Responsibilities and Action* to help countries and parliaments dealing with such crises put in place effective legislation.

8. The UNHCR representative confirmed that experience showed that normative frameworks (national policies and laws) were an effective approach. When providing support in that regard, UNHCR focused as a priority on countries where work on normative frameworks was in progress. Examples were the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria, which were drafting or amending laws on internal displacement. It was also important to note that the applicability of such laws was not limited to conflict situations. They were also relevant in the event of displacement as a result of natural disasters.

Statelessness

9. The Committee was briefed on recent developments with regard to the campaign to end statelessness. A major conference organized in 2011 and attended by 120 States had identified the causes of protracted statelessness, namely the absence of adequate legislation or the failure to apply existing legislation. Since the conference, progress had been made in many countries, and new or amended laws had enabled access to nationality. In Côte d'Ivoire, a 2012 law had made it easier for stateless people to request naturalization. Other States, notably the United Kingdom, Georgia and the Philippines, had established determination procedures, and discussions were ongoing with several other countries to introduce such procedures.

10. Much progress had been made in the past few years towards ratification of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Since 2011 there had been 42 accessions: 18 to the 1954 Convention and 24 to the 1961 Convention. A global action plan to end statelessness in 10 years would be launched on 4 November 2014.

11. The Committee also drew attention to the updated IPU/UNHCR publication *Nationality and Statelessness: Handbook for Parliamentarians*, which was launched at the 131st IPU Assembly. It encouraged parliamentarians to make use of the Handbook and to organize discussions of the subject in their parliaments.

International humanitarian law: Cooperation with the ICRC

12. The ICRC representative briefed the Committee on the latest developments in the strengthening IHL process and the steps taken to update the joint ICRC-IPU publication *Handbook for Parliamentarians: Respect for International Humanitarian Law*.

13. The ICRC had launched a major review of IHL and its enforcement in 2011, and that review had highlighted the need for better enforcement and application of the law. Treaty mechanisms were rarely if ever used or applied. Discussions with States had identified new mechanisms, including regular meetings of States party to the treaties to ensure the States met their reporting obligations.

14. Regional consultations were currently being held on four themes with a view to strengthening the law. The ICRC would prepare a report following the consultation process and stressed that all efforts should be made to involve parliaments in the clarification and strengthening of the law.

15. The objectives of the updated version of the IPU-ICRC handbook were similar to those of the original: (a) to familiarize parliamentarians with international humanitarian law; (b) to describe the role of parliamentarians in relation to the law; and (c) to provide tools and models to facilitate legislative work on the law. The update would also provide information on specific themes, such as sexual violence, detainees, arms and new technologies. Committee members were invited to propose themes for inclusion in the handbook. A first draft would be shared with Committee members in the coming weeks.

Hearings with delegations from countries hosting Syrian refugees

The Committee held hearings with the delegations of Turkey and Iraq.

Turkey

The Committee held a hearing with the delegation from Turkey, which it thanked for its cooperation. The objective was to discuss the humanitarian aspect of the refugee crisis and the impact on the Turkish population. Turkey was currently host to over 1 million Syrian refugees, with more arriving every day because of the siege on the Syrian town of Kobani. The strain on the Turkish population was enormous. Only 10 per cent of the funds needed to meet the needs of the refugee population had been provided by

the international community. The Committee was particularly interested in the initiatives taken by Turkey to provide education to child refugees. The delegation promised to provide additional detailed information in that regard. The Committee also expressed interest in carrying out a mission to Turkey. This would have to be organized in cooperation with UNHCR.

Iraq

The Committee also held a hearing with the Iraqi delegation, which it thanked for the information provided and for its cooperation. The delegation provided additional information on the plight of Syrian refugees in Iraq and the situation in respect of ISIL.

Before ISIL launched its offensive, there were 250,000 Syrian refugees in camps in Iraq, with aid being provided by the Iraqi Government and international organizations. At that time, the security situation in Iraq was stable. Today, Iraq had approximately 1.8 million internally displaced people (IDPs), 25 per cent whom had the means to rent accommodation in the major cities. The Christians among them had sought refuge in churches, which were now all full of IDPs. Humanitarian aid was in desperately short supply, with only some support from UNHCR. Thousands of IDPs were sheltered in schools. Iraq had postponed the start of the school year, which should have begun in September, so that the IDPs could remain there. Access to education was vital for all children. However, as winter approached, accommodation and access to health were becoming critical issues. The most difficult question facing the Iraqi Government was where to house/shelter the IDPs and for how long.

The situation was becoming more and more dangerous. Iraq's second largest city, Mosul, was under ISIL control, cutting off access to the Syrian border. Al-Anbar province was 80 per cent under ISIL control; if the entire province fell to ISIL, access to Jordan would be cut off.

The Committee heard that the security situation for all Iraqi people was critical. The crimes and savagery committed by ISIL were unimaginable and were unlike anything seen in human history. The level of aggression against women and children, who were being sold and trafficked, was unprecedented. While all Iraqis were at serious risk, the worst of the violence was directed towards minority populations.

The delegation pleaded for immediate support from the international community and for the burden to be shared. They said that the situation was becoming explosive. Strong measures were urgently needed to contain it.

The Committee thanked the delegation for having taken part in the hearing. It stressed that the humanitarian response was neither sufficient nor sustainable and called on the international community to step up its support.

Implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2012-2017

Strategic Objective 1 - Strengthen democracy through parliaments

Common Principles for Support to Parliament

*Adopted by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)*

INTRODUCTION

Common Principles for Support to Parliaments

The suite of 'Common Principles for Support to Parliaments' set out below, comprising one over-arching General Principle and nine further focussed Principles, is designed to achieve two main objectives:

- Ø Assist partners engaged in the front line of parliamentary support and parliaments worldwide to work together with improved relevance, sensitivity and effectiveness, and,
- Ø Enable partners and parliaments to work towards sharing a fundamental approach for the design and implementation of parliamentary support.

Support available to parliaments has grown significantly in recent years. As a result, there is now extensive experience in this field shared between a range of organisations and individuals partnering with parliaments. This has made the present distillation of Common Principles possible. The aim has been to capture the fundamentals of parliamentary support for the benefit of all parliaments and their partners³ in a single, accessible document.

The Principles are intended to provide an inclusive and enabling framework for partners which:

- Ø Reflects an effective, practical approach to support for parliaments.
- Ø Takes full account of the uniqueness of each parliamentary institution, while recognizing emerging international standards encompassing all democratic parliaments.
- Ø Emphasizes inclusive parliamentary ownership over its development and change process.
- Ø Advances a culture of partnership, trust and mutual respect.

In particular, the Principles are designed to promote good communication and co-operation at local, regional, and global levels and to assist in ensuring that partners' roles and responsibilities in providing parliamentary support are transparent, mutually agreed, and complementary.

The present Principles will undoubtedly evolve. Their likely future evolution will take account of partners' and parliaments' experience and development, thereby ensuring their continuing relevance to effective parliamentary support.

Adoption of these Principles by parliaments and partners as a common framework for parliamentary support should ensure, therefore, that support activities are made progressively more effective and efficient. This, in turn, will increase the capacity of parliaments to fulfil their core functions.

Parliamentary Support – rationale and nature

Rationale

Well-structured and resourced parliaments are essential to a vibrant democracy, maintaining peace, upholding the rule of law and human rights, gender equality, increasing economic prosperity, and promoting social justice. Parliaments' growing legislative, oversight and representational responsibilities in these areas mean that all citizens have a vital stake in the institution.

There is a strong desire on the part of many parliaments to develop their capacities in response to the growing expectations of the people for more efficient and effective service from their representative and this primacy needs to be acknowledged in all support work.

Democracy in its widest sense however is a world community and it is therefore appropriate that parliaments should be able to draw upon appropriate, excellent, external technical support from an international community with a common interest and stake in the functioning of all key democratic institutions. This common purpose provides the rationale for parliamentary support.

Nature

Parliaments are complex organisations with distinct political, procedural and administrative aspects, and this complexity presents significant challenges when devising effective external support.

Parliaments comprise elected politicians, assisted by a range of supporting procedural officials and administrators. They often have a shared goal of ensuring that parliament manages competing social priorities, passes sound laws, holds the government to account, and provides members of parliament with resources to represent their constituents. While these roles are interlinking capacity requirements are often very distinct. Effective parliamentary support needs to be sufficiently sophisticated and responsive to reflect these complex requirements adequately.

To meet the growing requirements for parliamentary support, a range of partners have emerged over the last two or three decades. Established parliaments have provided support to assist their more recent counterparts. In addition, specialized international organizations, training institutes, donors, civil society groups and consultancy firms have come forward to provide niche resources. Parliamentary support has emerged as a recognized field of expertise, and the resources dedicated to it have increased, while the potential of parliaments to promote sound governance, political inclusion, economic prosperity, and social justice has become more widely appreciated.

³ The largely interchangeable terms "Partners", "parliamentary support partners", and "parliamentary partners" are used throughout the document to refer to those external to parliaments who are engaged on parliamentary support work. "Partnership" refers to the relationship between partners and parliaments. "Support to parliaments" and "parliamentary support" are used interchangeably throughout the text.

Parliamentary support requires local, as well as international, input. Just as there has been a growth of international actors recognizing the importance of strong effective parliaments to democratic development, civil society organizations in many countries of the world have also recognized the fundamental importance of parliament to the health of their own democracies, and are increasingly engaged in monitoring parliamentary performance and supporting issues of parliamentary development and reform. Engagement of national actors in parliamentary development is often vital to the success of parliamentary support work.

The fundamental objective of parliamentary support is to assist parliaments to develop to the full, the capacity to perform their basic legislative, oversight and representational roles. This support must also take account of parliaments' potential to aggregate input from individual citizens, civil society organisations, and subordinate oversight and governance bodies such as sub-national legislatures and major municipalities (where those exist). It must also take account of parliament's potential to take the lead nationally in promoting the rule of law, human rights (including women's rights and protection for children) and democracy in their country, and establish themselves as credible national institutions for the peaceful resolution of conflict.

The difficulties inherent in these parliamentary functions, and the complexity of parliamentary institutions, raise many challenges for effective parliamentary support. These include the need to adequately appreciate the national socio-political context, understand the parliament's wider institutional and governance environment, and encourage sound local support. Understanding how to operate effectively within parliaments, and overcoming those challenges, is possible only with strong support from within the country particularly that of parliament itself, at all levels.

Successful parliamentary support journeys therefore need to be led strongly and consensually by the 'family' of stakeholders surrounding a parliament. Internally, this includes both government and opposition parties, leadership and backbenchers, and members and staff. Externally, it also includes citizens and civil society stakeholders that engage with parliament. Whether internal or external, support should be based firmly on parliament's own well defined priorities. A parliament's close and consensual partnership with external support partners in this process will help facilitate the full identification of these priorities, and additionally allow ready access to relevant international norms expected of 21st century democratic parliaments.

The last twenty years has seen increasing demands on parliaments and parliamentarians from ordinary citizens. This pressure for parliaments to live up to their central place within the institutional structure of countries, through demonstrating improved business efficiency and progressively higher standards of personal probity on the part of parliamentarians, is likely to increase in future. Parliamentary support also offers parliaments help in meeting those challenges.

Parliaments are at the heart of political events and parliamentary support activities frequently take place and develop as a result of changing political priorities and dynamic alignments. The range of technical support mechanisms must therefore be designed progressively more imaginatively and appropriately if they are to result in a positive outcome within parliaments.

Multi-party political championing for both the substance and form of parliamentary support will always be essential to a positive outcome. Finally, successful interventions are unlikely to be achieved except as a function of support that is both long-term and matched in sophistication by parliaments' own complexities.

Common Principles – process and form

Process

Acknowledging these challenges, a number of parliaments and parliamentary support partners met in Geneva in October 2013 and agreed that it was timely to find out if devising a set of Common Principles to provide a framework for parliamentary support work would be possible.

The Principles were developed through a consultative process. A five-member working group⁴, convened by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), led the process with support from an independent consultant. Parliaments provided input during the process through the Association of Secretaries General of Parliament and the governing bodies of the IPU. Partners in parliamentary support provided comments on successive drafts.

⁴ Inter-Parliamentary Union, United Nations Development Programme, National Assembly of France, European Parliament, National Democratic Institute

Form

The document below is the product of that initiative and comprises one over-arching Principle and nine specific Principles, each of which crystalizes one common aspect of parliamentary support. The first Principle provides a rationale for parliamentary support generally. Each Principle is accompanied by a commentary. Parliaments and parliamentary support partners will wish to interpret the Principles in the context of their own work.

The Principles are designed to apply to all activities aimed at strengthening parliament. In addition, the Principles are intended to be relevant to all countries and contexts where support is made available to assist parliaments in strengthening themselves, and to be applicable to the work of all parliamentary support partners.

GENERAL PRINCIPLE OF SUPPORT TO PARLIAMENTS

Effective parliaments are essential to democracy, the rule of law, human rights, gender equality, and economic and social development. Parliaments require access to excellent technical support in order to contribute fully in these areas.

Parliaments and democracy

Democracy has many forms but is usually predicated upon an effective separation of powers between executive, judiciary, and parliament in order to spread power and maintain checks and balances. This structure requires a democratic parliament broadly rooted in society, and with internal business structures of sufficient capacity to undertake its functions.

The core legislative, oversight and representational functions of parliaments provide an essential contribution to the quality of a country's overall governance by: adding value to government policy in areas of modern state activity, providing additional legitimisation for government actions and activities, initiating policy independently of government, and enabling policy to be translated into social reality by means of laws.

Underpinning these functions, and providing a benchmark for decision making, a democratic parliament ensures that the rule of law predominates, guards the primacy of human rights, promotes the goal of gender equality, regulates the economy to promote sustainable growth, and is responsive to changes in society requiring social development and modernisation. While aspects of work in these areas are shared with the executive and judiciary, the absence of a strong, effective democratic parliament will deny the state legitimacy.

Democratic parliaments also provide the opportunity for all sections of society to be heard through their representatives, for disputes and disagreements over the direction of policy and issues of national importance to be debated, and for peaceful resolutions to be arrived at and sustained within the rule of law.

Support for parliaments from partners

Many parliaments seek external assistance in helping fulfil the complex role of a parliament. External assistance whether in bilateral form or multilateral programmes must be (a) fully appropriate to the requirements of parliament; and (b) of an excellent quality commensurate with the importance of parliament within national governance.

Support to parliamentarians and parliamentary officials should therefore be available across all areas of parliamentary activity both from internal and local sources, and also from other parliaments and the international parliamentary support community. Such international links should stress the integrity and independence that underpins all successful parliamentary institutions. Such support will be conveyed at times through formal meetings, events and processes, at others by means of informal contacts.

Finally, parliamentary support must reflect the reality that irrespective of how long or short the pedigree of a parliament, all parliaments, whether new or long established, are able to learn from each other. Beyond the vital role parliamentary partners have in fulfilling the specialized requirements for support from individual parliaments, the reciprocal sharing of experience among parliamentarians and parliamentary staff is invaluable to the development of democracy throughout the world and should be strongly encouraged.

SPECIFIC PRINCIPLES OF SUPPORT TO PARLIAMENTS

Principle 1: Parliamentary support partners are guided by the needs of parliament.

A pre-requisite for successful parliamentary support is a trustful, open, and inclusive relationship between parliament and the support partners. This trust must be reflected in the practical implementation arrangements for parliamentary support, for example, the inclusive and open management of activities.

Support to a particular parliament must fully reflect the parliament's needs, and these needs are best articulated through an inclusive process that reflects the diversity of a parliament's members, political parties, parliamentary officials and others. Parliament alone is in the best position to articulate its needs and to define broad strategic objectives, as well as tactical approaches for particular activities - although external partners can often also be helpful in facilitating a strategic planning process.

Parliaments are not stand-alone institutions, but rather intrinsic parts of wider institutional and other contexts. It follows therefore that interest in the development of parliament and future external support normally extends well beyond parliament. In these circumstances, the views of external institutions and bodies are also relevant, including the executive.

Good national governance depends upon the main state institutions working cooperatively. While it would be inappropriate for the executive to play a direct role in the development of parliamentary support given separation of powers considerations, the development of constructive legislative-executive relations is an important aspect of parliamentary support. Timely consultations with the executive can be helpful in informing parliamentary development efforts.

Parliaments are busy places with often intense and competing daily pressures especially when sitting, and therefore parliamentary support needs to fit well with the demands of a working institution.

Indeed, long term parliamentary support may best be approached through embedding it within an overall parliament 'owned' strategic plan, developed through an inclusive process. Such a plan may cover all areas of a parliament's work and may usefully identify priority areas for intervention, the interests of those in parliament, and the best entry points for support. (The drafting of such a strategic plan might itself be a feature of external support.)

While recognizing that parliamentary support must be driven by the parliament's needs, the relationship between parliament and partners should also help to ensure that the latter's expertise is used well and given full weight and that advice offered is carefully considered. Parliamentary support partners often possess deep knowledge of, and reflect extensive experience with, parliaments. It is therefore clearly in the best interests of the overall work of developing parliament that such expertise is utilized to the maximum degree.

The basic conditions identified above are important both in determining a successful overall outcome for parliamentary support activities and also in identifying the practical arrangements required to drive that success. Practical arrangements for successful implementation 'on the ground' include:

- Ø Establishing sound management, (including financial and administrative management) for activities, in which the diversity of parliamentary perspectives are appropriately represented. Such management structures should be the minimum required and should be streamlined within parliament's existing administrative architecture, to the extent possible.
- Ø Fully reflecting the structure of parliament (e.g., its unicameral or bicameral structure), in program design and engaging the secretariat in the delivery of parliamentary support.
- Ø Encouraging the practical involvement of parliament where possible in support activities including periodic staff participation, sharing costs, or in-kind contributions.
- Ø Ensuring that support activities are coordinated with the daily work of parliament, and the work of members and parliamentary officials who most closely determine parliament's program. This will normally mean, for example, the close involvement of the Speaker and Secretary General or their representatives, though the input of other parliamentary stakeholders is also vital.
- Ø Pacing support activities at a rate with which all partners and parliament are comfortable, and avoiding over-ambitious plans or timetables.

- Ø Frequently reassessing the strategic objectives of support and the tactical approaches adopted to ensure that the quality of outputs is progressively improved.
- Ø Conducting 'final' evaluations of specific interventions to assess value for money and impact and to inform future support work.

Principle 2: Parliamentary support partners are attentive to the multiple, overlapping social, economic and political contexts in which parliaments operate.

However complex parliaments may appear their fundamental rationale resides in the role of transforming the political, economic, and social aspirations of citizens into legal and social realities by means of legislation, oversight, and representation.

The more deeply embedded a parliament is in society's fabric, and the more sensitive to its multiple contexts, the greater will be its capacity to contribute peaceful and politically acceptable solutions to the country's urgent challenges.

Parliamentary support partners have a role in assisting parliaments to work towards developing a positive profile within their contextual environments by encouraging a parliament's efforts to deepen its relevance to all citizens.

Therefore, successful parliamentary support operations take close account both of the interior constitutional, institutional, and procedural architecture of parliament, but also the multiple exterior social and political contexts in which parliaments are situated, and which act upon parliament and parliamentarians on a daily basis. Sound support will involve assistance to parliament in its drive to be inclusive and to reach out to and engage within all social and political contexts.

There is an important role for parliamentary outreach activity in providing opportunities to demonstrate a parliament's relevance to citizens. In particular, partners require a keen appreciation of a country's political economy context, including the nature and role of political parties, in addition to understanding the country's constitutional position.

Parliamentary outreach – the country as context: engaging all citizens

Parliaments functioning optimally are highly accessible national centres where the issues of national and often individual significance for citizens, irrespective of sex, ethnic background, social status, or political beliefs, may be debated and resolved.

This is unlikely to be possible in the absence of substantial, vigorous parliament-driven outreach programmes in which citizens and civil society organizations are strongly encouraged to relate to their parliament, and where parliaments and parliamentarians are expected to be outward looking and responsive both to their constituents and the overall national interest.

Parliamentary outreach is relatively new to many parliaments (including some long established) but is now considered a normal part of parliamentary life. Outreach may take a variety of forms, from straightforward reciprocal visits to complex engagement on issues of policy.

It will always be important to consider outreach from the point of view of gender relations and the particular challenges to women and youth, and to reflect carefully on ways in which such development support may be offered. Women's participation may be encouraged by systematically engaging with women's grassroots organizations, women leaders of the community, gender-focused research institutes and think-tanks

Equally important is youth outreach. Youth may be drawn into a parliamentary environment including the establishment of parliamentary internships for students at national universities and colleges as a means of promoting openness, cooperation and learning, and the creation of youth parliaments.

Parliaments also have a special responsibility to ensure that the voice of minorities and the marginalized are heard, and support activities should take strong account of the requirement to reach out to those vulnerable constituencies. Where a country has a challenging geography, a fragile transport system, or contains far flung and distinct ethnic groups, strong outreach will be of especial importance.

There are a multitude of practical ways in which outreach can be conducted and supported, and the priorities agreed will depend largely on the national and regional modes of communication habitually used: radio, television, dedicated parliamentary media channels, a meaningful parliament website, newsletters in the relevant range of languages, inward and outward visits by citizens and local and international parliamentarians respectively, seminars, and conferences.

Whatever the exact forms of the outreach engagement appropriate in particular cases, parliamentary support partners should invariably consider a parliament's capacity to engage with its citizenry as a foremost priority for action.

Outreach support activities should:

- Ø Promote a strong spirit of parliamentary inclusiveness, and strengthen links to the citizens.
- Ø Ensure that participation in support activities reflects national diversity.
- Ø Include specific training to address diversity issues in parliament where required.
- Ø Assist parliaments and parliamentarians in promoting an awareness of equal opportunities and tackling discrimination in all forms in its legislative, oversight and representational work, and within its own secretariat administration.

Constitutional and political economy contexts

Parliaments are a part of, and operate within a formal constitutional and institutional context. At the same time, parliaments are a dynamic part of a less transparent, overlapping political economy context extending beyond parliament.

Support partners must always seek to take account of both the surface constitutional/institutional *and* political economy contexts within which a parliament exists. Appropriately designed activities to assist parliaments to design suitable support programmes will be contingent on such understanding.

Parliamentary support partners have an obligation, therefore, to inform themselves about the country's institutional history; and should also appreciate the country's general political environment (electoral system, political parties, relevant provisions of the constitution, human rights situation, gender equality, recent experience of conflict), the budgetary and fiscal situation, the economic context and national development plans.

Partners also need to consider international and regional issues (trade, political, economic, cultural regional relations) and disputes, and the country's international and regional obligations, all of which are likely to be continuing features of parliament's interest and concern.

The institution of political parties is the bridge between organized political opinion and the institutions of the state, including parliament. Parliament is where major national political tendencies are represented, in line with the country's electoral law, and political parties are vital features of a country's political economy.

The capacity of a parliament to operate well rests partly on well-designed procedural rules, but to a considerable extent upon the stability, disciplines and capacities of the political parties, groupings, and alignments. Where parties are weak or even non-existent, parliament is unlikely to be able to effectively represent its citizens. The political parties, as crucial players in national democratic life and parliamentary democracy, are therefore an additional key context and focus for support. It will be important for partners to be aware of the history and political background of the main parties represented in parliament.

Principle 3: Parliamentary support aims for sustainable outcomes.

Sustainability of parliamentary support means that the benefits of external assistance continue to accrue to the institution after the assistance ceases. This implies that parliaments develop the capacity to manage change and renewal processes.

Parliamentary support should focus on tools to sustain development assistance and on institutionalizing a process for continued institutional development. These tools include (1) a strategic approach to development; and (2) deepened effectiveness of parliamentary staff.

Strategic planning for sustainability

While parliaments may be functionally unique, they behave in many ways like other institutions, in particular they demonstrate evolution, whether planned or not.

Parliaments should therefore invariably be encouraged to adopt strategic and corporate management techniques to exert control over their own development by: prioritizing activities, managing external support and, in the context of overall institutional objectives, revisiting and revising previous initiatives and reforms, ensuring resources are used with value for money, accountability and transparency.

Such techniques also provide parliaments with the opportunity to showcase to citizens progress in agreed national institutional targets and objectives, and therefore to develop a progressively more positive public image for parliament.

Strategic planning is the main tool a parliament has for managing rational and sustainable change by establishing consensus over strategic objectives and consequential annualized corporate and operational planning.

Where no parliament strategy exists, therefore, support partners should encourage parliaments to agree to an early assessment of whether it is timely to begin planning for one, and stand ready to assist with the lengthy process of embedding a strategic outlook in Parliament. Where there is a strategy, then a priority will be review and update where required.

Staff and institutional continuity

Parliaments exist to enable members to exercise their democratic mandate. This cannot be carried through effectively in the absence of a cadre of permanent staff. The main potential resource for continuity and sustainable change in a parliament is the permanent secretariat, although many other actors, namely, the Speaker and party leaders, and members (especially those re-elected) also have extremely important roles.

Strong parliaments need impartial, highly professional and qualified staff that are loyal to the parliamentary institution. Parliamentary support activities may help achieve this aim by promoting staff selection and careers based on merit and by ensuring that employment contracts or regulations contain appropriate employee protection guarantees. Parliamentary support may promote measures intended to encourage women's promotion to leadership positions in the secretariat.

Every parliament finds an institutional memory invaluable; that memory invests primarily in the staff, mainly in senior procedural positions. This does not necessarily mean that all individuals will stay in the secretariat for their entire working lives. Indeed, taken to extreme this could result in an institution resistant to evolution. A balance of continuity and change in parliament staff is required.

Assistance in the form of ongoing training and mentoring of procedural staff, possibly the development of a parliament research or training centre, the production of handbooks or facilitating parliament's access to independent qualified expertise are all initiatives in which partners might engage with parliamentary staff, alongside targeted support for members of parliament.

Partners' role in promoting sustainable parliamentary development

To promote sustainability, partner support activities must be a clear part of the development process agreed and driven by parliament itself. Such a position:

- Ø Ensures that partners are genuinely supporting parliament's own development vision and confirms the legitimacy of this support.
- Ø Allows the closest co-ordination between activities and parliament's overall development, and
- Ø Enables a holistic approach to be taken to parliamentary support in which all parts of parliament gain from partners' support. Sustainable parliamentary support activities imply capacity building that benefits the whole institution, its different components, members and staff.

Members and staff are normally substantially more likely to enter willingly and enthusiastically into partner sponsored activities, contribute to their success, and take real ownership of the results if those are part of a process of sustainable development owned and directed locally.

That said, there are often instances where when there may be demands for support activities which might not be foreseen as part of a longer-term planning document. Not all parliaments may have had the opportunity to develop a long-term development plan through an inclusive process. Even where this exists, there are often gaps between an election and the development of a new parliamentary development plan, and institutional development priorities may sometimes change with new political leadership. Legislatures are often in the position of adapting their schedule and priorities in response to emerging needs of the country, as well as to new political developments. To be effective, parliamentary support activities must also be responsive to emerging needs expressed by parliament and parliamentarians, even if not reflected during a long-term strategic planning document.

Principle 4: Parliamentary support is inclusive of all political tendencies.

Parliament is where all political tendencies are represented, in line with the country's electoral law. Political parties are crucial players in democratic life, and parliamentary democracy is intended to give a voice to all groups with significant electoral support. While the primary focus of parliamentary support must be the effective functioning of parliament as a whole, it is important for parliamentary support partners to be aware of the history and political background of the main parties represented in the parliament in question.

Inclusiveness means providing opportunities, wherever possible, for support and assistance to all political tendencies represented in parliament, to the extent that they abide by generally accepted democratic practice, such as respect for the rule of law and for the rights and privileges of political opponents. Members of the majority and of the opposition should both benefit from parliamentary support activities, and no group should be entitled to veto support for others.

Some foundations and organizations involved in parliamentary support are tied to specific political parties. While there is an appropriate role for party-to-party assistance and exchanges among parties sharing similar ideology or affiliations, political inclusiveness should be reflected in the design and implementation of parliamentary support activities -- recognizing that the overall goal of parliamentary support is to strength the democratic functioning of parliament as a whole.

Inclusiveness does not require that identical assistance be provided to each political party group, since the needs and priorities of these groups may differ substantially depending on their role in parliament (ruling party, opposition, junior coalition partner, etc.). In some contexts, parliamentary support partners need to have an understanding of and engage with significant political groups or tendencies that are absent from parliament, for example because they did not meet the threshold to sit in parliament or were unable to fully participate in the electoral process.

Principle 5: Parliamentary support is grounded in emerging international democratic parliamentary standards.

National democratic parliaments are each unique, made so by their evolution, the place they hold in their national governance structure, and their individual and characteristic conventions and procedures. Nevertheless aspects of parliamentary practice are universal, and it is this that enables us to refer to a genuine international parliamentary community.

Parliamentary support partners recognize the unique character of each parliament but also seek to reinforce these universal practices that are grounded in emerging international standards for democratic parliaments. The commendable efforts of the IPU,⁵ of parliamentary associations such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)⁶ and the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)⁷ to develop such international standards have been significant and should be expanded.⁸

Any tendency for parliamentary support partners to approach parliamentary democracy in terms of a single model or system is likely to be harmful. The strength of democracy is its ability to fulfil fundamental aspects of inclusion and engagement within a shared political process while respecting the wide variety of traditions across the world.

The emerging international standards for democratic parliaments, which ultimately come from parliaments themselves facilitated through organizations like the CPA, IPU, SADAC and APF, will help avoid any tendency for parliamentary support to focus on a single model of parliamentary democracy, and instead base support efforts on those elements of parliamentary practice that are universal across constitutional systems.

⁵ www.ipu.org/

⁶ www.cpahq.org

⁷ apf.francophonie.org

⁸ Access to documentation on emerging international standards may be accessed on the IPU, CPA, APF web sites; many helpful documents are brought together on agora-parl.org

Purpose of international standards

International standards are a common language that enables the parliamentary community to find common pathways for future development in response to the changing needs of national populations.

A number of publications in recent years have provided sophisticated analyses of parliaments and parliamentary democracy with the objective of seeking broad discussion of, and emerging consensus on, relevant standards for democratic legislatures,⁹ identifying benchmarks for democratic legislatures,¹⁰ providing innovative approaches to parliamentary accountability in developing countries.¹¹

Other important work enables parliaments to commence the process of self-development by providing a rational and universal approach to self-assessment, the first, essential stage in identifying the starting point for current and future needs.¹²

There are many other enhancements to democratic parliamentary life that may arise from this work. Agreed international guidelines, standards and assessment frameworks can, for example:

- ∅ Enable parliaments to check the state of their own development and to provide clarity about the nature of support required.
- ∅ Provide an objective measure of the effectiveness of parliament.
- ∅ Constitute useful reference points for conducting evaluations.
- ∅ Help establish a baseline for support work with a parliament.
- ∅ Assist in developing a roadmap for future support.
- ∅ Contribute to parliaments' self-evaluation and reform efforts.

Those involved in parliamentary support, led by parliaments themselves, should promote the emerging international norms and standards for democratic parliaments, based on universal parliamentary practice and support their further development.

Principle 6: Parliamentary support addresses the needs and potential of women and men equally in the structure, operation, methods and work of parliament.

Rationale

The political enfranchisement of women constituted one of the greatest changes to democracy around the world in the 20th century. Responding to this change continues to require support; both in working towards the goal of gender balance in women's parliamentary representation, and in ensuring that the legislative and oversight work of parliaments reflect the principle of gender equality.

Where women's contributions are blocked, educational and working opportunities denied, or barriers placed to women's participation in governance leadership and decision-making institutions, countries deny themselves the full potential capacities of roughly half the population. Gender equality is therefore a crucial factor in driving sustainable development, economic growth and poverty reduction.

The importance of gender equality for parliaments is threefold:

First, democratic parliaments derive their legitimacy from the ability to represent all the citizens of their country. Therefore where the role of women is constrained overall institutional legitimacy suffers.

Second, the small number, or even absence of women in some parliaments undermines parliaments' institutional ability to take full account of the needs and interests of a major part of the population when undertaking its core legislative, oversight and representational tasks. This seriously degrades the quality of a parliament's legislative and other core output.

⁹ For example, NDI, *Towards the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures* (2007) at <http://www.agora-parl.org/resources/aoe/standardsfordemocraticparliaments>

¹⁰ SADAC, *Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures in Southern Africa* (2010) at <http://www.agora-parl.org/sites/default/files/SADC%20PF%20%E2%80%93%20Benchmarks%20for%20Democratic%20Legislatures%20in%20Southern%20Africa.pdf>

¹¹ OECD, *Accountability and Democratic Governance: Orientations and principles for development*, at [www.oecd.org_dac_governance-development_ForWEB/Accountability and democratic governance Orientations and principles for development.pdf](http://www.oecd.org_dac_governance-development_ForWEB/Accountability%20and%20democratic%20governance%20Orientations%20and%20principles%20for%20development.pdf)

¹² IPU, *Evaluating Parliament: A self-assessment tool kit for parliament* (2008); and UNDP, *Benchmarks and Self-Assessment Frameworks for Democratic Parliaments* (2010) both at <http://www.agora-parl.org/resources/aoe/standardsfordemocraticparliaments>

Third, parliaments are a country's mirror to the international community. Most countries seek to demonstrate and promote the operation of international norms in social and economic policy and benefit fully from participating actively in the community of nations. Parliaments reflecting gender imbalance present a distorted image of their country

These are powerful incentives for parliamentary authorities to promote measures to transform the institution into a gender-sensitive one, that ensures balanced participation in parliament, sets the example by ensuring respect for gender equality in its functioning and mainstreams gender throughout its work so as to deliver on gender equality goals.

Where women are under-represented in parliaments, or the means for their voices to be heard are weak, as they are in many parliaments, it is essential for parliamentary support partners to seek to assist parliaments in promoting activities to encourage more equal gender participation and mainstreaming of gender in parliament's work.

Action

Conducting an assessment of a parliament's gender sensitivity can be a useful first step in establishing the facts and identifying actions to encourage and improve the participation of women – both as members and as parliamentary staff – and to ensure that parliament's outputs address the needs and interests of men and women equally.

Parliament's strategic plans should be written with the objective of mainstreaming gender awareness and equality work throughout all parliamentary objectives. The strategy itself should be an exemplar of the objective of gender equality. Drafting plans in this way will assist enormously partners' work with parliaments in legitimizing tactics to promote a gender balance in all aspects of parliamentary life and work, particularly core parliamentary business outputs.

Mainstreaming gender throughout all aspects of parliamentary support and securing equal participation by men and women in activity design, implementation and results monitoring and evaluation processes results in more effective programmes because objectives and results will take into account and meet the needs of both women and men.

Parliamentary support activities should address gender equality issues from at least two distinct, complementary points of view. First, activities should aim to support and respond to the current specific needs of women parliamentarians, secretariat staff, and specific parliamentary bodies working on gender equality/women's rights issues such as a women's parliamentary caucus or parliamentary committees dedicated to gender equality.

Second, activities should aim to advance gender equality and women's rights into the future by supporting the efforts of both men and women, and the institution of parliament as whole, to develop ever stronger policies and working cultures to that end. Parliamentary support partners should assist all parliaments' efforts to review and assess how they function, their internal rules, as well as their facilities and infrastructure procedures and practices, from a gender perspective, on a regular basis, and to ensure that these are gender-sensitive and non-discriminatory.

In carrying out activities, partners need to work hard to ensure that women and men are well represented in all support activities at equivalent levels, including in project decision-making structures.

Support activities should have as constant objectives the following:

- Ø Ensure that both women and men are effectively represented in parliament at all levels, both as members and parliament secretariat staff.
- Ø To increase the number of women elected to parliament and to strengthen their effectiveness once elected.
- Ø To ensure that parliament's secretariat reflects gender balance at directing as well as in middle and junior ranks.
- Ø Ensure that dedicated gender mainstreaming mechanisms such as committees or caucuses have a legitimate and inclusive role in the overall institutional framework of the parliament.
- Ø Ensure that parliaments are willing and have the capacity (including financial and human resources) to develop public policies tackling gender-based discrimination. For example, activities aiming to promote gender-sensitive/disaggregated statutory impact assessments of bills and budgets, and include a gender approach in the evaluation of public policy implementation, should be adequately resourced.

It is essential that parliamentary support partners assist parliaments in their objective of becoming gender-sensitive institutions, i.e. institutions that respect and embody gender equality in the way they function and that advance gender equality in their work and outputs. The *Plan of Action for Gender-Sensitive Parliaments*, adopted by the IPU's Member Parliaments in 2012, is a useful reference tool.¹³

Principle 7: Parliamentary support utilizes locally and regionally available expertise.

Rationale

External support to any parliament, however well informed and expert, requires guidance and practical assistance from within the immediate operating environment.

Long term partner engagement will require contracted national staff and resources to complement the sharing of international experience and enhance the knowledge of international staff on the local context. National expertise within partner sponsored work normally permits a much richer mix of support than would be available from the international experts alone.

Parliamentary support cannot be effective without a genuine local/international partnership at the heart of the support delivery mechanism whether *ad hoc*, project, programme, or in some other mode.

Parliament as a resource

It goes without saying that parliament is also a source of local expertise which should be effectively integrated into parliamentary support activities, where possible.

Such support should not be confined to one source within parliament but should be widely drawn from amongst administrative and political stakeholders whose 'championing' of activities will be essential to their success.

Ultimately, the doors of the Speaker, Secretary General and others should be open to the partners to seek support for specific activities where required, or to overcome particular challenges.

Non-parliamentary sources of local expertise

Parliamentary partners should also help vibrant and independent civil society organizations to work effectively with parliaments. They should seek to work with and support such organizations where they exist, first taking care to understand the existing dynamics between parliament and such civil society organizations in order to create the best conditions for success.

They should also foster or reinforce strong links between parliament and local universities, national and foreign experts based in the country, and think tanks, to help parliament benefit from local expertise.

Looking further out from parliament, parliamentary support partners should strive to harness the expertise available not only in the country but, where politically and practically acceptable, promote regional cooperation, especially with parliaments of neighbouring countries, relevant regional parliamentary and governance co-operation structures, and parliamentary training centres of excellence.

While great care needs to be taken over the involvement of the national government and national judicial bodies in parliamentary support work, such involvement does reflect the aspiration of 'joined up government' and institutional harmony which, if implemented, help enormously to promote better overall national governance.

Linking local parliamentary support goals to regional programmes may help increase national awareness of the common institutional challenges and weaknesses faced by all parliaments.

National staff

Finally, the ways in which national resources may be utilized and developed is almost infinite and there is an obligation to encourage national partners to adopt exciting and imaginative roles when engaging in parliamentary development.

National staff can act in many roles: resource staff, mentors, facilitators and committee advisors. Where capacity of national staff is limited, parliamentary support should contribute to the personal and professional development of talented national staff.

¹³ 127th IPU Assembly in Quebec City, 26 October 2012, at, <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/127/res-plan.htm>

There is often unhealthy competition between parliaments, international support organizations, and governments for the services of trained and talented staff. Partners need to take a broad view of such challenges recognizing the undesirability of “hiring away” talent from national institutions. There is also a need to work to expand the general pool of trained individuals in the national interest, and that the departure of one person provides a development opportunity for another.

Principle 8: Parliamentary support partners and parliaments commit to excellent co-ordination and communication.

Using aid resources well is a continuing international priority.¹⁴ Aid provided for parliamentary support is no different, and good co-ordination of effort and ‘open door’ partner communications pays dividends in improving the quality of outputs.

The interests of parliaments are clearly served by co-operation amongst support partners from different organizations, not competition. Parliamentary support partners should, therefore, engage in close co-operation to avoid duplication and cross-purposes.

The mechanisms to provide an opportunity for good ‘on the ground’ co-operation include:

- Ø Harmonization of activities and best practice.
- Ø Promotion of a complementary approach to support and activity provision through formal and informal communication structures (regular joint meetings, information sharing, dissemination of lessons learned, reciprocal assistance, and co-ordinated activities).
- Ø Parliament-driven activities with parliament co-ordinating all partners and self-supporting the partnership process effectively.

However, meetings ‘on the ground’ between local partners are often insufficient to improve the delivery of activities because, too frequently, the objectives of the partners are set in headquarters. Too often, the degree of room for manoeuvre in making adjustments towards enhancing rational delivery between support partners throughout the period of support is frequently unclear, often leading to continuing inefficiencies. Traditional delivery mechanisms, programmes and projects, are themselves normally characterized by structural rigidities of objective and time.

While there are no simple solutions to the challenge of fully rationalizing support resources it is important for partners to continue promote co-operation and co-ordination both at the national and headquarters level. Parliamentary support partners must engage in regular and transparent communication amongst themselves, and with the parliament concerned. Regular meetings are important, and partners should be encouraged and support provided to them when required to take a lead in this. At headquarters level, coordination is also vital, especially where the number of partners interested in working with a particular parliament is high.

The earlier discussions are opened, and the more comprehensive the partner constituency for such discussions, the more likely it is that the opportunity for a well-targeted allocation of resources will be possible, and also that the front line supporters will be able to implement complementary and comprehensive activity packages ‘on the ground’.

Principle 9: Parliamentary support partners act ethically and responsibly.

Just as the design and staffing of parliamentary support activities will have a significant effect upon the success of the partnership, similarly, the ethical position of partners in carrying forward such activities bears significantly on the relative success of their work.

Parliament’s role and responsibility as a national exemplar of integrity, an institution adhering to and acting upon a comprehensive and transparent code of ethics, is absolutely fundamental to its democratic purpose and has never been more needed around the world, where many countries suffer the blight of corruption.

Scrutiny of parliament from civil society and media means that apparent lapses in ethical standards are likely to erode public trust in confidence in parliament as a whole.

¹⁴ Such international commitments to make development cooperation more effective as, the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action, the 2011 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, apply equally to parliamentary development activities

Parliamentary support programming has as one of its major aims the promotion of parliamentary integrity and reference may be made to relevant documents for comprehensive treatments on parliamentary ethics.¹⁵

It follows therefore that partners must adhere to and demonstrate the same high standards of ethical behaviour and integrity that they themselves are advocating. Parliaments and partners should be fully in step with each other in maintaining an exemplary standard of ethical and responsible behaviour. There are several aspects to ethical and responsible behaviour on the part of parliaments and parliamentary support partners.

The following examples are intended to be a helpful, though not exhaustive, illustration of the behaviour required of partners:

- Ø Parliamentary support partners must adhere to principles of financial probity, especially since one of the primary purposes of parliamentary support is to improve parliamentary financial accountability and openness.
- Ø Parliamentary support activities should not be used to advance commercial interests. While for-profit players may have a role to play in parliamentary development, their activities should be limited in the interests of probity and transparency and should be driven by the goal of parliamentary support, not by a business or profit motive.
- Ø Parliamentary support activities should be inclusive of all political tendencies in the parliament.
- Ø Parliaments and parliamentary support providers should be transparent about the types of assistance received and provided. The effectiveness and efficiency of such support requires parliaments to deal fairly with all stakeholders, and not to use one against the other or seek similar assistance from multiple partners without disclosure.
- Ø Parliamentary support partners should abide by the general principles embodied in the internal codes of conduct of parliaments, for example by not engaging in nepotism or other practices that are inconsistent with the standards of conduct that parliaments have defined for themselves.
- Ø Parliamentary support partners should promote the sustainable enhancement of parliament's capacities. This implies that they should avoid "hiring away" existing parliamentary staff to work for parliamentary support programmes.

Establishing parliamentary ethical codes of behaviour and ensuring good implementation is one of the most demanding, as well as an important element of parliamentary support.

Where no such parliamentary code presently exists, support partners should encourage the drafting and adoption in an inclusive and locally led process. Where a code is in place, they should consider support for its effective implementation in parliament and support partners should also set an example by adhering to the strictest norms of ethical behaviour.

¹⁵ For example, OSCE, *Background Study: Professional and Ethical Standards for Parliamentarians* (Warsaw, 2012) at http://www.agora-parl.org/sites/default/files/background_study.pdf and European Parliament - Office for Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy, *Parliamentary Ethics: A Question of Trust* (OPPD, 2011) at http://www.agora-parl.org/sites/default/files/codes_of_conduct_final-enforweb.pdf

Amendments to Practical modalities of the rights and responsibilities of Observers at IPU meetings

*Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)*

- ~~As in the past, bodies to which observer status has been granted by the United Nations General Assembly and~~ international organizations **that** can be invited as observers to IPU meetings. ~~International organizations~~ are understood to include: (a) organizations of the United Nations system **and organizations holding permanent observer status with the UN General Assembly**; (b) regional intergovernmental organizations; (c) regional, **subregional or** and geopolitical parliamentary assemblies or associations; (d) worldwide non-governmental organizations; (e) international political party federations; and (f) organizations with which the IPU shares general objectives and has established a close and mutually beneficial working relationship.
- ~~For The status of observer can only be granted to those~~ inter-parliamentary organizations and international political party federations, **observer status can be granted only to those that** ~~which~~ have an official status and whose general objectives and working methods are shared by the IPU.
- The current practice will be maintained whereby a distinction is made between those observers invited on a regular basis and others on a "one-off" basis in the light of the items placed on the agenda of an Assembly.
- Observers will be entitled to register a maximum of two delegates to Assemblies of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. However, each programme and organ of the United Nations will **normally** be allowed to send one delegate. Seating arrangements at Assemblies will be made accordingly.
- Observers will be entitled to register one speaker ~~only~~ in plenary debates of the IPU Assembly and its Standing Committees. However, each programme and organ of the United Nations will be allowed to register one speaker each.
- Observers will not enjoy the right of reply or the right to raise points of order.
- In the General Debate of the Assembly, the speaking time of observers will be limited to five minutes. Some flexibility will be shown to executive heads of organizations within the United Nations system who wish to address the IPU.
- Observers will not enjoy voting rights and the right to submit candidatures.
- Representatives of international organizations having particular expertise in a subject considered by the Assembly may be invited by the Presidents of Standing Committees, with the authorization of the Committee, to be present in an advisory capacity to provide technical advice, if need be, during the work of a drafting committee.
- Observers cannot present draft resolutions or amendments. They may, however, make information available on a table specially set aside for this purpose.
- International organizations having special competence in an item placed on the Assembly agenda may be invited by the Secretary General to provide an information document on the item.
- Observers may be invited by the **IPU** President to address the Governing Council in exceptional circumstances only.
- An evaluation of the situation of observers will be made every four years. Such a periodic review will be undertaken by the Executive Committee on a dual basis: (i) a factual note by the IPU Secretariat on the actual participation of each observer in the period under review, and (ii) the views of the observers themselves regarding their interest in being represented at IPU meetings, ~~on the basis of a short enquiry designed to solicit their views.~~

List of Permanent Observers

*Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)*

United Nations

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
International Labour Organization (ILO)
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)
Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
World Health Organization (WHO)

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI)
International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)
Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)
World Bank
World Trade Organization (WTO)

African Union (AU)

League of Arab States
Organization of American States (OAS)

ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

African Parliamentary Union (APU)
Amazonian Parliament
Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union
ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA)
Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA)
Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie
Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA)
Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World (ASSECAA)
Baltic Assembly
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)
Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC)
Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Eurasian Economic Community (EURASEC)
Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS)
Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (IAO)
Inter-Parliamentary Union of the Member States of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IPU-IGAD)
Maghreb Consultative Council
Nordic Council
Pan-African Parliament (PAP)
ParlAmericas
Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation (PABSEC)
Parliamentary Assembly of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (AP-CPLP)
Parliamentary Assembly of the Economic Cooperation Organization (PAECO)
Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM)
Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-speaking Countries (TURKPA)
Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean

Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and Russia
Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas (COPA)
Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Member States (PUIC)
Southern African Development Community (SADC) Parliamentary Forum
World Scout Parliamentary Union (WSPU)

Amnesty International
Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria
Human Rights Watch
Penal Reform International
World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA)

Centrist Democrat International (CDI)
Socialist International

Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

Calendar of future meetings and other activities

*Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)*

Workshop on “Good Nuclear Disarmament Practice”	GENEVA (IPU Headquarters) 17 October 2014
Regional seminar on Promoting Child Nutrition in Asia	VIENTIANE (Lao People’s Democratic Republic) 4-6 November 2014
Second Meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament	NEW YORK 17-18 November 2014
Parliamentary meeting at the Second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)	ROME (Italy) 18 November 2014
Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations	NEW YORK 19-20 November 2014
Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP20/CMP10)	LIMA (Peru) 8 December 2014
Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the International Conference on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons	VIENNA (Austria) 8 December 2014
Third sub-regional meeting on budgeting for maternal, newborn and child health for English-speaking African countries	LUSAKA (Zambia) December 2014
Annual 2015 session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO	GENEVA (WTO premises) 16-17 February 2015
Regional seminar on “Translating international human rights commitments into national realities: The contribution of parliament to the work of the United Nations Human Rights Council”	MANILA (Philippines) February 2015
Parliamentary meeting at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction	SENDAI (Japan) March 2015
Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the 59 th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women	NEW YORK March 2015
132 nd Assembly and related meetings	HANOI (Viet Nam) 28 March-1 April 2015
Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians	TOKYO (Japan) May/June 2015 (dates to be confirmed)
Information seminar on the structure and functioning of the Inter- Parliamentary Union for English-speaking participants	GENEVA (IPU Headquarters) June 2015
Twelfth Workshop of Parliamentary Scholars and Parliamentarians organized by the Centre for Legislative Studies at Hull University	WROXTON (United Kingdom) 25-26 July 2015

34 th session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO	GENEVA (IPU Headquarters) September-October 2015
133 ^d Assembly and related meetings	GENEVA (CICG) 11-15 October 2015
Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament	Venue and date to be determined
Regional seminar on violence against women/gender equality	Venue and date to be determined
10 th Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament	Venue and date to be determined
Regional seminar on birth registration, child labour and trafficking and/or malnutrition	Venue and date to be determined
Joint meeting with the East African Legislative Assembly on access to HIV treatment	Venue and date to be determined
Seminar on Nationality and Statelessness, organized with UNHCR	Venue and date to be determined
134 th Assembly and related meetings	LUSAKA (Zambia) 19-23 March 2016

Agenda of the 132nd Assembly

(Hanoi, 28 March – 1 April 2015)

1. Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the 132nd Assembly
2. Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
3. General Debate on *Parliaments and the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals*
4. Cyber warfare – A serious threat to peace and global security
(Standing Committee on Peace and International Security)
5. Shaping a new system of water governance: Promoting parliamentary action on water
(Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade)
6. International law as it relates to national sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and human rights
(Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights)
7. Report of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs
8. Approval of the subject items for the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade for the 134th Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs

Decisions concerning the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

CAMEROON

CM/01 - Dieudonné Ambassa Zang

*Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)*

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Referring to the case of Mr. Dieudonné Ambassa Zang, a former member of the National Assembly of Cameroon, and to the resolution it adopted at its 194th session (March 2014),

Taking into account the letter dated 14 March 2014 from the Minister Delegate to the Office of the President in charge of the Supreme State Audit Office (CONSUPE), President of the Budget and Finance Disciplinary Council (CDBF), and the information regularly provided the complainant,

Recalling the following information on file:

- Mr. Ambassa Zang, Minister of Public Works from August 2002 to December 2004 and known, according to the complainant, for having fought corruption within that ministry, was elected in 2007 on the ticket of the Cameroon People's Democratic Rally;
- On 7 August 2009, the National Assembly Bureau lifted Mr. Ambassa Zang's parliamentary immunity to permit an investigation into allegations of misappropriation of the public funds managed by him when he was Minister of Public Works; although Mr. Ambassa Zang left Cameroon on 12 July 2009, he had a defence note sent on 3 August 2009 to all members of the Bureau; there is no indication that the note was included in the file before the Bureau;
- According to the authorities, the charges laid against Mr. Ambassa Zang stem from audits prompted by a complaint by the French Development Agency (AFD), the funding source for the rehabilitation of the Wouri Bridge, works for which Mr. Ambassa Zang was responsible; according to the Prosecutor General, State companies, ministries and other State structures managing public funds are subject to annual audits by the CONSUPE; according to the complainant, Mr. Ambassa Zang was never informed about the audits, invited to contribute to the audit process, informed of the conclusions or invited to comment on them;
- On the basis of the audits, the Head of State first opted for criminal proceedings on a charge of misappropriation of public funds; on his orders, a decision was signed on 12 October 2012 also bringing the accusations against Mr. Ambassa Zang before the CDBF, before which, unlike in a criminal procedure, defendants can be represented in their absence by legal counsel; it would seem that the decision was notified to Mr. Ambassa Zang's counsel in May 2013, or nearly seven months after it was signed, without any explanation; on 20 August 2013, Mr. Ambassa Zang received a partial request for information from the CDBF rapporteur, to which he responded in two defence memoranda; more than two months later, the CDBF rapporteur sent, according to the complainant in violation of the CDBF rules of procedure, a second partial request for information, to which Mr. Ambassa Zang responded on 13 December 2013 with another defence memorandum; according to the complainant, the CDBF rapporteur has also broken the rules of procedure by formulating accusations in addition to those mentioned in the audits,

Considering that, in his letter of 14 March 2014, the Minister Delegate to the Office of the President in charge of the CONSUPE, President of the CDBF, states inter alia that:

- The CDBF's rules of procedure strictly comply with the general principles of the presumption of innocence and the right of defence, notably the right to be informed, the right to be assisted by a lawyer or counsel, and the right to adversarial proceedings. He added that "However, should one or several new incidents arising from the rapporteur's investigations be closely connected to the presumed offences on the basis of which the

respondent was brought before the CDBF, the rapporteur is authorized, in accordance with consistent case-law, to take them into account in his examination of the case. This principle is at all times limited to the management period considered by the audit;"

- "It must be remembered that the rapporteur, in examining the evidence both for and against the respondent, is called on to conduct additional investigations (article 15(2) of the above-mentioned decree) that may result in the following suggestions: (i) requalification of the misdeed; (ii) re-assessment of the financial damage (up or down); (iii) re-assessment of the allegations. Moreover, and by virtue of the connectivity mentioned earlier, the rapporteur can justifiably incorporate new incidents into the examination, even though that is not currently the case at this stage of the proceedings. The criterion of connectivity is, moreover, the main limit to the principle of the fixed nature of the charges;
- "It is not possible to establish a timetable for winding up the proceedings because how long they last depends not only on the complexity of the case but also on the rapidity with which the various people contacted by the rapporteur (the respondent, witnesses, others) reply to the requests for information they have received." He states that "in this case, the difficulties encountered by the rapporteur stem chiefly from the absence of the respondent and the fact that it is therefore impossible to reach him, and from the extensions requested by his counsel to reply to the requests for information and the incomplete nature of the replies provided. Moreover, he states that "the defence would be well advised to contact the CDBF Permanent Secretariat with a view to consulting, on site and as provided for in the regulations, all the documents in the case,"

Recalling that, according to the complainant, there was no wrongdoing or misappropriation in Mr. Ambassa Zang's favour of any sum whatsoever, the accusations have to do with objective facts and the relevant documents are available at the Ministry of Public Works, the Office of the Prime Minister, the Tenders Regulation Agency and donors such as the AFD; moreover, on 13 July 2010, the International Chamber of Commerce handed down an arbitral award in *UDECTO v. State of Cameroon*, a dispute concerning the execution of the Wouri bridge rehabilitation works; the complainant affirms that, since Cameroon won the case, the company UDECTO being sentenced to pay it substantial sums, and on the strength of the legal principle *non bis in idem*, the charges brought against Mr. Ambassa Zang regarding a prejudice he allegedly caused Cameroon are no longer applicable; the AFD Director General stated in her letter of 7 January 2014 that the AFD wished to specify that it had filed no complaint against Mr. Ambassa Zang and relating to his activities in the context of the proceedings against him before the CDBF, and that, owing to the blocking statute, it was not in a position to provide any observations on the matter that could be used as proof in administrative or judicial proceedings abroad, except pursuant to an official request made as part of international judicial assistance procedures,

Considering that with regard to the criminal procedure against Mr. Ambassa Zang, the Prosecutor General of the Special Criminal Court deferred him and four other defendants to that court by an Order (*Ordonnance de renvoi devant le Tribunal criminel spécial*) dated 9 June 2014; *recalling* in this regard that, on 11 June 2013, more than two years later after the police had completed their investigation, the Prosecutor General of the Special Criminal Court filed charges before the examining judge of that court, directed against 15 persons, including Mr. Ambassa Zang,

Considering that Mr. Simon Foreman, (partner, Courrégé Foreman law office and lawyer at the Paris Bar), was mandated to attend and report on the hearing which took place in this case before the Special Criminal Court on 17 September 2014; in his report, he mentions that "It is worth stressing that the examining judge's order seizing the court and presenting the charges against the accused mentions no sign whatsoever of personal enrichment on behalf of Mr. Ambassa Zang. Many of the accusations against him relate to the fact that the auditors found no justifying documents for various budgetary expenses, for which he could not account. Given that ministers do not normally leave office taking accounting documents with them, much of Mr. Ambassa Zang's defence arguments rely on the suggestion that such documents might be found, for instance, in the archives of the Ministry of Public Works or the Ministry of Finance. In any event, his inability to provide detailed justification for expenses that occurred 10 to 12 years' ago (2002-2004) does not amount to evidence of criminal misappropriation. In the absence of criminal intent, it should at the most qualify as mismanagement, possibly resulting in disciplinary proceedings. In reading the examining judge's order, I found no mention of any sign of criminal intent, let alone personal enrichment,"

Recalling the complainant's affirmation that Mr. Ambassa Zang, who enjoys official refugee status abroad, cannot at present return to Cameroon because he would be arrested and not enjoy a fair trial,

Recalling that, according to the complainant, the prosecution of Mr. Ambassa Zang must be seen in the context of "Opération Épervier" (Operation Casting Net), which was widely criticized as a campaign originally intended to combat corruption and misappropriation of public funds, but instead used to purge critically-minded public figures who, like Mr. Ambassa Zang, expressed views not always in line with those of their party,

1. *Thanks* the Minister Delegate to the Office of the President in charge of the Supreme State Audit Office (CONSUPE), President of the Budget and Finance Disciplinary Council (CDBF), for his detailed reply and the valuable information contained therein;
2. *Thanks* the trial observer for his efforts and for producing his report; *thanks* the parliamentary authorities for their full cooperation in facilitating his mission; *requests* the Secretary General to convey a copy of the report to the relevant authorities and the complainants and any other parties concerned and to seek their observations;
3. *Is concerned* that criminal proceedings against Mr. Ambassa Zang have been re-activated given that he is not allowed to be represented in his absence by legal counsel and given the lack of clarity as to how the facts of which he is accused amount to a criminal offence; *is also concerned* about the possibility that two simultaneous procedures regarding the same facts may lead to contradictory outcomes; *is eager* to receive the authorities' observations on each of those matters;
4. *Trusts*, in light of the explanations provided and commitment expressed by the Minister Delegate to the Office of the President in charge of the CONSUPE, President of the CDBF, that the rules of procedure are scrupulously followed and that Mr. Ambassa Zang's right to defence is fully respected in the disciplinary proceedings;
5. *Trusts* that the CDBF will continue to advance with the examination of Mr. Ambassa Zang's case as a matter of urgency, given that 10 years have elapsed since the alleged events and that Mr. Ambassa Zang and his legal counsel have produced extensive replies to refute the allegations; *wishes* to be kept informed of the next steps in the disciplinary proceedings;
6. *Trusts also* that the CDBF will take due account of the arguments presented in Mr. Ambassa Zang's defence, including the arbitral award of the International Chamber of Commerce in *UDECTO v. State of Cameroon*, as well as of any documents available in the archives of the Ministry of Public Works and other official entities that may shed light on the accusations; *suggests* that the State of Cameroon seriously explore the possibility of obtaining, through a formal request for assistance, the information the AFD has at its disposal that could help shed further light on the case;
7. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the relevant authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;
8. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

DRC/71 - Eugène Diomi Ndongala

*Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)*

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Referring to the case of Mr. Eugène Diomi Ndongala, a former member of the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and to the resolution it adopted at its 194th session (March 2014),

Referring to the letter of the Speaker of the National Assembly of 8 October 2014 and the information provided by the complainants,

Referring also to the report on the mission conducted to the DRC from 10 to 14 June 2013 (CL/193/11b)-R.2),

Recalling the following allegations provided by the complainants: Mr. Ndongala, the leader of an opposition political party, is being framed because he publicly denounced massive cases of electoral fraud during the 2011 elections and contested the legitimacy of the election outcome; he is being blamed for having boycotted the National Assembly in protest, together with 40 opposition members; for these reasons, Mr. Ndongala has been the target since June 2012 of a campaign of political and legal harassment aimed at removing him from the political process and at weakening the opposition; that campaign has been marked by the following alleged violations of his fundamental rights: (i) arbitrary arrest on 27 June 2012, the day before Mr. Ndongala was to establish an opposition party platform, followed by unlawful incommunicado detention by the intelligence services from 27 June to 11 October 2012, during which time Mr. Ndongala was allegedly ill-treated; (ii) arbitrary lifting of Mr. Ndongala's parliamentary immunity in violation of his rights of defence on 8 January 2013; (iii) arbitrary revocation of his parliamentary mandate on 15 June 2013; (iv) baseless and politically motivated judicial proceedings that disregarded the right to a fair trial; (v) illegal remand custody from April 2013 until his conviction on March 2014; (vi) denial of medical care in prison since the end of July 2013,

Also recalling that the National Assembly has repeatedly asserted that, since Mr. Ndongala has boycotted the parliamentary institution to which he belonged and questioned its legitimacy, he could not expect to benefit from its protection; that at the hearing held during the 130th IPU Assembly, the delegation of the DRC stated that if Mr. Ndongala had not contested the legitimacy of the last elections and had agreed to take part in the parliamentary proceedings, the National Assembly would not have agreed to lift his parliamentary immunity or revoked his parliamentary mandate,

Also recalling that, according to the authorities, Mr. Ndongala was never held incommunicado but rather fled in late June 2012 to avoid arrest in *flagrante delicto* proceedings; that, after his immunity had been lifted, he was arrested and remanded in custody; and that he was tried on charges of rape of minors that are unrelated to his political activities,

Recalling that, according to the complainants, the accusations that Mr. Ndongala had sexual relations with minors – qualified as rape by the prosecution – are unfounded and a pure fabrication, given that: (i) Mr. Ndongala was not present on the scene of the alleged rape when the police arrived to arrest him “in the act of rape”; (ii) the girls and their alleged father were paid to accuse Mr. Ndongala by a police superintendent and a member of the majority from the same constituency as Mr. Ndongala; (iii) the girls are adults and came forward under false identities and the alleged father is a well-known criminal with several convictions for fraud; (iv) the girls and the police superintendent met in order to plot their setting up Mr. Ndongala; (v) the complainants claim that they have evidence of the above, including eyewitnesses,

Considering that Mr. Ndongala's trial started in July 2013 and concluded on 12 March 2014; most hearings of the trial were postponed; the substance of the case was only examined briefly at the last hearing according to the complainants,

Considering that Mr. Ndongala was convicted as charged by the Supreme Court on 26 March 2014 and was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment in the first and last instance; that the girls, recognized as rape victims by the Supreme Court, have filed for civil action for damages, with the presentation of oral arguments of the parties set for 22 October 2014,

Considering that, according to the complainants, due process was not respected during Mr. Ndongala's trial, which largely took place in camera; the allegations include the following:

- Mr. Ndongala was kept in jail, despite three Supreme Court decisions between April and June 2013 ordering his placement under house arrest in accordance with the law and the practice applicable to Congolese parliamentarians in pretrial detention;
- The presumption of innocence and the confidentiality of the pretrial investigation were violated, given the prosecution's frequent statements to the media stressing Mr. Ndongala's guilt;

- Procedural flaws in the case scheduling and notification procedure prevented the lawyers for the defence from having access to the court file and preparing their client's defence before the first hearings were held in July 2013;
- The substantive examination of the case did not start until the last hearing and the trial was closed when it had hardly begun; the defence lawyers and Mr. Ndongala were denied the floor and were not given the opportunity to present witnesses and cross-examine those of the prosecution; the two hearings focused exclusively on the testimony of the alleged victims and their "father"; after hearing the testimony of those three people, the judges suddenly decided to close the case and immediately requested the Prosecutor to present his summation without the Court having heard the defence or the plaintiff, who had left the courtroom in boycott over not having been allowed to present their arguments;
- The Court discarded Mr. Ndongala's argument that he was the victim of a political set-up on the grounds that he had not provided evidence in that respect, yet the Court did not allow the defence to do so;
- No exhibit attesting to the rapes was presented or discussed, nor was any medical examination conducted during the investigation; the court relied upon the alleged victims' account, despite major discrepancies casting doubt on their identity, age, filiation and the truthfulness of the accusations against Mr. Ndongala; the Court took no account of the fact that the defence had disputed the age of the girls, which in this particular case was the central element qualifying the alleged sexual relations as rape, given that absence of consent was never alleged;
- The Court also relied on highly disputable evidence of the prosecution, namely: (i) evidence that was illegally seized, as Mr. Ndongala's lawyers were excluded from attending the search by the police; (ii) phone records between the girls and a telephone number not attributed to Mr. Ndongala; (iii) the written testimony of two prosecution witnesses whose credibility and reliability were not established and who were never heard by the Court; those witnesses were arrested on 26 June 2012 and then arbitrarily held in a military camp for several months before being released following demands by civil society and the United Nations; one of these witnesses, a security guard who was initially prosecuted jointly with Mr. Ndongala, provided written testimony stating that he escorted the girls to Mr. Ndongala's office but did not witness what happened therein; the guard was never called to appear in court, and he subsequently disappeared following his release;
- The composition of the trial chamber was not in compliance with the law;
- Mr. Ndongala's main political opponent in his constituency, a parliamentarian of the majority, and allegedly the instigator of the political set-up against him, acted as one of the legal representatives of the alleged victims throughout the trial, even though he was not qualified to do so given his status of attorney-in-training;
- The lack of impartiality of certain judges, in respect of whom requests for recusal were filed, and the political pressure said to have been exerted on several judges, as a result of which the composition of the bench ruling on the case was changed in February and March 2014;
- During the trial, the judges never acknowledged the deteriorating state of health of the accused or his having been denied medical care while in custody, and blamed him of delay tactics and abuse of the judicial process after he collapsed several times during the hearings,

Considering that the Court noted in its decision that the accused and his counsel had left the last hearing and had therefore not stated their closing arguments before the end of the trial; it rejected the application of the defence to reopen the proceedings after they had left the hearing in boycott on the grounds that courts and tribunals must not be given over to "the whims of defendants regarding abuse of the law, as in the present case, the intention of the accused and his counsel having already been made known throughout the proceedings"; it blamed the defendant for delaying the progress of the trial by different means, including: (i) "under the guise of illness"; (ii) by interrupting the hearings to consult with his counsel; (iii) by questioning the filiation of the alleged victims; and (iv) by protesting "vigorously before collapsing and getting up again to move aside while his counsel withdrew from the courtroom",

Recalling also the following information provided by the complainants: Mr. Ndongala's health has deteriorated sharply while in detention since late July 2013, but the authorities have systematically refused to allow him to be taken to hospital; Mr. Ndongala was briefly transferred to a military camp in late July 2013 for medical care, but demanded that he be transferred to one of the civilian hospitals with which the prison has an agreement, in accordance with standard prison practice, and because he feared for his safety, given that he had been unlawfully detained and tortured in that military camp in the past; after Mr. Ndongala's cardiac arrest and emergency hospitalization on 27 December 2013, he was forcibly returned to prison the following day before the tests ordered by the doctor had been carried out; according to the complainants, he has been denied appropriate medical care since,

Recalling in that regard that, in her letter of 27 November 2013, the Minister of Justice stated that there was no truth to the allegations that Mr. Ndongala had been denied medical care and that the applicable legislative provisions had been respected, that Mr. Ndongala had been seen by the doctor at the military hospital at Kokolo camp in July 2013 and that the doctor had recommended x-rays and physiotherapy, that Mr. Ndongala had obtained a recommendation from the doctor that he continue his treatment at a hospital near the airport that had no agreement with the prison, that "the proximity of the international airport [was] indicative of Mr. Ndongala's intentions", and that the prison administration had acted in good faith and given Mr. Ndongala every opportunity to have access to appropriate care outside the prison, but that he had abused that possibility through his behaviour; at the hearing held during the 130th IPU Assembly (March, 2014), the delegation of the DRC said, with regard to the denial of medical care, that the fact that Mr. Ndongala was still alive was "irrefutable proof that he continued to receive treatment, otherwise he would already be dead",

Considering that the United Nations Human Rights Committee was seized of the case of Mr. Ndongala on 22 September 2014 and requested on 8 October 2014 that the DRC take all necessary measures to provide appropriate medical assistance in order to ensure that no irreparable health damage is incurred by Mr. Ndongala,

Recalling that the Congolese authorities held national consultations from 7 September to 5 October 2013 in order to strengthen national unity, that the Head of State presented the recommendations of the final report that emerged from the consultations to both houses of parliament on 23 October 2013 and set up a national committee tasked with implementing them, and that the final report recommends that, "among the measures taken to ease the political tension and announced by the President of the Republic, the public authorities: (a) grant, depending on the case, a presidential pardon, release on parole and/or amnesty to inter alia (...) Eugène Diomi Ndongala (...)",

Considering that this recommendation has not been implemented to date; the nature of the charges against Mr. Ndongala makes him ineligible for amnesty under the amnesty law of February 2014 and the only possibility left for him is a presidential pardon, according to the letter of the Speaker of 8 October 2014; the complainants have stated that there was no remedy under Congolese law with the exception of a retrial (which stands no chance of succeeding given the political nature of the case according to them), a presidential pardon, or an amnesty, the latter being – in their opinion – the most appropriate way to resolve the case at this stage,

1. *Thanks* the Speaker of the National Assembly for the information provided;
2. *Takes note of* the decision of the Supreme Court and *deeply regrets* that it has not taken into account, nor provided any redress for the serious violations of due process that have characterized the trial;
3. *Once again strongly deplors* that there is no separate avenue of appeal in the judicial process applying to parliamentarians in the DRC; *can but fear* a serious miscarriage of justice in the current circumstances, in particular in light of the eminently political nature of the case;
4. *Is further dismayed* that no progress has been made in resolving the case, and *urges* the DRC authorities, including Parliament, to urgently implement the recommendations of the national consultations through all appropriate means, including presidential pardon, amnesty, or a retrial in full compliance with international standards; *wishes* to be informed of the measures taken without delay;

5. *Reiterates its deep concern* that Mr. Ndongala continues to be denied appropriate medical care and, *urges once again* that the DRC authorities ensure that he is urgently provided with medical care in full compliance with the DRC's international obligations under international human rights law;
 6. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the parliamentary authorities, the Minister of Justice, the complainants and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;
 7. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.
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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

DRC/81 - Muhindo Nzangi

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session (Geneva, 16 October 2014)

The Governing Council,

Referring to the case of Mr. Muhindo Nzangi and to the resolution it adopted at its 194th session (March 2014),

Referring also to the letter from the Speaker of the National Assembly of 8 October 2014 and the information provided by the complainants,

Considering that Mr. Nzangi, a member of parliament for the majority, was arrested on 11 August 2013 following comments he made on a radio show where he criticized the Government; he was charged with jeopardizing state security, insulting the Head of State, and disclosing classified defence information and sentenced, on 13 August 2013, to three years in prison at first and last instance by the Supreme Court only on the charge of jeopardizing State security,

Considering the following allegations by the complainants: Mr. Nzangi's parliamentary immunity was violated; his conviction constitutes a serious violation of the right to freedom of expression of parliamentarians, Mr. Nzangi having been convicted for having expressed his point of view about the war in the eastern DRC and for having criticized government policy; his trial was not fair, his lawyers not having had the material time to mount a defence (in view of the expedited nature of the *flagrante delicto* procedure applied in the case) and in the absence of the possibility to appeal,

Bearing in mind that, in the reasoned decision of February 2014, the Supreme Court held as follows: Mr. Nzangi was guilty of jeopardizing State security because he had "deliberately spread rumours about the Head of State's failure to order the continuation of the war in the east of the country, even though troops from the DRC armed forces at the front were ready to fight the M23"; this was "an inaccurate statement that was of a nature to alarm the people in that part of the country, to worry them and to foment doubt about the strength of the authorities, institutional stability and the public authorities, and that definitely caused unrest in Goma and the neighbouring area"; the "rumours" consisted in Mr. Nzangi's declaration that "if the Head of State does not give the order to kick the aggressors out, we'll go the way of Mali, we've seen loads of Rwandan bodies, and the people have to attack MONUSCO because it has not performed its duties and obligations; the Head of State isn't controlled by anyone and whether the army attacks or no longer attacks, he's the Commander-in-Chief of the army and the army was reorganized after former commanders left for Kinshasa",

Bearing in mind the recording of the incriminating radio broadcast provided by the complainants, in particular Mr. Nzangi's words during the broadcast,

Considering that article 153 of the Constitution of the DRC, adopted in 2006, provides that the Court of Cassation shall hear cases involving offences committed by members of the National Assembly and the Senate in first and last instance,

Recalling that the Speaker of the National Assembly indicated in his letter of 19 February 2014 that, in application of the recommendations that emerged from the national consultations held in September 2013, the Parliament of the DRC had adopted, on 11 February 2014, an amnesty law that covered the offences for which Mr. Nzangi had been convicted, and that the complainants had confirmed that Mr. Nzangi was eligible for amnesty, which he had applied for in writing pursuant to the law,

Recalling that during the 130th IPU Assembly (March 2014) the delegation of the DRC indicated that:

- In accordance with the Constitution, and because he had been arrested using the *flagrante delicto* procedure, Mr. Nzangi had not benefited from parliamentary immunity;
- Even though Mr. Nzangi had been found guilty, he had not been removed from office by the National Assembly, which considered that the case could be resolved by granting Mr. Nzangi amnesty for political offences, and that the Speaker of the National Assembly had pledged to do all in his power to ensure that Mr. Nzangi was granted amnesty,

Considering that Mr. Nzangi was finally granted amnesty and released from prison on 30 April 2014 in accordance with the amnesty law and that Mr. Nzangi has since resumed his parliamentary duties,

1. *Thanks* the Speaker of the National Assembly for the information and for his assistance in promoting a satisfactory settlement;
2. *Notes with satisfaction* that Mr. Nzangi was granted amnesty and released from prison under the amnesty law adopted by the Parliament of the DRC in February 2014 and has resumed his parliamentary duties;
3. *Regrets* nevertheless that in sentencing Mr. Nzangi to a prison term for having criticized government policy, even though he did not incite to violence, the Congolese authorities disregarded Mr. Nzangi's right to freedom of opinion and expression, which is enshrined in article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which the DRC is a party, therefore *urges* the Congolese authorities to take all appropriate measures to strengthen freedom of expression and prevent similar incidences from repeating in the future, and *wishes* to be kept informed in this regard;
4. *Deplores again* that there is no separate avenue of appeal in the judicial process applying to parliamentarians in the DRC and *recalls* that the possibility to appeal is one of the principal guarantees of a fair trial; *appeals to* the Congolese Parliament to create such an avenue of redress so that parliamentarians may enjoy the same full protection of the rights of defence in judicial proceedings as all other citizens of the DRC;
5. *Suggests* that the IPU, in the context of a technical assistance programme, examine together with the parliamentary authorities, the possibility of allowing them to benefit from its experience to address the underlying concerns reflected in this case;
6. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the parliamentary authorities, the Minister of Justice, the complainants and any third party relevant to the case;
7. *Decides to* close the case.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

DRC/83 - Jean-Bertrand Ewanga

*Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)*

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Having before it the case of Mr. Jean-Bertrand Ewanga, a member of the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which has been examined by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians pursuant to the Procedure for the examination and treatment of complaints (Annex I of the revised rules and practices),

Referring to the information provided by the Speaker of the National Assembly in his letter of 8 October 2014, and by the complainant,

Considering that Mr. Ewanga, an opposition member of parliament, gave a speech on 4 August 2014 at a public rally, and was arrested in the morning of 5 August 2014; he was charged with insulting the Head of State and inciting racial and tribal hatred; he was tried before the Supreme Court in first and last instance under the *flagrante delicto* procedure; during the trial Mr. Ewanga claimed that the Constitution was violated, causing the judges to suspend the proceedings until a decision on these matters was made by the Constitutional Court; his challenges were rejected by that court and the trial before the Supreme Court resumed; he was subsequently sentenced to one-year imprisonment on 11 September 2014 on the charge of insulting the Head of State and other state officials,

Considering that according to the complainant, Mr. Ewanga was arrested, charged, and convicted in violation of his freedom of expression, parliamentary immunity and right to liberty and due process,

· As regards freedom of expression

Considering that, according to the complainant, article 23 of the DRC Constitution on freedom of expression was violated; Mr. Ewanga was exercising his freedom of expression and did not make any statements that went beyond normal criticism of a Head of State,

Considering that, according to the Speaker, a video of Mr. Ewanga's speech was broadcast during the Supreme Court trial and forged the conviction of the Court that his words went beyond normal criticism of the Government's action and were constitutive of a criminal offence,

Bearing in mind that the video and the transcript of Mr. Ewanga's speech, provided by the complainant and other reliable sources of information, indicated that he stated that "Kabila must go", that "he stole the elections", that "he lied", and that the Speakers of the Senate and the National Assembly, as well as the Prime Minister, were his sorcerers,

Bearing in mind that members of the international community, including the European Union and the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), expressed concern over the arrest of Mr. Ewanga, questioned the appropriateness of the use of the *flagrante delicto* procedure, and called on the authorities of the DRC to take necessary measures to ensure that freedom of expression was protected,

Considering also that, according to the complainant, Ordinance-Law No. 300 of 16 December 1963, which stipulates the crime of insulting the Head of State, is not in compliance with the DRC Constitution promulgated in 2006 and with international human rights standards, and should be repealed or amended,

· As regards parliamentary immunity

Considering that the complainant alleges that Mr. Ewanga was arrested in violation of his parliamentary immunity; it contested the application of the *flagrante delicto* procedure and claimed that it was used abusively to circumvent the National Assembly and article 107 of the DRC Constitution, which reads that "Parliamentarians may not be prosecuted, investigated, arrested, detained or tried for opinions expressed or votes cast by them in the exercise of their functions"; it alleges that the use of the *flagrante delicto* procedure was abusive both because Mr. Ewanga was simply exercising his freedom of expression and therefore did not commit a crime, and also because he was not arrested at the moment that he gave his speech, but only the following day,

Considering that the Speaker of the National Assembly noted that, according to article 107 of the Constitution, parliamentary immunity only protects opinions or votes expressed in the exercise of parliamentary functions; he also stated that according to article 7 of the Congolese Criminal Code, the procedure of *flagrante delicto* can be applied whenever an infraction "produces effects ... provided that this occurs shortly after the violation",

· As regards pretrial detention and house arrest

Considering that, according to the complainant, Mr. Ewanga was put in jail on 5 August 2014 despite a Supreme Court order that he be placed under house arrest, which was finally executed on 8 August 2014 when Mr. Ewanga was transferred to a hotel in Kinshasa; the complainant contested, however, that pursuant to the legislation and existing jurisprudence on house arrest, he should have been placed under house arrest at his domicile,

Considering that the Speaker of the National Assembly stated that he intervened with the Prosecutor General to obtain enforcement of the Supreme Court order,

As regards due process

Considering that, according to the complainant, due process was not respected in the judicial proceedings, in particular: (i) Mr. Ewanga's lawyers were not provided with access to the court files at the initial hearing of the Supreme Court proceeding and could not consider the evidence against him; (ii) the composition of both the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court was not consistent with domestic law; (iii) the sentencing was made without the presence of Mr. Ewanga's legal counsel, who had left the courtroom in boycott; (iv) Mr. Ewanga was convicted for additional infractions – namely insulting the presidents of the National Assembly and the Senate and the Prime Minister – not on the original charge sheet, although he was never notified of the charges during the trial and could therefore not prepare a defence to them,

Considering that, according to the Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr. Ewanga's lawyers had access to the Supreme Court files, otherwise they would not have obtained a stay of enforcement of the case on account of pleas of unconstitutionality,

Considering that the reasoned rulings on both the Supreme Court case and the Constitutional Court case have not yet been made available to Mr. Ewanga and his lawyers by the DRC authorities more than one month after his conviction,

Bearing in mind that the Constitutional Court is not fully operational and that its proceedings continue to be conducted by the Supreme Court to date,

Bearing in mind that freedom of expression is protected by article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and that, according to the United Nations Human Rights Committee ICCPR general comment No. 34 (2011), "the mere fact that forms of expression are considered to be insulting to a public figure is not sufficient to justify the imposition of penalties ... all public figures, including those exercising the highest political authority such as heads of state and government, are legitimately subject to criticism and political opposition" (para. 38), "defamation laws must be crafted with care to ensure that they ... do not serve, in practice, to stifle freedom of expression" (para. 47),

Considering that, during the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2014, the DRC accepted to "ensure that the freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly are respected in conformity with international standards and that members of political parties, journalists and human rights activists are able to exercise their activities and criticize the Government without being subject to intimidation, reprisals or harassment" (para. 134.134 of the UPR Working Group Report,

1. *Thanks* the Speaker of the National Assembly for the information provided;
2. *Observes* that Mr. Ewanga criticized government policy, the Head of State and other state authorities; *notes* that the language of his comments was not conducive to promoting constructive and amicable political dialogue; *but considers*, based on the video and transcript of the speech, that his words fell within the scope of protected free speech pursuant to Article 19 of the ICCPR and should therefore have been protected; *urges* the DRC authorities, including Parliament, to consider all appropriate means of resolving the case, including presidential pardon, amnesty, or a retrial in full compliance with international standards;
3. *Is deeply concerned* that the procedure of *flagrante delicto* appears to have been used abusively and *considers* that the National Assembly should have inquired, in full respect of the principle of separation of powers, as to the grounds justifying the use of the procedure and made its own assessment on whether the procedure was used properly;
4. *Notes with concern* the allegations regarding the violation of due process and *wishes* to receive the reasoned rulings of both the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court; *reaffirms its longstanding view* that the possibility to appeal is one of the principal guarantees of a fair trial; therefore *urges* the Congolese Parliament to create a separate avenue of redress in the judicial process applying to parliamentarians, so that they may enjoy the same full protection of the rights of defence in judicial proceedings, as all other citizens of the DRC;

5. *Urges* the authorities to repeal or amend the laws stipulating the crime of insulting the Head of State and other high political authorities and bring it in compliance with international human rights standards so as to prevent similar incidences from being repeated in the future; *wishes* to be kept informed in this regard;
6. *Suggests* that the IPU, in the context of a technical assistance programme, examine together with the parliamentary authorities the possibility of allowing them to benefit from its experience to address the underlying concerns reflected in this case;
7. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the parliamentary authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;
8. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and report back to it in due course.

ZAMBIA

ZM01 - Michael Kaingu
 ZM02 - Jack Mwiimbu
 ZM03 - Garry Nkombo

ZM04 - Request Mutanga
 ZM05 - Boyd Hamusonde
 ZM06 - Moono Lubezhi (Ms.)
 ZM07 - Dora Siliya (Ms.)
 ZM08 - Mwalimu Simfukwe
 ZM09 - Sarah Sayifwanda (Ms.)
 ZM10 - Lt. Gen. Ronnie Shikapwasha

ZM11 - Maxwell Mwale
 ZM12 - Kenneth Konga
 ZM13 - Annie Munshya Chungu
 (Ms.)
 ZM14 - Howard Kunda
 ZM15 - Michael Katambo
 ZM16 - James Chishiba
 ZM17 - Hastings Sililo
 ZM18 - Lucky Mulusa
 ZM19 - Patrick Mucheleka
 ZM20 - Eustacio Kazonga

***Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session
 (Geneva, 16 October 2014)***

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Referring to the case of the above-mentioned individuals, all elected in the September 2011 parliamentary elections as members of political parties that are now in the opposition, and the resolution which it adopted at its 194th session (March 2014),

Recalling that, according to the complainant, immediately following the legislative and presidential elections in September 2011, the Patriotic Front Government embarked on a campaign of score-settling against members of the former government, abusing provisions of the Public Order Act, disrupting opposition activities and using the pretext of the “anti-corruption fight” to eliminate political competition; according to the complainant, apart from a few isolated cases that have gone to trial, the accusations against opposition members have proved groundless, and the unsubstantiated prosecutions have been abandoned in some cases, such as with respect to Ms. Sarah Sayifwanda, Mr. Mwalimu Simfukwe, Mr. Garry Nkombo and Mr. Request Muntanga, but in others the Government is pressing on despite the absence of evidence, like in the cases of Mr. Maxwell Mwale, Ms. Dora Siliya and Mr. Ronnie Shikapwasha,

Recalling that the parliamentary authorities observed that, in spite of judicial pronouncements on the administration of the Public Order Act, challenges persisted and that, while successive governments had insisted that the Public Order Act was impartially administered, the opposition felt that its administration was biased towards the Government and that the matter occasionally arose even on the floor of the House; the parliamentary authorities affirmed that the criminal cases against members of parliament, which primarily concern charges of abuse of authority at the time when the individuals concerned were ministers in the previous government, were following their normal course before the courts,

Taking into account that the President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, Senator Juan Pablo Letelier, conducted an on-site mission to Zambia from 22 to 25 September 2014 at the invitation of the Speaker of the National Assembly; his full mission report will be presented to the Governing Council at its next session (March-April 2015), after being shared with all parties for their observations; the preliminary observations regarding the mission are as follows:

- The authorities extended their full cooperation during the mission, thus permitting the President of the Committee to meet the relevant legislative, judicial and executive authorities, including the Vice-President, Speaker of the National Assembly, Minister of Home Affairs, Deputy Inspector General of Police, Attorney-General and Director of Prosecutions, as well as the parliamentarians directly concerned;
- The cases before the Committee have to be seen in the context of: (i) the unprecedented number of contested parliamentary seats and disqualified members of parliament following the 2011 parliamentary elections, thereby altering the balance of power in Parliament; (ii) incidents of political harassment and violence, in particular in 2012 and 2013, such as in the lead-up to the Livingstone by-election in February 2013, although, with the exception of the reported violence during the by-election in August 2014 in Mangango, by-elections held in 2014 appear to have been largely peaceful; and (iii) the lack of legislation on the financing of political parties and political campaigns, clear rules on floor-crossing and the absence of a new Constitution that could possibly address these and other outstanding critical questions with a view to enhancing democracy in Zambia,
- With regard to the observations on the specific human rights cases, the preliminary mission findings include the following:
 - In light of the detailed allegations of the arbitrary arrests of and legal criminal action in December 2012 against Ms. Anne Chungu, Mr. Michael Katambo, Mr. Howard Kunda and Mr. James Chishiba, and in February 2013 with respect to Mr. Garry Nkombo and Mr. Request Mutanga, which legal action – in the absence of any proof of wrongdoing – was subsequently abandoned in court, it appears that the police have indeed abused their authority in these cases and there is concern that no action appears to have been taken to look into these incidents and to hold police officers to account;
 - The Public Order Act, which existence and application are at the centre of several of the concerns in the cases at hand, puts undue strain on the right of freedom of assembly; there have been reports of instances of the police unduly limiting political activity by the opposition even in the face of court orders, such as in the case of the public meeting called for in September 2012 in Lusaka's Kanyama compound; parliamentarians have not always been proposed alternative dates or venues in response to apparently justified security concerns from police, nor have they systematically used the legal process to challenge decisions taken by the police to limit the exercise of the right of freedom of assembly in specific instances;
 - There has been a serious delay in handling petitions for the disqualification of seats, several of which remain pending three years after the parliamentary elections took place;
 - There has been a serious delay in the legal proceedings concerning the charges of abuse of authority (corruption) against former member of parliament Maxwell Mwale and concerns about the legal justification for the continued confiscation of member of parliament Kenneth Konga's campaign vehicles and restrictions on the full use of other property;
 - No legal action has been taken against the alleged attacker of Mr. Garry Nkombo at a police station in February 2013, despite the existence of a report detailing Mr. Nkombo's version of the facts and his injury,
- In order to address those specific concerns, the mission recommends that:
 - The Public Order Act be amended so as to reduce the discretion and powers of police in response to political opposition; the police be reprimanded when and where they continue to insist on the need for a permit for members of parliament, which under the current Public Order Act is no longer needed, abuse their discretion to cancel or postpone without justification duly announced public meetings or arbitrarily arrest parliamentarians taking part in such meetings; full support be given to the National Human Rights Commission's work aimed at identifying and discussing

solutions for human rights challenges that have arisen in the application of the Public Order Act; members of parliament who consider that, under the Public Order Act or any other law, the police have abused their rights, make effective use of national legal means of recourse;

- Steps be taken to investigate and establish accountability for the arbitrary arrest and detention of members of parliament in December 2012 and February 2013;
 - The relevant courts decide swiftly on outstanding petitions for disqualification of seats and organize by-elections as quickly as possible, where called for;
 - Steps be taken to shed full light on and, if applicable, establish responsibility for, the alleged attack on Mr. Nkombo in February 2013;
 - Complaints by Mr. Kenneth Konga regarding the unlawful continued confiscation and limitation on the use of his property be dealt with swiftly;
 - Ongoing criminal cases of alleged abuse of authority against current and former members of parliament, in particular that of Mr. Mwale which has been going on since 2011, be expedited;
 - Action be taken to adopt a political parties act, a legal framework to address political party and campaign financing and floor-crossing, and to promote a full and open exchange of views on the Government's plans for a new Constitution,
1. *Thanks* the Speaker and the other Zambian authorities for the full cooperation which they have extended to the mission, including the extensive documentation that they have provided;
 2. *Takes note of* the preliminary mission observations and *eagerly awaits* the final mission report at the next IPU Assembly (March-April 2015); *hopes* that the Committee will in the meantime receive the observations of the authorities on the preliminary mission's specific concerns and recommendations;
 3. *Encourages* the authorities to seize the opportunity to review and amend the Public Order Act now, well before the next parliamentary and presidential elections, and to put in place for this purpose a national consultative process involving all political parties, the police, the National Human Rights Commission, as well as other interested parties, with a view to ensuring that the concerns and challenges that have arisen in the cases at hand are properly addressed; *assures* that the IPU stands ready to assist in those efforts, including by sharing relevant experiences from other countries, should that be requested;
 4. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the relevant authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;
 5. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

COLOMBIA

CO/146 - Iván Cepeda Castro

CO/147 - Alexander López

CO/148 - Jorge Enrique Robledo

CO/149 - Guillermo Alfonso Jaramillo

CO/150 - Wilson Árias Castillo

***Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)***

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Referring to the cases of Mr. Iván Cepeda Castro, Mr. Alexander López, Mr. Jorge Enrique Robledo, Mr. Wilson Árias Castillo and Mr. Guillermo Alfonso Jaramillo, all, with the exception of the last-named individual, current members of the Colombian Congress from the opposition party *Polo Democrático Alternativo* (Alternative Democratic Pole), and to the resolution it adopted at its 194th session (March 2014),

Recalling that up until 2013, the five individuals concerned had received several death threats,

Recalling that Mr. Cepeda has since 2013 received the following threats:

- In February 2013, an anonymous call was made regarding a plot hatched against Mr. Cepeda, claiming that two brothers, Pedro and Santiago Gallón Henao, had paid an armed group to go to Melgar municipality (Tolima) to prepare an attack on him in Bogotá;
- In July 2013, a human rights defender and member of the National Movement of Victims of State Crimes, MOVICE, Sucre branch, received a threat directed at various trade union and human rights leaders, including Mr. Cepeda, in which the latter is referred to as “the spokesperson and chief ambassador for terrorism in Colombia and a major terrorist”;
- On 5 August 2013, a threat was sent to Mr. Cepeda’s work email address by “LOS RASTROJOS - COMANDOS URBANOS”; the threat was identified as PUBLIC COMMUNIQUE No. 012 04 of August 2013 and sent from an email address identified as jrojasilva@gmail.com; it contained three points, the second of which identifies as “... military target and permanent enemies of the country a series of people referred to as trade union/guerrilla leaders, and ideologues clothed as lawyers, senators and representatives, the insurgents: ... IVAN CEPEDA (emphasis added) ...”;
- Mr. Cepeda was also mentioned as a military target by “the national urban commandos of the Rastrojos” in their PUBLIC COMMUNIQUE No. 18 of 10 September 2013 and PUBLIC COMMUNIQUE of 24 September 2013;
- On 4 February 2014, Mr. Cepeda and Mr. Alirio Uribe Muñoz, his running-mate for the Chamber of Deputies in the elections of 9 March 2014, were threatened by email by those who called themselves the AGUILAS NEGRAS BLOQUE CAPITAL D.C.; in their threat, they tell their two targets that their time has come, that this is the only warning and that they better withdraw from politics and save their lives,

Considering that on 31 July 2014, Mr. Cepeda received a letter from Mr. Hernan Alonso Villa, Jefe Militar de los Urabeños y el Bloque Metro de las Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia, announcing that he would be subject to a military trial and death if he did not go into exile within the next four months. The letter made particular reference to the problems faced by former President and current Senator Alvaro Uribe, thereby implicitly criticizing Mr. Cepeda’s work to investigate alleged links between Mr. Uribe and the paramilitary. On 1 August 2014, Mr. Cepeda informed the National Protection Unit, the national police and the Prosecutor’s Office respectively of the threat. According to the complainant, the National Protection Unit replied on the same day that it was the national police that was in charge of assessing risks faced by parliamentarians and adopting adequate protection measures,

Recalling that on 4 February 2014, the website *semana.com* (Colombia) published the results of its investigation into the “Andromeda” affair, involving unlawful eavesdropping to uncover the Government’s representatives in the peace process in Havana, including Mr. Cepeda; *considering* that in August 2014, the complainant provided information according to which a hacker by the name of Mr. Andrés Sepúlva, currently held in detention, reportedly spied on Mr. Cepeda on behalf of those close to Mr. Alvaro Uribe,

Recalling that the complainant, in his communication of 6 February 2014, stated that Mr. Cepeda has continued to ask the Prosecutor’s Office to guarantee the security and protection of the persons concerned; Mr. Cepeda has always informed the competent national authorities of any threats against them so that they could conduct the necessary investigations; however, in his communication of 6 February 2014, the complainant points out that only in 2013 was Mr. Cepeda approached about an investigation into a denunciation made in 2008,

Recalling that the acting Chief Prosecutor of Colombia stated in October 2010 that all threats against members of the Alternative Democratic Pole were being investigated with the utmost diligence, but that it was often very difficult to lay hands on those responsible since they were experts at covering up their identity and whereabouts; in its report of 12 January 2011, the Prosecutor’s Office affirmed that the threats issued by *Águilas negras* against Mr. Cepeda and by *Los rastrojos - comandos urbanos* against Senators López, Robledo and Jaramillo were all the subject of ongoing criminal investigations; *recalling* also that the current Chief Prosecutor stated to Senator Juan Pablo Letelier, then Committee Vice-President, during the latter’s visit to Colombia in March 2013 that his Office was doing everything possible to hold the culprits of threats against members of the opposition to account,

Recalling that in March 2013 the *Procuraduría* reportedly opened two disciplinary procedures against Mr. Cepeda; according to the complainant, the first one concerns Mr. Cepeda's efforts to accompany the displaced victims of violence returning to their land in Las Pavas community; the other investigation is reportedly based on the investigations conducted by Mr. Cepeda into the denunciations for paramilitarism against Mr. Álvaro Uribe; according to the complainant, this disciplinary procedure is based on two supposed faults, the first for procedural fraud and the second for overstepping and usurping duties; in view of the above and, given the seriousness of the situation, a petition for a temporary injunction [*solicitud de medida cautelar*] has been filed with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, in order to stop the procedures that could end up curtailing Mr. Cepeda's political life. At the same time, a suit has been filed charging the Colombian State with violating article 23 of the American Convention on Human Rights, in that it permitted an administrative authority to investigate authorities or public servants elected by the people and possibly to sanction them with removal from office. The suit also refers to articles 8, 16, 25 and others on political rights and due process,

1. *Is alarmed* at the repeated death threats directed against Mr. Cepeda;
2. *Considers* that the risks Mr. Cepeda has incurred as a long-standing critical voice in Colombia have to be taken extremely seriously and that the authorities should do everything possible to ensure that he will not suffer the same fate as his father;
3. *Is therefore deeply concerned* at the absence of any information indicating that full-scale investigations are under way and results have been obtained to establish accountability;
4. *Reaffirms its belief* that it is the duty of the Colombian authorities to do everything possible to ensure that the threats against Mr. Cepeda and the other members of the Alternative Democratic Pole do not go unpunished and *urges* them therefore to take effective steps towards identifying and holding to account the culprits; *wishes* to know what recent steps the Prosecutor General's Office has taken in this regard;
5. *Calls on* the competent authorities to ensure without delay that an effective security detail is in place for Mr. Cepeda and his legislative team; *wishes* to receive official information on this point; *is eager* to know whether the other members of Congress remain at risk and, if so, what security arrangements have been made for them;
6. *Considers* that the protection of the physical integrity and the ability of members of the opposition to carry out their work without fear of reprisals should be of direct concern to the Colombian Congress; *calls therefore on* the Colombian Congress to use fully its constitutional powers to address the concerns that have arisen in this case;
7. *Is eager to understand* the legal grounds and facts underpinning the two disciplinary investigations initiated against Mr. Cepeda; *would appreciate* therefore receiving the observations of the *Procuraduría* on this matter; *wishes to be kept* informed of the ongoing legal challenges in the investigations brought before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Colombian courts;
8. *Considers* that a follow-up visit to Colombia by a Committee delegation would help to promote further progress in addressing the issues which have arisen in this case; *requests* the Secretary General therefore to make the necessary arrangements for this purpose;
9. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the relevant authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;
10. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

COLOMBIA

CO/155 - Piedad del Socorro Zuccardi de García CO/157 - Oscar Arboleda Palacio

*Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)*

The Governing Council,

Referring to the case of Ms. Piedad del Socorro Zuccardi de García, a member of the National Congress of Colombia when an investigation was opened against her on charges of aggravated criminal conspiracy for the purpose of organizing, promoting, arming or financing illegal armed groups, following accusations that she had cooperated with paramilitary groups, and to the resolution it adopted on her case at its 193rd session (October 2013),

Having before it the case of Mr. Oscar Arboleda Palacio, a former member of the National Congress of Colombia, which has been examined by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians pursuant to the Procedure for the examination and treatment of complaints (Annex I of the revised rules and practices); considering that Mr. Arboleda is being investigated on the same charges as Ms. Zuccardi de García,

Considering that Ms. Zuccardi de García and Mr. Arboleda were placed in pretrial detention by decisions of the Supreme Court of Justice on 5 March and on 11 September 2013 respectively and that on 8 October 2014 the Supreme Court changed Mr. Arboleda's detention to house arrest in response to his poor health and the treatment he required,

*Considering that the complainants point out that both former members of Congress do not benefit from a fair trial and are being prosecuted in the absence of any concrete and reliable proof, with the prosecution relying significantly on the testimony of a convicted drug trafficker and self-proclaimed demobilized paramilitary member, Mr. Juan Carlos Sierra alias "El Tuso"; they point in this regard also to the decisions by the Office of the Attorney-General (*Procuraduría*) had on 12 June 2012 and on 5 November 2013 to dismiss the cases against Ms. Zuccardi de García and Mr. Arboleda respectively,*

Considering the following: The reports of the Committee's on-site missions to Colombia in 2009 and 2010 refer extensively to concerns about respect for fair-trial guarantees in criminal proceedings against current and former members of Congress, who are investigated and judged in single instance by the Supreme Court, and about how the investigation and proceedings are handled in practice; with regard to the testimony of demobilized paramilitaries, the 2010 mission concluded, "such testimonies, however useful they may be, must be treated with great caution. The credibility of those persons, who have committed atrocious abuses, cannot be taken for granted. What seems clear is that the demobilized paramilitaries have their own interest in acting in a certain manner in order to be granted the lenient sentences provided for in the Justice and Peace Act. This necessarily implies that many feel it better to speak than remain silent, even when they know little or no information,"

Considering that several attempts have been made to introduce legislation to ensure that Colombian parliamentarians enjoy, like other Colombian citizens, the right to a fair trial, including the possibility of appeal, and that the most recent attempt was part of a larger series of judicial reform measures adopted by the Colombian Congress on 20 June 2012, but subsequently abandoned after the President of the Republic objected to it; considering that a bill to balance the powers of the different branches of the State was brought before the National Congress in September 2014,

Considering finally that an observer from the IPU, Mr. Nick Stanage from Doughty Street Chambers, attended the hearings which took place before the Supreme Court in both cases on 22 and 23 September 2014 and met with several of the parties directly concerned and has produced a report in which he expresses both concern about due process and the evaluation of the credibility of the evidence at hand,

1. *Thanks the trial observer for his efforts and the report he has produced; also thanks the National Congress of Colombia for facilitating his mission;*
2. *Requests the Secretary General to convey a copy of the report to the relevant Colombian authorities and to the complainants with a view to soliciting their views;*

3. *Decides* to continue closely monitoring the proceedings in both cases, including by exploring the option of a continued presence at future hearings before the Supreme Court;
4. *Reaffirms its view* that the legal framework in Colombia should ensure that members of Congress benefit from due process in criminal procedures so that they can fulfil their mandates effectively and without fear of reprisals; therefore *calls on* the competent authorities to do everything possible to renew consultations with a view to helping ensure that the current legal provisions governing the procedure applicable to members of Congress in criminal cases are finally overhauled so as to ensure their full compatibility with fundamental fair-trial standards, including the right to appeal and non-discrimination towards members of Congress; *affirms* the continued readiness of the IPU to assist in this regard;
5. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the relevant authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;
6. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

ISRAEL

IL/05 - Haneen Zoabi

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session (Geneva, 16 October 2014)

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Having before it the case of Ms. Haneen Zoabi, a member of the Knesset of Israel, which has been examined by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians pursuant to the Procedure for the examination and treatment of complaints (Annex I of the revised rules and practices),

Considering the following information provided by the complainant:

- On 29 July 2014, the Knesset's Ethics Committee decided to suspend for six months Ms. Haneen Zoabi's right to make speeches in the Knesset and submit parliamentary questions or initiate debates in committees or the Knesset plenary, reportedly because it considered that Ms. Zoabi had made statements that "deviated from the realm of legitimate expression" for a member of the Knesset. According to the complainant, the suspension is the longest in the Knesset's history and the maximum the Committee can impose under Israeli law;
- According to the complainant, the issue at the centre of the Ethics Committee's decision was an interview Ms. Zoabi gave on Radio Tel Aviv on 17 June 2014, five days after three Israeli teenagers were abducted in the West Bank, at which time it was not known that they had been killed. Ms. Zoabi upset the interviewer and many listeners by refusing to describe the abductors simplistically as "terrorists". Instead, she responded: "Is it strange that people living under occupation and living impossible lives, in a situation where Israel kidnaps new prisoners every day, is it strange that they act this way? They are not terrorists. Even if I do not agree with them, they are people who do not see any way open to change their reality, and they are compelled to use means like these until Israel wakes up and sees the suffering, feels the suffering of the other." The complainant affirms that almost all media coverage and even a reference to this statement by the Knesset Ethics Committee left out the part in which Ms. Zoabi said that she did "not agree" with the kidnapping;
- The Attorney-General's Office reportedly announced on 24 July 2014 that it would not order a police investigation for incitement regarding the interview. According to the complainant, the Deputy Attorney-General, Mr. Raz Nizri, admitted that there was a difficulty in seeing the statements as incitement to commit kidnapping;
- On 7 October 2014, Ms. Zoabi filed a petition with the High Court of Justice, which is still pending, to strike down the six-month suspension,

Considering that the complainant affirms that the decision by the Ethics Committee is part of a campaign of persecution, a situation that has reportedly been highlighted by Israeli legal experts,

Considering also that, according to the complainant, Ms. Zoabi's punishment is discriminatory and that an example thereof is that when former Knesset member Aryeh Eldad called in 2008 for Mr. Ehud Olmert, the Prime Minister at the time, to be sentenced to death for suggesting that parts of the occupied territories become a Palestinian state, the Ethics Committee suspended him for just one day. The complainant affirms that this was clear incitement to violence in a country where a former Prime Minister, Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, was murdered by an extremist, citing exactly this kind of justification for his actions,

Considering also that the Attorney-General announced on 25 July 2014 that he had instructed police to begin a formal investigation of Ms. Zoabi on suspicion of inciting others to violence and insulting a public servant, namely a police officer, outside Nazareth's district court on 6 July 2014. According to the complainant, Ms. Zoabi's lawyers have not yet been provided with documents relevant to the investigation, although Ms. Zoabi addressed the allegations at a police interrogation in Lod on 11 August 2014,

Considering furthermore that the complainant affirms that during this period the police have not been acting as a neutral law enforcement body and have been actively abusing their powers and denying people the right to peaceful demonstration and that, according to the NGO Adalah, more than 600 people had been arrested over their alleged participation in demonstrations since the beginning of July 2014, all of them Palestinian citizens,

Considering that the complainant points out that Ms. Zoabi has personally experienced police violence on several recent occasions, most notably at an anti-war demonstration in Haifa on 18 July 2014. There, she was verbally and physically abused by police officers and handcuffed for half an hour. Ms. Zoabi has formally filed a complaint against the police for their behaviour at the demonstration. So far no investigation has been initiated,

Considering that, according to the complainant, Ms. Zoabi is the only public figure in Israel to be facing an investigation for incitement, even though there was an outpouring of anti-Arab racist statements during Israel's 50-day Operation Protective Edge, including calls for violence and threats to Palestinians both in Gaza and in Israel from leading Jewish politicians, rabbis and academics; the complainant affirms that the investigation against Ms. Zoabi is being pushed through at great speed to take advantage of the war atmosphere so that there is a national consensus in favour of punishing her,

Recalling that, under the previous legislature, on 13 July 2010, the Knesset passed a resolution to revoke three of Ms. Zoabi's parliamentary privileges for the duration of the legislative period owing to her participation in the Gaza-bound humanitarian flotilla in May 2010, which matter was also examined through the procedure of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians,

Bearing in mind that Israel is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and thus bound to guarantee freedom of expression, which is also guaranteed under Israel's Basic Law,

1. *Is deeply concerned* that Ms. Zoabi has been suspended from taking part in all parliamentary activity except for voting for six months, hence impairing her ability to exercise the mandate entrusted to her by her electors and their effective representation in the Knesset; *fears* that she was suspended on account of having exercised her freedom of speech by expressing a political position, as the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians believed was the case when the Knesset punished her for her participation in the Gaza-bound flotilla in 2010; *wishes* to receive a copy of the full decision taken by the Knesset Ethics Committee;
2. *Sincerely hopes* that the High Court of Justice will swiftly decide on the petition challenging the suspension and adopt a decision that fully recognizes the right to freedom of expression, respect for which is essential for members of parliament; *wishes* to be kept informed of developments in the proceedings;
3. *Wishes* to receive official information with regard to the criminal investigation against Ms. Zoabi, including with regard to the precise facts in support of the accusations against her;
4. *Wishes also* to receive official information regarding steps taken to investigate the alleged verbal and physical abuse by police which Ms. Zoabi suffered during a demonstration on 18 July 2014; *also wishes* to know whether an analysis has been made, including by the Knesset in carrying out its oversight functions, of the police handling of the demonstration;

5. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the relevant authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;
 6. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.
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MALAYSIA

MAL21 - N. Surendran
MAL22 - Teresa Kok (Ms.)
MAL23 - Khalid Samad
MAL24 - Rafizi Ramli
MAL25 - Chua Tian Chang

*Decision adopted by consensus by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session (Geneva, 16 October 2014)*¹⁶

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Having before it the case of Mr. N. Surendran, Ms. Teresa Kok, Mr. Khalid Samad, Mr. Rafizi Ramli and Mr. Chua Tian Chang, members of the House of Representatives of Malaysia, which has been examined by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians pursuant to the Procedure for the examination and treatment of complaints (Annex I of the revised rules and practices),

Taking into account the information provided at the hearing which the Committee had on 14 October 2014 with the Malaysian delegation to the 131st IPU Assembly and the information that the complainants have regularly provided,

Considering that the five parliamentarians have been charged with sedition or are being investigated for this crime under (a), (b) and (c) of Section 4(1) of the Sedition Act of 1948:

- Ms. Teresa Kok, an opposition member of parliament for Seputeh in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, was charged on 5 May 2014 for making a satirical video called "Onederful Malaysia" which was published on YouTube on 27 January 2014. The Malaysian delegation emphasized that, according to the charges, the video raised, inter alia, sensitive security issues in Sabah, contained insults and promoted disaffection against the judiciary; a hearing in the case will take place before the High Court on 5 November 2014;
- Mr. Khalid Samad, a member of parliament for Shah Alam in the State of Selangor, was charged on 26 August 2014, under Section 4(1)(b) of the Sedition Act, for suggesting during a press conference in the parliamentary lobby, held on 26 June 2014, that an enactment allowing the Selangor Islamic Religious Council (MAIS) to control the State's religious authorities should be reviewed. The Malaysian delegation emphasized that, according to the charges, his remarks included, inter alia, calls for the return to a constitutional monarchy and questioned the powers of the rulers; the case was going to be heard next in court from 1 to 5 December 2014;
- Mr. N. Surendran, an opposition member of parliament for Padang Serai in the State of Kedah and lawyer for opposition leader Mr. Anwar Ibrahim, was charged twice within two weeks. His first charge, under Section 4(1)(c) of the Sedition Act, was for a press statement he released on 18 April 2014 entitled "Court of Appeal's Fitnah 2 written judgement is flawed, defensive and insupportable", in which he criticized the decision of the appellate court against the appeal of his client, Mr. Anwar Ibrahim, for a second sodomy conviction. The second charge, under Section 4(1)(b) of the Sedition Act, on 28 August 2014, was for a video on YouTube dated 8 August 2014 in which he stated that Mr. Anwar Ibrahim's second sodomy trial and conviction was part of a political conspiracy. A court hearing in the case took place on 14 October;

¹⁶

The delegation of Malaysia expressed its reservation regarding the decision.

- Mr. Rafizi Ramli, an opposition member of parliament for Pandan in the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur, is currently under three separate sedition investigations. One is for providing the media with a letter allegedly written to Bank Rakyat from the Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Minister, Datuk Seri Hasan Malek. Another is for remarks he made against right-wing groups in the country in which he criticized their call to protest outside churches. The third is for writing a book called “Reformasi 2.0: Fakta Kes Anwar Ibrahim” (translated as “Reforms 2.0: The Facts of Anwar Ibrahim’s Case”); according to the Malaysian delegation, the investigations are ongoing;
- Mr. Chua Tian Chang, an opposition member of parliament for Batu, is also being charged with sedition over speeches he made at the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall in Jalan Maharajalela, allegedly claiming that the United Malays National Organization staged the Sulu invasion into Sabah; according to the Malaysian delegation, the cases will next be heard in court on 30 October, 14 November and 11 December 2014,

Considering that the complainants are concerned about the wave of legal action taken under the Sedition Act, which they affirm aims to stifle the opposition; they consider that the act is drafted so broadly so as to criminalize democratic speech, including criticism against the Government, its leaders, and ruling political parties, as well as discussions of religion and ethnicity,

Recalling that the late member of parliament Mr. Karpal Singh was convicted on 21 February 2014 of sedition and sentenced to pay a fine of 4,000 ringgit; persons who are convicted of a crime for which the punishment is imprisonment of one year or more or a fine of 2,000 ringgit cannot be members of parliament; if convicted, parliamentarians charged with sedition face a maximum prison sentence of three years and a maximum fine of 5,000 ringgit,

Considering that, according to the Malaysian delegation, freedom of expression was fully respected in Malaysia, that the Sedition Act was nothing new and had been inherited from the former British rulers, that the existence of the Sedition Act had to be seen in the context of complex racial and religious relations in Malaysia and that parliamentarians charged with sedition were not targeted because of their opposition to the Government, but because they had allegedly violated the laws of Malaysia; the delegation also emphasized that the Attorney-General, in deciding whether or not to bring or pursue a case, placed great importance on whether or not it was in the public interest to do so,

Considering that in 2102 the Malaysian Prime Minister announced that the Government intended to carry out a comprehensive review of the Sedition Act; *considering* that the complainants are concerned that, despite this announcement, no serious efforts have been made to this effect,

Considering that, according to the Malaysian delegation, the Government has been actively exploring, through the establishment of a dedicated team, four different options to review the Sedition Act, namely: (i) maintaining the act with minor changes, (ii) abolishing it, (iii) replacing it with the National Harmony Act, or (iv) maintaining the Sedition Act along with the adoption of the National Harmony Act; the matter was now in the hands of the Attorney-General’s Office which was due to make a proposal on how to go forward,

Considering that the Malaysian delegation stated that it would welcome a visit by a Committee delegation with a view to promoting better understanding of the issues and challenges related to the Sedition Act,

1. *Thanks* the Malaysian delegation for their cooperation and the information provided;
2. *Is concerned* about the ongoing criminal proceedings under the Sedition Act against five parliamentarians and their impact on the right to freedom of expression, respect for which is essential for members of parliament to effectively carry out their functions; *considers* in this regard that the conviction of the late Mr. Karpal Singh bears out that the application of the Sedition Act can have the effect of punishing remarks that seem to fall squarely within the exercise of the right to freedom of expression, easily leading to the loss of the parliamentary mandate, as would have been the case had his sentence been upheld on appeal;
3. *Decides* therefore to monitor closely the ongoing legal proceedings regarding the five parliamentarians; *would appreciate receiving* further details on the precise facts that have led to the charges and the investigations;

4. *Notes with interest* the continuing efforts being made by the authorities to review the Sedition Act; *underscores* that the Malaysian Parliament has a particular responsibility in bringing these efforts to fruition, not only because they will require legislative action, but also because the Parliament has a special interest in ensuring that its members can speak out freely without fear of undue legal action;
5. *Welcomes* the invitation extended by the Malaysian delegation for a Committee delegation to go to Malaysia; *considers* that such a visit would be an excellent opportunity to enhance the Committee's understanding of the pending review of the Sedition Act, to identify opportunities for sharing other countries' legislative experiences in promoting full respect for freedom of expression while safeguarding social and religious cohesion, and to acquire a full understanding of the application of the Sedition Act in the pending proceedings against members of parliament;
6. *Requests* the Secretary General to make the necessary arrangements for the visit to take place in the near future;
7. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the relevant authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;
8. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

OMAN

OMN/01 - Talib Al Mamari

***Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)***

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Having before it the case of Mr. Talib Al Mamari, a member of the *Majlis A'shura* of Oman, which has been examined by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians pursuant to the Procedure for the examination and treatment of complaints (Annex I of the revised rules and practices),

Taking into account the letters from the Chairman of the *Majlis A'Shura*, the last one dated 9 September 2014, the information provided at the hearing held on 14 October 2014 with the Omani delegation to the 131st IPU Assembly, and the information regularly provided by the complainants,

Considering the following facts regarding Mr. Al Mamari's arrest, prosecution and sentencing:

- Mr. Al Mamari was arrested, with the prosecutorial authorities invoking *flagrante delicto*, which application is contested by the complainants, on 24 August 2013 in connection with his participation in a demonstration on 22 August 2013;
- He was convicted on 10 October 2013 and sentenced to a seven-year prison term and a fine of 1,000 riyals for impairing the honour of the State, disturbing public order and obstructing traffic; in this regard, the court verdict states that Mr. Al Mamari was convicted of inciting unrest by "inciting people of Liwa to demonstrate in front of Sohar Industrial Port" and deliberately spreading biased reports violating the dignity of the State because he "intentionally spread tendentious news that could impair the honour of the country". On the latter crime, court documents illustrate that more specifically, Mr. Al Mamari impaired the honour of the country by giving the Government a deadline to respond to the demonstrators' demands, and threatening to demonstrate further – ready to die if need be – should no government response be forthcoming; Mr. Al Mamari and his lawyers rejected the conclusions of the first instance ruling, objecting to both its form and substance, and filed an appeal;
- Mr. Al Mamari was released on bail on 11 October 2013 pending the appeal, but re-arrested later that same day on charges that he was responsible for incitement during Friday prayers at the mosque;

- Mr. Al Mamari's verdict was upheld in a Court of Appeals on 16 December 2013, which reduced his sentence to a four-year prison term and a 500-riyal fine after merging the sentences for the multiple crimes of which he was convicted;
- In February 2014, the Supreme Court overturned the decision against Mr. Al Mamari, due to a procedural error, ruling a retrial in the Court of Liwa – the location of the alleged crime – as opposed to the Court in Muscat;
- The retrial nevertheless took place once again in Muscat, according to the Omani delegation, at the hearing held on 14 October 2014, because of "security concerns" and given that the Supreme Court's decision to transfer the case to Liwa had subsequently been effectively challenged in court;
- On 6 August 2014, the court in Muscat found Mr. Al Mamari guilty of the charges and sentenced him to a four-year prison term and 700-riyal fine. The judge ruled that Mr. Al Mamari could be released on bail for the amount of 10,000 riyals; Mr. Al Mamari appealed and is awaiting the verdict, which may be handed down at the next hearing scheduled for 25 October 2014;
- Following the payment of bail, Mr. Al Mamari remains in detention, however, due to the investigation pending against him in connection with the allegations of incitement during Friday prayers at the mosque,

Considering that, with regard to the demonstrations in which Mr. Al Mamari took part and the precise circumstances of his arrest, the complainants affirm the following:

- The demonstrations in which Mr. Al Mamari participated were peaceful and were held in protest against pollution in Liwa; the demands of the demonstrators were not political, as they merely requested the Government to protect the health of Liwa inhabitants affected by the pollution; according to the complainants, Mr. Al Mamari was arrested and sentenced for exercising his freedom of peaceful assembly; they underscore that many people reported that he attended the demonstration as a mediator and was carrying out his duty as a member of parliament, concerned by popular demands; the complainants also affirm that a video provided by the authorities that allegedly implicated Mr. Al Mamari as inciting violence during the protest was clearly modified and edited, and that the footage of children throwing rocks was in fact of a separate event that had occurred on a different occasion;
- On 23 August 2013, Mr. Al Mamari held meetings with other parliamentarians and security authorities about the protests and the security forces' response. At the end of the meeting, Mr. Al Mamari returned to his brother's house, where he was staying after being injured by the police intervention in the demonstration. Mr. Al Mamari was arrested by security forces after they raided his brother's house in the early hours of 24 August 2013;
- In the course of the demonstrations, members of the security forces fired tear gas and used water cannons to disperse the crowd and Mr. Al Mamari was among those injured by the violent police intervention; the Chairman of the *Majlis A'Shura* noted in his letter of 6 March 2014, however, that the *Majlis* could not review the medical report on injuries of the citizens concerned, as none had lodged official complaints; however, according to the Chairman, members of the *Majlis* did not notice any injuries requiring medical treatment on the day following the event,

Considering that, according to the information provided by the Omani delegation at the hearing on 14 October 2014,

- Mr. Al Mamari's colleagues in Parliament had advised him not to take to the streets and to use instead his powers in Parliament to plead his cause;
- The region of Liwa had benefited from large-scale investments which had been very beneficial to the people. While there may have been some pollution, the Government ensured that acceptable limits were not exceeded and five ministers had gone to the area to set such limits; if there was any serious concern about pollution the Parliament would have been the first to know about it and to adopt a critical position,

Considering that, with regard to Mr. Al Mamari's conditions of detention and the question of respect for a fair trial:

- One of the complainants states that, in the period preceding the first appeal, Mr. Al Mamari had been held in solitary confinement in a national security detention centre, without his lawyer being able to access his client, and that Mr. Al Mamari was tried at first instance by an inimical judge closely associated with the prosecution;
- In his letter of 12 January 2014, the Chairman of the *Majlis A'shura* noted that Mr. Al Mamari was convicted in the first instance court in a public hearing, with his lawyer in attendance and with full access to evidence and that Mr. Al Mamari's lawyer was also present during the appeal proceedings. The Chairman concluded by explaining that, in his view, all measures taken were legal and did not violate any provision. In his letter dated 6 March 2014, the Chairman remarked that Mr. Al Mamari was being treated properly by the prison authorities, detained with others, and allowed to receive visits. The Chairman attached a document from the Governor of the Central Prison where Mr. Al Mamari was detained detailing the list of Mr. Al Mamari's visitors, including the dates of their visits and their relationship to Mr. Al Mamari; the Deputy Chairman of the *Majlis A'shura*, at the hearing held with the Committee on 17 March 2014, confirmed this information and added that Mr. Al Mamari was even in charge of leading Muslim prayers with other inmates, that other members of parliament had the right to visit him and had done so;
- The Deputy Chairman of the *Majlis A'shura* stated at the aforesaid hearing that Mr. Al Mamari's trial had been carried out according to due process and that he had been allowed to present a strong defence; he also stated that the *Majlis A'Shura* had closely monitored proceedings, including through the presence of a trial observer,

Recalling that the complainant affirms that Mr. Al Mamari's prosecution has to be seen in the following context: Since his election to Parliament in 2011, Mr. Al Mamari has staunchly defended his province's interest in Parliament, especially denouncing environmental damage and pollution in the region, and has come to be known for criticizing the Government for its lack of commitment to the rule of law and good governance; the complainant also affirms in this respect that Mr. Al Mamari's conviction follows previous incidents of harassment in connection with his parliamentary work; it alleges that Mr. Al Mamari was arrested in the context of the popular protests in 2011 demanding a more inclusive political process in Oman; he was detained for nearly 48 hours and then released after reportedly being beaten and ill-treated by police officers; in 2012, the Public Prosecutor's Office initiated proceedings against him because of a Facebook post criticizing an employee of the Ministry of Housing and requested the *Majlis A'Shura* to lift Mr. Al Mamari's parliamentary immunity, which it did not do; in late 2012, Mr. Al Mamari was assaulted in a hotel room and handcuffed by police officers, who reportedly beat and threatened him,

Considering that, on 9 May 2014, one of the complainants expressed alarm over the arrest and detention of three individuals – at least one of which was a relative of Mr. Al Mamari – allegedly apprehended for publicly defending Mr. Al Mamari and calling for his release. These arrests were confirmed by the other complainant, with the nephew of Mr. Al Mamari having reportedly been detained for 67 days,

Considering that the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association conducted a mission to Oman between 8 and 13 September 2014 and that he was not permitted to meet with Mr. Al Mamari; *considering* that in the preliminary findings of his mission, released in a statement on 13 September 2014, the Special Rapporteur:

- Voiced concerns over the limiting of freedom of assembly and association rights and a "pervasive culture of silence and fear affecting anyone who wants to speak and work for reforms in Oman";
- Stated that he had spoken with many people who reported having been arrested or detained without due process and subject to intimidation and torture for asserting their rights;
- Stated that, although the right to peaceful assembly was guaranteed in Omani Basic law, the caveat that this must be "within the limits of the law" was applied in a manner often leading to the annulment of the essence of such rights;
- Expressed concern regarding the response of the public authorities to protests, where he received reports of arbitrary arrest and excessive force and concern about reported reprisals against human rights activists and bloggers, and highlighted the arrests and imprisonment of individuals allegedly for expressing dissenting views online,

Considering that the Omani parliamentary authorities have repeatedly affirmed that freedom of opinion and expression was fully protected in Oman, including for members of parliament, and that Mr. Al Mamari had exercised this right without ever complaining about harassment,

Taking note of the invitation which the Omani delegation to the 131st IPU Assembly extended to the Committee to visit Oman to enhance its understanding of the issues which have arisen in the case, including the specific cultural and historical context in which they have to be seen,

1. *Thanks* the Chairman of the *Majlis A'Shura* and the Omani delegation for their cooperation and the information they have provided;
2. *Is concerned* about the serious allegation that Mr. Al Mamari was prosecuted and convicted on the basis of charges which may have infringed his legitimate right to freedom of assembly; *wishes* to receive a copy of the first-instance ruling in the retrial as well as a copy of the evidence, including videos and testimonies, that the court has relied on in support of his conviction; *wishes* also to receive a copy of the legal document regarding the decision to overturn the original order by the Supreme Court for the retrial to take place in Liwa;
3. *Trusts* that the appeal court will issue an exemplary ruling that takes due account of Mr. Al Mamari's basic human rights; *wishes* to receive a copy of the ruling on appeal as soon as it becomes available;
4. *Is concerned* about the allegation that three individuals were the subject of reprisals for publicly raising concern about the case of Mr. Al Mamari; *wishes* to receive the official views on this matter;
5. *Wishes also* to receive official documentation on the legal and factual grounds in support of the accusation that Mr. Al Mamari's speech at the mosque during Friday prayers amounted to incitement; *wishes* to be informed of the stage reached in the legal proceedings in this matter;
6. *Notes* the discrepancies between the information provided by the authorities and the complainants with regard to the allegations of use of disproportionate force by law enforcement officers during the demonstrations; *wishes* to receive specific information from the complainants about whether or not those who were reportedly injured submitted official complaints to the relevant authorities in this regard;
7. *Welcomes* the invitation extended by the Omani delegation for a Committee delegation to visit Oman; *considers* that such a visit would provide an excellent opportunity to exchange views, in a spirit of dialogue and openness, with the parliamentary, judicial and executive authorities, the complainants and relevant third parties, and to acquire a better understanding of the issues that have arisen in the case, including their legal, historical and cultural context; *underscores* that it is of primary importance that the delegation also meet with Mr. Al Mamari himself;
8. *Requests* the Secretary General to make the necessary arrangements for the visit to take place in the very near future and to convey this decision to the parliamentary authorities, the complainants and any third party likely to be in a position to assist with the preparation of the visit;
9. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

PALESTINE/ISRAEL

PAL/02 - Marwan Barghouti

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session (Geneva, 16 October 2014)

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Referring to the case of Mr. Marwan Barghouti, an incumbent member of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), and to the resolution it adopted at its 194th session (March 2014),

Also referring to Mr. Simon Foreman's expert report on Mr. Barghouti's trial (CL/177/11(a)-R.2) and to the study published in September 2006 by B'Tselem (the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories), entitled "*Barred from Contact: Violation of the Right to Visit Palestinians Held in Israeli Prisons*",

Recalling the following on file regarding Mr. Barghouti's situation:

- He was arrested on 15 April 2002 in Ramallah by the Israeli Defence Forces and transferred to a detention centre in Israel; on 20 May 2004, Tel Aviv District Court convicted him on one count of murder relating to attacks that killed five Israelis, on one count of attempted murder relating to a planned car bomb attack and on one count of membership of a terrorist organization, and sentenced him to five life sentences and two 20-year prison terms; Mr. Barghouti did not lodge an appeal because he does not recognize Israeli jurisdiction; in his comprehensive report on Mr. Barghouti's trial, Mr. Foreman stated that "the numerous breaches of international law make it impossible to conclude that Mr. Barghouti was given a fair trial"; those breaches included the use of torture;
- According to his letter of 6 January 2013, the Diplomatic Advisor to the Knesset stated that: "Mr. Barghouti was detained in Hadarim prison. He was held in a regular cell with other inmates, without any separation or isolation. Mr. Barghouti is entitled to and, in fact, receives regular visits from his family, the last of which was on 4 December 2012",

Recalling that, under the terms of the Israel/Hamas-brokered prisoner exchange, Israel released 477 Palestinian prisoners on 18 October 2011 and another 550 Palestinian prisoners during December 2011, and that those released included prisoners convicted of plotting suicide bombings inside buses and restaurants such as Ms. Ahlam Tamimi, who had been sentenced to 16 life sentences, but not Mr. Barghouti; *recalling also* that several members of the Knesset have in the past called for Mr. Barghouti's release, including Mr. Amir Peretz in March 2008 and later Mr. Guideon Ezra, a member of Kadima, and that, following Mr. Barghouti's election in August 2009 to Fatah's Central Committee, the then Israeli Minister for Minority Affairs, Mr. Avishai Braverman, expressed support for his release,

Considering that Israel released 26 long-serving Palestinian prisoners every day on 13 August, 30 October and 30 December 2013, as part of a United States-brokered deal allowing the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks; the individuals form the first three of four groups of Palestinian prisoners detained before 1993, totalling 104 individuals; the release of the fourth and last batch of prisoners, due to take place at the end of March 2014, did not occur following disagreements between Israeli and Palestinian authorities about the peace talks,

Considering that, in the face of escalating violence in the region, the United Nations Human Rights Council convened a special session on 23 July 2014 and adopted a resolution on the question of "Ensuring respect for international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem", in which it expressed "deep concern at the condition of Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli jails and detention centres, in particular following the arrest by Israel of more than 1,000 Palestinians since 13 June 2014, and calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, to immediately release all Palestinian prisoners whose detention is not in accordance with international law, including all children and all members of the Palestinian Legislative Council",

1. *Deeply deplores* that 12 years after his arrest Mr. Barghouti remains in detention as the result of a trial which, in the light of the compelling legal arguments put forward in Mr. Foreman's report (on which the Israeli authorities have never provided their observations), did not meet the fair-trial standards which Israel, as a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, is bound to respect, and therefore did not establish Mr. Barghouti's guilt;

2. *Calls on* the Israeli authorities to release him without delay and to provide, until that occurs, new official information on his current conditions of detention, in particular his family visiting rights, along with information on the extent to which he has access to medical care; *remains concerned* in this regard about the reported prison conditions in which Palestinian prisoners are held in Israel;
 3. *Urges* the authorities to accede to its own long-standing request, for as long as Mr. Barghouti remains imprisoned, to be granted permission to visit him; *sincerely hopes* that the authorities will respond favourably and facilitate such a visit;
 4. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the relevant authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;
 5. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.
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PALESTINE/ISRAEL

PAL/05 - Ahmad Sa'adat

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session (Geneva, 16 October 2014)

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Referring to the case of Mr. Ahmad Sa'adat, elected in January 2006 to the Palestinian Legislative Council, and to the resolution it adopted at its 194th session (March 2014),

Referring also to the study produced by the Israeli non-governmental organization Yesh Din (Volunteers for Human Rights) on the implementation of due process rights in Israeli military courts in the West Bank, entitled *Backyard Proceedings*, which reveals the absence of due process rights in those courts, and to the study published in September 2006 by B'Tselem (the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories), entitled *Barred from Contact: Violation of the Right to Visit Palestinians Held in Israeli Prisons*,

Recalling the following on file regarding Mr. Sa'adat's situation:

- On 14 March 2006, Mr. Sa'adat, whom the Israeli authorities had accused of involvement in the October 2001 murder of Mr. R. Zeevi, the Israeli Minister of Tourism, was abducted by the Israeli Defence Forces from Jericho Jail and transferred to Hadarim Prison in Israel, together with four other prisoners suspected of involvement in the murder; the Israeli authorities concluded one month later that Mr. Sa'adat had not been involved in the killing but charged the other four suspects; 19 other charges were subsequently brought against Mr. Sa'adat, all arising from his leadership of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which Israel considers a terrorist organization, and none of which allege direct involvement in crimes of violence; on 25 December 2008, Mr. Sa'adat was sentenced to 30 years in prison;
- Mr. Sa'adat suffers from cervical neck pain, high blood pressure and asthma, and has reportedly not been examined by a doctor and is not receiving the medical treatment he needs; when he was first detained, the Israeli authorities refused to let his wife visit him; for the first seven months, Mr. Sa'adat received no family visits; his children, who have Palestinian identity cards, were not allowed to visit their father, for reasons unknown; in March and June 2009, Mr. Sa'adat was placed in solitary confinement, prompting him to go on a nine-day hunger strike in June 2009;

- On 21 October 2010, Mr. Sa'adat's isolation order, due to expire on 21 April 2011, was confirmed a fourth time for a further six months; it was apparently again extended in October 2011, bringing Mr. Sa'adat's time in isolation to three years; his isolation ended in May 2012, as part of the agreement ending the April-May 2012 hunger strike by some 2,000 Palestinian detainees in Israel; one of the complainants affirmed in September 2012 that, while Mr. Sa'adat's wife and oldest son had been able to visit him, his other three children continued to be denied permits;
- According to his letter of 6 January 2013, the Diplomatic Advisor to the Knesset stated that: "Mr. Sa'adat was detained in Hadarim Prison. He was held in a regular cell with other inmates, without any separation or isolation. Mr. Sa'adat is entitled to and, in fact, receives regular visits from his family, the last of which was on 4 December 2012",

Considering that Israel released 26 long-serving Palestinian prisoners every day on 13 August, 30 October and 30 December 2013, as part of a United States-brokered deal allowing the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks; the individuals form the first three of four groups of Palestinian prisoners detained before 1993, totalling 104 individuals; the release of the fourth and last batch of prisoners, due to take place at the end of March 2014, did not occur following disagreements between Israeli and Palestinian authorities about the peace talks,

Considering that, in the face of escalating violence in the region, the United Nations Human Rights Council convened a special session on 23 July 2014 and adopted a resolution on the question of "Ensuring respect for international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem", in which it expressed "deep concern at the condition of Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli jails and detention centres, in particular following the arrest by Israel of more than 1,000 Palestinians since 13 June 2014, and calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, to immediately release all Palestinian prisoners whose detention is not in accordance with international law, including all children and all members of the Palestinian Legislative Council",

1. *Deeply deplores* that eight years after his arrest Mr. Sa'adat remains in detention as a result of a politically motivated trial; *reaffirms* in this regard its long-standing position that Mr. Sa'adat's abduction and transfer to Israel were related not to the original murder charge but rather to his political activities as PFLP General Secretary;
2. *Calls on* the Israeli authorities to release him without delay and to provide, until that occurs, new official information on his current conditions of detention, in particular his family visiting rights, along with information on the extent to which he has access to medical care; *remains concerned* in this regard about the reported prison conditions in which Palestinian prisoners are held in Israel;
3. *Urges* the authorities to accede to its own long-standing request, for as long as Mr. Sa'adat remains imprisoned, to be granted permission to visit him; *sincerely hopes* that the authorities will respond favourably and facilitate such a visit;
4. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the relevant authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;
5. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

PALESTINE/ISRAEL

PAL18 - Yaser Mansour	PAL67 - Ibrahim Abu Salem
PAL21 - Emad Nofal	PAL68 - Mohammed Musleh
PAL28 - Muhammad Abu-Teir	PAL69 - Omar Abd Al Razaq
PAL29 - Ahmad 'Attoun	PAL70 - Daoud Abo Seer
PAL30 - Muhammad Totah	PAL71 - Khaled Saeed
PAL32 - Basim Al-Zarrer	PAL72 - Ibrahim Dahbour
PAL35 - Mohamed Ismail Al-Tal	PAL73 - Fadhel Hamdan
PAL47 - Hatem Qfeisheh	PAL74 - Mohd. Mutalaq Abu Jihaisheh
PAL48 - Mahmoud Al-Ramahi	PAL75 - Nayef Rjoub
PAL57 - Hasan Yousef ¹⁷	PAL76 - Sameer Al Qadi
PAL60 - Ahmad Mubarak	PAL77 - Khalil Al Rabee
PAL61 - Mohammad Jamal Natsheh	PAL78 - Husni Al Borini
PAL62 - Abdul Jaber Fuqaha	PAL79 - Riyadh Radad
PAL63 - Nizar Ramadan	PAL80 - Abdul Rahman Zaidan
PAL64 - Mohammed Maher Bader	PAL81 - Fathi Qaraa'wi
PAL65 - Azzam Salhab	PAL82 - Khalida Jarrar (Ms.)
PAL66 - Ayman Daraghme	

***Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session
(Geneva, 16 October 2014)***

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Referring to the case of the above-mentioned parliamentarians, all of whom were elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) in January 2006, and to the resolution it adopted at its 194th session (March 2014),

Recalling that the parliamentarians concerned were elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council on the Electoral Platform for Change and Reform and arrested following the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier on 25 June 2006, that they were prosecuted and found guilty of membership in a terrorist organization (Hamas), holding a seat in parliament on behalf of that organization, providing services to it by sitting on parliamentary committees, and supporting an illegal organization, and that they were sentenced to prison terms of up to 40 months,

Noting that, while most of the parliamentarians concerned were released upon having served their sentences, many were subsequently rearrested, sometimes several times, and placed in administrative detention,

Considering that, according to information provided on 14 September 2014 by one of the complainants, although the number of PLC members in administrative detention had dwindled to five by March 2013, they now numbered 26, with many arrests having taken place since June 2014 following the abduction, with the Israeli authorities blaming Hamas, of three Israeli teenagers, who were later found to have been killed,

Considering that, in the face of escalating violence in the region, the United Nations Human Rights Council convened a special session on 23 July 2014 and adopted a resolution on the question of "Ensuring respect for international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem", in which it expressed "deep concern at the condition of Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli jails and detention centres, in particular following the arrest by Israel of more than 1,000 Palestinians since 13 June 2014, and calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, to immediately release all Palestinian prisoners whose detention is not in accordance with international law, including all children and all members of the Palestinian Legislative Council",

Considering that in the first half of 2014, one of the complainants referred to the hunger strike which started in April 2014 of 125 Palestinians in administrative detention in Israel. According to the complainant, PLC members Mr. Mahmoud Al-Ramahi, Mr. Hatem Qfeisheh, Mr. Mohammad Jamal Al-Natsheh, Mr. Abdul Jaber Fuqaha, Mr. Nizar Ramadan and Mr. Mohammed Maher Badr were part of this group; the complainant affirms that the Israeli Prison Service (IPS) responded to the strikers by

¹⁷ According to the press, Mr. Hasan Yousef was freed on 19 January 2014.

carrying out violent raids and searches of their cells, transferring them from one prison to another and punishing them, including through denial of family visits and of access to the prison yard and the confiscation of newspapers or books; in this context, the complainant affirms that Mr. Mohammad Jamal Al-Natsheh was beaten in detention; it also affirms that lawyers were being systematically denied access to the detainees on strike; the hunger strike ended on 25 June 2014, reportedly after minor concessions, but no major change of policy from Israel,

Recalling that, with regard to the use of administrative detention:

- The Supreme Court of Israel has ruled that the exceptional measure of administrative detention, which is usually ordered for six months, but can, in fact, be prolonged indefinitely, can only be applied if there is current and reliable information to show that the person poses a specific and concrete threat, or if the confidential nature of the intelligence and the security of the sources prohibit the presentation of evidence in an ordinary criminal procedure; according to the Israeli authorities there are two avenues of judicial review, namely the independent and impartial military courts, which have the authority to assess the material relevant to the detainee in question in order to determine whether the decision to detain him/her was reasonable given his/her general rights to a fair trial and freedom of movement, and military prosecution, which implements a “cautious and level-headed” policy in the use of administrative detention; this approach is said to have reduced the number of administrative detention orders;
- Human rights organizations in and outside Israel have repeatedly stressed that administrative detention is usually justified by reference to a “security threat”, without, however, specifying the scope and nature of the threat or disclosing the evidence; accordingly, although administrative detainees are entitled to appeal, this right is ineffective, given that the detainees and their lawyers do not have access to the information on which the orders are based and are therefore unable to present a meaningful defence,

Considering that, according to one of the complainants, PLC member Mr. Husni Al Borini had been sentenced to a 12-month prison term and that Mr. Riyadh Radad, Mr. Abdul Rahman Zaidan and Mr. Fathi Qaraa'wi, who had first been held in administrative detention, were now in detention subject to criminal charges,

Considering that, on 20 August 2014, PLC member Ms. Khalida Jarrar was reportedly ordered, according to the complainant based on secret information that she is a threat to the security of the area, to leave her home in Ramallah and to move to Jericho for the next six months. According to recent unofficial reports, following an appeal against the decision, the military court reduced the expulsion order from six months to one month,

Recalling also the following information on file with regard to the revocation of the residence permits of three PLC members: In May 2006, the Israeli Minister of the Interior revoked the East Jerusalem residence permits of Mr. Muhammad Abu-Teir, Mr. Muhammad Totah and Mr. Ahmad Attoun, arguing that they had shown disloyalty to Israel by holding seats in the PLC; the order was not implemented, owing to their arrest in June 2006; after their release in May/June 2010, the three men were immediately notified that they had to leave East Jerusalem; Mr. Abu-Teir was ordered to leave by 19 June 2010 and, refusing to do so, was arrested on 30 June 2010 and later deported to the West Bank; the other two parliamentarians were ordered to leave by 3 July 2010 and, likewise refusing to comply with the order, took refuge in the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) building in Jerusalem, from which they were removed by the Israeli authorities on 26 September 2011 and 23 January 2012, respectively,

Bearing in mind, lastly, that, in its concluding observations on the third periodic report of Israel under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,¹⁸ the United Nations Human Rights Committee recommended, inter alia, that all persons under Israel's jurisdiction and effective control be afforded full enjoyment of the rights enshrined in the Covenant,

¹⁸ CCPR/C/ISR/CO/3.

1. *Is alarmed* at the recent wave of arrests of PLC members, thus bringing the total number of PLC members held in administrative detention to 26; *deplores* this situation, which not only prevents the parliamentarians concerned – a fifth of the Council's total membership – from carrying out the mandate for which they were elected, but also greatly impairs the right of the Palestinian people to be represented by persons of their choice;
2. *Considers* in this regard that the continued practice of administrative detention is bound to impede the proper functioning of the Palestinian Legislative Council, as its members can be arrested at any time and placed in administrative detention for as long as the Israeli military authorities wish;
3. *Calls on* the Israeli authorities therefore to abandon the practice of administrative detention and either to release the members of the Palestinian Legislative Council being held in administrative detention forthwith or, should there be concrete and convincing proof of criminal involvement, to prosecute them in full accordance with normal criminal procedure;
4. *Is deeply concerned* about allegations that the Israeli authorities took reprisals against and intimidated those who started a hunger strike earlier this year aimed at putting an end to their administrative detention; *is particularly concerned* about allegations that Mr. Mohammad Jamal Al-Natsheh was beaten in detention; *wishes* to receive the views of the Israeli authorities on these allegations;
5. *Wishes* to receive official information regarding the reported conviction of and 12-month prison term for PLC member Mr. Husni Al Borini, and should he have indeed been sentenced, a copy of the ruling, as well as the criminal charges brought against detained PLC members Mr. Riyadgh Radad, Mr. Abdul Rahman Zaidan and Mr. Fathi Qaraa'wi and, should charges exist, to receive details of their nature and the facts to support them;
6. *Is concerned* that Ms. Khalida Jarrar was reportedly ordered to leave her home in Ramallah and to move to Jericho for six months, which duration was reportedly subsequently brought down to one month; *wishes* to receive the official views on this matter including, should the existence of the order be confirmed, on the justification and legal grounds for the order;
7. *Remains deeply concerned* that Mr. Totah, Mr. Abu-Teir and Mr. Attoun were effectively removed from East Jerusalem; *reiterates its long-standing concerns* about the decision to revoke their residence permits and the manner of its implementation; *considers* that the revocation is at odds with the Hague Convention (IV) of October 1907 on the rules of customary international law, article 45 of which stipulates that the inhabitants of an occupied territory, of which East Jerusalem may be considered an example, are not to be compelled to swear allegiance to the occupying power;
8. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the relevant authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;
9. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

PALESTINE/ISRAEL

PAL/83 - Aziz Dweik

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session (Geneva, 16 October 2014)

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Having before it the case of Mr. Aziz Dweik, Speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), which has been examined by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians pursuant to the Procedure for the examination and treatment of complaints (Annex I of the revised rules and practices),

Considering that Mr. Dweik was elected to the PLC on the Electoral Platform for Change and Reform and arrested in mid-June 2014, along with and followed by scores of other Palestinian leaders, following the abduction, which Israel blamed on Hamas, of three Israeli teenagers, who were subsequently found killed; according to the complainant, after first being placed in administrative detention, Mr. Dweik is now facing criminal charges,

Considering that on 4 September 2014, an indictment was reportedly handed down against a member of Hamas' Hebron branch, Mr. Hussam Qawasmeh, charging him with helping to plan the abduction of the three Israeli teenagers; the document, as described in Israeli news reports, spells out a detailed account of the crime's planning, execution and aftermath, but does not appear to contain any evidence that the leadership of Hamas – or anyone else outside Mr. Qawasmeh's family, which reportedly controls the Hebron branch – had any knowledge of the crime before or after its commission,

Recalling that Mr. Dweik was previously arrested during the night of 5 to 6 August 2006 by the Israeli Defence Forces and later charged with membership of a terrorist organization, namely Hamas, and leadership of that organization through his membership of the PLC and assuming the role of Speaker of the PLC; on 16 December 2008, the judge handed down her verdict, finding him guilty of membership of an unauthorized organization and leadership of that organization through his membership of the PLC and, on account of his poor health, sentenced him to 36 months' imprisonment, which he served until his release on 23 June 2009,

Recalling that since then, Mr. Dweik was re-arrested in 2012 and spent six months in administrative detention in Israel until his release on 19 July 2012,

Considering that, in the face of recent escalating violence in the region, the United Nations Human Rights Council convened a special session on 23 July 2014 and adopted a resolution on the question of "Ensuring respect for international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem", in which it expressed "deep concern at the condition of Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli jails and detention centres, in particular following the arrest by Israel of more than 1,000 Palestinians since 13 June 2014, and calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, to immediately release all Palestinian prisoners whose detention is not in accordance with international law, including all children and all members of the Palestinian Legislative Council",

1. *Is alarmed* at Mr. Dweik's renewed arrest, which is an affront to the authority of the Palestinian Legislative Council; *fears* that his arrest may not be based on formal charges of any specific criminal activity, but rather on his political affiliation, and that it was therefore carried out for non-judicial purposes;
2. *Recalls* in this regard its long-held view that, with regard to Mr. Dweik's previous arrest, detention and prosecution, that they were unrelated to any criminal activity on his part, but were linked to his election on the Change and Reform list in a free and fair election recognized as such by the international community;
3. *Is therefore extremely eager* to receive official information from the Israeli authorities as to whether Mr. Dweik is now the subject of recognizable charges of criminal activity against him;
4. *Calls on* the Israeli authorities, should such charges have been made, to try him in a fair and transparent legal process, guaranteeing the full right of defence, as required under international human rights law and international humanitarian law, or otherwise to release him forthwith;
5. *Wishes* to receive official information on Mr. Dweik's current conditions of detention, in particular his family visiting rights, along with information on the extent to which he has access to medical care; *remains concerned* in this regard about the reported prison conditions in which Palestinian prisoners are held in Israel;
6. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the relevant authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;
7. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

TURKEY

TK/41 - Hatip Dicle
TK/67 - Mustafa Balbay
TK/68 - Mehmet Haberal
TK/69 - Gülser Yildirim (Ms.)
TK/70 - Selma Irmak (Ms.)
TK/71 - Faysal Sariyildiz
TK/72 - Ibrahim Ayhan
TK/73 - Kemal Aktas
TK/74 - Engin Alan

TK/55 - Mehmet Sinçar

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session (Geneva, 16 October 2014)

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Referring to the cases of the above-mentioned parliamentarians and to the resolution adopted at its 194th session (March 2014),

Referring to the full report on the mission conducted to Turkey by two members of the IPU Committee on the Human Rights Parliamentarians, Vice-President of the Committee, Ms. Ann Clwyd and Ms. Margaret Kiener Nellen, from 24 to 27 February 2014 (CL/195/11(b)-R.1),

Recalling that the nine parliamentarians above were all elected in June 2011 while in prison and are being prosecuted for destabilizing or overthrowing the constitutional order, including by being members of terrorist organizations, in three complex cases known as the “Sledgehammer/Balyoz case”, the “Ergenekon case” and the “KCK case”,

Considering that the nine parliamentarians have now been released pending the completion of ongoing proceedings following ground-breaking decisions of the Constitutional Court of Turkey on the excessive length of pretrial detention, the right of elected parliamentarians to sit in Parliament and the need to respect international fair-trial guarantees; Mr. Alan and Mr. Dicle were granted provisional release on 19 and 28 June 2014, respectively,

Considering that they are now able to exercise their parliamentary mandate with the exception of Mr. Dicle, who lost his parliamentary status at the time of his invalidation; Mr. Balbay’s and Mr. Haberal’s restrictions on the freedom of movement have been lifted,

Recalling that Mr. Mehmet Sinçar, a former member of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, of Kurdish origin, was assassinated in September 1993 in Batman (south-eastern Turkey),

Considering that the appeal in Mr. Sinçar’s case was concluded in January 2011; the decision does not make any specific reference to the murder of Mr. Sinçar, to the appeal lodged by his family or to any of the arguments raised by their lawyers; it does not indicate that the judicial process effectively probed the political and security context prevailing at the time of the murder and the possible responsibility of the chain of command of the Turkish intelligence and security officers, in particular existing information implicating five agents in planning and executing the crime,

Considering that the mission concluded and observed the following:

- With regard to freedom of expression:
- The protection of freedom of expression in Turkey has been a long-standing issue of concern in prior cases before the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians which, since 1992, has repeatedly called on the Turkish authorities to take action to enhance respect for this fundamental right;
- Peaceful and legal political activities of the parliamentarians concerned have been regarded as evidence of criminal and terrorist acts by the prosecution and the courts, and that despite progress made in legislative reforms; the Turkish legal framework and judicial practice continue to largely fail to distinguish between peaceful protest and dissenting opinions on the one hand, and violent activities pursuant to the same goals on the other;

- In the case of Mr. Dicle, his statement publicly expressing a non-violent opinion supportive of the PKK fell within the scope of freedom of speech; he was therefore convicted in violation of his right to freedom of expression and that, as a consequence, his parliamentary mandate was arbitrarily invalidated,
- With regard to fair-trial guarantees:
- In light of the information and documentation reviewed during and after the mission, the delegation has concluded that the judicial process under which the parliamentarians concerned have been, and continue to be, tried is not in compliance with international standards of due process, that justice was neither achieved nor perceived to have been achieved, and that the large scope of the proceedings and the broader context lend weight to the allegations that the judicial proceedings may have been politically motivated,

Considering that the Constitutional Court ruling of 18 June 2014 concluded that fair-trial violations occurred in the Sledgehammer case, which will pave the way for a retrial of Mr. Alan and other defendants in the case,

Considering that, in their observations on the mission report, the parliamentary authorities have stated that:

- They did not have any general objections to the findings of the delegation;
 - Further legislative reforms were completed with the amendments made by Law No. 6526 of 21 February 2014, known as the Fifth Judicial Reform Package;
 - The first hearing of the retrial of the persons accused in the Sledgehammer case, including Mr. Alan is scheduled for 3 November 2014,
1. *Thanks* the Turkish authorities for their observations and *notes with interest* that they generally share the findings of the mission;
 2. *Further thanks* the mission delegation for the work done and endorses its overall conclusions; and *trusts* that the Turkish authorities will implement its recommendations promptly;
 3. *Notes with satisfaction* that all parliamentarians have been released pending the completion of the ongoing proceedings and, with the exception of Mr. Dicle, are now able to exercise their parliamentary mandate; *also notes with interest* that the travel restrictions on Mr. Balbay and Mr. Haberal have been lifted; *welcomes* the legislative reforms undertaken by the authorities;
 4. *Deeply regrets*, however, that the parliamentarians concerned spent over half of their parliamentary term and an average of four years in detention before a solution was found; and *urges* the Turkish authorities to adopt appropriate constitutional and legislative amendments to fully implement the rulings of the Constitutional Court as regards the pretrial detention of parliamentarians;
 5. *Is deeply concerned* that the peaceful and legal activities of the parliamentarians concerned were regarded as evidence of criminal and terrorist acts by the prosecution and the courts, and *calls on* the authorities to urgently strengthen freedom of expression and association, in particular concerning anti-terrorist legislation and the offence of membership of a criminal organization; *wishes* to be kept informed about legislative reform envisaged on these issues;
 6. *Expects* that the judicial proceedings will provide appropriate redress for the acknowledged violations of due process and will be completed swiftly in compliance with international standards; *wishes* to be regularly apprised of their status and outcome;

7. *Urges* the Turkish authorities to pursue further investigations in the case of Mr. Sinçar and fully take into account existing information implicating five agents of the Turkish intelligence Services in planning and executing the crimes; *further invites* the parliamentary authorities to consider establishing a parliamentary commission to investigate the murder, together with other human rights violations committed in the 1990s in south-eastern Turkey, including abuses by State perpetrators;
8. *Trusts* that the parliamentary authorities will liaise with the competent executive and judicial authorities to keep the Committee apprised of any future developments, so as to facilitate a dialogue conducive to a satisfactory settlement of the cases under examination;
9. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the relevant authorities, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;
10. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.