



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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135th Assembly

1. Opening of the Assembly

The 135th IPU Assembly was opened on Monday, 24 October 2016 at 11 a.m. at the *Centre International de Conférences de Genève (CICG)*, with the President of the IPU, Mr. Saber Chowdhury (Bangladesh), in the chair. He was assisted by several Vice-Presidents: Mr. T. Smith, Speaker of the House of Representatives (Australia), Mr. A. Schieder, Head of the Delegation (Austria), Mr. A. Hounbedji, Speaker of the National Assembly (Benin), Mr. J. Zangpo, Speaker of the National Assembly (Bhutan), Ms. J. Luveni, Speaker of Parliament (Fiji), Mr. E.K. Gudfinnsson, former Speaker of Parliament (Iceland), Ms. S.B. Hanoomanjee, Speaker of the National Assembly (Mauritius), Ms. G. Eldegard, Member of Parliament (Norway), Ms. N. Zangar, Member of the Assembly of People's Representatives (Tunisia) and Ms. R.A. Kadaga, Speaker of Parliament (Uganda).

High-level segment

Mr. Saber Chowdhury, President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, said that the excitement around current events and processes of global importance was matched by concern at the disturbing events going on all over the world. Such times served as a reminder of the purpose of the IPU, an Organization established on the premise of averting or resolving conflict through political dialogue. It served as a forum for parliamentarians to put aside their partisan differences and practise parliamentary diplomacy to make a real difference.

The theme of the General Debate, which had been selected to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, was particularly apt. No country could boast an immaculate human rights record; aggravating factors, such as marginalization, political exclusion, religious intolerance and poverty could lead to friction and conflict. The Assembly would also see the launch of a ground-breaking issues brief on sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament, which made shocking reading and showed that much remained to be done to protect and encourage women parliamentarians. It would also be marked by two special events: the adoption of the revised IPU Strategy for 2017–2021 that set out the priority actions and objectives for the IPU over the next five years, and the new multilingual website that had been expanded to include content in Arabic and Spanish.

Mr. Michael Møller, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, said cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations was growing ever closer. The 135th Assembly provided an opportunity to consider how best to operationalize the new cooperation agreement between the IPU and the United Nations with a view to accelerating joint efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He highlighted the important role of parliamentarians in ensuring the efficient use and allocation of sufficient resources for the work of the United Nations and in promoting the incorporation of international agreements into national legislation.

The Assembly was rightly emphasizing the important connection between human rights violations and conflict. The United Nations could benefit immensely from the first-hand information provided by parliamentarians, who were often the first to become aware of human rights violations. Parliamentarians had a responsibility to ensure that legislation passed was compatible with human rights standards and to promote implementation of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council. Highlighting the importance of building strong institutions based on human rights, particularly in post-conflict settings, he emphasized the responsibility of parliamentarians in stopping the continuing fragmentation of societies, including by encouraging gender parity.

Ms. Margaret Mensah-Williams (Namibia), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, said that the theme of the General Debate, *Human rights abuses as precursors of conflict: Parliaments as early responders*, had prompted her to think about the reality of violence against women and girls throughout the world. Such violence was one of the most prevalent human rights violations, and gender inequality lay at its basis. A high prevalence of violence against women and girls was an indicator that society was likely to resort to violence on a large scale.

Gender inequality was a precursor of war. Women's empowerment was therefore a predictor of peace. A gender-sensitive approach must be taken to early warning, peacemaking and conflict prevention. She called for implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on promoting gender equality in peace and security processes and highlighted the dual responsibility of parliamentarians in ensuring that women were empowered to participate in all processes and in considering their actions from a gender perspective.

Ms. Carmen Lucila Crexell (Argentina), Member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU, said that, for millions of young people, the sad reality was that their dignity was denied, freedoms were a luxury and justice belonged to the few. While some might say that young people were easily drawn to violence and extremism, the vast majority were in favour of peace. Efforts must be made to harness young people's energy and passion, and enable them to contribute at all levels to become agents of peace and stability. Young people were particularly attentive to abuses and inequalities; their increased participation as young parliamentarians should be encouraged, as should their engagement in parliamentary work.

Ms. Fawzia Koofi (Afghanistan), Member of the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, said it was a great honour for her, as an Afghan woman, to stand before a body such as the IPU and discuss the challenging and interlinked topics of human and women's rights. She drew particular attention to the impact of armed conflict on women and children, and to the challenges they faced, which were magnified by insecurity. The dislocation of society in Afghanistan had prompted the emigration to Europe of some 300,000 Afghans. The return of those denied asylum must be managed with due respect for their human rights and dignity and in line with international conventions. She highlighted the role of parliaments in ensuring respect for human rights.

She concluded by noting that peace was the guarantee of a better life for all but would not be sustainable if the peacemaking process was opaque. Peace negotiations must be transparent, inclusive and involve women.

2. Participation

Delegations from 141 Member Parliaments took part in the work of the Assembly¹:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Singapore, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The following seven Associate Members also took part in the Assembly: the Andean Parliament, the Arab Parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), the Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS), the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino), the Parliament of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) and the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The Parliament of the Central African Republic participated as an observer with a view to future affiliation.

Other observers comprised representatives of: (i) the United Nations system: the United Nations, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the

¹ For the complete list of IPU Members, see page 27

United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR); (ii) the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Bank; (iii) the African Union, the League of Arab States; (iv) the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA), the African Parliamentary Union (APU), the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), the Association of Senate, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World (ASSECAA), the Baltic Assembly, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the Forum of Parliaments of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (FP-ICGLR), the Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC), the Maghreb Consultative Council, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries (TURKPA), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and Russia, the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUIC); (v) the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria; (vi) Liberal International (LI), Socialist International; (vii) the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA).

Of the 1,487 delegates who attended the Assembly, 693 were members of parliament. Those parliamentarians included 51 Presiding Officers, 50 Deputy Presiding Officers and 228 women (32.9%).

3. Choice of an emergency item

On 24 October 2016, the President informed the Assembly that the following eight requests for the inclusion of an emergency item had been proposed:

- *Helping to consolidate international peace and security through the recognition of a viable, independent and sovereign Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital: The role of parliaments (Morocco);*
- *Respecting the separation of powers as an essential element of democratic systems and as a guarantee of the proper functioning of parliaments as unique institutions within democracies (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela);*
- *Guaranteeing the safety of migrants on their way to countries of destination (Uganda);*
- *Addressing the South Sudan conflict: The role of parliaments in safeguarding peace and security (Kenya);*
- *The role of parliamentarians in protecting the principles of State sovereignty and State immunity from prosecution in the national courts of another State, and in preventing the adoption of unilateral legislation undermining these principles, which constitutes a violation of international law, international treaties and the Charter of the United Nations [Parliaments of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates)];*
- *The war and the severe humanitarian situation in Syria, particularly in Aleppo (Germany and Mexico);*
- *The role of parliaments in combating terrorism for sustainable peace, security and development (Bangladesh);*
- *Restoring peace and security in Syria: The contribution of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (Russian Federation and the Syrian Arab Republic).*

The delegations of Bangladesh, Uganda and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) withdrew their proposals before the vote.

Two delegations took the floor to oppose proposed emergency items. The Syrian Arab Republic expressed its opposition to the proposal *The war and the severe humanitarian situation in Syria, particularly in Aleppo*. Canada expressed its opposition to the proposal *Restoring peace and security in Syria: The contribution of the Inter-Parliamentary Union*.

The Assembly proceeded with a roll-call vote on five items (see pages 36 to 40). The proposal put forward jointly by Germany and Mexico was adopted and added to the agenda as Item 7.

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

(a) General Debate: Human rights abuses as precursors of conflict: Parliaments as early responders (Item 3)

During the three days of debate, representatives of 105 Member Parliaments, two Associate Members and five Permanent Observers spoke. The General Debate showcased a variety of good practices and recommendations for parliamentary action to promote and protect human rights, and to prevent conflict from breaking out.

A special segment was held in the General Debate to mark the 40th anniversary of the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. It was moderated by Committee President Mr. A.B.M.F.K. Chowdhury (Bangladesh). The session started with a screening of the animation film *Fight for the rights of persecuted MPs – Fight for strong democratic parliaments serving the people*. Committee Vice-President Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland) provided a historical overview of the Committee's work, achievements and challenges. Deeply moving personal testimony was provided by Ms. O. Solari Yrigoyen, granddaughter of former Senator Hipolito Solari Yrigoyen of Argentina, whose case was one of the first to be brought before the Committee in 1977. Another was also provided by Mr. I. Mahmoud Ahmed, the son of two Eritrean parliamentarians, who had been detained since 2001. Ms. C. Roth (Germany) described the work of German legislators to support other MPs around the world and called for firm parliamentary solidarity in that crucial area.

On 26 October, the IPU and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights launched the revised publication *Human Rights: Handbook for Parliamentarians No.26*. The handbook was designed as a practical tool to be used by parliamentarians in their day-to-day work and provided key information on basic human rights principles, State obligations on human rights, international human rights instruments, UN human rights monitoring bodies and basic functions and requirements for the effective contribution of parliaments to the defence of human rights. Before the handbook was launched, Mr. M.R. Rabbani (Pakistan) delivered a keynote address.

The General Debate was complemented by an IPU photo exhibition displaying portraits of victims or former victims of human rights abuses from around the world. A display of winning photographs from the Alfred Fried Photography Award was also exhibited throughout the Assembly, courtesy of the Austrian Parliament, the Austrian Permanent Mission in Geneva and Edition Lammerhuber. The photos focused on the theme *What does peace look like?* They would remain in Geneva throughout November and were to be showcased at the United Nations Office at Geneva during Geneva Peace Week 2016.

(b) Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security held two sittings on 24 and 26 October with its President, Ms. L. Rojas (Mexico), in the chair. Elections to the Bureau were held and all five vacant posts were filled.

On 24 October, the Committee held an expert hearing entitled *The role of parliament in preventing outside interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States*. A related resolution would be prepared for adoption by the 136th IPU Assembly (Dhaka, Bangladesh). The Committee heard from Mr. F. Zarbiyev (Graduate Institute, Geneva). The co-Rapporteurs, Ms. S. Koutra-Koukouma (Cyprus) and Mr. K. Kosachev (Russian Federation) welcomed inputs from the Committee on the content of the future resolution.

Thirty-four members spoke during the debate. Most referred to the need to maintain non-intervention as a key principle and to ensure that intervention was decided on a case-by-case basis. Many expressed concern that the responsibility to protect was being used as a modern-day version of imperialism. On 26 October, the Committee examined two subjects: the promotion of democratic accountability of the private security sector; and comprehensive disarmament.

On the first subject, the Committee heard from Ms. H. Obregón Gieseken (International Committee of the Red Cross) and Ms. A.M. Burdzy (Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces). During the discussion, 11 participants spoke. They examined how parliaments could regulate and oversee private military and security companies.

On the second subject, the Committee heard presentations from Mr. D.T. Plesch (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London), Mr. I. Sene (Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540) and Ms. D. Pascal Allende (Chile). The debate involved 14 speakers.

Interventions mainly referred to the fact that an international process should be established to consolidate all international instruments and ensure the elimination of certain weapons across the world. Small arms and light weapons were also addressed.

Ms. L. Rojas (Mexico) presented the Committee report to the Assembly at its last sitting.

The Committee Bureau met on 27 October; 10 out of 18 members attended.

The President summarized the main ongoing topics of the peace and security agenda and proposed that the Committee establish its work programme around them. Two members proposed that non-interference be added.

Some members requested that a manual for Committee Bureau members be drafted. Others stated that there should be additional Bureau meetings between Assemblies to discuss emerging issues at greater length.

The Bureau was also briefed on the concept of “sustaining peace” by Mr. O. Fernandez-Taranco, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support and Head of the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO).

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

The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade held its sittings on 25 and 26 October with its President, Ms. S. Tioulong (Cambodia), in the chair.

The Committee discussed a draft outcome document of the Parliamentary Meeting at the UN Climate Change Conference in Marrakech, due to take place in November 2016. The Rapporteur, Mr. A. Touizi (Morocco) introduced the document and asked the Committee members for their comments, observations and input. The Committee's feedback would be incorporated and presented to the Parliamentary Meeting, which was being organized by the IPU and the Moroccan Parliament on 13 November in Marrakech. Fourteen delegations contributed to the debate.

The Committee also debated the subject item of the next resolution, *Promoting enhanced international cooperation on the SDGs, in particular on the financial inclusion of women as a driver of development*. The theme was introduced by renowned experts from the African Development Bank, the World Bank and the International Trade Centre. Twenty-one parliamentarians took part in the debate. They highlighted the importance of financially including women and of gender-responsive budgeting. At the end of the debate, the co-Rapporteurs reflected on the deliberations and provided insight into how they would incorporate the Committee's input into the draft resolution.

The Committee also held a panel discussion entitled *The role of parliaments in countering the activities of vulture funds*. An expert from the European Network on Debt and Development participated in discussions. Members of parliament from Belgium and the United Kingdom also contributed; they had been personally involved in developing legislation to counter the activities of vulture funds. Delegates called for the issue of vulture funds to be discussed further in plenary at a future IPU Assembly.

The Committee approved the proposal of the Bureau to dedicate the Committee's sessions at the 136th IPU Assembly to drafting the resolution.

The Committee elected Mr. C. Tursunbekov (Kyrgyzstan) to fill the vacancy for the Eurasia Group. The Group of Latin America and the Caribbean nominated Mr. R. Acuña Nuñez (Peru) to complete the term of Mr. J. León (Peru), who was no longer an MP. Mr. Nuñez's term would therefore end in October 2019. The Committee endorsed this change.

The Committee endorsed the appointment of Mr. N.K. Premachandran (India) as a Rapporteur. He would replace Ms. P. Mahajan (India).

(d) Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective (Item 4)

The Committee held sittings on 24 and 26 October. At the first sitting, Ms. A. King (New Zealand) presided over the election of the members of the Bureau and the election of the new Committee President, Ms. B. Tshireletso (Botswana). With Ms. Tshireletso in the chair, the Committee continued its

work on the draft resolution, *The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective*. The co-Rapporteurs presented the draft resolution, after which 40 speakers took the floor, 26 of whom were women.

When examining the draft resolution, the Committee considered 102 amendments submitted by 19 parliaments (Bahrain, Canada, China, Finland, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kenya, Romania, Russian Federation, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Viet Nam). Three amendments were proposed by the Forum of Women Parliamentarians.

The Committee worked in plenary to review, vote on and make drafting improvements to the text. The revised draft resolution was adopted unanimously at the final sitting by the Committee and subsequently by the Assembly.

The Committee Bureau met on 25 October to consider proposals for the future work programme. Three proposals for the subject of the Committee's next resolution had been submitted before the deadline (from Canada, the Russian Federation and Sudan) and two had been submitted afterwards (Argentina and Cyprus).

On the recommendation of the Bureau, the Committee decided unanimously to take on the subject proposed by the Russian Federation, *Sharing our diversity: The 20th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Democracy*. A preparatory debate on the next resolution would take place at the 136th Assembly (April 2017). The resolution would be finalized at the 137th Assembly (October 2017).

The Assembly appointed Mr. I. Umakhanov (Russian Federation) as one of the Rapporteurs of the resolution, and requested the IPU President to consult with the geopolitical groups to identify a second one.

The Committee endorsed the Bureau's recommendation to hold a debate entitled *Act now for adolescents: The role of parliamentarians in promoting adolescent health and well-being* at the 136th Assembly, which would not lead to a resolution.

- Ms. B. Tshireletso (Botswana) was elected to represent the African Group.
- Mr. A.Y. Desai (India) was elected to represent the Asia-Pacific Group
- Mr. L. Slutsky (Russian Federation) and Mr. S. Yershov (Kazakhstan) were elected to represent the the Eurasia Group. The third position for Eurasia on the Bureau was allocated to Armenia. The name of the Bureau member will be confirmed at the next session of the Committee.
- Ms. R.M. Bartra Barriga (Peru) was elected to complete the mandate of Mr. G. Rondón Fudinaga (Peru).

(e) Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

The first sitting reviewed funding of the United Nations. Panellists included Mr. R. Lalli, (UN High Level Committee on Management), Ms. B. Adams (Global Policy Forum), Ms. E. Nursanty (Indonesia) and Ms. G. Ortiz (Mexico).

The second sitting focused on the UN response to allegations of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse by UN peacekeepers. The panellists were Mr. B. Klappe (Office of the Special Coordinator on improving UN response to sexual exploitation and abuse), Ms. S. Whitman (Romeo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative (via video link)), Ms. A. Rashed Albasti (United Arab Emirates) and Mr. E. Mokolo Wa Mpomblo (Democratic Republic of the Congo). They ensured a thorough discussion of the issues, the solutions and the appropriateness of those solutions. MPs were encouraged to ensure human rights and gender training was provided throughout soldiers' careers, and that domestic laws properly defined and classified sexual abuse and exploitation as crimes.

The Committee Bureau met on 25 October and decided that in Dhaka, the Committee would dedicate one session to the modalities of reviewing progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, and another to poverty, which was the main theme for 2017 of the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

The Committee looked forward to participating in the annual Hearing at the United Nations in early 2017 in New York.

The Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs met on 26 October. Two new members were elected to the Bureau: Ms. B. Sampatisiri (Thailand) and Mr. D. Asylbek uulu (Kyrgyzstan). A recommendation to replace Ms. I. Montenegro (Nicaragua) was adopted.

(f) Debate on the emergency item

The war and the severe humanitarian situation in Syria, particularly in Aleppo (Item 7)

The debate on the emergency item was held in the morning of Tuesday, 25 October, with Mr. K. Jayasuriya, Speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka, in the chair.

Ms. C. Roth (Germany), co-author of the joint proposal, made a brief presentation on the emergency item. She reminded parliamentarians that over 11 million people had lost their homes in Syria, 6.5 million of whom were internally displaced, and that 4.8 million had had to flee abroad. She deplored the alarming situation in Syria, in particular in the ancient city of Aleppo, which was part of the heritage of humanity. She called on all parties involved to immediately end the war so as to allow humanitarian aid to be provided swiftly to those in need.

Subsequently, 16 speakers took the floor during the debate, namely: Australia, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Canada, Cuba, Ecuador, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Nicaragua, Palestine, Portugal, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom.

Participants underscored the need for an immediate end to the severe humanitarian crisis in Syria, from which many civilians - in particular, women and children - were suffering. They agreed on the urgent need for humanitarian aid and support for the Syrian people. There were differing views on the cause of the crisis: some participants called on the Syrian Government to ensure the protection of the Syrian people and others reproached foreign intervention, with many attributing the blame for the dire situation to the acts of terrorists.

Some participants emphasized the need to respect international law and criticized the use of chemical weapons. They deplored the international community's failure to resolve the crisis that saw numerous violations of human rights, including torture and rape. In particular, they criticized the impasse at the UN Security Council, which had led to the repeated failure to pass a resolution on Syria, most recently on 8 October. Parliamentarians urged the United States of America and the Russian Federation to agree on a ceasefire so as to end the humanitarian crisis, which some termed as a crime against humanity.

Others shared their concerns about the suffering of civilians in Syria and urged the international community to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria. Several participants condemned the "politicization and manipulation" of the Syrian crisis. Many participants stressed that the outcome of the emergency item should serve the true interest of the Syrian people.

Several delegations emphasized that the conflict should be resolved through political dialogue rather than military intervention, which, in their view, made the situation worse. They called on all parties to work for restoring peace and order.

The Assembly referred the emergency item to a drafting committee made up of representatives of Argentina, Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Germany, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Portugal, Russian Federation and Saudi Arabia.

(g) Adoption of the resolution on the emergency item

In the afternoon of 26 October, the plenary sitting of the Assembly adopted the resolution by consensus. Following the adoption of the resolution, the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic expressed its objection to the entire text. The delegation of Cuba expressed reservations on preambular paragraphs 5, 6 and 8 and on operative paragraph 5. The delegation of the United Kingdom expressed an objection to the statement made by the delegation of Syria and clarified that there had been no official visit by the UK Parliament to the Syrian Arab Republic.

5. Concluding sitting

At its final sitting on 27 October, the Assembly considered the reports of the work of the Standing Committees and the Outcome Document of the General Debate, *Human rights abuses as precursors of conflict: Parliaments as early responders*.

The reports of the Standing Committees were presented and noted by the Assembly. The resolution put forward by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, *The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective*, was adopted unanimously. The IPU President then gave an overview of the main conclusions and recommendations of the General Debate, as reflected in the Outcome Document (see page 29). He underscored the types of measures that parliaments and parliamentarians could undertake to prevent human rights abuses, tackle such violations when they occurred, and build an inclusive and integrated society through cooperation with all stakeholders. He called on all participants to follow up with robust action in their own parliaments and countries. He asked Members to report back to the IPU on the initiatives they would have taken and progress made. He emphasized that parliamentarians were called upon to play key roles in building bridges and trust in their communities and societies, and in firmly upholding human rights and the rule of law. In terms of inter-parliamentary cooperation, MPs' independence of thought and their direct link to citizens could help break down barriers and promote a more peaceful and just world.

The representatives of the geopolitical groups expressed their satisfaction with the Assembly and its substantive outcomes. The representatives were: Mr. I. Liddell-Grainger (United Kingdom) on behalf of the Twelve Plus Group; Mr. R. Magyezi (Uganda) on behalf of the African Group; Mr. Y. Jaber (Lebanon) on behalf of the Arab Group; Ms. V. Petrenko (Russian Federation) on behalf of the Eurasia Group; Ms. Y. Ferrer Gomez (Cuba) on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean and Ms. N. Marino (Australia) on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group. They commended the IPU President, Secretary General and Secretariat for their hard work on behalf of the Organization. They also pledged their full support and cooperation in the implementation of the revised IPU Strategy and of the other decisions taken by Member Parliaments during the 135th IPU Assembly.

Mr. F. Rabbi, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Bangladesh, addressed the Assembly on behalf of the Parliament that was to host the 136th IPU Assembly. He introduced a video message from the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Ms. Sheikh Hasina. She underscored the importance that Bangladesh attached to the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and expressed the satisfaction of the Bangladesh people and authorities that the IPU would be holding its next Assembly in Dhaka. She invited all IPU Member Parliaments to send delegations to the Dhaka Assembly and to experience first-hand the rich cultural heritage and natural beauty of Bangladesh.

The IPU President summed up the results of the Assembly, thanked all participants for their active involvement and declared the 135th Assembly closed.

199th session of the Governing Council

1. Membership and Permanent Observers of the IPU

At its sitting on 24 October, the Governing Council approved a request for affiliation from the Parliament of Swaziland, thus bringing the overall membership of the IPU to 171 national parliaments.

The Council was apprised of the situation of certain parliaments and took note of recommendations from the Executive Committee with regard to the following parliaments: Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Libya, Somalia, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen.

The Council approved the establishment of a Parliamentary Solidarity Fund with a view to encouraging the participation of parliaments, especially those of small island developing States, in the IPU's drive towards universal membership. The practical modalities of the Fund would be developed by the Sub-Committee on Finance for subsequent adoption by the governing bodies.

2. Financial situation of the IPU

The Governing Council was presented with a report on the financial situation of the IPU as at 31 July 2016 and an updated list of unpaid contributions. As at 27 October 2016, two Members had arrears of two full years and were subject to voting sanctions. Of the two Members subject to suspension due to arrears of three or more years, Congo provided evidence that it was in the process of transferring sufficient funds towards covering part of its arrears. Honduras was to be approached and supported by certain Members with a view to retaining its membership. It was therefore agreed to defer its suspension until the next session of the Governing Council.

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

3. Programme and budget for 2017

The Council received the consolidated budget proposal for 2017.

Reporting on behalf of the Executive Committee, the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Finance Mr. R. del Picchia (France) observed that the proposed budget represented a transition to the revised IPU Strategy. He highlighted the key elements, including the revised IPU scale of assessment, patterned on the latest UN scale, which changed the percentage shares of assessed contributions for some Members. Following the previous year's decrease in total Member contributions of 8.7 per cent, a small increase of 1.5 per cent was recommended for 2017 in order to meet certain essential expenditures relating to security and the IPU website. At the same time, savings had been made across several other areas of the budget while maintaining the IPU's full range of activities.

In order to balance the budget, CHF 100,000 from the Working Capital Fund was authorized to be used if needed. This would be a temporary measure only. The Executive Committee had welcomed the very successful efforts of the President and the Secretary General to mobilize voluntary funds from external sources. These funds also contributed to the costs of supporting the IPU's programmes.

Following questions and comments from Members, including Bangladesh, Sweden and Ukraine, it was confirmed that: the expenditure for future statutory meetings was budgeted under Objective 7; that the core expenditure savings would not reduce IPU activities; that authorization to use the Working Capital Fund would only be exercised if needed and would be reduced in future years; and that the IPU's reserves continued to be managed prudently.

The Governing Council approved the 2017 budget of CHF 15,927,300. It also endorsed the proposal to develop the usual detailed logframe, as in the past, to be annexed to the approved budget following the adoption of the revised IPU Strategy for 2017–2021. The approved budget and scale of contributions for 2017 are presented on pages 60 and 61.

4. Cooperation with the United Nations system

The Council reviewed the activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system from 15 March to 15 September 2016. The IPU had worked with the United Nations towards common objectives in a range of political processes. A number of meetings had been held and publications produced.

Members took note that the new cooperation agreement that had been under negotiation for some time had been signed in July 2016 between the Secretaries General of the two organizations. The new pact gave recognition to the IPU as the world organization of parliaments and placed the strategic partnership between the IPU and the United Nations on a stronger footing.

In July 2016, the UN General Assembly had also adopted a consensus resolution entitled *Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union*.

5. IPU Strategy for 2017–2021

The Governing Council adopted the revised IPU Strategy for 2017–2021, which would serve as the Organization's roadmap for the next five years. Entitled *Strong democratic parliaments serving the people*, the document highlighted the need for democracy to deliver better development and peace outcomes for people everywhere. The UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development would provide an appropriate framework for meeting the objectives contained in the Strategy.

6. Recent specialized meetings

The Governing Council took note of the outcomes of the Regional Seminar on the Sustainable Development Goals for the parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe entitled *Building strong foundations for sustainable development* ([http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/199/10\(a\)-R.1.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/199/10(a)-R.1.pdf)); the Regional Seminar *Harmonizing synergies for wide-ranging parliamentary actions against child trafficking and labour and strengthening South-South and Triangular cooperation* ([http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/199/10\(b\)-R.1.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/199/10(b)-R.1.pdf)); the Parliamentary side event at the World Health Assembly ([http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/199/10\(c\)-R.1.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/199/10(c)-R.1.pdf)); the Roundtable on water for the Middle East region ([http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/199/10\(d\)-R.1.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/199/10(d)-R.1.pdf)); the Parliamentary meeting held in conjunction with the UN General Assembly

High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS ([http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/199/10\(e\)-R.1.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/199/10(e)-R.1.pdf)); the 2016 annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO ([http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/199/10\(f\)-R.1.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/199/10(f)-R.1.pdf)); the World e-Parliament Conference ([http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/199/10\(g\)-R.1.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/199/10(g)-R.1.pdf)); the Interregional Seminar *Parliamentary capacity-building and the further implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals* ([http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/199/10\(h\)-R.1.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/199/10(h)-R.1.pdf)); and the Parliamentary side event at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development entitled *Mobilizing parliaments for the SDGs* ([http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/199/10\(i\)-R.1.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/cnl-e/199/10(i)-R.1.pdf)).

7. Reports of plenary bodies and specialized committees

At its sitting on 27 October, the Governing Council endorsed the recommendations contained in the reports on the activities of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, the Committee on Middle East Questions, the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, the Gender Partnership Group, the Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS and Maternal, Newborn and Child Health and the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU. It also adopted amendments to the Rules of the Committee on Middle East Questions.

The Council approved 10 decisions concerning 129 parliamentarians submitted by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (see pages 78 to 107). The Council noted the reservations of the delegations of Cambodia and Fiji concerning the cases in their respective countries.

At the Council's sitting on 24 October, a handbook for parliamentarians on *International Humanitarian Law* was launched. It had been jointly produced by the IPU and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The IPU President and Secretary General launched the guide with Ms. C. Beerli (Vice-President, ICRC).

8. Future inter-parliamentary meetings

At its sitting on 27 October, the Council heard the findings of the on-site mission to St. Petersburg with a view to the 137th Assembly. Final approval of that city as the venue for the 137th IPU Assembly was contingent on the report, whose findings had been positive. The delegation of Ukraine requested a roll-call vote to confirm the Council's decision about the venue for the 137th IPU Assembly. The results of the vote were: 138 affirmative votes, 19 negatives votes and 5 abstentions. The Governing Council reconfirmed its decision to hold the 137th IPU Assembly in St. Petersburg (Russian Federation) from 14 to 18 October 2017.

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 75). The Council heard a presentation on the forthcoming Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament, scheduled to take place on 12 and 13 December in Abu Dhabi.

Lastly, the new IPU website was launched at the Council's sitting of 27 October. The new site was more dynamic and user-friendly and was available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic. It had been developed with the generous financial and technical support of the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates.

274th session of the Executive Committee

1. Proceedings and decisions

The Executive Committee held its 274th session in Geneva on 21, 22 and 26 October 2016. The President of the IPU chaired the meetings. The following members took part in the session: Ms. F. Benbadis (Algeria), Ms. M.I. de Oliveira Valente (Angola), Mr. A. Lins (Brazil) on 21 October, Mr. R. del Picchia (France), Mr. K. Jalali (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. S. Suzuki (Japan) and Mr. D.E. Ethuro (Kenya) on 21 and 22 October, Ms. M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia) in her capacity as President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Mr. N. Schrijver (Netherlands), Ms. A. Habibou (Niger), Ms. G. Eldegard (Norway), Mr. K. Kosachev (Russian Federation), Mr. A. Jasem Ahmed (United Arab Emirates), Mr. I. Liddell-Grainger (United Kingdom), and Mr. D. Vivas (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) on 21 and 22 October.

At its sitting on 21 October, the Executive Committee examined one request for affiliation from the Parliament of Swaziland and recommended that the Council approve it.

The Executive Committee examined the situation of certain parliaments, including those of: Burundi, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Libya, Somalia, South Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Turkey, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen, and made specific recommendations on each to the Governing Council. Regarding the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Committee noted that the authorities would welcome a role for the IPU in the mediation efforts led by the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) to foster dialogue between the parliamentary majority (the opposition) and the ruling party.

The Executive Committee recommended that the decision to suspend the parliaments of Congo and Honduras, which had been in arrears of their contributions for three full years, be deferred and called on all defaulting parliaments to make prompt payment. It also requested the geopolitical groups to reach out to Members in their region, with a view to encouraging them to pay their outstanding contributions.

The Executive Committee recommended that a Parliamentary Solidarity Fund be established under its oversight. The Fund would facilitate the participation of non-Member parliaments, especially those of small island developing States, in the IPU in its bid to become truly universal. The Committee heard the reports on the financial situation of the IPU and the mobilization of voluntary funds. It examined the draft programme and budget for 2017 and heard the recommendations of the Sub-Committee on Finance in that respect. It decided to recommend the adoption of the programme and budget for 2017 as prepared by the Secretariat. Following the adoption of the revised Strategy, the usual logframe, with more details of activities and expected results, including monitoring indicators and allocation of resources, would be developed. The Executive Committee agreed to renew the mandate of the Swiss Federal Audit Office as the External Auditors of the IPU for a further three years. It also agreed to renew the mandate of the Chairperson of the Consultative Commission for a further four-year term.

The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU Strategy for 2017–2021 be adopted. The document had been prepared following broad consultations with Members, partners and external consultants. The Strategy was innovative in that it set out the IPU's values and enablers for achieving the Organization's eight objectives, which focused on the Organization's core mandate.

At its sitting on 26 October, the Executive Committee took note of proposed amendments to the Statutes and Rules of the IPU. Those included a proposal to increase women's representation in the Executive Committee to 30 per cent, as well as the inclusion of the President of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians as an *ex officio* member. It entrusted the Secretariat with circulating them to the entire membership for adoption at the next session of the Governing Council. The Committee also saw a presentation on the new IPU website and endorsed the Global Appeal 2017 to end stigma and discrimination against persons affected by leprosy (see page 74).

The Executive Committee also held an extensive discussion on future meetings. It took note of the special security arrangements that would be put in place and security guarantees given by the Bangladeshi authorities for the 136th Assembly in light of the terrorist attack that had taken place in Dhaka in July 2016.

Regarding the venue of the 137th IPU Assembly, the Executive Committee took note of the findings of the IPU on-site mission, which had concluded that all logistical requirements had been met. The Executive Committee therefore recommended that the Council reconfirm its decision to hold the 137th Assembly in St. Petersburg (Russian Federation).

2. Sub-Committee on Finance

The Sub-Committee on Finance met on 20 October 2016 to prepare and facilitate the Committee's consideration of the financial situation of the IPU, the draft programme and budget for 2017, the situation of voluntary funding and the establishment of a Parliamentary Solidarity Fund. The Sub-Committee advised the Executive Committee to recommend the 2017 budget to the Governing Council, having been closely involved in overseeing its preparation throughout the year. The term of the Sub-Committee Chair, Mr. R. del Picchia (France), was renewed for a further two years.

Forum and Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

The twenty-fourth meeting of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians took place on 23 and 26 October. It brought together 124 delegates from 79 countries and representatives from various international organizations. The President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia), presided over the meeting. The President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr. S. Chowdhury, delivered a welcome address.

Ms. S. Atallahjan (Canada) briefly summed up the work of the Bureau at its 37th and 38th sessions, held respectively in Lusaka in March 2016 and in Geneva on the morning of 26th October. The rapporteur of the Gender Partnership Group, Ms. G. Eldegard (Norway), briefed the Forum on the work of the Group.

As a contribution to the Assembly, participants considered the draft resolution on the agenda of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, *The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective*, from a gender perspective. The discussion was opened by the co-Rapporteurs, Ms. N. Marino (Australia) and Mr. M. Kilonzo Junior (Kenya) and began with a presentation of the IPU study on *Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians*. Two groups were formed to discuss different aspects of the draft resolution. Ms. S. Atallahjan (Canada) and Ms. N. Al Kharoosi (Oman) were designated as chairs while Ms. N. Luo (Zambia) and Ms. P. Locatelli (Italy) were designated as rapporteurs.

Participants considered that men and women should work hand-in-hand to achieve equality in politics and in society. There were many cultural and societal obstacles that continued to prevent that goal from being attained. Participants emphasized that discrimination and violence against women limited their entry and participation in politics, perpetuated gender inequality and prevented women from participating in political life. Those obstacles were exacerbated in national situations characterized by a climate of tension or in situations of occupation where general insecurity prevailed. Several solutions were put forward to ensure that women could participate in political processes in complete security and freedom.

The discussion resulted in proposed amendments to the draft resolution of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights. All the proposed amendments were subsequently included in the draft resolution.

Panel discussion on Securing the rights and future of women and girls during war and conflict

During the panel discussion, participants examined parliamentary actions that could be taken to protect the basic rights of women and girls during war and of those attempting to flee war or conflict. The debate began with contributions from Ms. F. Bustreo, Assistant Director-General for the Family, Women's and Children's Health, World Health Organization (WHO); Mr. M. Naciri, Regional Director of UN Women for the Arab States; Ms. M. Pawlak, Adviser on Gender, Age, Disabilities and Diversities, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); and Mr. A. Cissé, Member of Parliament, Mali.

The discussions shed light on several initiatives enabling women and girls to access health care, education, vocational training and revenue-generating activities in times of conflict, including in displacement and refugee settings. The issue of violence against women and girls during conflict, displacement and in refugee camps was raised by the majority of participants. They highlighted the danger of losing a generation to war and conflict. They also emphasized the need for women and girls to be able to access basic services, realize their rights and have opportunities wherever they were. It was highlighted that, notwithstanding the devastating effects of conflict on them, women and girls were resilient and particularly well-placed to identify strategies enabling them to overcome the threats they faced. They were the agents of their own protection and must therefore be actively involved in decisions concerning them. Participants also highlighted the urgency of implementing strictly United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in particular, by involving women in decision-making at all levels, by increasing significantly the number of women in peacekeeping forces and by bringing to justice the perpetrators of sexual assault in wartime. Participants also called for women to be appointed as special envoys for peace.

Subsidiary bodies of the Governing Council

1. Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

Mr. A.B.M.F.K. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), President, Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland), Vice-President, Ms. F. Koofi (Afghanistan), Mr. A.A. Alaradi (Bahrain), Mr. J.P. Letelier (Chile), Mr. B. Mbuku-Laka (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Mr. B. Fabritius (Germany), Mr. A.A. Gueye (Senegal), Ms. A. Clwyd (United Kingdom) and Ms. D. Solórzano (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) took part in the Committee's 151st session, which was held from 22 to 25 October.

During the session, the Committee held six hearings with delegations and complainants to enhance its understanding of the cases before it and convey its concerns. It examined 28 cases relating to the situation of 242 parliamentarians in 12 countries. Of the cases examined, 1 per cent concerned parliamentarians from Africa, 20 per cent parliamentarians from Asia, 1 per cent parliamentarians from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), 53 per cent parliamentarians from the Americas, 24 per cent parliamentarians from Europe and 1 per cent of parliamentarians from the South Pacific region. Twenty-eight per cent of cases involved women. Freedom of expression being a matter of direct or indirect concern in most cases, the violations frequently considered by the Committee during the session were lack of due process in proceedings against parliamentarians, abusive revocation or suspension of the parliamentary mandate, arbitrary arrest and detention, violation of freedom of assembly and association, and acts of torture, ill-treatment and other acts of violence inflicted on parliamentarians.

The Committee submitted 10 decisions to the Governing Council for adoption concerning the following eight countries: Cambodia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Fiji, Maldives, Oman, Turkey and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

2. Committee on Middle East Questions

The Committee held two sittings, on 25 and 26 October. Ms. D. Pascal Allende (Chile), President, Ms. C. Guittet (France), Mr. N. Shai (Israel), Ms. N. Motsamai (Lesotho), Mr. A.N.M. Al-Ahmad (Palestine), Mr. F. Müri (Switzerland) and Mr. M. Al Mehrzi (United Arab Emirates) attended both sittings. Mr. R. Munawar (Indonesia) and Mr. G. Farina (Italy) attended one sitting.

The Committee considered the report of the Roundtable on water, which had been held from 31 May to 2 June 2016 at IPU Headquarters. The Committee requested that a draft agenda be drawn up from the proposed programme of action so that it could have a clear view of the suggested mechanisms for implementing the recommendations of the Roundtable.

The Committee reconfirmed its decision to hold a second Roundtable. It would maintain its focus on water in order to build on the growing goodwill and the commitment to transform the Committee's discussions into specific actions. The mobilization of additional funding would facilitate a broader scope for implementing those actions.

A presentation was given on a regional political and economic initiative that provided a new dimension for peace based on converging interests in the Middle East region. The Committee recognized the potential of such an approach. It reaffirmed its interest in integrating initiatives of that nature into its efforts to bring about peace and dialogue in the Middle East (see page 68 for the full report).

The Committee also approved a set of proposed amendments to its Rules that would bring it in line with other IPU Committees. Vacancies on the Committee would be filled at the 136th IPU Assembly in April 2017. Current members would continue to serve until the end of their mandates.

3. Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

The Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law met on Sunday 23 October. Representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also attended. The meeting elected Ms. N. Ali Assegaf (Indonesia) as its President.

The Committee heard and adopted the report of the mission to Lebanon in May and June 2016 (see page 69). The Committee called on IPU Members to follow up on the findings and recommendations of the mission, which stressed the need to support not only Syrian refugees but also Lebanon as the host country. Lebanon was faced with dramatic challenges: the arrival of 1.5 million refugees in a country whose total population was only 4 million.

The Committee heard a presentation on the overall situation of refugees worldwide. It was also informed of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which was the outcome of the UN Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants. In adopting the Declaration, States had declared profound solidarity with persons who were forced to flee. They had reaffirmed their obligations to fully respect the human rights of refugees and migrants and had also pledged robust support to those countries affected by large movements of refugees and migrants.

In pursuing its work on refugee protection, the Committee reaffirmed that it would be useful to conduct an on-site mission to Greece to examine the situation of refugees and their needs, as well as those of Greece as a host country.

The Committee discussed follow-up of the outcome document of the conference *Ensuring everyone's right to nationality: The role of parliaments in preventing and ending statelessness*. The Committee took note of positive developments that had taken place since it had last met in Lusaka. In particular, it noted the increased number of States that had acceded to major UN conventions on statelessness and the increased levels of regional and national action taking place in that regard. The Committee invited all MPs that had attended the conference to follow up on the commitments made there. It also invited IPU Members to sign up to the UNHCR *#IBelong* 1-year campaign to end statelessness.

The ICRC representative presented to the Committee the joint ICRC-IPU publication *International Humanitarian Law: Handbook for Parliamentarians No.25*. This would support parliaments in taking action to ensure respect for IHL. He encouraged parliaments to organize launch events and debates in parliament on the issue and not to hesitate to contact the ICRC for support. The ICRC representative also presented the work of the Organization. A workplan would be developed with the ICRC to support the work of the Committee.

The Committee discussed the outcome of the World Humanitarian Summit (Turkey, May 2016). The Summit had focused on five core responsibilities: global leadership to prevent and end conflict; uphold the norms that safeguard humanity; leave no one behind; change people's lives – from delivering aid to ending need; and invest in humanity.

The Committee invited parliaments to take note of the commitments that States had made as reflected on the *Agenda for Humanity* website and ensure that those commitments were met. It also called on parliaments to support the objectives of *The Grand Bargain on humanitarian financing* and the *Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action*, and implement their recommendations at the national level.

4. Gender Partnership Group

The Gender Partnership Group met on 22 and 26 October. Mr. D.E. Ethuro (Kenya), Ms. M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia), Mr. A. Jasem Ahmed (United Arab Emirates) and Ms. G. Eldegard (Norway) attended.

The Group compared the composition of the delegations present at the 135th IPU Assembly with that of previous statutory meetings. (See page 72). As at 27 October, 228 of the 693 parliamentary delegates (32.9%) at the Assembly were women. In absolute terms, that was the highest figure ever reached. It was also the highest percentage recorded to date. The Group expressed its wish to see that trend continue. Of the 141 delegations present, 123 were composed of at least two delegates. Of those, 15 were composed exclusively of men (11.5%). The all-male delegations were from the parliaments of the following States: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Guinea, Maldives, Micronesia (Federated States of), Morocco, Netherlands, Qatar, Romania, San Marino, Swaziland and Yemen. Of those, Bulgaria, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Micronesia and Qatar were sanctioned at the Assembly for being represented exclusively by men three times or more consecutively. There were three all-female delegations.

The Group called on the IPU leadership to send a clear and strong message to all delegations, including those that wished to join or be re-affiliated, that gender balance was a fundamental tenet of the IPU. The Group stood ready to support delegations in devising strategies to enhance women's participation in parliament.

At its previous meeting in Lusaka, the Group had reviewed the Statutes and Rules of the IPU to ensure that they enshrined a harmonized and consistent standard of gender equality. The Gender Partnership Group proposed that the Rules of the Executive Committee be amended to increase the minimum requirement for both sexes in the Committee to 30 per cent (instead of the current 20 per cent). The

Executive Committee debated and endorsed the recommendation. The Group also recommended that the Executive Committee implement a system by which all geopolitical groups shared the responsibility of achieving the minimum target of 30 per cent participation for each sex.

The Group conducted its regular examination of the situation of parliaments with no women members. It discussed developing tools and compiling best practices to support parliaments with no women members in making progress. The Group wished to engage more with these countries when they were about to hold elections. That would make it possible to offer support in developing reform strategies and creating an environment favourable to women's candidatures and their election. The Group noted that several parliaments with no or few women members were holding elections in the coming months, including Kuwait and Papua New Guinea. It looked forward to seeing more women elected in those countries.

The Group welcomed the new IPU Issues Brief on *Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians*. The Brief was an eye-opener to the major obstacles to gender equality in politics, which undermined democracies. The Group asked the IPU to focus on investigating sexism, harassment and violence against female parliamentary staff and women who participated in election campaigns.

5. Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS and Maternal, Newborn and Child Health

The Advisory Group met on 24 October with five out of 11 members present. Representatives of WHO and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) also attended. The meeting was chaired by Ms. P. Bayr (Germany).

The meeting discussed at length a draft proposal to change the mandate of the Group in light of the revised IPU Strategy, the SDGs and the new Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health. The Group agreed that its main area of work would continue to be women's, children's and adolescent's health, including HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health and rights. In this context and to the extent possible, the Group would also pay attention to how universal health coverage and health security/emerging epidemics related to its core mandate.

The Advisory Group agreed that the name of the Group should be further discussed. It accepted the title *Advisory Group on Health* as a temporary working title and agreed to again discuss its name in its next meeting at the 136th IPU Assembly.

The Group discussed ways to align the landmark 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* to new developments in the area of women's and children's health. It reviewed the first draft of an addendum to the resolution and it tasked the IPU Secretariat to work with partners from WHO and PMNCH in order to obtain further technical input. The Advisory Group would propose the addendum for adoption at the 136th IPU Assembly in Dhaka.

The Advisory Group also discussed preparations for a parliamentary event at the 70th World Health Assembly that would be held at the end of May 2017 in Geneva. The first parliamentary meeting at the World Health Assembly had been successfully organized by the IPU and WHO in 2016 and the Group was keen to continue to mobilize parliamentarians around this important global gathering. The Advisory Group received assurances from WHO that a date for the parliamentary event would soon be identified. The Group discussed the ongoing collaboration between IPU and WHO on effective legislation to end child marriage. It commended the work done so far, including the study *Child, early and forced marriage legislation in 37 Asia-Pacific countries*. Regarding future work, the Group recommended that the issue of early pregnancies and their effect on the lives of girls and women also be examined.

6. Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU

The Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU met on Monday 24 October. Close to 70 young parliamentarians attended, of whom 34 per cent were women. The average age of participants was 33.5 years. Compared to the Assemblies held in 2015 and 2016, the number of young parliamentarians had risen and the average age had dropped. There were more young women than at all previous assemblies. The Forum was chaired by Mr. S. Alremeithi (United Arab Emirates), President of the Board of the Forum, who had been elected by the Board of the Forum on 24 October 2016.

Three new representatives were elected to the Board of the Forum: Ms. R.A. Elwany (Egypt) for the Arab Group, to replace Ms. T. Al-Riyati (Jordan) who was no longer a member of parliament; Mr. N. Erskine-Smith (Canada) for the Twelve Plus Group to replace Mr. V. Gapsys (Lithuania), who was no longer a parliamentarian; and Ms. S. Haskel (Israel) to fill the vacant position for a female representative. One Board seat remained vacant for a female representative from the Eurasia Group. The terms of office of all members of the Board would end in March 2017. The Board of the Forum would then be fully renewed.

In one session, delegates described recent progress achieved and challenges encountered in their respective countries regarding youth participation. Several initiatives designed to reduce the legal voting age were discussed. Good practice and lessons learned in establishing youth networks in parliament were highlighted. Youth participation in parliament, political parties and government was on the rise in several countries. However, disparities between countries existed and significant barriers to youth participation remained. These included financial obstacles for young candidates and scarce support measures to increase the number of young people being elected. Introducing youth quotas and empowering young people politically were key strategies to advance progress.

Ways of enhancing youth participation and contributions to IPU business were sought. The young parliamentarians agreed on a series of measures to facilitate youth participation in delegations to IPU Assemblies to be submitted to the Executive Committee for consideration at the 136th Assembly. Such measures would be combined with incentives rather than sanctions. The Forum welcomed the decision taken by the Executive Committee to include an ex-officio seat for the President of the Forum.

In the coming months, consultations would be launched by the Forum to identify a target for youth participation in national parliaments. Youth quotas in national parliaments were rare and existing quota proportions and age ranges targeted were inconsistent. The Forum aimed to devise a realistic and feasible target in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders.

Marking the 40th anniversary of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, the delegates highlighted the need to pay particular attention to protecting the rights of women parliamentarians and supporting them. They paid tribute to their colleague from the United Kingdom, Jo Cox, who had been killed while fulfilling her duties as an MP.

As a contribution to the work of the 135th Assembly, the young parliamentarians highlighted that young people paid a high price in conflict and war, and were victims of radicalization as much as bombings. Their future was hampered when their access to education and protection was limited by war and conflict. Youth organizations and youth movements were important allies for parliamentarians in their efforts to identify human rights abuses and tackle them. It was important to include young human rights advocates in parliamentary committee processes and to channel their concerns towards taking action on human rights issues.

Young parliamentarians would take part in IPU regional conferences in Africa and Asia in addition to their annual Global Conference in 2017.

Other events

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

In the morning of 23 October, the IPU President and Secretary General met with the Chairs of the Geopolitical Groups and the Presidents of the Standing Committees to discuss implementation of the new IPU Strategy, gender mainstreaming in the work of the IPU, and ways to further enhance the functioning of the Standing Committee Bureaux.

The IPU Secretary General introduced the draft Strategy for 2017–2021. The initial draft had been amended to include input from Members and restructured to give greater prominence to the IPU's core work on peace and inter-parliamentary dialogue. The Chairs of the Geopolitical Groups expressed their strong support for the revised Strategy. They highlighted its interconnections with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the added value that the IPU and its Members could bring in terms of promoting and reinforcing political dialogue, the rule of law and democratic governance. Regarding the Strategy's implementation, the geopolitical groups would be called upon to play a key role in reaching out to parliaments in their respective regions, sharing information and monitoring progress achieved.

The Chairs of the Geopolitical Groups and the Presidents of the Standing Committees discussed new measures that could further enhance gender equality in the work and structures of the IPU. There were already several mechanisms in place to ensure that at least 30 per cent of members on each of the main IPU bodies were of each sex. That was the case with the Standing Committee Bureaux (the figure was 50 per cent for the Middle East Committee). The time had now come for the IPU Executive Committee, as the principal administrative organ of the Organization, to reflect this objective of gender equality. It had been proposed to amend the IPU Statutes and Rules to provide that a minimum of 30 per cent of Executive Committee members must be of each sex. The Geopolitical Groups were invited to consider possible ways of achieving this goal. They were to report back on the outcome of their Groups' deliberations at the last sitting of the Executive Committee before the conclusion of the Assembly.

The leaders of the Geopolitical Groups and Standing Committees also examined the situation of the Committee Bureaux, which had been reformed in 2013. Efforts were still being made to ensure the best possible representation on the Bureaux, as these bodies played an important role in guiding the work of the Committees and preparing their decisions and work programmes. The Chairs of the Groups reconfirmed that, in the selection of new Bureaux members, every effort would be made to ensure: gender equality; a fair distribution of posts among Members that were not represented on other bodies; and the selection of candidates both with solid experience in the Committees' respective areas of work and with clear support from their parliaments, as well as language skills. Groups would also seek to engage young parliamentarians in IPU decision-making; they had much to contribute to the work of the IPU through their energy and enthusiasm.

2. Open session of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law on Refugees, migrants and their hosts: What next?

On 26 October, the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law held an open briefing session. Panellists included Ms. P. Locatelli (Italy), Mr. Y. Jaber (Lebanon), Ms. E. Hansen, Senior Policy Adviser to the Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, UNHCR, Ms. M. Klein Solomon, Senior Policy Adviser to the Director General, International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Mr. D. Hellé, Diplomatic Adviser, Multilateral Organizations Unit, ICRC. The debate was moderated by Mr. P. Taran, President, Global Migration Policy Associates.

The aim of the session was to take stock of current challenges faced in hosting refugees and migrants, as well as in upholding their rights. The objective was to also discuss how the outcome of the UN Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, held in New York in September, offered new strategies and avenues for progress. Participants began with a discussion of the current challenges faced by countries at the forefront of receiving large populations of migrants and refugees, such as Lebanon and Italy.

Participants emphasized the importance of increasing solidarity and international cooperation. Particular attention was paid to the importance of tackling the root causes of forced migration and conflict. They also reaffirmed the importance of providing direct support to host countries in order to help them cope with the dramatic pressures on their infrastructures and economies and challenges to their stability. The participants concluded by noting the importance of building tolerant societies and addressing fears among populations, especially the fear of the unknown, and fear of others, which often led to fragmentation rather than to unity and solidarity.

3. Side event on *The role of parliaments in implementing the Paris Agreement*

On 25 October, the IPU and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) organized a side event to examine the status of ratification of the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the role of parliaments in its implementation. Over 75 countries had ratified the Paris Agreement in less than a year. The treaty was set to enter into force on 4 November 2016 during the UN Climate Change Conference in Marrakech. IIED provided an overview of the main provisions of the Paris Agreement and underscored that it was both universal and dynamic in nature. In order to move ahead with implementation, parliaments would need to give careful consideration to the nationally determined contributions, the common transparency and accounting rules and to the need for regular reviews of national action, support and results.

The deliberations showed that, in many countries, legislation had still not been enacted, overarching frameworks were missing and planning continued to be short-term. Common barriers encountered included resource and capacity constraints; little or no monitoring or enforcement; and tension between development and climate policies. There were also similar contradictions between efficiency and the transformation of energy production and its use; command and control methods and consultation.

Parliamentarians could play a crucial role in a number of areas. They could establish adequate legislative frameworks by amending existing legislation, ensuring cross-cutting, dynamic and responsive laws and embedding climate change into existing priorities. They could allocate appropriate funds, particularly in terms of implementing nationally determined contributions and promoting financial incentives. They could also exercise rigorous oversight by reviewing progress on implementation and outcomes, and by challenging government to ensure accountability. Lastly, they could engage with all stakeholders, keep abreast of progress under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and work with private industry, non-governmental organizations and local communities.

4. Side event on *Leaving no one behind: Parliaments at the forefront of protecting women's, children's and adolescents' health in migration crises, including in humanitarian and fragile settings*

The event was moderated by Mr. H. Millat (Bangladesh). The participants discussed what parliamentarians could do to protect the health of women, children and adolescents in humanitarian and fragile settings stemming from migration and enduring political crises, health epidemics or natural disasters. Discussions drew on the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016–2030), which addressed a wide range of topics, including adolescent health and humanitarian and fragile settings.

Participants highlighted the fruitful collaboration between the IPU, WHO and PMNCH. Both organizations had championed the IPU's work in past years on women's, children's and adolescents' health at all levels.

In Fiji, there had been a tenfold budget increase to fund Fiji's child- and mother-centred policies, which included women's health and social services, baby-friendly health centres and vouchers for expectant mothers.

MPs were reminded to scrutinize government's work, especially their funding commitments, on women's, children's and adolescents' health.

It was important for parliaments to protect the health of women and children as they accounted for nearly three quarters of people in need. Parliaments should work across party lines to address health issues related to migration crises.

Political leadership was critical to turn words into action. Parliamentarians should promote the continuity of care during crises, as health challenges were acute among mobile populations. MPs had the power to ensure that aid reached those who could make the best use of it.

A human rights-based approach to health was considered to be essential. MPs needed to participate more actively in communities to make adolescents and girls aware of their health rights and the consequences of early pregnancy; girls' empowerment and education were crucial to protect them from early and undesired pregnancy. It was felt that government-driven budgets did not allow parliaments to argue for more funds to be allocated to health or for health funds to be spent more effectively.

5. Informal panel discussion on *How to reconcile growing military expenditures with the realization of our sustainable development commitments?*

The informal panel discussion, organized jointly by the IPU and the International Peace Bureau (IPB), was held on 25 October. The session tackled a contradiction that was not often discussed in parliaments. It was a time of extraordinary riches and yet every important cause seemed to be lacking funds. The SDGs had been approved but no one really knew what it would cost to achieve them. At the same time, the world's governments spent US\$ 1,700 billion every year on their military forces. As geopolitical tensions rose, there were strong pressures from the arms industry and other institutions for politicians to spend more. In certain States, a substantial portion of military expenditure went on research and development into nuclear weapons - which could never be used - and into controversial new weapons systems such as "killer robots".

Mr. P. Wezeman, of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) military expenditure project, presented the latest statistics and trends in the field of military spending and arms trade. Mr. C. Archer, IPB Secretary-General, introduced the Global Campaign on Military Spending, which urged legislators to deprioritize military spending and invest more in sustainable development, climate change and other human security challenges. IPU President, Mr. S. Chowdhury, chaired the session and stressed the importance of the issue. The panel was also the occasion for the launch of a new report *Move the nuclear weapons money: A handbook for civil society and legislators*, published by IPB, the World Future Council and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND).

6. Parity debate on Harassment and violence against parliamentarians: Issues and solutions

The parity debate was organized by the Forum of Women Parliamentarians and was designed to promote equal representation and participation of men and women in the discussion and encourage them to incorporate the gender dimension in their analysis. The debate addressed a subject that was often overlooked in discussions on the role and work of parliamentarians, namely: the forms of pressure and violence used to prevent parliamentarians from exercising their functions. The debate opened with an overview of the work of the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and with a presentation on the IPU survey on *Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians*. The discussion began with statements from the following parliamentarians: Ms. N. Luo (Zambia), Mr. S. Spengemann (Canada) and Ms. E. Mendoza Fernández (Plurinational State of Bolivia). Mr. M. Kilonzo Junior (Kenya) acted as moderator.

The work of the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians was presented. That Committee looked into cases of parliamentarians whose fundamental rights had been violated. Participants were also informed of the alarming data revealed in the IPU survey on violence against women parliamentarians. The participants, both men and women, then went on to share some of their experiences of intimidation and violence in the exercise of their functions, mainly in parliaments and political meetings, and on social media. They stressed that threats of murder, rape or kidnapping, including on social media, must be taken seriously and those responsible prosecuted. It was noted that few women parliamentarians referred cases of violations of their fundamental rights to the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. In that regard, it was suggested that the Committee include in its procedures the notion of gender-based violations, while enhancing confidentiality in the handling of certain complaints.

The need to change mentalities and to bring about a shift in political culture was recognized by all as a priority to be addressed through strengthened solidarity between men and women parliamentarians. Sexism and violence should no longer be tolerated either in parliament or in any other environment. The Bolivian law against political harassment and violence against women, and the code of conduct on sexual harassment of the House of Commons of Canada were presented as examples of possible parliamentary responses to such behaviour. Other solutions were also put forward, such as educating young, avid users of social media, and training journalists in the gender-neutral treatment of women in politics. The participants asked the IPU to continue to study sexism and violence against women parliamentarians, to conduct further research at the regional and national levels and to extend it to include parliamentary staff.

The members of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians decided to disseminate the study in their respective parliaments to encourage debate and to inspire relevant actions to put an end to all forms of violence against women parliamentarians. They encouraged their parliamentary colleagues to do likewise in their parliaments.

7. Side-event for African Parliaments on Putting into practice the recommendations of the Abidjan seminar on the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004)

On 27 October, a workshop was held to follow up on the recommendations of the regional seminar (Abidjan, February 2016) on the implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolution. Mr. I. Sene represented the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (the 1540 Committee).

Mr. Sene briefed the participants on the review conference of resolution 1540. He said that most 1540 Committee members were calling for a new resolution that would take account of technological, geopolitical and geostrategic developments since the adoption of resolution 1540 in 2004. The

Committee was considering whether it should continue to wait for assistance requests from States or take a more proactive approach. He highlighted the importance of associating MPs with the resolution's implementation as they developed the necessary legislative frameworks.

Participants who had attended the Abidjan seminar outlined the progress they had made since then. Some requested assistance both from the 1540 Committee and the IPU. Participants recommended that assistance should continue to be provided at the request of States; a more proactive approach could be perceived as interference in State's affairs. However, they suggested that more efforts should be made to publicize information about who could provide assistance. They said that both the Abidjan seminar and the list of entities able to provide assistance with implementing resolution 1540 should be seen as good practice, and replicated more widely. Participants praised the regional approach currently in use, as western countries did not generally have a good understanding of African processes and ways of proceeding. They suggested that the IPU link up with the Pan-African Parliament to organize another seminar on implementing resolution 1540.

8. Panel discussion on *How parliaments change: Developing recommendations for strengthening parliamentary oversight*

The panel discussion, held on Thursday, 27 October and jointly organized by the IPU and the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP), was moderated by Mr. A. Nombre (Burkina Faso). Contributions were invited from Ms. S. Atallahjan (Canada), Mr. J.M. Araujo (Portugal) and Ms. C. Surtees (Australia).

The session provided a forum for exchange of perspectives of Secretaries General and members of parliament. Participants contributed their own experiences and lessons learned from being involved in parliamentary reform, focusing on parliament's oversight role in holding the executive to account. The exchange would contribute to the preparation of the second Global Parliamentary Report, *Parliament's power to hold government to account: Realities and perspectives on oversight*.

9. Side event on *Nuclear-weapon-free zones and regional security in the Middle East, North-East Asia and Europe*

The side event was convened on 27 October by the IPU, PNND and the World Future Council. The event underscored the important role that nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs) could play in building regional security and supporting nuclear disarmament. The event also provided updates on recent proposals that had been made for such zones in the Middle East, North-East Asia and Europe.

Ms. L. Rojas (Mexico), President of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, outlined lessons learned from the Latin American and Caribbean NWFZ. It had been the first such zone to be created in a populated region and had established the general parameters of NWFZs. Those included the commitment not to manufacture, acquire, test or possess nuclear weapons, and not to allow such weapons to be deployed on the territories of any States within the zone. Mr. R. van Riet (World Future Council) outlined the proposal for a European NWFZ. The zone could be established in a first phase by some of the non-nuclear-reliant States in Europe, followed by NATO States that had committed never to host or possess nuclear weapons on their territories.

Ms. M. Kim (PNND) introduced the 3+3 concept for a North-East Asia NWFZ, which had been developed by parliamentarians and academics in Japan and the Republic of Korea. The concept proposed a prohibition on nuclear weapons in the three intra-zonal States (Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan and Republic of Korea), plus security guarantees from the three principal nuclear-weapon States (China, Russian Federation and United States of America) that they would not threaten or use nuclear weapons against the countries concerned. Mr. A. Ware (PNND) reported on the proposal for a Middle East NWFZ. The proposal had first been submitted to the UN General Assembly by the Islamic Republic of Iran in the 1970s. It had since been expanded to propose a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction. Noting the stalled process for a UN conference to establish such a zone, Mr. Ware referred to new possibilities to take forward that proposal, and the role that parliamentarians could play in supporting that process.

Ms. S. Damen Masri (Jordan) launched the Arabic edition of *Supporting Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament: Handbook for Parliamentarians No. 19* (2012). The Handbook would provide parliamentarians with useful information about nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament issues and initiatives. It provided good practices and examples of parliamentary action on that topic and had also been published in English, French, Spanish and Russian.

Elections and appointments

1. Executive Committee

The Governing Council elected:

- Ms. M.I. Oliveira Valente (Angola) to complete the term of Ms. C. Cerqueira, who is no longer a parliamentarian, until October 2019.
- Ms. Y. Ferrer Gómez (Cuba) for a four-year term ending in October 2020.
- Mr. Nguyen Van Giau (Viet Nam) to complete the term of Mr. Tran Van Hang, who is no longer a parliamentarian, until October 2019.

2. Sub-Committee on Finance

The Sub-Committee decided to re-elect Mr. R. del Picchia (France) as a member for another two-year term ending in October 2018. It also decided to renew his term as its Chairperson.

3. Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

- Ms. J. Vicente (Dominican Republic) was elected to complete the term of Ms. L. Arias until March 2018.
- Ms. K. Beteta (Peru) was elected as a member for a four-year term ending in October 2020.

4. Gender Partnership Group

The Group elected Mr. A. Jasem Ahmed (United Arab Emirates) as a member until the end of his term on the Executive Committee, in April 2017.

5. Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

The Governing Council elected Mr. F. Pinedo (Argentina) for a five-year term ending in October 2021.

6. Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

President of the Committee

Ms. N. Ali Assegaf (Indonesia) for a one-year term ending in October 2017.

- Ms. D. Figuera (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) was elected for a four-year term ending in October 2020.
- Mr. K. Zulushev (Kyrgyzstan) was elected for a four-year term ending in October 2020.

7. Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU

President of the Board

Mr. S. Alremeithi (United Arab Emirates) was elected for a term ending in March 2017.

- Ms. R.A. Elwany (Egypt) was elected for a term ending in March 2017.
- Mr. N. Erskine-Smith (Canada) was elected for a term ending in March 2017.
- Ms. S. Haskel (Israel) was elected for a term ending in March 2017.

8. Bureaux of the Standing Committees

Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

African Group

- Mr. R. Ossele Ndong (Gabon) to complete the mandate of Mr. P. Nzengué Mayila (Gabon) until March 2018;
- Mr. A.L.S. Ssebagala (Uganda) to complete the mandate of Ms. B. Amongi (Uganda) until March 2020; and
- Ms. G. Katuta (Zambia) to complete the mandate of Ms. E. Banda (Zambia) until March 2019.

Asia-Pacific Group

- Ms. S. Abid (Pakistan) and Mr. A. Suwanmongkol (Thailand) were elected for a four-year term ending in October 2020.

Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade

- Mr. R.F. Acuña Nuñez (Peru) was elected to complete the term of Mr. J. León (Peru), who is no longer an MP. His term will expire in October 2019.
- Mr. C. Tursunbekov (Kyrgyzstan) was elected for a four-year term ending in October 2020.

Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights*President*

Ms. B. Tshireletso (Botswana) was elected for a term ending in March 2020.

Vice-President

Ms. S. Koutra-Koukouma (Cyprus) was elected for a term ending in March 2018.

- Ms. B. Tshireletso (Botswana) was elected to represent the African Group.
- Mr. A.Y. Desai (India) was elected to represent the Asia-Pacific Group for a term ending in March 2020.
- Mr. L. Slutsky (Russian Federation) and Mr. S. Yershov (Kazakhstan) were elected to represent the the Eurasia Group. The third position for Eurasia on the Bureau was allocated to Armenia. The name of the Bureau member will be confirmed at the next session of the Committee. Their terms will end in March 2020.
- Ms. R.M. Bartra Barriga (Peru) was elected to complete the mandate of Mr. G. Rondón Fudinaga (Peru) ending in March 2019.

Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

- Ms. B. Sampatisir (Thailand) was elected to replace Mr. J. Jahangirzadeh (Islamic Republic of Iran) for a term ending in October 2020.
- Mr. D. Asylbek uulu (Kyrgyzstan) was elected to replace Mr. A. Romanovich (Russian Federation) for a term ending in October 2020.

9. Rapporteurs to the 137th Assembly

- Mr. I. Umakhanov (Russian Federation) was elected rapporteur of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights for the subject item *Sharing our diversity: The 20th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Democracy*.
- Mr. N.K. Premachandran (India) replaced Ms. P. Mahajan (India) as Rapporteur of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade.

10. Internal Auditors for the 2017 accounts

The Governing Council approved the following two Auditors for the 2017 accounts:

- Ms. G. Cuevas (Mexico)
- Mr. K. Ornfjäder (Sweden).

Media and communications

Five press releases were issued and two press conferences were held during the 135th IPU Assembly. The IPU also supported a press conference organized by the Federal National Council (United Arab Emirates) on the Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament (December 2016). Some 150 media personnel were accredited to the Assembly, mainly from Angola, Lebanon, Russian Federation and United Arab Emirates. Independently, the delegation of Venezuela held a press conference on events in that country.

Initial media monitoring showed that more than 2,752 online articles and blog posts mentioning the IPU, women MPs and the 135th Assembly were posted over the Assembly period. The articles covered the themes of the Assembly, as well as bilateral meetings between delegations. The launch of the report on sexism, harassment and violence against women MPs received the most coverage. Past and future human rights missions were also reported as top news stories. Both issues highlighted that, when the IPU had contributions to make on significant world events, the international, regional and local media would feature them.

Parliamentarians, the IPU President and the IPU Secretary General gave interviews with broadcasters, newspapers and agencies, such as Xinhua, UN Radio (Geneva and New York), the BBC, New York Times, Agence France Presse, El Pais, Globo, Agencia EFE, Reuters, Radio France Internationale, the Guardian and Mediacorp Radio. Coverage was worldwide and comprehensive.

A live Twitter feed using the hashtag #IPU135 was available. Iranian, Egyptian and Venezuelan activists posted graphic images and content, so that the hashtag received limited visibility.

From 21 to 27 October 2016, there were 2,174 hits on the IPU Twitter account. According to Google Analytics, there were 588 views of Assembly press releases from 19 to 28 October.

Flickr was used to distribute photos of the Assembly to the media and Assembly participants. There were an impressive 122,734 views between 23 and 27 October.

During the Assembly, three new publications were launched: *International Humanitarian Law: Handbook for Parliamentarians No. 25*; *Human Rights: Handbook for Parliamentarians No. 26*; and the Issues Brief on *Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians*. The Assembly Guide was also produced.

The future IPU website was presented to the Executive Committee and launched in the Governing Council.

A motion design and an exhibition to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians were displayed throughout the Assembly.

All the publications at the IPU publications stand received great attention from delegates.

Membership of the Inter-Parliamentary Union*

Members (171)

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, 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, Swaziland, 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 (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe

Associate Members (11)

Andean Parliament, Arab Parliament, Central American Parliament (PARLACEN), East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), European Parliament, Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS), Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), Latin American 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)

* As at the close of the 135th Assembly.

Agenda, resolutions and other texts of the 135th Assembly

1. Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the 135th Assembly
2. Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
3. General Debate on *Human rights abuses as precursors of conflict: Parliaments as early responders*
4. The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective
(*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 137th IPU Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs
7. The war and the severe humanitarian situation in Syria, particularly in Aleppo

Outcome document of the General Debate on Human rights abuses as precursors of conflict: Parliaments as early responders

***Endorsed by the 135th IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 27 October 2016)***

No country is immune to human rights violations. Across the world, there is widespread marginalization, inequality, political exclusion, religious intolerance, poverty and undue restrictions on fundamental freedoms such as the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. States continue to fall short of fully delivering on their citizens' civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, to which they have committed through their constitutions and by signing international treaties.

Failure to address human rights challenges not only runs counter to national and international obligations, but can also create a fertile breeding ground for violent conflict if abuses become more serious and widespread. The appeal of those bent on advocating violence to achieve their objectives is bound to increase wherever there is a pervasive lack of respect for human dignity and an airtight lid on the free flow of information and ideas, which are indispensable for democracy to flourish. These situations are often compounded by poor governance, resulting in injustice, whether real or perceived.

Today, the world is witnessing a multitude of conflicts with devastating effects. Parliaments are the guardians of human rights and the rule of law. As parliamentarians, we are the "eyes and ears" of citizens and are familiar with their concerns. We are well-placed to articulate those concerns in parliament. We are therefore at the forefront of raising the alarm and taking action when serious human rights challenges arise.

In that regard, we make the following recommendations. They should constitute the overarching framework for the specific action that we must take in order to stem and root out the potential enablers of all types of conflict.

Recommendations

1. Prevent human rights violations

As representatives of the people, we should lead by example and make transparency, accountability and respect for the rule of law our guiding principles. We believe that preventing human rights violations directly reduces the risk of conflict. Therefore, we must:

- Ensure that international human rights norms are transposed into domestic legislation; ensure that this legislation is implemented by developing effective policies and programmes, allocating necessary budgets and rigorously overseeing their successful implementation;
- Create effective parliamentary human rights committees that:
 - (i) scrutinize the compatibility of our national legislation with our national and international human rights obligations,
 - (ii) legislate on human rights questions and undertake other initiatives as required,
 - (iii) advise other parliamentary bodies on human rights issues,
 - (iv) have the power to request information, question witnesses and conduct on-site missions;
- Combat gender-based violence and address growing inequality; empower women and girls; address gender stereotypes, including preconceptions about masculinity and violence, by engaging men and boys;
- Apply a gender-sensitive approach to all parliamentary work and implement innovative measures such as gender equality compliance certificates, which would require all sectors of society to address gender equality and comply with women's rights commitments;
- Ensure that law enforcement officers always act with the necessary restraint and respect for basic international human rights standards;

- Promote the creation of early warning mechanisms, which ensure access to accurate and timely information from a wide range of sources, with a view to monitoring changing conflict dynamics on multiple levels; these mechanisms should allow for participation and ownership by a range of stakeholders across the country and contribute to the design of tailor-made responses;

Early warning mechanisms should therefore enable regular exchanges with citizens. In particular, they should focus on outreach to women, as they are in a good position to detect risk factors within the community; hotlines to report human rights violations is one possible example of an early-warning mechanism; such mechanisms should also include gender-specific indicators, such as information on laws and practices that discriminate against women or the rate of domestic and sexual violence;

- Ensure that violent extremism is prevented and countered, through legislation that advocates dialogue, shuns hate speech and incitement to hatred, and ensures respect for others, in ways that comply with obligations under international law, particularly international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

2. Tackle human rights violations when they occur

When human rights violations do occur, we are often among the first to become aware of them. To avoid such violations degenerating into conflict, we should speak out vigorously against them. We should work tirelessly to find a remedy, whatever the violation, and wherever it occurs. Therefore we must:

- Investigate human rights violations; press for the prosecution of the perpetrators of such violations through an independent and impartial justice system; ensure that court decisions are carried out in full, so that justice is both done and seen to be done;
- Ensure that every person who claims that his or her human rights have not been respected, protected or fulfilled can seek an effective remedy before a competent and independent domestic body vested with the power to order compensation and to have its decisions enforced;
- Ensure the creation of bodies that investigate citizens' allegations regarding violations of their constitutional rights; regularly ask oral and written questions to the government departments in charge of these bodies in order to monitor their functioning, including through receiving updates on the numbers of complaints registered and those still outstanding so as to ensure they are satisfactorily resolved;
- Cooperate with the national human rights commissions to address all human rights violations reported to them;
- Protect MPs at risk: create and implement effective procedures to ensure that MPs can freely express themselves without fear of reprisals, including by ensuring respect for the principle of parliamentary immunity;
- Condemn threats and attacks on parliamentarians, regardless of their backgrounds and views; promote effective investigations into such crimes and the adoption of the necessary security measures;
- Act in solidarity with parliamentarians across the world whose human rights are at risk by systematically raising with the relevant authorities the concerns of the IPU Governing Council about cases brought before it by the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians; never give up on unresolved cases;

3. Build an inclusive and integrated society through closer cooperation with all stakeholders

While promoting human rights so that peace prevails, we should respect the diversity of our societies and ensure that no one is left behind. We can do this by making sure that our decision-making processes are inclusive, and by encouraging all stakeholders to work in close cooperation. Therefore, we must:

- Ensure that our parliaments reflect the diversity of our societies;
- Build a culture of equality, social justice, peace and solidarity throughout our communities, regardless of political views, age, gender, religion or social standing;
- Promote a tolerant society premised on resolving disputes through dialogue;

- Involve all sectors of society, including women, young people, minorities and disadvantaged groups, in the decision-making process through wide-ranging consultation;
- Harness young people's energy and passion by opening spaces for them to contribute locally, nationally and internationally, bearing in mind that young people become strong agents for peace and positive change when they are engaged in their communities and when they are empowered to contribute to policymaking;
- Partner with civil society and non-governmental organizations, especially those who are active in promoting human rights, so that more harmonized and consolidated efforts are made to build and maintain lasting peace.

These recommendations are by no means exhaustive. However, they do provide a basis for our contribution to dealing with human rights violations. We have the means to make significant contributions. All we need is the political will. It should not be so difficult to muster that will, considering the cause that we are defending: the stability of our countries and peace for the people whom we have the privilege to represent.

The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective

Resolution adopted unanimously by the 135th IPU Assembly (Geneva, 27 October 2016)

The 135th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Noting that equal participation of men and women in public affairs and decision-making has long been recognized as a human right, as enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1953 Convention on the Political Rights of Women, the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and relevant UN Security Council statements,

Recalling that the 1997 Universal Declaration on Democracy adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union states that “the achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society”,

Taking into account the provisions contained in the national constitutions of States relating to the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and CEDAW,

Recognizing that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit draws up a new blueprint for global development and emphasizes that realizing gender equality and women’s empowerment will make a crucial contribution to achieving all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets,

Noting that gender equality is a vital part of development, as set out in Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly in target 5.5, which aims to “ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, social and public life”, and target 5.c, which makes a call to “adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels”,

Recognizing that the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action call for equal and active participation of women and the incorporation of women’s perspectives at all levels,

Recalling UN Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15, which set a 30 per cent target for women in leadership positions by 1995, and a target of parity by 2000, and which emphasizes the importance of improving men’s and women’s capacity to raise awareness about gender equality in their communities and change negative attitudes that lead to discrimination against women,

Concerned that as at 1 August 2016, the global average of parliamentary seats held by women is still only 22.8 per cent, and *deeply concerned* that there are still eight parliamentary chambers with no women members at all,

Noting that various impediments continue to hinder women’s ability to participate in political processes, including at the legislative, ministerial and sub-ministerial levels, such as a male-dominated political culture, negative cultural attitudes and stereotypes regarding the role of women in society, persistent discrimination against women in law and practice, as well as security concerns, lack of support from political parties and society at large, unequal access to health, quality education, training and employment, lack of finances and resources,

Also noting the need to change mindsets and culture within institutions and society, in particular with respect to traditional gender norms, by addressing gender stereotyping in the media and by promoting the values associated with gender equality among young people of both sexes,

Underscoring that the economic empowerment of women is a precondition for their ability to take part in political processes and to raise funds for campaigning,

Recognizing that young women face specific challenges based on their age, sex, education, health, access to basic services and the spread of poverty among women, and that they are the least represented in parliament among both youth and women,

Underlining that electoral systems have an impact on women's representation, and that the proportional representation system tends to be more conducive to higher representation of women,

Noting that electoral gender quotas, among other measures, have proved to be useful and successful in facilitating women's access to elected office and to leadership positions, in particular when such quotas set ambitious goals, are promoted by political leaders, are understood by the general public and are supported with strong implementation mechanisms, such as sanctions for non-compliance,

Bearing in mind that quota systems alone are not sufficient to change or challenge societal views whereby women are not perceived as equals, that only 15 countries among those who have chosen to use a quota system have established a system that aims to achieve a rate of women's political participation above what has been determined as the critical level of 30 per cent, and that measures to promote gender equality in other areas are also needed,

Underlining that the increasing inclusion of women in political processes around the world has been accompanied by forms of resistance such as stereotyping, harassment, intimidation and violence, including online and in social media, in addition to other forms of resistance that are related to social, cultural, economic and legislative factors,

Acknowledging that the climate of tension and confrontation that characterizes the political arena may dissuade both women and men from participating in politics, and that the specific forms of violence that women face constitute an additional obstacle to their engagement in politics and can inhibit their freedom to exercise their mandate as they would wish,

Recognizing that a gender-sensitive parliament is one that responds to the needs and interests of both women and men in its structures, rules and regulations, operations, methods and work,

Also recognizing the need for parliaments to encourage the adoption of a strategy of gender-based analysis, namely, the process of assessing and taking into account the impact on women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes at all levels and in all spheres,

Further recognizing the need for parliaments to encourage the adoption of a strategy for gender mainstreaming, namely, taking into account women's and men's concerns and experiences as integral dimensions of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated,

Underlining that gender balance at expert hearings in parliamentary standing committees is of great importance for mainstreaming gender policy,

Underscoring that gender equality is in the interest of both men and women and should be promoted jointly by both sexes in legal, political, economic, cultural and social terms at the local, national, regional and international levels,

1. *Urges* parliaments to ensure that national laws and the rules and practices of government authorities comply with international law and human rights obligations and all other international obligations, including those linked to the United Nations system organizations, particularly in relation to women's and young women's empowerment;
2. *Also urges* parliaments to amend or repeal existing legislation that directly or indirectly discriminates against women and impedes their full participation in political processes, as well as to enact legislation that encourages gender equality;
3. *Calls on* men and women parliamentarians to work together and to take joint initiatives in parliament to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women at all levels of policy-making processes and decision-making positions;
4. *Also calls on* parliaments to include a gender equality perspective in education policies and to work towards closing the gender gap in educational opportunities;
5. *Urges* parliaments to continue to promote education as part of an inclusive democratic society, with particular focus on ensuring equal access for women and girls, and incorporating a gender equality perspective into all civic education activities;

6. *Encourages* parliaments to support the strengthening of national mechanisms for gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as collaboration and synergies between them;
7. *Calls on* parliaments and parliamentarians to enhance cooperation with civil society organizations, particularly independent women's organizations, in the elaboration, monitoring and evaluation of measures to increase women's participation in political processes;
8. *Also calls on* parliaments to promote new media strategies that address the role of women and develop gender equality, and if possible, to enact national legislation that requires such strategies to be issued or adopted, as well as to develop media, educational and community-level campaigns that aim to combat gender stereotypes; and *further calls on* men and women parliamentarians to play a prominent role in those efforts, and to act as champions and role models in challenging gender stereotypes and negative attitudes towards women;
9. *Urges* parliaments to facilitate the reconciliation and strengthening of personal, family, professional and political life for both women and men, including by promoting shared parental leave, as well as economic support, infrastructure-building and improving childcare services through enacting and amending legislation and labour regulations that affect family life;
10. *Strongly urges* parliaments to set a deadline by which at least 30 per cent of parliamentarians should be women and to set a further deadline by which that proportion should reach 50 per cent;
11. *Calls on* parliaments to consider the adoption and implementation of quota systems or other similar measures that set ambitious goals and enable women to be pre-selected into winnable seats or winnable positions on lists;
12. *Also calls on* parliaments to create a fairer environment for women and men candidates, including by, but not restricted to, tying part of public funding to the number of women candidates that political parties field, establishing special funds or interest-free loans for women candidates, capping expenses, and limiting the duration of campaigns;
13. *Further calls on* political parties to ensure that their candidate-selection processes favour gender-balanced representation and to consider the implementation of quota systems for that purpose;
14. *Urges* political parties to provide regular political education aimed at strengthening women's capacity and enhancing society's awareness of women's participation in political processes;
15. *Also urges* parliaments and political parties to ensure there is an equal number of women and men in leadership positions in all policy areas and all governance bodies, through transparent and fair processes, such as dual leadership and gender rotation in leadership positions;
16. *Calls on* parliaments and political parties to support young women's political participation through specific work programmes, including by implementing empowerment programmes that target young women, by enabling young women to access leadership positions and to act as role models for other young women, and by engaging young women in programmes and training courses designed to foster and prepare them to become future leaders;
17. *Urges* parliaments to ensure that national strategies adopted in all spheres of governance incorporate a gender perspective in terms of design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting, and *calls on* parliaments to promote gender-responsive legislation, policies and programmes in order to achieve gender equality;
18. *Also urges* parliaments to strongly support measures for improving the collection, analysis and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data and the development of gender indicators;

19. *Calls on* parliaments to promote mechanisms to advance gender equality in the work of parliament, including the establishment of women's caucuses that are open to supportive men parliamentarians, parliamentary committees on gender equality that include men, and gender expertise among parliamentary staff of both sexes;
20. *Invites* parliamentary standing committees to ensure that both women and men are equally represented among the experts in committee hearings, and that there is sufficient capacity among the experts to evaluate the effects of planned legislation on gender equality;
21. *Invites* men and women parliamentarians to work together on the development and effective implementation of legislation and policies on harassment and violence against women, including in politics, and to collaborate in this endeavour with the relevant government agencies, civil society and other stakeholders, including technology companies, on tackling online abuse;
22. *Calls on* political leaders and individual men and women parliamentarians to condemn acts of harassment, intimidation and violence against women candidates and parliamentarians, including online and in social media; and *also calls on* parliaments to adopt legal and practical measures to prevent and punish such acts;
23. *Urges* parliaments and political parties to promote an institutional culture that offers a safe and secure working environment for both men and women, including strong and well-implemented internal policies against sexist language and attitudes;
24. *Also urges* parliaments and political parties to adopt policies on sexual harassment, effective complaints mechanisms and penalties for offenders in order to safeguard women when performing their duties;
25. *Further urges* parliaments to ensure that their institutions put in place the necessary framework (infrastructure, technical assistance) for women with disabilities, who continue to suffer from discrimination on multiple fronts, to be able to carry out their parliamentary mandate;
26. *Calls on* parliaments to review the gender sensitivity of their institutions, with a view to making them places that are amenable to both men and women, that promote gender partnerships and that fully advance equality in society;
27. *Requests* the IPU to support national parliaments wishing to conduct an assessment of their gender sensitivity, in line with the 2012 *IPU Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments* and its self-assessment methodology, and to increase technical assistance and support for parliaments in their efforts to enhance institutional gender sensitivity;
28. *Also requests* the IPU to develop comprehensive tools and guidelines for each action area in the 2012 *IPU Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments* and to ensure the successful implementation of the Plan;
29. *Further requests* the IPU to work closely on gender equality and women's empowerment with relevant UN bodies, such as UN Women, as indicated in the recent UN General Assembly resolution 70/298 (2016) on Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union;
30. *Calls on* the IPU, in cooperation with its international partners, to develop capacity-building programmes for women parliamentarians, as part of its work towards achieving gender equality in politics;
31. *Also calls on* the parliamentary assemblies and parliaments participating in international election observation missions to ensure a gender-balanced composition of their delegations, and to devote particular attention to the role and participation of women in electoral processes;
32. *Further calls on* parliaments to enhance their engagement in the Universal Periodic Review process conducted by the UN Human Rights Council in the area of gender equality, and to ensure their countries' full cooperation with the Council's Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice.

**Helping to consolidate international peace and security through
the recognition of a viable, independent and sovereign Palestinian State
with East Jerusalem as its capital: The role of parliaments**

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

Results

Affirmative votes653 Total affirmative and negative votes 1,087
Negative votes434 Two-thirds majority 725
Abstentions464

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Afghanistan	Absent			Finland		12		Nicaragua	10		
Albania	Absent			France		18		Niger		13	
Algeria	15			Gabon		11		Nigeria		20	
Andorra			10	Germany		19		Norway		12	
Angola	8		6	Ghana		14		Oman	11		
Argentina	Absent			Greece	10	3		Pakistan	21		
Armenia			11	Guatemala			10	Palestine	11		
Australia		14		Guinea	13			Peru			14
Austria		12		Guinea-Bissau	Absent			Philippines	Absent		
Bahrain	11			Haiti	Absent			Poland			15
Bangladesh	20			Hungary	10			Portugal		13	
Belarus	Absent			Iceland		10		Qatar	8		
Belgium		13		India			23	Republic of Korea		17	
Benin	8	4		Indonesia	22			Romania		14	
Bhutan	7		3	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	18			Russian Federation	10		10
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	12			Iraq	14			Rwanda	12		
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Absent			Ireland	8	3		San Marino			10
Botswana	Absent			Israel		12		Sao Tome and Principe	10		
Brazil	22			Italy		10	7	Saudi Arabia	14		
Bulgaria			10	Japan			20	Senegal	12		
Burkina Faso	13			Jordan	12			Serbia			12
Burundi	12			Kazakhstan	10			Singapore			12
Cabo Verde			10	Kenya		15		South Africa		17	
Cambodia		13		Kyrgyzstan	10			South Sudan	Absent		
Cameroon	Absent			Lao People's Dem. Republic	Absent			Sri Lanka			13
Canada		15		Latvia		11		Sudan	15		
Chad			13	Lebanon	Absent			Suriname	5		5
Chile	5		5	Lesotho			11	Swaziland			11
China	13		10	Liechtenstein		10		Sweden		12	
Colombia			14	Lithuania	Absent			Switzerland			12
Comoros	Absent			Luxembourg			8	Syrian Arab Rep.	13		
Costa Rica	Absent			Madagascar	14			Thailand			18
Cuba	13			Malawi				Timor-Leste			11
Cyprus	5		5	Malaysia	14			Togo			10
Czech Republic			13	Maldives	10			Tunisia	13		
DPR of Korea	10			Mali	10			Turkey	18		
DR of the Congo			17	Mauritania	10			Uganda			13
Denmark	5		5	Mauritius			11	Ukraine			17
Djibouti	Absent			Mexico		20		United Arab Emirates	11		
Dominican Rep.			12	Micronesia (Fed. States of)	Absent			United Kingdom		18	
Ecuador	10			Monaco	Absent			Uruguay		11	
Egypt	19			Morocco	15			Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep. of)	15		
El Salvador	Absent			Mozambique	Absent						
Equatorial Guinea	11			Myanmar			10				
Estonia		11		Namibia			11	Viet Nam	12		7
Ethiopia			19	Netherlands		13		Zambia		13	
Fiji	Absent			New Zealand		11		Zimbabwe	13		

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.

Addressing the South Sudan conflict: The role of parliaments in safeguarding peace and security

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

Results

Affirmative votes.....529	Total affirmative and negative votes 904
Negative votes375	Two-thirds majority..... 603
Abstentions647	

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Afghanistan	<i>Absent</i>			Finland		12		Nicaragua			10
Albania	<i>Absent</i>			France		18		Niger	13		
Algeria	15			Gabon	11			Nigeria	20		
Andorra			10	Germany		19		Norway		12	
Angola	14			Ghana	14			Oman		11	
Argentina	<i>Absent</i>			Greece			13	Pakistan			21
Armenia			11	Guatemala			10	Palestine	1	10	
Australia		14		Guinea	6	7		Peru			14
Austria			12	Guinea-Bissau	<i>Absent</i>			Philippines	<i>Absent</i>		
Bahrain			11	Haiti	<i>Absent</i>			Poland			15
Bangladesh			20	Hungary	10			Portugal		13	
Belarus	<i>Absent</i>			Iceland		10		Qatar		8	
Belgium		13		India			23	Republic of Korea		17	
Benin	8	4		Indonesia			22	Romania		14	
Bhutan	6		4	Iran (Islamic Republic of)			18	Russian Federation			20
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)			12	Iraq	14			Rwanda	12		
				Ireland			11	San Marino			10
Bosnia and Herzegovina	<i>Absent</i>			Israel		12		Sao Tome and Principe	10		
				Italy			17	Saudi Arabia		14	
Botswana	<i>Absent</i>			Japan	20			Senegal	12		
Brazil	22			Jordan			12	Serbia			12
Bulgaria			10	Kazakhstan			10	Singapore			12
Burkina Faso			13	Kenya	15			South Africa	17		
Burundi	12			Kyrgyzstan	10			South Sudan	<i>Absent</i>		
Cabo Verde	10			Lao People's Dem. Republic	<i>Absent</i>			Sri Lanka			13
Cambodia		13		Latvia		11		Sudan	15		
Cameroon	<i>Absent</i>			Lebanon	<i>Absent</i>			Suriname		5	5
Canada		15		Lesotho	11			Swaziland	11		
Chad	13			Liechtenstein		10		Sweden		12	
Chile			10	Lithuania	<i>Absent</i>			Switzerland			12
China	5		18	Luxembourg			8	Syrian Arab Rep.		13	
Colombia			14	Madagascar	14			Thailand			18
Comoros	<i>Absent</i>			Malawi	<i>Absent</i>			Timor-Leste	11		
Costa Rica	<i>Absent</i>			Malaysia	14			Togo			10
Cuba			13	Maldives			10	Tunisia		13	
Cyprus			10	Mali	10			Turkey			18
Czech Republic			13	Mali	10			Uganda	13		
DPR of Korea			10	Mauritania	10			Ukraine	10		7
DR of the Congo	17			Mauritius	11			United Arab Emirates		11	
Denmark			10	Mexico			20	United Kingdom		18	
Djibouti	<i>Absent</i>			Micronesia (Fed. States of)	<i>Absent</i>			Uruguay		11	
Dominican Rep.			12	Monaco	<i>Absent</i>			Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep. of)	10		5
Ecuador			10	Morocco			15				
Egypt			19	Mozambique	<i>Absent</i>						
El Salvador	<i>Absent</i>			Myanmar			10				
Equatorial Guinea	11			Namibia	11			Viet Nam	15		4
Estonia		11		Netherlands			13	Zambia	13		
Ethiopia	19			New Zealand			11	Zimbabwe	13		
Fiji	<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 parliamentarians in protecting the principles of State sovereignty and State immunity from prosecution in the national courts of another State, and in preventing the adoption of unilateral legislation undermining these principles, which constitutes a violation of international law, international treaties and the Charter of the United Nations

Results of the roll-call vote on the request of the delegations of the Parliaments of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates) for the inclusion of an emergency item

Results

Affirmative votes	470	Total affirmative and negative votes	914
Negative votes	444	Two-thirds majority	609
Abstentions	637		

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Afghanistan		Absent		Finland		12		Nicaragua			10
Albania		Absent		France		18		Niger	13		
Algeria	15			Gabon		11		Nigeria			20
Andorra			10	Germany		19		Norway		12	
Angola	4		10	Ghana		14		Oman	11		
Argentina		Absent		Greece			13	Pakistan	21		
Armenia			11	Guatemala			10	Palestine	11		
Australia		14		Guinea	8	5		Peru			14
Austria			12	Guinea-Bissau	Absent			Philippines	Absent		
Bahrain	11			Haiti	Absent			Poland		15	
Bangladesh	20			Hungary			10	Portugal		13	
Belarus		Absent		Iceland		10		Qatar	8		
Belgium		13		India			23	Republic of Korea		17	
Benin	8	4		Indonesia			22	Romania		14	
Bhutan	6		4	Iran (Islamic Republic of)			18	Russian Federation	20		
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)			12	Iraq	14			Rwanda	12		
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Absent			Ireland			11	San Marino			10
Botswana	Absent			Israel		12		Sao Tome and Principe			10
Brazil	22			Italy		17		Saudi Arabia	14		
Bulgaria			10	Japan			20	Senegal	12		
Burkina Faso	13			Jordan	12			Serbia			12
Burundi			12	Kazakhstan	10			Singapore			12
Cabo Verde			10	Kenya		15		South Africa			17
Cambodia	13			Kyrgyzstan			10	South Sudan	Absent		
Cameroon	Absent			Lao People's Dem. Republic	Absent			Sri Lanka			13
Canada		15		Latvia		11		Sudan	15		
Chad			13	Lebanon	Absent			Suriname	10		
Chile	10			Lesotho			11	Swaziland			11
China	23			Liechtenstein		10		Sweden		12	
Colombia			14	Lithuania	Absent			Switzerland		12	
Comoros	Absent			Luxembourg		8		Syrian Arab Rep.		13	
Costa Rica	Absent			Madagascar			14	Thailand			18
Cuba			13	Malawi	Absent			Timor-Leste			11
Cyprus			10	Malaysia	14			Togo			10
Czech Republic			13	Maldives	10			Tunisia	13		
DPR of Korea	10			Mali			10	Turkey	13		5
DR of the Congo			17	Mauritania			10	Uganda			13
Denmark		10		Mauritius			11	Ukraine	17		
Djibouti	Absent			Mexico		20		United Arab Emirates	11		
Dominican Rep.			12	Micronesia (Fed. States of)	Absent			United Kingdom		18	
Ecuador			10	Monaco	Absent			Uruguay		11	
Egypt	19			Morocco	15			Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep. of)			15
El Salvador	Absent			Mozambique	Absent			Viet Nam	12		7
Equatorial Guinea		11		Myanmar		10		Zambia		13	
Estonia		11		Namibia			11	Zimbabwe			13
Ethiopia			19	Netherlands		13					
Fiji	Absent			New Zealand		11					

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 war and the severe humanitarian situation in Syria, particularly in Aleppo

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

R e s u l t s

Affirmative votes.....	802	Total affirmative and negative votes	1,043
Negative votes	241	Two-thirds majority.....	695
Abstentions	508		

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Afghanistan		<i>Absent</i>		Finland	12			Nicaragua			10
Albania		<i>Absent</i>		France	18			Niger		13	
Algeria		15		Gabon		11		Nigeria			20
Andorra	10			Germany	19			Norway	12		
Angola			14	Ghana			14	Oman		11	
Argentina		<i>Absent</i>		Greece	13			Pakistan			21
Armenia	6		5	Guatemala	10			Palestine		11	
Australia	14			Guinea	13			Peru	14		
Austria	12			Guinea-Bissau		<i>Absent</i>		Philippines		<i>Absent</i>	
Bahrain	11			Haiti		<i>Absent</i>		Poland	15		
Bangladesh			20	Hungary	10			Portugal	13		
Belarus		<i>Absent</i>		Iceland	10			Qatar	8		
Belgium	13			India			23	Republic of Korea	17		
Benin	8	4		Indonesia			22	Romania	14		
Bhutan	8		2	Iran (Islamic Republic of)		18		Russian Federation		20	
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)		12		Iraq		14		Rwanda	12		
Bosnia and Herzegovina		<i>Absent</i>		Ireland	11			San Marino	10		
Botswana		<i>Absent</i>		Israel	12			Sao Tome and Principe			10
Brazil	22			Italy	17			Saudi Arabia			14
Bulgaria			10	Japan	20			Senegal			12
Burkina Faso	10		3	Jordan	12			Serbia	9	3	
Burundi			12	Kazakhstan			10	Singapore	12		
Cabo Verde	10			Kenya		15		South Africa			17
Cambodia			13	Kyrgyzstan		10		South Sudan		<i>Absent</i>	
Cameroon		<i>Absent</i>		Lao People's Dem. Republic		<i>Absent</i>		Sri Lanka			13
Canada	15			Latvia	11			Sudan		15	
Chad	13			Lebanon		<i>Absent</i>		Suriname			10
Chile	10			Lesotho			11	Swaziland			11
China		23		Liechtenstein	10			Sweden	12		
Colombia	14			Lithuania		<i>Absent</i>		Switzerland	12		
Comoros		<i>Absent</i>		Luxembourg	8			Syrian Arab Rep.		13	
Costa Rica		<i>Absent</i>		Madagascar			14	Thailand	12		6
Cuba			13	Malawi		<i>Absent</i>		Timor-Leste	11		
Cyprus	6		4	Malaysia	14			Togo			10
Czech Republic	13			Maldives	5		5	Tunisia			13
DPR of Korea		10		Mali			10	Turkey	18		
DR of the Congo			17	Mauritania			10	Uganda			13
Denmark	10			Mauritius			11	Ukraine	17		
Djibouti		<i>Absent</i>		Mexico	20			United Arab Emirates	11		
Dominican Rep.	12			Micronesia (Fed. States of)		<i>Absent</i>		United Kingdom	18		
Ecuador			10	Monaco		<i>Absent</i>		Uruguay	11		
Egypt			19	Morocco			15	Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep. of)	10	5	
El Salvador		<i>Absent</i>		Mozambique		<i>Absent</i>					
Equatorial Guinea	11			Myanmar		5	5				
Estonia	11			Namibia			11	Viet Nam	12		7
Ethiopia	14		5	Netherlands	13			Zambia		13	
Fiji		<i>Absent</i>		New Zealand	11			Zimbabwe			13

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.

Restoring peace and security in Syria: The contribution of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Results of the roll-call vote on the request of the delegations of the Russian Federation and Syrian Arab Republic for the inclusion of an emergency item

Results

Affirmative votes491 Total affirmative and negative votes 1,038
 Negative votes547 Two-thirds majority 692
 Abstentions513

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Afghanistan		Absent		Finland		12		Nicaragua	10		
Albania		Absent		France		18		Niger		13	
Algeria	15			Gabon		11		Nigeria		20	
Andorra			10	Germany		19		Norway		12	
Angola	14			Ghana		14		Oman	11		
Argentina		Absent		Greece	7	6		Pakistan			21
Armenia	11			Guatemala			10	Palestine	11		
Australia		14		Guinea			13	Peru			14
Austria	3	9		Guinea-Bissau		Absent		Philippines		Absent	
Bahrain		11		Haiti		Absent		Poland		15	
Bangladesh	20			Hungary			10	Portugal		13	
Belarus		Absent		Iceland		10		Qatar		8	
Belgium		13		India			23	Republic of Korea			17
Benin			12	Indonesia			22	Romania		14	
Bhutan	5		5	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	18			Russian Federation	20		
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	12			Iraq	14			Rwanda	12		
Bosnia and Herzegovina		Absent		Ireland		11		San Marino	5		5
Botswana		Absent		Israel		12		Sao Tome and Principe			10
Brazil			22	Italy	3	14		Saudi Arabia		14	
Bulgaria			10	Japan		20		Senegal			12
Burkina Faso			13	Jordan	12			Serbia	12		
Burundi			12	Kazakhstan	10			Singapore			12
Cabo Verde			10	Kenya		15		South Africa	17		
Cambodia	7		6	Kyrgyzstan	10			South Sudan		Absent	
Cameroon		Absent		Lao People's Dem. Republic		Absent		Sri Lanka			13
Canada		15		Latvia		11		Sudan	15		
Chad			13	Lebanon		Absent		Suriname	5		5
Chile			10	Lesotho			11	Swaziland			11
China	23			Liechtenstein		10		Sweden		12	
Colombia		14		Lithuania		Absent		Switzerland		12	
Comoros		Absent		Luxembourg		8		Syrian Arab Rep.	13		
Costa Rica		Absent		Madagascar	14			Thailand	12		6
Cuba	13			Malawi		Absent		Timor-Leste			11
Cyprus	10			Malaysia	14			Togo			10
Czech Republic			13	Maldives	10			Tunisia	13		
DPR of Korea	10			Mali			10	Turkey	5	13	
DR of the Congo			17	Mauritania			10	Uganda			13
Denmark		10		Mauritius			11	Ukraine		17	
Djibouti		Absent		Mexico		20		United Arab Emirates			11
Dominican Rep.			12	Micronesia (Fed. States of)		Absent		United Kingdom		18	
Ecuador	10			Monaco		Absent		Uruguay		11	
Egypt	19			Morocco			15	Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep. of)	5	10	
El Salvador		Absent		Mozambique		Absent		Viet Nam	12		7
Equatorial Guinea			11	Myanmar	10			Zambia		13	
Estonia		11		Namibia			11	Zimbabwe			13
Ethiopia	19			Netherlands		13					
Fiji		Absent		New Zealand		11					

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 war and the severe humanitarian situation in Syria, particularly in Aleppo

Resolution adopted by consensus by the 135th IPU Assembly (Geneva, 26 October 2016)*

The 135th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Deploing the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people in the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria), most of them civilians,

Recalling that over 11 million people have lost their homes in Syria, 6.5 million of whom are internally displaced, and that 4.8 million have had to flee abroad,

Also recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,

Further recalling that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (1949) provides that direct attacks against civilian targets constitute a war crime,

Taking account of the resolutions of the 134th IPU Assembly (Lusaka), the 133rd IPU Assembly (Geneva), the 128th IPU Assembly (Quito) and in particular, the resolution of the 126th IPU Assembly (Kampala) entitled *Inter-Parliamentary Union initiative for an immediate halt to the bloodshed and human rights violations in Syria, and the need to ensure access to humanitarian aid for all persons in need and to support implementation of all relevant Arab League and United Nations resolutions and peace efforts*,

Also taking account of United Nations Security Council resolution 2258 of 22 December 2015, “reaffirming the primary responsibility of the Syrian authorities to protect the population in Syria and, reiterating that parties to armed conflict must take all feasible steps to protect civilians, and recalling in this regard its demand that all parties to armed conflict comply fully with the obligations applicable to them under international law related to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, including journalists, media professionals and associated personnel”; and *noting* that this resolution highlights the role of the Syrian authorities in the conflict and the actions of terrorist organizations operating in Syria,

Emphasizing that United Nations Security Council resolution 2258 (2015) notes “the role that ceasefire agreements which are consistent with humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law can play in facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance in order to help save civilian lives”; and *taking into account* all relevant Human Rights Council resolutions on Syria,

Noting, with regard to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, that those who perpetrate war crimes, including crimes against humanity, must be held responsible,

Considering that Syria has signed and ratified the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which has not been respected; and *stressing* the incalculable historic value of the ancient city of Aleppo, which is part of the heritage of humanity,

Emphasizing that, in the long term, the situation for people in Syria cannot be improved through humanitarian measures, but only through political negotiations,

1. *Condemns* in the strongest possible terms crimes, which target attacks against civilians in Syria, such as the targeting of hospitals, and attacks on and blockading of aid convoys, which are depriving over 550,000 civilians in besieged areas from almost all humanitarian aid;

* The Syrian Arab Republic rejected the entire resolution. Cuba expressed a reservation on operative paragraph 5 and preambular paragraphs 5, 6 and 8.

2. *Calls upon* all parties to the conflict to stop attacking civilians and civilian infrastructure, and besieging and forcefully evacuating cities, and to stop the suffering of people, with immediate effect;
3. *Appeals* to the parties to the conflict to reinstate the ceasefire agreement of 12 September 2016;
4. *Urges* the United States of America and the Russian Federation and all relevant parties involved in the conflict to resume serious dialogue aiming at a permanent, peaceful and political solution and at maintaining the unity and integrity of Syria, and to bring an end to this war that is claiming the lives of men, women and children;
5. *Requests* the United Nations Security Council to fulfil its primary responsibility of maintaining world peace and international security;
6. *Urges* the parties to the conflict to ensure the security and freedom of movement of humanitarian personnel, including those exclusively carrying out medical duties, medical staff, and United Nations staff; and *supports* the initiatives taken by the United Nations regarding humanitarian aid;
7. *Demands* immediate, unimpeded and permanent humanitarian and medical access in order to ensure that supplies reach the civilian population;
8. *Requests* its Members to undertake efforts to encourage their countries to increase emergency aid to the region, and support, in every possible way, aid organizations on the ground;
9. *Calls upon* the international community to make firm commitments and adequately support Syria's neighbouring countries, which are providing assistance to the refugees, to mitigate and address the impact of the large influx of Syrian refugees;
10. *Also calls upon* parliamentarians to urge their Governments to support the UNESCO campaign Unite4heritage, an initiative that stems from the destruction of the heritage of humanity in Syria and Iraq, and that is designed to support, champion and safeguard cultural inheritance;
11. *Urges* its Members to monitor the situation in Syria, to commit the parliamentary community to undertake further efforts to improve the situation in Syria, and to remain in close contact with all relevant parties, as well as the League of Arab States and the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union, which hold the status of Permanent Observers at the IPU.

Report of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

*Noted by the 135th IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 27 October 2016)*

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security held two sittings on 24 and 26 October 2016 with its President, Ms. L. Rojas (Mexico), in the chair.

Procedural items and any other business, including the announcement of events relevant to the mandate of the committee were dealt with at the beginning of the session. Elections were held and the five vacant posts were filled. Mr. R. Ossele Ndong (Gabon), Mr. A.L.S. Ssebagala (Uganda) and Ms. G. Katuta (Zambia) were elected for the African Group. Ms. S. Abid (Pakistan) and Mr. A. Suwanmongkol (Thailand) were elected for the Asia-Pacific Group.

During the 24 October sitting, the Committee held an expert hearing on *The role of parliament in preventing outside interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States*, the topic of a resolution that is expected to be adopted by the 136th IPU Assembly in Dhaka (Bangladesh). The Committee heard the key expert followed by the co-Rapporteurs.

The hearing opened with a presentation from the expert, Mr. F. Zarbiyev, Professor of International Law at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva. His statement clarified the principle of non-interference, which is often invoked in contexts where it is not clear if it is a legal principle or a general idea of how States should behave. In addition, peculiarly, its very existence is sometimes brought into question although many legal instruments refer to it. Mr. Zarbiyev cautioned that the principle should not be limited to activities within the borders of States. Non-interference relates to both internal and external affairs. Intervention is to be understood when a State interferes in the internal affairs of another State on matters that can be chosen freely, such as its political organization and when it uses methods of coercion to do so. Mr. Zarbiyev concluded his presentation with an overview of the historical evolution of the place of the principle of non-interference in a globalized world in the context of recent developments. He mentioned that the concept of humanitarian intervention is not an unlawful intervention if it meets certain characteristics, i.e. being non-discriminatory and aiming to alleviate human suffering. With regard to the concept of the responsibility to protect (R2P), he stated that it does not contradict the principle of non-intervention. The 2005 World Summit document clearly mentions that the responsibility to protect the population lies with each individual State. However, intervention is not prohibited if the government brutalizes its people or commits massive human rights violations.

The co-Rapporteurs, Ms. S. Koutra-Koukouma (Cyprus) and Mr. K. Kosachev (Russian Federation), took the floor to explain why they had decided to study this subject item and to welcome comments from their peers. They referred to the basic principle of non-intervention and to the fact that everyone is in favour of helping people who are victims of crimes. They also stated that there is a red line regarding the legality of intervening to change a regime.

Further to the expert's and Rapporteurs' interventions, a total of 34 speakers took the floor during the discussion. The majority of interventions referred to the need to keep non-intervention in State affairs as the main principle and that intervention should be decided on a case-by-case basis. The challenges in interpreting non-interference and related concepts were also addressed. Speakers raised the issue of the growing cases of external intervention and the fact that it undermines peace and international security, giving the example of the Middle East, which is in chaos. The protection of human rights and non-intervention were not incompatible but using human rights as an excuse to launch an intervention was unacceptable. Some participants referred to humanitarian intervention and R2P as modern expressions of imperialism and that interventions in their names had brought chaos, and led some countries to fall apart due to conflicting interests. Several participants stated that conflict prevention, reconstruction and early recovery should be the preferred route and military intervention should be a last resort. They also called for good governance as a means to avoid intervention. Lastly, many considered that reform of the UN Security Council was necessary.

Mr. Zarbiyev concluded the meeting by addressing the tension between sovereignty and human rights. Human rights were an international issue and human rights concerns did not qualify as a prohibited intervention since States were entitled to take measures against another State that was violating human rights. However, that did not mean that human rights should be used as a pretext for regime change.

On 26 October, the Committee held its second and last sitting and examined two items through back-to-back panels.

The first panel dealt with the promotion of democratic accountability of the private security sector. During the Lusaka Assembly, the topic had been presented as a potential subject item for the upcoming resolution. Although it had been defeated with the issue of outside interference being the preferred option for the next resolution, the Bureau of the Committee had proposed to keep an eye on the issue and to organize a panel discussion during this Assembly. Mr. F. Lombardi, a Swiss delegate, was the promoter of the subject item and agreed to be the moderator of this segment. MPs discussed the fact that the security landscape was changing and new actors were emerging, such as private military and security companies (PMSCs); whose range of services were becoming increasingly diversified while their nature and role often remained unclear. Two experts took the floor: Ms. H. Obregón Gieseken, Legal Adviser, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Ms. A.M. Burdzy, Project Officer, Public-Private Partnerships Division, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF). They referred to the Montreux document on pertinent international legal obligations and good practices for States related to operations of private military and security companies during armed conflict¹ (September 2008). This document informs actors of obligations regarding private military and security companies in war zones. It lists some 70 recommendations for good State practices towards PMSCs and many of them can also be applied during peace time. The panellists also presented the legislative guidance tool created by DCAF². This tool was a response to growing challenges in national regulation of the private security industry. It is aimed to provide guidance to parliamentarians, lawmakers, members of oversight committees and other actors in national legislative processes who were in the process of updating or developing national regulation related to PMSCs.

Following the experts' interventions, a total of 11 speakers took the floor during the discussion. Participants discussed possible measures that parliaments could take to regulate and oversee the activities of these companies. The majority of the interventions referred to the growing number of PMSCs around the world and the challenges they created to the traditional role of government in maintaining peace and security. Many expressed concerns that PMSCs seriously endangered international peace and security whereas others were of the view that privatization of security was an irreversible trend. Speakers mentioned that proper international and domestic legislative framework was needed to support implementation of international law on PMSCs. Parliaments that had already legislated on the issue encouraged their peers to do the same and to cooperate. Participants also raised the question of the legitimacy of PMSCs' actions and the need to follow the international code of conduct for private service providers to frame the privatization of security trend.

The two panellists concluded by recalling the Montreux document and its related forums which could assist MPs in legislating on PMSCs issues. They also mentioned that their respective organizations could provide technical assistance if needed.

During the second panel, Committee members heard three presentations: from Mr. D. Plesch, Director of the Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy, SOAS University, Mr. I. Sene, Member of the 1540 Committee established pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1540 and Ms. D. Pascal Allende, Second Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies of Chile.

Mr. Plesch presented the Strategic Concept for the Removal of Arms and Proliferation (SCRAP) proposal, which provided a holistic approach to global disarmament through the adoption of an international legally binding agreement for complete and general disarmament. He highlighted the need for MPs to promote implementation of existing treaties and mechanisms such as the NTP and UN Security Council resolution 1540. He also stated that disarmament should not be treated as business as usual since this would lead to World War III. Mr. Sene called for increased international engagement, especially on non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. He urged parliamentarians to assist in the implementation of resolution 1540 and recalled that even if States did not own weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), they might have the material to build them and that these could fall into the hands of non-state actors. He also briefed Committee members on the comprehensive review of the resolution 1540 and referred to the IPU regional seminar held in Abidjan as a good example to engage MPs in the implementation of the resolution. Ms. Pascal Allende referred to the current new arms race and its attendant concerns. She also mentioned that nuclear weapons were a global threat to peace and international security and that complete nuclear disarmament should be the ultimate aim.

¹ https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/icrc_002_0996.pdf

² <http://www.dcaf.ch/Publications/Legislative-Guidance-Tool-for-States-to-Regulate-Private-Military-and-Security-Companies>

The ensuing debate involved 14 speakers, including one observer to the IPU.

Interventions referred mainly to disarmament as a major issue of international security and called for international process to be established to ensure the elimination of certain weapons globally. Many speakers made the point that some States who claimed to be reducing their arsenal were in reality modernizing them by acquiring new and improved weapons. The need to budget for peace and not for war in order to meet Agenda 2030 was stressed. Small arms and light weapons were considered much more murderous than the weapons of mass destruction. International cooperation was needed to achieve disarmament.

The Bureau of the Standing Committee met on 27 October; ten out of 18 members were present.

The President of the Committee proposed that it establish its work programme around the areas on its agenda and decide how to address them, i.e. through panels, reports, workshops or field visits. Two members proposed adding non-interference to the listed topics.

The Bureau discussed its working methods. Some members called for a manual of Committee bureau members to be drafted, including the exact mandate of the committee. Members also stated that they would like to hold additional Bureau meetings between Assemblies to discuss at length emerging issues pertaining to the peace and security agenda.

Members agreed that the President would communicate with them shortly after the Assembly with a proposal for a two-year work-plan which they will be invited to comment on and validate.

Lastly, the Bureau was briefed on the concept of sustaining peace by Mr. O. Fernandez-Taranco, UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support and Head of the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO).

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

*Noted by the 135th IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 27 October 2016)*

The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade held its sittings on 25 and 26 October 2016 with its President, Ms. S. Tioulong (Cambodia), in the chair.

Parliamentary contribution to the 2016 United Nations Climate Change Conference

This segment discussed the preliminary draft outcome document of the Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference that would take place on 13 November in Marrakech.

The session started with an overview of the Paris Agreement on climate change. Mr. S. Huq, Director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development, summarized the main provisions of the Paris Agreement, as well as the ratification mechanism and highlighted that the ratification process was quicker than expected, especially in comparison with the Kyoto Protocol. He expressed the hope that members of parliament from developed countries would press their governments to provide funds and technology to developing countries to cut gas emissions. He also encouraged parliamentarians from developing countries to put in place accountability and oversight mechanisms to ensure effective use of technical and financial resources.

Mr. A. Touizi, member of the House of Councillors of Morocco and rapporteur to the Parliamentary Meeting in Marrakech, introduced his draft document to the Committee. He stressed that the Parliamentary Meeting in Marrakech could be fundamental to help understand how the policies and provisions set out in the Paris Agreement would be implemented at the national level. He emphasized the need for a human dimension to climate change, which also included reflections on gender equality.

Fourteen delegates took the floor and provided comments on the draft outcome document. They largely expressed agreement with the current text and highlighted that the Paris Agreement was an occasion for all countries to transition from non-renewable to renewable sources. They were encouraged to submit all comments in writing.

In his final remarks, Mr. Huq noted that climate change had increasingly become an issue that was being taken up across party lines and was no longer a trigger of political conflict in countries.

Debate on *Promoting enhanced international cooperation on the SDGs, in particular on the financial inclusion of women as a driver of development*

At the beginning of the debate, the Committee endorsed the appointment of Mr. N.K. Premachandran from India as a rapporteur, to replace Ms. P. Mahajan, also from India.

This debate was organized around the theme of the future Committee resolution, expected to be adopted at the 136th Assembly in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The purpose of the debate was to provide the Committee with an opportunity to exchange views about challenges that stood in the way of ensuring the financial inclusion of women. The debate would also provide the co-Rapporteurs with initial information about how IPU Member Parliaments might approach the issue.

The debate was chaired by Mr. J. Fried, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the World Trade Organization. It included a panel of experts consisting of Ms. G. Fraser-Moleketi, Special Envoy on Gender of the African Development Bank; Ms. S. Iqbal, Manager of Women, Business and the Law Project, World Bank Group; and Ms. D. Tembo, Deputy Executive Director of the International Trade Centre.

Ms. Fraser-Moleketi presented the results of a recently-published study from McKinsey on how advancing women's equality could add US\$ 12 trillion to global growth. She pointed out the importance of countries coming together to raise funds for implementation of gender-sensitive policies in view of the economic empowerment of women. She added that national ownership of funds and technical assistance from key development partners were vital for success and that technology in particular was a way to empower women and facilitate their participation in national economies. Ms. Fraser-Moleketi also

drew the Committee's attention to the role that parliaments could play in this context. She affirmed that they not only had a pressing moral and social duty to approve supportive legislation but also had to create an enabling environment in terms of attitude leveraging their representative role.

Ms. Iqbal briefed the Committee about the work that the World Bank was conducting on the issue of the financial inclusion of women, especially on the collection and analysis of data in view of evidence-based recommendations to countries. She mentioned the example of the Democratic Republic of the Congo that had recently approved new legislation that allowed women to open a bank account without permission from men. She added that effective implementation of supportive legislation was likely to produce positive outcomes in terms of women's health and access to education. She also stated that the financial inclusion of women was the result of an ecosystem-wide effort where all actors and stakeholders were called to play a decisive role. Ms. Iqbal informed the Committee that according to a World Bank study, the presence of women MPs in parliament was a strong driver of renewed legislation on the issue, as well as positive change in terms of attitudes.

Ms. D. Tembo stressed the critical inequality factor among women living in urban and rural areas, according to which a one-size-fits-all approach would not be able to generate positive outcomes. She emphasized that parliaments and other political institutions should aim to maximize positive outcomes of the most vulnerable women, especially the ones living in hard-to-reach areas. While it was important to achieve equal representation between women and men in parliaments, she identified the involvement of men in renewed legislation as a critical factor for changing attitudes at the community level. She invited members of parliament to exercise their oversight role to make sure that legislation was effectively implemented.

A total of 21 delegates took part in the debate that followed. Most of them shared the good practices that their countries had put in place for the financial inclusion of women as a driver of development. Several delegations provided concrete examples of laws and policies that their parliaments had developed in this area. Some pointed out that affordable housing and childcare would be instrumental to supporting the financial inclusion of women. Others mentioned the practice already adopted by some countries to avail themselves of a gender-responsive budget and highlighted the pivotal role of the private sector in turning the financial inclusion of women into reality.

At the end of the debate, the rapporteurs, Ms. G. Cuevas (Mexico) and Mr. N.K. Premachandran (India) reflected on the input received and how they would like to include it in the draft resolution. They invited the panellists and delegates to send them written comments by 16 November.

Panel discussion on *The role of parliaments in countering the activities of vulture funds*

The panel discussion was chaired by the President of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade and benefitted from the expert contribution of Mr. A. Gwynne, MP, United Kingdom, Mr. S. Crusnière, Member of the House of Representatives, Belgium, and Mr. T. Stichelmans de Castro Freire, Policy and Networking Analyst, European Network on Debt and Development (Eurodad).

Mr. Stichelmans explained that vulture funds were private entities that acquired distressed debt on the secondary market for a lower-than-face value. Vulture funds then waited for an improvement in the financial situation of the debtor State to sue the debtor to get reimbursement of the full value. He affirmed that they undermined countries' capacity to invest in development and poverty alleviation. Mr. Stichelmans outlined a set of solutions that were being discussed at the global level to counter vulture funds, pointing out that the best possible solution would be the creation of an independent international sovereign debt mechanism.

Mr. Gwynne explained how he had managed to have a landmark bill on vulture funds approved in his country and why it was a first attempt, hence a precedent, to protect poor countries from being sued for vulture funds using the UK judicial system.

Mr. Crusnière presented the main provisions of Belgian legislation on vulture funds, which was considered as the most advanced worldwide. He outlined the main provisions of legislation that limited the duty of countries to repay vulture funds, especially if there was a demonstrated disproportion between face value and issue price.

Nine delegations took the floor in the ensuing debate. Members of parliament highlighted the need to counter vulture funds to put in place better strategies for national development and poverty alleviation. They agreed that vulture funds represented a human rights abuse perpetrated by the rich. Members of parliament also pointed out that vulture funds were not illegal and therefore an extraordinary effort from countries was needed to be made in order to have the issue regulated at the national level. They called for the issue to be further examined in plenary at a future IPU Assembly.

Elections to the Bureau

The Committee elected Mr. C. Tursunbekov (Kyrgyzstan) to fill the vacancy for the Eurasia Group.

In addition, GRULAC nominated Mr. R.F. Acuña Nuñez (Peru) to complete the term of Mr. J. León (Peru), who was no longer an MP. Mr. Nuñez's term will therefore end in October 2019. The Committee endorsed the change.

The Committee approved the proposal from the Bureau to dedicate time allocated to the Committee at the 136th IPU Assembly to the drafting of the resolution.

Report of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

*Noted by the 135th IPU Assembly
(Geneva, 27 October 2016)*

The President introduced two new appointments to the Bureau, Ms. B. Sampatisiri (Thailand) and Mr. D. Asylbek uulu (Kyrgyzstan), and invited the Committee to formally elect these members by acclamation.

Pursuant to Standing Committee Rule 10.2, the President further proposed that a Bureau recommendation to replace Ms. I. Montenegro (Nicaragua) for failure to participate in meetings be adopted by the Committee. As no objection was raised, the Committee agreed with this recommendation.

The President then proceeded to open the plenary debate, which consisted of two sessions.

The following panellists took part in the first session, *Funding the United Nations*: Mr. R. Lalli, Secretary, High-level Committee on Management (HLCM), United Nations, Ms. B. Adams, Board Member, Global Policy Forum, Ms. E. Nursanty, MP, Indonesia, Ms G. Ortiz, Senator, Mexico

Mr. Lalli began the session with a presentation outlining the key facts and figures of the UN funding model and building on a comprehensive background note prepared by the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs. A total of 15 interventions, including two from UN entities (UNDP and OCHA), were heard in the ensuing debate.

Over the past two decades, the UN funding model had become over-dependent on earmarked, voluntary funding from relatively few donor countries, as well as a growing number of non-government donors (e.g. the Gates Foundation). This pattern obtained across the entire system of over 30 entities (i.e. agencies, funds and programmes) in addition to the UN proper. Each of these entities had its own governing body, making it difficult for the UN “system” to act coherently, under a central budget authority.

More earmarked funding as opposed to core funding not targeted to specific activities made long-term planning difficult. Other downsides of earmarking included: high transaction costs to negotiate bilateral funding and abide by different donors’ reporting requirements; potential “bias” in terms of the work the United Nations might end up doing to satisfy major donor demands, potentially at the expense of its own core mandate; increased competition for limited donor funds between agencies; a diversion of core resources to support voluntary (non-core) projects; and a “bilateralization” of UN funding in what could be called a “pay to play” system and in contradiction with the very nature of the United Nations as a multilateral organization.

It was noted that the total annual budget of the UN system, including development operations, peacekeeping, humanitarian and normative work amounted to a mere US\$ 48 billion, or about half the operating budget of the City of New York, or US\$ 6 per person (globally). Any discussion about the UN budget should consider first and foremost whether this amount is adequate to support such a large worldwide organization whose workload has grown considerably bigger over the years in the face of mounting global challenges. This is best exemplified by the humanitarian work of the UN (31% of its budget), which has grown three-fold in just one decade.

From the perspective of “value for money”, there is no question that the UN is delivering a lot to the world. Programme support fees that the UN charges donors to execute their chosen projects is well below those charged by other major international agencies and even NGOs (8-10% vs. 15-18% on average). Under pressure from Member States, and in order to meet difficult budget circumstances, the United Nations has taken and continues to take a number of measures to make itself more efficient and cost-effective. Yet this can only go so far: without additional resources, the United Nations cannot be asked to meet ever increasing demands.

In the end, Member States were caught in a contradiction: at the same time as they were asking the United Nations to “self-correct”, streamlining operations, innovating, and improving administrative procedures to cut costs, they insist on earmarked funding despite its well-known downsides. Similarly, while Member States insisted on austerity and expected the UN to do its own fundraising, they were generally opposed to innovative funding practices such as international taxes, which could provide the United Nations with an independent revenue stream.

Parliaments can play a major role in this issue as they have the final say on all allocations to the UN through the budget process. Yet very few MPs truly understand how the UN is funded as this information tends to be broken down in different sections of the budget document. MPs generally lack awareness of the *kind* of funding that goes to the UN and not just of the total amount that each government contributes. Conversely, MPs in countries that are at the receiving end of UN operations know even less about those operations and their costs.

At the end of the debate, the President invited participants to look more carefully at the budget document to see how funding for the various agencies and programmes is presented. MPs should consider asking their governments to summarize all allocations to the UN into a single annex to the budget document. This annex would need to clearly identify the kind of contribution to the UN – i.e. assessed, voluntary, earmarked – and not just the amounts.

The second session was devoted to *The UN response to allegations of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse by UN peacekeepers*. The following experts participated in the debate: Mr. B. Klappe, Senior Military Legal Expert, Office of the Special Coordinator on improving UN response to sexual exploitation and abuse, United Nations; Ms. S. Whitman, Executive Director, Roméo Dallaire Child Soldier Initiative, Canada (via Skype); Ms. A. Rashed Albasti, MP, United Arab Emirates; Mr. E. Mokolo Wa Mpombo, First Vice-President of the Senate, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The session began with a presentation by Mr. Klappe outlining the main steps the United Nations had taken to prevent its peacekeepers from committing sexual abuse and exploiting children and adults. A number of such violations had occurred over the years partly as a result of a reconfiguration of peacekeeping, which required more interaction between peacekeepers and the civilian population in conflict zones. Despite a long-standing zero tolerance policy on the matter, in 2014 the need for a comprehensive policy review became urgent as a result of a whistle-blower exposing the failure of the UN to deal with sexual abuse cases involving peacekeepers in the Central African Republic.

Following the recommendations of an independent panel of experts, and under the leadership of a Special Coordinator, the UN response included such steps as: creating an interdepartmental steering group to oversee peacekeeping operations; putting in place a clear, system-wide protocol for victims assistance (on the premise that victim protection must come first); establishing clear accountability lines to identify who is responsible for what action throughout the chain of command; developing a common glossary to clarify the various meanings of sexual abuse and exploitation; and establishing a trust fund to support victims.

Conflict is in itself a form of abuse of the civilian population, and particularly of children. Sexual abuse and exploitation are unfortunately all too common around the world and in both public and private sectors. Notwithstanding these considerations, the United Nations must make every possible effort to protect innocent civilians from abuse by the hands of their protectors, i.e. peacekeepers, and to ensure that people can trust the United Nations as a force for good in all circumstances. No abuse is ever justified and the argument that poverty, cultural differences, and other vulnerabilities of people in conflict countries contribute to the problem should be roundly rejected as an attempt “to blame the victim” instead of the perpetrators.

Key steps to prevent new cases of abuse include: ensuring soldiers are properly trained on human rights, and on appropriate conduct in the field, not just before deployment but from the beginning and throughout their careers; shortening the length of time troops are deployed; and making more systematic use of the UN Secretary-General’s authority to dismiss an entire contingent in case of any violation. An overlooked approach but possibly a game changer when it comes to prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation may be the inclusion of more women soldiers in peacekeeping missions. Women are far less likely to commit sexual violations than men. As investigators, women are also better suited to obtain evidence from children and other women.

Next to prevention, ensuring a proper handling of each allegation is key to the whole process. Collecting evidence and testimonials as soon as possible and on-site is critical to ensure a fair hearing or a possible trial. Ideally, troop-contributing countries should provide the United Nations with access to a DNA sample from each soldier (DNA data bank), should allegations arise regarding unlawful physical contact, or to settle paternity cases.

Regarding the legal jurisdiction that should apply to each case, the UN default option can only be the jurisdiction of the soldier's nationality. Leaving it to the host country's court system to try such cases is not advisable given that most countries in conflict lack the capacities to uphold the rule of law. Countries where peacekeepers are present should collect evidence of abuse in response to an allegation and in concert with the UN authorities in the field.

Parliamentarians can help facilitate legislation to make sure that the highest standards of accountability as well as due process under the law are followed. In troop-contributing countries, parliaments can make DNA collection from soldiers mandatory before deployment. They can also require that all deployments and their applicable conditions are subject to parliamentary approval. In troop-receiving countries, parliaments can ensure laws allow UN investigators the right to interview witnesses as needed. Parliaments and civil society organizations can do more to educate people to reduce the risk of sexual abuse and exploitation. They can review the training programmes provided to their troops to ensure adequate respect for human and gender rights, and child protection.

Most importantly, parliaments everywhere must make sure that sexual abuse and exploitation are properly defined and classified as crimes under the law.

Strong democratic parliaments serving the people

IPU Strategy for 2017-2021

*Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 199th session
(Geneva, 27 October 2016)*

VISION

We want a world where every voice counts, where democracy and parliaments are at the service of the people for peace and development.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the global organization of national parliaments.

We promote democratic governance, institutions and values, working with parliaments and parliamentarians to articulate and respond to the needs and aspirations of the people.

We work for peace, democracy, human rights, gender equality, youth empowerment and sustainable development through political dialogue, cooperation and parliamentary action.

CORE VALUES

These core values are intended to apply to the entire IPU community—its Members and the IPU Secretariat—and to serve as guiding principles for all of our actions.

Equality: Ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are treated fairly, in the same way and no less favourably than others irrespective of race, gender, disability, religion or belief, political persuasion, sexual orientation or age. We promote equality with the ultimate aim of eliminating discrimination and injustice.

Inclusiveness: Harnessing the full spectrum of views, needs and concerns within society in order to foster a sense of belonging. We promote inclusive parliaments that mirror and represent the interests of all sectors of society.

Respect: Recognizing, showing regard for and valuing cultural, religious, ethnic, political, linguistic and other differences. We promote mutual respect as a prerequisite for constructive dialogue and resolving disputes.

Integrity: Acting with honour, openness and probity, without compromising the truth. Parliament's integrity as an institution and the integrity of its members are essential to its legitimacy. We act as an impartial broker in conflict or post-conflict situations.

Solidarity: Fostering a sense of community, togetherness and unity of interests for the world parliamentary community. Supporting each other and working together as one. We promote parliamentary solidarity in all our areas of work and inter-parliamentary cooperation.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Build strong, democratic parliaments

The core legislative, oversight, budgetary and representative functions of parliament are essential to the quality of a country's overall governance. The IPU's Strategy for 2017-2021 focuses on strengthening these core functions to enable parliaments to contribute to democracy and help meet the aspirations of the people. Parliament's role in ensuring accountability for commitments undertaken at all levels is crucial to the proper functioning of any democracy. This is also in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 on strengthening the rule of law and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. We pursue an integrated approach, developing research and tools and establishing norms, then applying them in concrete ways in national contexts.

Promote standards-setting and knowledge generation

The IPU will continue to promote its criteria for democratic parliaments as outlined in *Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice*. We will encourage parliaments to assess their performance based on these criteria and will create mechanisms and tools for parliaments to review their performance on a voluntary basis. As and when the need arises, we will develop new standards and guidelines for good parliamentary practice.

We will continue to serve as the global platform for information gathering and dissemination, as well as knowledge generation, on parliaments, and parliamentary procedure and practice. We will further develop our online databases such as PARLINE, and collect and disseminate information on women in parliament and youth participation. On a regular basis and in cooperation with UNDP, the IPU will publish a *Global Parliamentary Report* on the state of the world's parliaments. We will pursue a publication programme focusing on parliaments' good practices, and new and emerging topics in parliamentary development.

Build institutional capacity

Effective, well-structured and well-resourced parliaments are essential to a vibrant democracy. The global development commitments articulated in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underline the importance of parliaments' contribution to good governance. The IPU will continue to strengthen parliaments around the globe, with a particular focus on parliaments in countries that have recently emerged from conflict and/or States that are undergoing a process of transition towards parliamentary democracy. We will provide tailored advice and programmes of assistance. In so doing, we will apply the *Common Principles for Support to Parliaments* by enabling parliaments to effectively develop their capacity to perform their legislative, oversight, budgetary and representative functions. In line with the Common Principles, IPU support will be underpinned by the premise that it is parliaments' responsibility to take the lead nationally in promoting democracy, the rule of law, human rights, including women's rights, and youth participation. To better serve the interest of parliaments, we will further coordinate our efforts in order to improve the quality and impact of our support. We will continue to build on our work on research, standards and good practices. The IPU is also mindful of the need to use new information and communication technologies (ICTs and e-Parliament), and will encourage parliaments to do so to modernize the way they function.

Objective 2: Advance gender equality and respect for women's rights

The IPU has been instrumental in advancing gender equality in and through parliaments. Its many achievements can only inspire further commitment and investment as social, economic and political obstacles to equality persist. We will support parliaments in becoming strong and gender-sensitive institutions able to drive the gender equality agenda. The IPU will promote legal reform to deliver on women's rights and empowerment. In meeting this objective, the IPU will work in close cooperation with key partners such as UN Women.

Support women's political empowerment

The IPU will continue its action to enhance women's access to parliament and strengthen their input to policymaking. We will advocate for the development of national strategies and help strengthen national frameworks that facilitate women's full and equal access to parliament. The IPU will support women members of parliament in their work, including by providing them with technical assistance and training, and we will build their capacity, including through the use of ICTs and mentorships for newly elected women MPs.

Promote gender-sensitive parliaments

The IPU has laid the foundation for transforming parliaments into gender-sensitive institutions. We will continue to support parliaments in their efforts to both embody gender equality and deliver it—through their organization, working modalities, functioning and capacities. We will develop standards and issue guidelines on gender-sensitive policies and procedures, and provide capacity-building support to parliamentary bodies that deal with gender equality and women's issues. This will help members of parliament and parliamentary staff to strengthen their capacities in gender mainstreaming and ensure the exchange of good practices. Building gender-sensitive parliaments will also provide a direct contribution to SDGs 5 and 16 and facilitate the mainstreaming of gender equality in the implementation of all the SDGs.

Ensure women's rights

Following on from the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and the 1995 Beijing Platform of Action, work on gender equality must be accelerated and priority must be given to addressing de jure and de facto inequalities that persist. To this end, the IPU will focus its actions on supporting parliaments to:

- Identify and address discrimination, particularly discriminatory laws, and implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- Combat violence against women and girls
- Engage in gender-sensitive legal reform, and
- Build national strategies and frameworks to facilitate women's empowerment, including in the economic sphere.

In all of our action we will pay particular attention to engaging men and building partnerships between men and women for the promotion of equality and women's rights.

Objective 3: Protect and promote human rights

Parliaments and their members are uniquely placed to help translate international human rights norms into national realities. The IPU will continue to help parliaments carry out their responsibilities to protect the human rights of their members and, by providing members with information, knowledge and training, enable them to actively promote and protect the human rights of all persons.

Protect the human rights of MPs

We will continue to pursue the IPU's unique international role in promoting respect for MPs' human rights, and to advocate for redress in cases where those rights have been violated. We will step up action to enhance the involvement of relevant stakeholders—in particular, IPU Member Parliaments, IPU geopolitical groups, UN human rights monitoring mechanisms, and the human rights community at large—in the resolution of the cases brought to the attention of the IPU. We will increasingly use statistics and visual tools, and make our jurisprudence easily available, in order to draw attention to the serious risks faced by MPs across the world. Additional research and advocacy regarding some of the recurrent concerns in the IPU's casework should help promote understanding of underlying, cross-cutting issues and prevent new violations. The IPU will pay particular attention to how women parliamentarians are affected by human rights abuses.

Increase parliaments' contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights

The IPU will continue to support parliaments in fulfilling their role in the practical implementation of international human rights norms. We will mobilize parliaments to address current and pressing human rights challenges. We will step up our efforts to ensure that parliaments around the world become fully aware of the work of the UN Human Rights Council and are involved in its Universal Periodic Review. The IPU will raise parliamentary awareness of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as well as other key international human rights treaties. The role of parliaments in the implementation of these treaties and, where they have not been ratified, their ratification, will be the focus of this work. We will also help build parliamentary capacity to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The IPU will serve as a bridge between parliaments and the UN human rights machinery, and promote synergies that will strengthen action and improve efficacy. We will also collect and disseminate information on parliamentary mechanisms and processes that effectively support a robust national human rights agenda. Our *Human Rights Handbook for Parliamentarians* provides information and suggests action that can be taken with respect to the promotion and protection of human rights. We will continue to be guided by this Handbook and will further develop it as required.

Promote respect for international humanitarian law

The IPU will continue to engage parliaments, seeking their contribution and action in addressing major challenges to international humanitarian law. This will include support to ensure ratification and implementation of conventions pertaining to such law, including the Geneva Conventions and other agreements dealing with refugee protection and statelessness. In this we will work in close coordination with partners such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

Objective 4: Contribute to peace building, conflict prevention and security

The IPU was founded on the premise of dialogue and the peaceful resolution of conflict. The role of parliaments in building peace and helping to prevent conflict—through dialogue and diplomacy—is crucial. Parliaments also play a pivotal role in restoring peace and fostering reconciliation in post-conflict situations. Strengthening security, including action to counter terrorism, is also fundamental to development and a major enabler of democracy. In this, too, parliaments play a central role—through legislation, budget allocation and the exercise of oversight to ensure implementation.

Ensure political reconciliation through dialogue and inclusiveness

The IPU plays a special role in countries emerging from conflict, helping develop their parliaments into robust and democratic institutions that can lead the way in healing national divisions. We encourage parliaments to do this work through dialogue and cooperation based on understanding and openness, a culture of tolerance and moderation, and highlighting the importance of political plurality and inclusiveness in decision-making. Parliaments are at the heart of reconciliation processes. MPs can lead the way in demonstrating how to work together across political, cultural and religious divides, and in engaging in constructive dialogue as a means of settling outstanding disputes. We support and will continue to support parliaments in post-conflict circumstances. We will do so by promoting consultation between MPs, and helping them—and parliaments as a whole—to contribute to national reconciliation by addressing the wounds of the past and collaborating on ways forward that will help build viable societies and create lasting peace.

Foster parliamentary diplomacy

A key part of the IPU's work is carried out through parliamentary diplomacy in some of the world's most intractable conflict areas. The IPU offers a privileged space for parliamentary diplomacy: Through IPU Assemblies we provide a neutral venue for members of parliament from different countries and political factions to exchange views and experiences, and discuss conflicts within and between countries. Making use of parliamentary diplomacy at the national or regional levels can help defuse tensions and resolve a conflict by peaceful means before it spirals out of control. The IPU is often called upon to leverage its good offices in addressing problematic issues that threaten the rule of law. We will continue to bring opposing sides to a conflict together under the IPU's auspices through our various formal and informal mechanisms.

Take action on counter-terrorism and disarmament

The IPU assists parliaments in dealing with various threats to security, including organized crime, small arms and light weapons, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We also work to prevent violent extremism and to counter terrorism. In so doing, we are partnering with the United Nations and other actors to fill the implementation gap in international counter-terrorism instruments, and to meet non-proliferation and disarmament commitments. This includes full implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1540, as well as working towards achieving a nuclear weapons-free world. We will provide parliaments with the legislative tools and training required to transpose international commitments into national laws and oversee their implementation in line with human rights obligations. We will raise awareness among our Members of initiatives and instruments proposed as part of global efforts to combat terrorism. Through action on human rights and empowerment of women and youth, we will also seek to prevent terrorism, which is often fuelled by hatred, intolerance and discrimination.

The IPU will also focus on urban security as an emerging issue. All activities conducted under this objective will take into consideration United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security, and resolution 2250 on youth, peace and security.

Objective 5: Promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation

Since its inception, the IPU has served as the focal point for inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation. We seek to foster contacts, coordination and the exchange of experience among parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries. As noted by Speakers of Parliament at their World Conferences, the IPU is also called upon to cooperate closely with regional and other parliamentary organizations with a view to enhancing coherence and efficiency in global and interregional parliamentary cooperation.

Provide an effective forum for international political dialogue

The IPU will continue to consolidate its role as a unique global convener, bringing together MPs and other partners around issues and initiatives. IPU Assemblies serve to foster dialogue, understanding and exchange between MPs from all regions and of all political persuasions to identify good practices, and to help mobilize parliamentary action on issues of particular relevance for citizens, parliaments and the global community. We will strive to further improve the format, functioning and outcomes of our Assemblies, Standing Committees and other bodies. In close cooperation with Member Parliaments and partner organizations, greater effort will be made to improve the statutory reporting exercise and ensure effective follow-up of IPU decisions and resolutions.

Build greater coherence and effectiveness in global parliamentary cooperation

Parliamentary organizations and networks have proliferated over the past few decades. Our strategy will include seeking enhanced engagement and fostering synergies with and among these groups. The majority of parliamentary bodies are already institutionally related to the IPU as Associate Members and Permanent Observers, and we will continue to identify opportunities to reach out to and cooperate with as many of them as possible. We will work to build on the comparative advantages of the various parliamentary bodies and to identify areas where efforts can be pooled, thereby reducing duplication and enhancing coherence and effectiveness in global parliamentary cooperation.

Achieve universal membership

As the global organization of national parliaments, the IPU will redouble its efforts to achieve universal membership and enhance its relationship with the 45,000 parliamentarians around the world. Parliaments that are not yet IPU Members will actively be encouraged to join. Efforts will be made to reach out to and engage with the parliaments of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and to facilitate their sustainable participation in IPU activities.

Objective 6: Promote youth empowerment

In recent years, we have promoted youth participation as a key element of democracy and inclusive and efficient political processes. We will further promote youth participation in politics, and support the involvement of young parliamentarians and youth in general in decision-making. The IPU will also support parliaments in better responding to the needs of youth and integrating their perspectives into parliamentary work. Throughout this process, we will build on the IPU's successful experience and lessons learned in promoting gender equality in politics, as they can be applied to increasing youth involvement.

Ensure youth participation in politics and decision-making

Democracy requires the engagement of young women and men, as they are key to tackling the many challenges faced by societies—poverty, discrimination, growing inequalities, migration, climate change, conflict, and barriers to education and employment. Youth participation in politics promotes active citizenship and strengthens social responsibility. It offers innovation, creativity and new thinking.

We will continue to work to engage young people in the advancement of democracy through parliament—to enhance inclusiveness by boosting youth participation and to foster efficiency in parliamentary work by promoting young people's involvement in policymaking. Our efforts to engage youth will be centred on three key programmes: a campaign to increase youth participation in parliament; youth-led mechanisms to connect and empower young MPs; and an observatory of youth representation in parliaments.

Enhance integration of youth perspectives in parliament

Delivering on youth empowerment also requires a focus on more technical dimensions of parliamentary work. As a source of expertise on both the functioning of parliament and the participation of youth in parliament, the IPU will provide technical support to parliaments through tailored programmes aimed at

enhancing the integration of youth perspectives and better responding to youth priorities. This support will be complemented by the development of guidelines on incorporating the viewpoints of youth — including through the use of ICTs and social media — as well as by regional capacity-building activities.

Objective 7: Mobilize parliaments around the global development agenda

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will guide the work of the IPU in this area. The IPU will work to mainstream this Agenda in parliaments and to help enhance the capacities of parliaments to oversee the implementation of the goals contained therein. Our work will recognize the interrelatedness of the SDGs and focus on their advancement, individually and collectively. The IPU will also concentrate on specific goals that are aligned with our core work, and on goals that we have a comparative advantage in helping to implement as a result of our expertise and available tools. As action on climate change, disaster risk reduction and health is a critical precondition for achieving the SDGs across the globe, our work will also emphasize these areas. Furthermore, attention will be paid to development cooperation as a key component of the means of implementation for the SDGs.

Engage parliaments on SDGs implementation

Together with partners, the IPU will work to raise awareness about the SDGs among parliaments. We will provide a platform to help parliaments take action and exchange experiences and good practices, including those related to effective development cooperation and education for sustainable development. We will thereby make a tangible contribution to the implementation of Agenda 2030 and its overarching objectives:

- End poverty in all its forms and reduce inequalities everywhere
- Ensure the sustainability of the planet for future generations
- Promote social justice and ensure access to justice for all,
- Tackle climate change, and
- Promote full and productive employment and decent work for all.

A three-pronged approach will be adopted to involve the national, regional and international levels. This will include promoting the engagement of parliaments in global reviews of progress on the SDGs being conducted within the framework of the United Nations.

Take action on climate change and disaster risk reduction

In keeping with the IPU's *Parliamentary Action Plan on Climate Change*, we will work in partnership with other international organizations, research institutions, private sector organizations and civil society in mobilizing parliamentary action to combat climate change. The IPU will continue to call upon parliaments to provide a comprehensive legislative response to climate change and to support the implementation of disaster risk reduction. The primary objective is to ensure that IPU Member Parliaments effectively translate the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as Agenda 2030, into appropriate national legislation and budget allocations. Parliaments should also provide rigorous oversight of government action in areas that include environmental protection, nationally determined contributions to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, adaptation to climate change, transition to clean energy, and the creation of environment-friendly jobs. The IPU Secretariat has already embarked upon an initiative to become greener and is taking active measures to further reduce its carbon footprint. Moreover, we will continue to promote action by parliaments to reduce the environmental impact of their operations.

Ensure good health and well-being

The right to health is a basic human right, and health is fundamental to human security. Universal access to good quality health care is critical to ending extreme poverty, promoting development and transformative change, and achieving the SDGs. Across the globe, far too many people, including women, children and adolescents, still have little or no access to essential health services and education. They remain unable to realize their right to health and to attain their maximum potential as human beings; they cannot participate fully in society, making a significant contribution to the communities in which they live. For these reasons, the IPU will assist parliaments in completing the unfinished business of the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including combating HIV/AIDS and fully implementing the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health. In cooperation with our partners—the World Health Organization (WHO); the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS); the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH); and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria—we will open avenues for strong parliamentary engagement to achieve a vision of health and universal coverage that leaves no-one behind.

Objective 8: Bridge the democracy gap in international relations

In an ever-more globalized and interdependent world, the United Nations remains the pillar of multilateral cooperation and plays a pivotal role in virtually all policy areas. The international commitments entered into by States have a direct impact on citizens and communities. This calls for parliaments and parliamentarians to play a critical role in bridging the gap between the global and local levels. The IPU pursues a strategy of mobilizing parliaments around the foremost issues facing the world. As part of this effort, we will continue to bring a parliamentary perspective to ongoing global initiatives and work with parliaments on the implementation of corresponding agreements. We will further enhance our strategic partnership with the United Nations and strengthen cooperation with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Bretton Woods institutions. In the process, we will seek to ensure strong parliamentary engagement in, oversight of and support for the work of the key institutions of global governance.

Ensure parliamentary engagement in and oversight of the work of the United Nations

The IPU will continue to facilitate interaction between parliamentarians and the United Nations community at both the national and international levels. We will help shape and promote parliamentary input to major global decision-making processes on the basis of policy recommendations emerging from IPU Assemblies and other formal meetings. We will partner with the United Nations through joint meetings and field programmes, and will work to build a more systematic interaction between UN field operations and national parliaments. We will encourage and support parliamentary action on the implementation of major global commitments and help mainstream UN processes into the work of parliaments. Through its Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs and other mechanisms, the IPU will seek to enhance coordination and build close and harmonious relations with the UN system, drawing on each other's respective strengths. We will also work to enhance accountability of the UN system and its various operations, with a view to ensuring that the United Nations is more effective, transparent and inclusive, and that it better meets the needs and expectations of the people.

Strengthen parliamentary action in relation to the WTO and the international financial institutions

Trade is a key driver of globalization and can help support inclusive and sustainable growth. The IPU will continue working with the European Parliament, and in cooperation with national parliaments and other regional parliamentary assemblies, will provide an effective parliamentary dimension to the WTO. We will work to raise awareness of and enhance the capacity of parliaments to monitor WTO activities, engage in dialogue with WTO negotiators, exchange information and experiences, and exert greater parliamentary influence on discussions and negotiations within the WTO. We will also seek to enhance the role of parliaments and parliamentarians vis-à-vis the international financial and development institutions (in particular the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and OECD), and to increase their transparency and accountability.

ENABLERS

Enabling actions to deliver on strategic objectives

How does the IPU meet its strategic objectives? Our overall goal is to build strong democratic parliaments serving the people, and to identify and implement effective means to accomplish this—means that will maximize our impact and ensure that our outcomes transcend the individual parties and interests with which we are engaged. In the current environment, we believe we need to focus in all that we do on mainstreaming enabling actions in the following five areas.

Effective internal governance and oversight

The Secretariat will increase its service to the IPU's governing bodies in their functions of directing and overseeing the Organization's work. Specifically, it will provide support on matters related to financial management and risk assessment. The Secretariat will ensure that the IPU complies with the highest reporting and audit standards, as well as other international management best practices. In the interest of greater transparency, the Secretariat will provide more detailed explanations of its decisions and procedures. As well, mindful of its social responsibility, the Secretariat will further adapt its practices and working methods to encourage and demonstrate respect for the community and the environment.

Visibility, advocacy and communications

In a complex and crowded environment, evolving communication technologies have a profound impact on the sharing of information and the shaping of opinions, public behaviour and political action. The IPU's voice has never been so important. The success of our drive to build a democratic world where peace, security and development are a reality for everyone depends on our ability to promote our values and vision, and effective communication on how the IPU's work can and does deliver positive change for people is critically important to our mission. We will work to create stronger and more strategic communications that make full and innovative use of diverse communication platforms, tools and techniques; strengthen credibility; ensure knowledge-sharing; build expertise; and enhance engagement among Members.

Gender mainstreaming and a rights-based approach

The inclusion and mainstreaming of gender equality and human rights in the IPU's work will enhance effectiveness and delivery on key objectives. We have adopted a gender mainstreaming policy and strategy that we will continue to implement, including through the development of tools, training sessions and reforms. We have also developed a strategy outlining how to implement an approach that respects, protects and promotes human rights for all, which we will continue to pursue. Through the application of these strategies, we will enhance parliaments' and our own capacity to promote and ensure respect for gender equality and human rights. These core enablers are part and parcel of the *Common Principles for Support to Parliaments*, which we spearheaded and enforce.

A properly resourced and efficient Secretariat

The Secretariat is committed to identifying and securing adequate human and financial resources to implement this *IPU Strategy for 2017-2021*, and will draw on the support of IPU Members and partners to do so. It encourages systematic planning, performance monitoring and reporting. It will continue to promote parliamentary standards and norms. The Secretariat will carry out its functions with increasing efficiency, professionalism and accountability, and is committed to the ongoing professional development of its staff.

Partnerships

In carrying out its work, the IPU will engage and collaborate with a broad array of partners from the United Nations system, other international organizations that share its objectives, regional and other parliamentary organizations, civil society, academia, foundations and the private sector.

IPU Budget for 2017

*Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 199th session
(Geneva, 27 October 2016)*

	2016 Approved Budget	2017 Approved Budget		
		Regular Budget	Other Sources	All Funds
REVENUES				
Assessed contributions	10,016,000	10,227,000		10,227,000
Working Capital Fund	356,100	337,000		337,000
Staff assessment	1,018,500	1,023,000		1,023,000
Interest	110,000	100,000		100,000
Programme support costs	0	312,800	(312,800)	0
Other revenue	16,000	16,000		16,000
Voluntary contributions	4,271,700		4,224,300	4,224,300
TOTAL REVENUES	15,788,300	12,015,800	3,911,500	15,927,300
EXPENDITURES				
Strategic Objectives				
1. Build strong, democratic parliaments	2,997,700	1,411,100	1,017,600	2,428,700
2. Advance gender equality and respect for women's rights	1,591,300	622,100	933,800	1,555,900
3. Protect and promote human rights	1,454,500	1,032,800	505,600	1,538,400
4. Promote youth empowerment	303,200		329,600	329,600
5. Mobilize parliaments around the global development agenda	1,054,400		1,083,700	1,083,700
6. Contribute to peacebuilding, conflict prevention and security	94,000	148,300	354,000	502,300
7. Promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation	3,201,400	3,182,000		3,182,000
8. Bridge the democracy gap in international relations	837,300	893,000		893,000
Subtotal	11,533,800	7,289,300	4,224,300	11,513,600
Enablers				
Effective internal governance and oversight	838,700	854,700		854,700
Visibility, advocacy and communications	967,800	1,086,900		1,086,900
Gender mainstreaming and a rights-based approach	10,000	10,000		10,000
Properly resourced and efficient Secretariat	2,649,400	2,668,900		2,668,900
Subtotal	4,465,900	4,620,500		4,620,500
Other charges	105,000	106,000		106,000
Eliminations	(316,400)		(312,800)	(312,800)
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	15,788,300	12,015,800	3,911,500	15,927,300

Approved 2017 capital budget

Item	2017
1. Replacement of computers	35,000
2. Furniture	15,000
3. Improved conference facilities	60,000
4. Website development	340,000
Total capital expenditures	450,000

Approved programme and budget for 2017

Scale of contributions for 2017 based on the UN scale of assessment

*Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 199th session
(Geneva, 27 October 2016)*

Country Name	UN 2016-2018	Approved 2017 scale	
	Per cent	Per cent	CHF
Afghanistan	0.006%	0.110%	11'200
Albania	0.008%	0.110%	11'200
Algeria	0.161%	0.310%	31'700
Andorra	0.006%	0.110%	11'200
Angola	0.010%	0.110%	11'200
Argentina	0.892%	1.120%	114'400
Armenia	0.006%	0.110%	11'200
Australia	2.337%	2.550%	260'500
Austria	0.720%	0.940%	96'000
Azerbaijan	0.060%	0.180%	18'400
Bahrain	0.044%	0.160%	16'300
Bangladesh	0.010%	0.110%	11'200
Belarus	0.056%	0.180%	18'400
Belgium	0.885%	1.110%	113'400
Benin	0.003%	0.100%	10'200
Bhutan	0.001%	0.100%	10'200
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	0.012%	0.120%	12'300
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.013%	0.120%	12'300
Botswana	0.014%	0.120%	12'300
Brazil	3.823%	3.960%	404'500
Bulgaria	0.045%	0.160%	16'300
Burkina Faso	0.004%	0.110%	11'200
Burundi	0.001%	0.100%	10'200
Cabo Verde	0.001%	0.100%	10'200
Cambodia	0.004%	0.110%	11'200
Cameroon	0.010%	0.110%	11'200
Canada	2.921%	3.110%	317'700
Chad	0.005%	0.110%	11'200
Chile	0.399%	0.590%	60'300
China	7.921%	7.890%	805'900
Colombia	0.322%	0.500%	51'100
Comoros	0.001%	0.100%	10'200
Congo	0.006%	0.110%	11'200
Costa Rica	0.047%	0.170%	17'400
Côte d'Ivoire	0.009%	0.110%	11'200
Croatia	0.099%	0.230%	23'500
Cuba	0.065%	0.190%	19'400
Cyprus	0.043%	0.160%	16'300
Czech Republic	0.344%	0.520%	53'100
Dem. People's Republic of Korea	0.005%	0.110%	11'200
Democratic Republic of the Congo	0.008%	0.110%	11'200
Denmark	0.584%	0.790%	80'700
Djibouti	0.001%	0.100%	10'200
Dominican Republic	0.046%	0.170%	17'400
Ecuador	0.067%	0.190%	19'400
Egypt	0.152%	0.300%	30'600
El Salvador	0.014%	0.120%	12'300
Equatorial Guinea	0.010%	0.110%	11'200
Estonia	0.038%	0.150%	15'300
Ethiopia	0.010%	0.110%	11'200
Fiji	0.003%	0.100%	10'200
Finland	0.456%	0.650%	66'400

Country Name	UN 2016-2018	Approved 2017 scale	
	Per Cent	Per Cent	CHF
France	4.859%	4.930%	503'600
Gabon	0.017%	0.120%	12'300
Gambia	0.001%	0.100%	10'200
Georgia	0.008%	0.110%	11'200
Germany	6.389%	6.390%	652'700
Ghana	0.016%	0.120%	12'300
Greece	0.471%	0.670%	68'400
Guatemala	0.028%	0.140%	14'300
Guinea	0.002%	0.100%	10'200
Guinea-Bissau	0.001%	0.100%	10'200
Guyana	0.002%	0.100%	10'200
Haiti	0.003%	0.100%	10'200
Honduras	0.008%	0.110%	11'200
Hungary	0.161%	0.310%	31'700
Iceland	0.023%	0.130%	13'300
India	0.737%	0.950%	97'000
Indonesia	0.504%	0.700%	71'500
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	0.471%	0.670%	68'400
Iraq	0.129%	0.270%	27'600
Ireland	0.335%	0.510%	52'100
Israel	0.430%	0.620%	63'300
Italy	3.748%	3.890%	397'300
Japan	9.680%	9.680%	988'800
Jordan	0.020%	0.130%	13'300
Kazakhstan	0.191%	0.350%	35'800
Kenya	0.018%	0.130%	13'300
Kuwait	0.285%	0.460%	47'000
Kyrgyzstan	0.002%	0.100%	10'200
Lao People's Democratic Republic	0.003%	0.100%	10'200
Latvia	0.050%	0.170%	17'400
Lebanon	0.046%	0.170%	17'400
Lesotho	0.001%	0.100%	10'200
Libya	0.125%	0.270%	27'600
Liechtenstein	0.007%	0.110%	11'200
Lithuania	0.072%	0.200%	20'400
Luxembourg	0.064%	0.190%	19'400
Madagascar	0.003%	0.100%	10'200
Malawi	0.002%	0.100%	10'200
Malaysia	0.322%	0.500%	51'100
Maldives	0.002%	0.100%	10'200
Mali	0.003%	0.100%	10'200
Malta	0.016%	0.120%	12'300
Mauritania	0.002%	0.100%	10'200
Mauritius	0.012%	0.120%	12'300
Mexico	1.435%	1.670%	170'600
Micronesia (Federated States of)	0.001%	0.100%	10'200
Monaco	0.010%	0.110%	11'200
Mongolia	0.005%	0.110%	11'200
Montenegro	0.004%	0.110%	11'200
Morocco	0.054%	0.180%	18'400
Mozambique	0.004%	0.110%	11'200
Myanmar	0.010%	0.110%	11'200
Namibia	0.010%	0.110%	11'200
Nepal	0.006%	0.110%	11'200
Netherlands	1.482%	1.720%	175'700
New Zealand	0.268%	0.440%	44'900
Nicaragua	0.004%	0.110%	11'200
Niger	0.002%	0.100%	10'200

Country Name	UN 2016-2018	Approved 2017 scale	
	Per Cent	Per Cent	CHF
Nigeria	0.209%	0.370%	37'800
Norway	0.849%	1.070%	109'300
Oman	0.113%	0.250%	25'500
Pakistan	0.093%	0.230%	23'500
Palau	0.001%	0.100%	10'200
Palestine		0.100%	10'200
Panama	0.034%	0.150%	15'300
Papua New Guinea	0.004%	0.110%	11'200
Paraguay	0.014%	0.120%	12'300
Peru	0.136%	0.280%	28'600
Philippines	0.165%	0.320%	32'700
Poland	0.841%	1.060%	108'300
Portugal	0.392%	0.580%	59'200
Qatar	0.269%	0.440%	44'900
Republic of Korea	2.039%	2.260%	230'900
Republic of Moldova	0.004%	0.110%	11'200
Romania	0.184%	0.340%	34'700
Russian Federation	3.088%	3.260%	333'000
Rwanda	0.002%	0.100%	10'200
Samoa	0.001%	0.100%	10'200
San Marino	0.003%	0.100%	10'200
Sao Tome and Principe	0.001%	0.100%	10'200
Saudi Arabia	1.146%	1.380%	141'000
Senegal	0.005%	0.110%	11'200
Serbia	0.032%	0.150%	15'300
Seychelles	0.001%	0.100%	10'200
Sierra Leone	0.001%	0.100%	10'200
Singapore	0.447%	0.640%	65'400
Slovakia	0.160%	0.310%	31'700
Slovenia	0.084%	0.210%	21'500
Somalia	0.001%	0.100%	10'200
South Africa	0.364%	0.550%	56'200
South Sudan	0.003%	0.100%	10'200
Spain	2.443%	2.650%	270'700
Sri Lanka	0.031%	0.140%	14'300
Sudan	0.010%	0.110%	11'200
Suriname	0.006%	0.110%	11'200
Sweden	0.956%	1.180%	120'500
Switzerland	1.140%	1.370%	139'900
Syrian Arab Republic	0.024%	0.130%	13'300
Tajikistan	0.004%	0.110%	11'200
Thailand	0.291%	0.460%	47'000
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	0.007%	0.110%	11'200
Timor-Leste	0.003%	0.100%	10'200
Togo	0.001%	0.100%	10'200
Tonga	0.001%	0.100%	10'200
Trinidad and Tobago	0.034%	0.150%	15'300
Tunisia	0.028%	0.140%	14'300
Turkey	1.018%	1.250%	127'700
Uganda	0.009%	0.110%	11'200
Ukraine	0.103%	0.240%	24'500
United Arab Emirates	0.604%	0.810%	82'700
United Kingdom	4.463%	4.560%	465'800
United Republic of Tanzania	0.010%	0.110%	11'200
Uruguay	0.079%	0.210%	21'500
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	0.571%	0.780%	79'700

Country Name	UN 2016-2018	Approved 2017 scale	
	Per Cent	Per Cent	CHF
Viet Nam	0.058%	0.180%	18'400
Yemen	0.010%	0.110%	11'200
Zambia	0.007%	0.110%	11'200
Zimbabwe	0.004%	0.110%	11'200

Member or associate member	UN 2016-2018	Approved 2017 scale	
	Per Cent	Per Cent	CHF
Andean Parliament		0.020%	2'000
Arab Parliament		0.010%	1'000
Central American Parliament		0.010%	1'000
East African Legislative Assembly		0.010%	1'000
European Parliament		0.060%	6'100
Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States		0.030%	3'100
Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union		0.010%	1'000
Latin American Parliament		0.030%	3'100
Parliament of the CEMAC		0.010%	1'000
Parliament of the ECOWAS		0.010%	1'000
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe		0.050%	5'100
Total		100%	10'207'000

Cooperation with the United Nations System

List of activities undertaken by the IPU from 15 March to 15 September 2016

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 199th session
(Geneva, 27 October 2016)*

Democracy and human rights

Work on the second edition of the flagship **Global Parliamentary Report** continued on schedule. The Report is jointly produced by the IPU and UNDP. Publication is expected around the turn of the year. A detailed outline was agreed and a team of writers was assembled. UNDP organized national focus groups to contribute to the report.

The **World e-Parliament Conference** took place from 28 to 30 June in Valparaíso, Chile. It was organized by the IPU and the Chamber of Deputies of Chile in partnership with UNDP, the National Democratic Institute and others. The fourth World e-Parliament Report was launched at the Conference.

UNDP and the IPU continued their joint project of **assistance to parliaments** in Afghanistan and Myanmar. The partnership facilitated a draft parliamentary service Act for Afghanistan in May 2016. Following historic elections in Myanmar in November 2016, the IPU–UNDP partnership supported induction programmes for over 700 national, regional and state MPs. The IPU and UNDP are also in discussions about a project to support the Tunisian Parliament.

On 22 June, the IPU and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) organized a panel discussion to take stock of the contribution of parliaments to the work of the **Human Rights Council** and its **Universal Periodic Review (UPR)**. Parliamentarians from Ecuador, the Philippines and Morocco addressed the meeting, which coincided with the 32nd session of the Human Rights Council. Discussions concluded with concrete recommendations about how parliaments and the Human Rights Council could work more closely together to their mutual benefit.

The IPU maintained **regular contact with OHCHR**, including with its country offices, in order to promote satisfactory settlements in cases before the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.

The IPU participated in the **high-level meeting on human rights** convened by the President of the UN General Assembly on 12 and 13 July. During the main session of the meeting, the IPU delivered an address. It reflected on the role of parliaments in the UPR and on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from a human rights perspective.

In April, the IPU delivered a statement at the **special session of the UN General Assembly on the world drug problem (UNGASS 2016)**. The statement captured the key messages of the 2016 Parliamentary Hearing, which was devoted to the same issue. It also emphasized the need to look at the drug problem from a human rights and health perspective.

The theme of the **UN Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law**, to be held in November 2016, will be *Widening the Democratic Space: The role of youth in public decision-making*. The IPU is discussing with OHCHR organizers how best to work together, and has answered the Forum's call for input by submitting documentation and key messages. The IPU also participated in a side event at the 32nd session of the Human Rights Council on the theme of the forthcoming Forum.

The IPU and OHCHR have jointly produced a **revised version of the human rights handbook for parliamentarians**, which has been very successful over the years. Similar work is underway with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the revised version of the refugee protection handbook.

On 25 and 26 May, a regional seminar took place in Abuja, Nigeria, on combating **child trafficking and child labour** in the context of South-South and triangular cooperation. The seminar was organized by the IPU, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Parliament of the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS); it was supported by UNICEF.

A member of the IPU Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL), represented the IPU at the **World Humanitarian Summit** that took place in Istanbul, Turkey, on 23 and 24 May. Her statement before the plenary expressed support for the objectives of the Summit, and recalled the role of parliaments in carrying forward those objectives. She also spoke at a special session on migration.

In June 2016, the IPU's IHL Committee conducted a mission to Lebanon, supported by UNHCR. The aim was to assess the situation of Syrian **refugees** in the country and the impact of their presence on their hosts. IHL Committee members met refugees and held meetings with Lebanese government and parliamentary authorities, as well as with organizations in the field that were providing assistance. A similar mission is due to be conducted in Greece.

Gender equality and youth empowerment

UN Women and the IPU developed a joint work programme on discriminatory laws and are currently seeking funding. UNDP and UN Women also approached the IPU to develop a **joint project on Security Council resolution 1325**, on the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, and in post-conflict reconstruction. A first draft project for joint action has been developed. Its implementation will depend on fundraising.

The IPU took part in the 64th session of the **review of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**. It presented a report on women in parliament and on the involvement of parliaments in the CEDAW reporting process. The IPU–CEDAW working group also met to discuss ways to enhance cooperation and to further the engagement of MPs in implementing the Convention. A side event during the 65th session is planned. The session will take place in October 2016 in Geneva.

The IPU held consultations with the **UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth**, Mr. A. Alhendawi, on opportunities for future cooperation. Future regional activities on youth-related issues were also discussed with UNDP Asia-Pacific. This work followed up on the 2016 Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians and the Lusaka Assembly general debate, *Rejuvenating democracy, giving voice to youth*.

Sustainable development

The IPU and the Romanian Parliament jointly organized a **Regional Seminar on the Sustainable Development Goals for the Parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe** (18–19 April). Participants included representatives of the UN Environment Programme, the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, UNDP and UNESCO. The outcome document urged parliaments to ensure they have appropriate laws to protect the environment and sufficient funding allocated for measures to prevent natural disasters and reduce the impact of climate change, especially in the most marginalized areas. It also underscored the importance of education for sustainable development in shaping the next generation of citizens and leaders.

The IPU contributed to the first **high-level political forum on sustainable development** since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. Forty parliamentarians participated in various sessions of the forum from 11 to 20 July. A parliamentary meeting was held on 18 July as part of the official programme of side events. The meeting, moderated by the IPU Secretary General, featured a panel of parliamentarians and the Director of the UN SDGs Action Campaign. Discussions highlighted a number of initiatives to help institutionalize the SDGs in parliaments. The IPU statement to the forum's general debate outlined how the IPU plans to advance the SDGs in the years ahead.

Before the high-level political forum, the IPU conducted a **survey of parliaments in 22 countries** that had volunteered to present progress reports to the forum. The survey queried parliaments on how they were involved in government-led reviews.

The IPU and UNDP held discussions on possible cooperation around the IPU **parliamentary self-assessment toolkit** (forthcoming) to help mainstream the SDGs in parliaments. Cooperation may include UNDP support to pilot the toolkit in a number of countries.

On 21 and 22 July, members of parliament also participated in the biannual session of the **Development Cooperation Forum of ECOSOC**. The Forum advances key questions of development cooperation, which is critical to the implementation of the SDGs. Before the Forum, held on 14 and 15 July, the IPU Secretary General participated in the 10th meeting of the Steering Committee of the **Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC)** on which he represents the parliamentary constituency. The GPEDC plays an important role in the implementation of development cooperation commitments. The

second high-level meeting (HLM2) of the GPEDC is to take place in Kenya in November 2016. The IPU has begun preparations for a parliamentary contribution to the meeting, including through a one-day parliamentary forum. As a member of the Steering Committee, the IPU contributed to the HLM2 draft outcome document and to the future organization of the GPEDC.

The 2016 Annual Session of the **Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization (WTO)** took place on 13 and 14 June in Geneva. The Conference's overall aim is to provide a parliamentary dimension to WTO work. The overarching theme of this year's session was *What future for the WTO?* It allowed for a substantive exchange of opinions, information and experience. The exchanges were designed to promote parliamentary action on international trade issues, which is one of the ways of implementing the SDGs.

IPU representatives spoke at a number of **development-related meetings** of the UN, including: the launch of a new report on financing the UN development system and a panel of the high-level political forum on sustainable development that discussed the role of local authorities in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

The IPU participated in the General Assembly's **High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS** on 8–10 June. The meeting concluded with a declaration of commitments, which included strong references to the role of parliaments and the IPU in helping to end the epidemic by 2030. Similar acknowledgements were made in the Secretary-General's report to the meeting. A joint UNAIDS–IPU side event was held for parliamentarians attending. The IPU statement to the Meeting drew from the conclusions of the joint side event and expressed the IPU's commitment to future action on HIV/AIDS.

The first ever parliamentary side event at the **World Health Assembly** was held on 25 May in Geneva. The event was entitled *Parliaments as key actors in ensuring access to health for all* and gave parliamentarians an opportunity to contribute to the global health agenda. The IPU Secretary General delivered an address to the main session of the Assembly.

The IPU President was invited by the UN Secretary-General to join his **High-level Advisory Group for Every Woman Every Child**, established to advise the Secretary-General on his Strategy to promote women's, children's and adolescents' health. The group will review progress and challenges, and provide recommendations on issues such as financing, accountability, cross-sectoral action and country-level implementation of the Strategy.

The UN Secretary-General also invited the IPU Secretary General to join his **Lead Group of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement (SUN)**. The Group's mandate is to provide leadership and strategic oversight for the SUN Movement. In that capacity, the IPU Secretary General participated in a high-level event convened in New York during the High-level Political Forum, to discuss the contribution of the SUN Movement to the success of the SDGs.

International peace and security

From 20 to 22 June, the President of the IPU Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, Ms. L. Rojas, led a parliamentary delegation to the **comprehensive review of the status of implementation of resolution 1540**. The resolution aims to prevent non-State actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. She delivered a statement on how parliaments could engage on this issue.

The President of the IPU Standing Committee also represented the IPU at the **annual session of the Peacebuilding Commission** that took place in New York on 23 June. Her address noted that parliaments should be better integrated into the Commission's work, UN efforts towards conflict prevention and resolution, and managing transitions to political stability.

The IPU continued its engagement with the UN, including its **Office on Drugs and Crime, the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate** and other partners, with a view to advancing a more structured parliamentary strategy supported by the IPU in order to combat terrorism and violent extremism.

The IPU coordinated with the UN Office at Geneva and other partner organizations with a view to contributing to **Geneva Peace Week 2016**. In November, the IPU is due to sponsor a panel discussion on *When Peace agreements fail to secure sustainable peace: Learning from Yemen, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka*, as well as a joint session entitled *Inequality as a danger to sustainable peace: Converging perspectives on human rights and peacebuilding*.

Senior-level interaction

On 22 April, the **IPU President** participated in a special event convened by the UN Secretary-General in New York to mark the signing of the Paris Agreement on climate change by representatives of more than 170 Member States.

A new **Cooperation Agreement** between the UN and the IPU was signed by the respective Secretaries General on 21 July. The agreement takes stock of developments since the first agreement of 1996 and aims to place the institutional relationship on a stronger and more strategic footing. Following the signing of the agreement, the two Secretaries General held consultations, with a view to identifying and confirming priority areas for joint work in the context of the major challenges facing the world.

On 25 July, the UN General Assembly adopted by consensus the resolution ***Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU***. Seventy-seven Member States sponsored the resolution, following four consultations held over the course of the summer facilitated by the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh as the country holding the IPU presidency. The resolution opens the door to new areas of cooperation between the two organizations, from the implementation of the SDGs to disarmament, South-South cooperation and migration. The IPU President delivered an address to the general debate, as did eight others, including the Speaker of the Beninese National Assembly and the President of the IPU Geopolitical Group for Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC).

Further to a recommendation of the IPU Standing Committee on UN Affairs, the IPU invited the **candidates for the post of UN Secretary-General** to answer a short questionnaire on how they see the relationship between the United Nations and the IPU. All candidates responded and their answers were posted on the IPU website.

The IPU Secretary General met the **President of the 71st session of the UN General Assembly**, Ambassador Peter Thomson (Fiji), to discuss the Ambassador's priorities for the new session, which starts in September 2016. Preparations will soon begin for the 2017 joint Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, expected to take place in the first semester of the new year.

The IPU Secretary General maintained contact with **the heads of UN agencies based in Geneva**, including the Director-General of the UN Office at Geneva (UNOG), in order to foster coordination and cooperation between the IPU and the UN community. He attended several working sessions convened by the Director-General for that purpose. He briefed the Geneva-based ambassadors on the IPU's work to promote the new development agenda at a meeting convened by the UNOG Director-General.

Report of the Committee on Middle East Questions

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 199th session
(Geneva, 27 October 2016)*

The Committee heard a brief overview of the current situation in the region, including the latest political developments in Iraq, Israel, Palestine, Libya, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. The IPU Secretary General highlighted the role of the IPU in building bridges between parties to a conflict and supporting peace processes through capacity-building and dialogue. The Members endorsed this view and their commitment to peace and stability in the region.

The President of the Committee, Ms. D. Pascal Allende, presented the report on the Roundtable on water, held from 31 May to 2 June 2016 at IPU Headquarters, with the participation of Committee members, parliamentary delegations and technical experts on water and scientific research. The roundtable had been organized as part of the Committee's efforts to pursue parliamentary projects of peace in the region, which had first begun in October 2013.

The discussions at the Roundtable focused on the issue of water management and the role that science could play in facilitating dialogue and cooperation among countries which faced similar challenges. They involved the input of three scientific institutions which are composed of politically diverse countries and have experience in implementing peace projects, including in the Middle East. WaterLex, CERN (European Organization for Nuclear Research) and SESAME (Synchrotron-Light for Experimental Science and

Applications in the Middle East) all presented models for scientific and technological cooperation on the issue of water as an essential element of human life and dignity that transcends political disagreements and is relevant to a broader development agenda.

The Committee members agreed that the report on the Roundtable reflected the spirit of dialogue and goodwill. It then turned to the resulting draft programme of action and asked the Secretariat to draw up a proposed agenda by the end of the year based thereon to enable the Committee to obtain a concise picture of the envisaged mechanisms for implementing the recommendations. The proposed agenda will also suggest the dates for the next Roundtable and its report would be examined by the Committee during its meetings at the 136th IPU Assembly in April 2017.

The Committee reconfirmed its decision taken during the Roundtable on water to hold a second roundtable in Sharm El-Sheikh but rather than diversify from the subject of water, the Committee decided to maintain its focus for the next roundtable on water. The scope of activities of the Committee would depend on its core funding resources and the mobilization of additional funding.

The Committee then heard a presentation by an Israeli Member of the Knesset whose entrepreneurial activities explored and built on technology; a regional political and economic initiative that provides a new dimension for peace based on converging interests in the Middle East region. The presentation underlined how, by fostering collective innovation and regional cooperation in the fields of high-tech, water and others, some of the challenges facing countries in the region could be addressed. The Member of the Knesset urged the Committee to continue opening doors for regional processes that could help to end the conflict in the region, stressing that parliaments had an important role to play in moving them forward. The Committee recognized the potential of such an approach and reaffirmed its interest in integrating initiatives of this nature in its efforts to bring about peace and dialogue in the Middle East.

The Committee also reviewed the proposed amendments to its Rules as discussed during the previous session in Lusaka. These amendments would align the Rules with those governing other IPU Committees. The Committee approved the proposed amendments. In light of the new amendments, vacancies of the Committee would be filled at the 136th IPU Assembly in April 2017. The current members would continue to serve until their mandates expired.

The meeting concluded with expressions of goodwill and readiness by all parties to both explore new paths for achieving the goals of the Committee and increasing resources to broaden its work.

Report of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law on its mission to Lebanon

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 199th session
(Geneva, 27 October 2016)*

Excerpts of the Report on the Mission of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law to Assess the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon (June 2016)

I. INTRODUCTION

[...]

In June 2013, the IPU Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL Committee) carried out a mission to Jordan to gather first-hand information on the refugee situation in countries neighbouring Syria. At its last sitting in Lusaka in March 2016, the IPU Governing Council approved a request from the Committee to conduct a second mission to the region. [...]

The mission took place from 28 May to 3 June 2016. Ms. M. Haj Hassan Osman (Sudan) and Ms. M. Green (Sweden) took part, accompanied by the Secretary of the IHL Committee.

II. BACKGROUND FACTS AND FIGURES

[...]

In early April 2012, UNHCR had registered 33,000 Syrian refugees in the region. By May 2016, it had registered 4,845,000 refugees across the Middle East and North Africa. This figure includes 2.1 million Syrians registered by UNHCR in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon, and 2.7 million Syrians registered by the Government of Turkey.

In **Lebanon**, by the end of March 2016, there were over 1,048,000 refugees scattered in 1,750 locations across the country. There are no Syrian refugee camps in Lebanon. Lebanon has an estimated population of 4 million. Its Government estimates that a total of 1.5 million registered and unregistered refugees are on its territory as a result of the Syrian crisis, in addition to over 500,000 Palestinian refugees. This makes Lebanon the highest refugee-per-capita country in the world. [...]

III. THE MISSION FINDINGS

The mission's aim was to assess the humanitarian impact of the refugee crisis, in particular concerning refugees in Lebanon and their impact on host communities. [...]

The mission visited refugees in urban and rural areas, meeting with families, men, women and children. It visited health and community centres and informal settlements. The mission also met with Lebanese authorities, including the Prime Minister, the Ministers of the Interior, Education, and Social Affairs, the Speaker of the National Assembly and members of parliament from the Committee of Human Rights. The mission also visited Palestinian camps in Lebanon and held meetings with UNHCR and the ICRC. [...]

The Syrian refugee crisis is one of the greatest humanitarian crises ever. The response has been fast, but sustainability is becoming a major issue. [...]

Syrians and Lebanese have a shared history and special ties. Refugees have received an overwhelming and impressive welcome from the Lebanese population and authorities. The delegation repeatedly praised the host country's response for its magnitude and generosity. [...]

Regarding refugees, vulnerabilities are increasing, leading to potential instability. Many refugees have depleted their savings and families cannot meet their basic needs. [...]

Residency is another major challenge for Syrian refugees. According to UNHCR, 55 per cent of refugees do not have a residency permit, and that number is on the rise. The US \$200 annual renewal fee is unaffordable for the majority of refugees. The lack of legal status for refugees has meant that many have felt an increased real or perceived risk of arrest and detention. They have consequently limited their movements to avoid check points and reduced their access to services (such as birth registration) and livelihood opportunities. [...]

Refugees must pledge not to work in Lebanon. This leads to decreased self-reliance and autonomy, and increased dependence on humanitarian aid and debt. Negative coping mechanisms are on the rise, including child labour, withdrawal from school, informal economic activity, and domestic and gender-based violence.

The Lebanese authorities have been generous beyond their means. The authorities repeatedly said that the country was committed to offering safe haven for refugees, but that a tipping point was being reached. The refugee crisis was increasingly affecting the availability of resources, jobs, health and education for Lebanese nationals. [...]

In economic terms, the World Bank estimates that Lebanon has incurred US \$13.1 billion in losses related to the crisis since 2012, with US \$5.6 billion in 2015 alone.¹ The overall loss constitutes 11 per cent of GDP. It has created a significant ripple effect on the efficacy of Lebanon's public services, the fabric of communities, the spread of poverty,² and levels of social cohesion. [...]

¹ MEHE : London Conference : Statement of Intent; p.1

² Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2015-16: 37 per cent of Lebanese children and 70 per cent of Syrian refugee children live under the poverty line.

The mission paid particular attention to the situation of children and young people, who often bear the biggest burden. In a meeting with the Minister of Education, the IPU delegation commended the important efforts of the Lebanese authorities to open more places in public schools to refugee children. [...]

This was made possible through the **Reaching all children with education, (RACE)** programme thanks to which the number of spaces made available to non-Lebanese children in Lebanese public schools has expanded considerably. This was due to the innovation of doubling available school spaces by opening public schools for a second shift in the afternoons that catered only to non-Lebanese children. There is more to be done on enrolling children. A RACE II (2017-2021) project is being developed to continue existing efforts while strengthening the overall Lebanese education system. [...]

The magnitude of the crisis has placed an enormous burden on the delivery of all basic and social services. There has been a disproportionate impact in already underserved areas of Lebanon. This echoes the delivery of education services by an already-challenged public education system. [...]

The mission also paid particular attention to the situation of women and to gender-based violence. Refugees faced a high risk of gender-based violence, both when fleeing within Syria and in host countries. Domestic violence was reported as the main type of violence that Syrian refugee women and girls faced in Lebanon. [...]

Lebanon is also host to some 500,000 Palestinian refugees. The focus on support to Syrian refugees must not distract from the need to sustain support to Palestinian refugees. The influx of Syrians into the country has resulted in increased pressure on resources and opportunities, and has had negative effects on the Palestinian refugee population and its living conditions.

IV. MISSION CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS - The Way forward

- The mission was stunned at the magnitude of the human tragedy that is taking place and impressed by the response provided. The mission's members were moved by the stories of refugees who had lost their homes, livelihoods and sometimes family members. They were impressed by the resilience of families, their dignity, humility and strength in such a difficult situation.
- The mission was equally impressed by the Lebanese response and the scale of Lebanon's generosity – a longstanding and firm tradition. The mission was furthermore impressed by the humanitarian assistance provided by international, and Lebanese national, local and community organizations. It was a national effort, to which all sectors of society were contributing. This was highly commendable and served as role model for other countries.
- Both Syrian refugees and Lebanon as a country are reaching a tipping point. There is an increasing need to focus support on alleviating vulnerabilities in both communities, to alleviate pressure and tension, and find manageable ways of coexisting until the Syrian conflict is resolved. This means that assistance should be substantively increased and that it should be used not only for direct refugee support but also to enable Lebanon to enhance its own capacity and cater to the needs of its most vulnerable populations.
- The Mission calls for a paradigm shift in the way humanitarian aid is viewed. It recalls that the London Conference (February 2016) advocated for investments in Lebanon's economy that would generate economic growth to cope with the crisis and lead to job creation for both vulnerable Lebanese and Syrians.
- The mission recommends that IPU's Member Parliaments bring pressure to bear on their respective governments to take action and meet commitments made. In particular, it recommends that they mobilize funds and ensure that allocations are made out of national budgets to support both refugees, including Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and host communities and countries. It also recommends considering direct support to enable host governments to build infrastructure, provide services, and thereby share the burden.
- The mission invites the broader international community to play its part and offer resettlement opportunities in third countries. Resettlement quotas doubled in 2015 from 9,000 to over 18,000. As of 2016, UNHCR has the capacity to process 19,000 resettlements. So far, it has received pledges for over 16,000.

- Other possibilities to be encouraged include establishing scholarships to allow youth to pursue their development in good conditions and eventually return to Syria with knowledge and experience, once the crisis is settled. The mission calls on the international community to explore and expand such opportunities.
- The mission encourages the Lebanese Government to continue its efforts. It welcomes the Lebanese Government's commitment to resolve the challenges faced by refugees regarding access to residency permits. It also encourages the Lebanese Government to implement measures to enable refugees to support themselves in sectors authorized by the law (such as agriculture, construction and environment services).
- The mission is particularly concerned by the specific vulnerability and plight of women and children. The mission recommends that the IPU's Member Parliaments pay particularly close attention to the plight of women and children and encourage funding and support for specific programmes tailored to their needs, especially in the area of health and education.
- In particular the mission requests IPU Member Parliaments to support the RACE II initiative designed to enhance educational opportunities for both Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese. RACE II also focuses on development of new curricula such as human rights, civic education and gender equality, which is highly commendable.
- The Mission recommends that the IPU's Member Parliaments pay particularly close attention to, raise awareness of and provide support for programmes aimed at empowering women, informing them of their rights and mechanisms of redress, and addressing gender-based violence.

The mission reaffirms that a humanitarian solution is neither sufficient nor sustainable – a political solution needs to be found. Time is of the essence in finding a negotiated political solution. The humanitarian response to the crisis is insufficient and unsustainable. The mission recommends that the IPU and its Member Parliaments continue mobilizing around a political resolution of the conflict based on dialogue.

Statistics of the Gender Partnership Group

*Noted by the IPU Governing Council at its 199th session
(Geneva, 27 October 2016)*

Status of participation of women delegates at the 135th Assembly of the IPU (at 26 October 2016)

Composition of delegations at the last eight IPU statutory meetings (March 2013 - present)

Meeting	Total delegates	Total/percentage of women delegates		Total delegations	Total/percentage of all-male delegations (2 or more)		Total all-female delegations (2 or more)	Total single-sex delegations (2 or more)	Total single-member delegations (male and female)
		Total	Percentage		Total	Percentage			
Geneva (26 October)	684	228	33.3	140	14	10.9	3	17	12
Lusaka (03/16)	636	190	29.9	126	19	15.8	0	19	6
Geneva (10/15)	647	210	32.5	133	12	9.9	2	14	12
Hanoi (03/15)	675	189	28.0	128	16	13.7	1	17	11
Geneva 14 (10/14)	717	229	31.9	145	18	12.9	1	19	6
Geneva 14 (03/14)	705	214	30.4	145	16	11.9	2	18	11
Geneva 13 (10/13)	539	168	31.2	132	16	13.2	2	18	11
Quito (03/13)	619	202	32.6	118	9	8.3	2	11	9

Single-sex, multi-member delegations present in Geneva (status on 26 October 2016)

N°	Country	Geneva 16			Lusaka 16			Geneva 15			Hanoi 15			Geneva 10/14			Geneva 03/14			Geneva 13			Quito 13		
		Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total
1	Armenia	2	0	2	absent			0	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	3	2	2	4	2	3	5	2	0	2
2	Bolivia	4	0	4	3	1	4	absent			absent			4	3	7	2	2	4	1	1	2	1	1	2
3	Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	2	2	absent			0	3	3	absent			1	2	3	2	2	4	1	4	5	1	2	3
4	Bulgaria	0	2	2	0	2	2	absent			0	3	3	absent			absent			absent			absent		
5	DPR Korea	0	4	4	0	4	4	absent			0	4	4	absent			absent			absent			absent		
6	Denmark	0	2	2	3	4	7	1	4	5	0	8	8	0	4	4	1	3	4	0	2	2	4	4	8
7	Djibouti	0	3	3	absent			1	3	4	1	2	3	2	2	4	0	3	3	absent					
8	Guatemala	2	0	2	absent			absent			absent			0	1	1	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	1	1
9	Guinea	0	4	4	1	1	2	1	4	5	1	1	2	0	3	3	suspended			suspended			suspended		
10	Maldives	0	4	4	1	4	5	0	1	1	0	5	5	2	6	8	0	2	2	1	4	5	2	4	6
11	Micronesia	0	3	3	0	3	3	0	4	4	0	3	3	0	2	2	absent			0	1	1	0	3	3
12	Morocco	0	4	4	1	7	8	3	5	8	1	7	8	1	7	8	1	7	8	1	4	5	1	7	8
13	Netherlands	0	3	3	2	3	5	0	2	2	0	3	3	2	2	4	2	2	4	2	1	3	2	3	5
14	Qatar	0	4	4	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	4	4	0	5	5	0	2	2	0	1	1	0	3	3
15	Romania	0	4	4	0	1	1	1	6	7	0	5	5	1	4	5	1	3	4	1	4	5	1	3	4
16	San Marino	0	2	2	0	3	3	2	2	4	1	1	2	0	4	4	1	3	4	1	3	4	1	2	3
17	Swaziland	0	2	2	not affiliated																				

Single-member delegations present in Geneva (status on 25 October 2016)

N°	Country	Geneva 16			Lusaka 16			Geneva 15			Hanoi 15			Geneva 10/14			Geneva 03/14			Geneva 13			Quito 13		
		Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total	Women MPs	Men MPs	total
1	Belarus	1	0	1	1	1	2	0	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	1	2	absent		
2	Congo	0	1	1	absent			absent			absent			absent			0	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	3
3	Costa Rica	0	1	1	absent			1	0	1	absent			2	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	3	2	1	3
4	Ecuador	1	0	1	absent			3	1	4	absent			3	2	5	1	2	3	2	2	4	5	7	12
5	Haiti	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	3	3	1	6	7	0	3	3	0	3	3
6	Kyrgyzstan	0	1	1	absent			absent			absent			absent			absent			absent					
7	Lithuania	0	1	1	1	2	3	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	2	0	1	1
8	Luxembourg	0	1	1	0	2	2	absent			0	3	3	absent			absent			absent			absent		
9	Mauritania	1	0	1	0	1	1	3	0	3	2	0	2	0	3	3	3	4	7	absent			absent		
10	Monaco	0	1	1	1	1	2	0	2	2	0	1	1	1	1	2	0	2	2	0	2	2	absent		
11	Myanmar	0	1	1	absent			0	1	1	1	5	6	1	1	2	0	1	1	0	5	5	absent		
12	Nicaragua	1	0	1	absent			absent			absent			1	0	1	2	0	2	1	0	1	1	0	1

Global Appeal 2017 to End Stigma and Discrimination against Persons Affected by Leprosy

*Endorsed by the Executive Committee at its 274th session
(Geneva, 26 October 2016)*

- Leprosy, a disease once feared for its disfiguring effects, is completely curable today with modern drug therapy. Over 16 million people have been treated worldwide.
- Early diagnosis and prompt treatment help prevent physical impairment.
- Yet mistaken beliefs about the disease persist, perpetuating social and economic discrimination.
- In different parts of the world, people affected by leprosy and their family members can find themselves:
 - deprived of opportunities for education, employment and marriage.
 - marginalized or rejected by society.
 - stigmatized by outdated laws and practices based on misconceptions.
- We, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, firmly believe that solutions to the challenges facing persons affected by leprosy must be **firmly embedded in human rights**, as a key component of democracy and development.
- We **condemn all forms of discrimination** on the grounds that a person has or once had leprosy.
- We recognize and support the 2010 United Nations General Assembly Resolution on the Elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members, and are committed to contributing to the implementation of the accompanying principles and guidelines.
- We **urge all parliaments** to promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies to end stigma and discrimination against persons affected by leprosy, and to ensure that:
 - Persons affected by leprosy and their family members are treated at all times with dignity and respect;
 - Persons affected by leprosy and their family members are fully represented and involved in political discussions and decisions which affect them, and that they benefit from the full enjoyment of their human rights; and
 - We help create a society in which every individual is free and equal in dignity and human rights.

Calendar of future meetings and other activities

*Approved by the IPU Governing Council at its 199th session
(Geneva, 27 October 2016)*

Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP22/CMP12)	MARRAKESH (Morocco) 13 November 2016
Regional seminar on the SDGs and Human Rights for Pacific region parliaments	NADI (Fiji) 16-18 November 2016
Parliamentary Meeting at the Second High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation	NAIROBI (Kenya) 29 November 2016
Regional seminar for Latin American Parliaments on parliaments and the implementation of the SDGs	PANAMA CITY (Panama) 1-2 December 2016
Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament (11 th meeting of Women Speakers)	ABU DHABI (United Arab Emirates) 12-13 December 2016
152 nd session of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians	GENEVA (IPU Headquarters) 23-26 January 2017
South Asian Speakers' Forum on the implementation of the SDGs	INDORE (India) 18-20 February 2017
Regional seminar for Parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia on parliaments and the implementation of the SDGs	BUDAPEST (Hungary) 23-24 February 2017
38 th session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO	BRUSSELS (European Parliament) February 2017 (Date to be confirmed)
Regional Seminar for Latin American and Caribbean Parliaments on the financial inclusion of women	Mexico February – April 2017
Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the 61 st session of the Commission on the Status of Women	NEW YORK Mid-March 2017 (Date to be confirmed)
136 th Assembly and related meetings	DHAKA (Bangladesh) 1-5 April 2017
Parliamentary side event at the 70 th World Health Assembly	GENEVA May 2017 (Date to be confirmed)
Regional Seminar for the Asia-Pacific region on the SDGs	Viet Nam May 2017
Information seminar on the structure and functioning of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for English-speaking participants	GENEVA (IPU Headquarters) May-June 2017 (Dates to be confirmed)
Parliamentary side event at the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)	NEW YORK Mid-July 2017 (Date to be confirmed)

Regional seminar for African Parliaments on parliaments and the implementation of SDGs	KAMPALA (Uganda) First half of 2017 (Dates to be confirmed)
Regional seminar for Young Parliamentarians of the Asia-Pacific region	Venue and date to be confirmed (First half of 2017)
39 th session of the Steering Committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO	GENEVA September-October 2017 (Dates to be confirmed)
Parliamentary session within the framework of the annual WTO Public Forum	GENEVA September-October 2017 (Dates to be confirmed)
137 th Assembly and related meetings	ST. PETERSBURG (Russian Federation) 14-18 October 2017
Annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO	BUENOS AIRES (Argentina) 11-14 December 2017
Fourth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians	Venue and date to be confirmed
Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations	NEW YORK (Date to be confirmed)
Regional seminar for Young Parliamentarians in Africa	Nigeria Second half of 2017 (Date to be confirmed)
12 th Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament	Venue and date to be confirmed
Regional Conference on Violence against Women and Girls for the Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia regions	Venue and date to be confirmed (Second half of 2017)
138 th Assembly and related meetings	GENEVA 24-28 March 2018

Agenda of the 136th Assembly

(Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1-5 April 2017)

1. Election of the President and Vice-Presidents of the 136th Assembly
2. Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
3. General Debate
4. The role of parliament in preventing outside interference in the internal affairs of sovereign States
(Standing Committee on Peace and International Security)
5. Promoting enhanced international cooperation on the SDGs, in particular on the financial inclusion of women as a driver of development
(Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade)
6. Reports of the Standing Committees
7. Approval of the subject items for the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and for the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade for the 138th Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs
8. Amendments to the Statutes and Rules of the IPU

**Results of the roll-call vote at the request of the delegation of Ukraine
on the following question**

**"DOES THE COUNCIL RECONFIRM ITS DECISION TO HOLD THE 137th ASSEMBLY
IN ST. PETERSBURG?"**

Results

Affirmative votes	138	Total affirmative and negative votes	157
Negative votes	19	Majority	79
Abstentions	5		

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Afghanistan		Absent		Finland	1			Nicaragua		Absent	
Albania		Absent		France	2			Niger	2		
Algeria	3			Gabon	2			Nigeria		Absent	
Andorra		Absent		Germany	2			Norway	2		
Angola		Absent		Ghana		Absent		Oman		Absent	
Argentina	3			Greece	1			Pakistan		Absent	
Armenia	2			Guatemala		Absent		Palestine	3		
Australia		3		Guinea		Absent		Peru		Absent	
Austria	2			Guinea-Bissau		Absent		Philippines		Absent	
Bahrain	3			Haiti		Absent		Poland			2
Bangladesh	3			Hungary		Absent		Portugal	3		
Belarus	1			Iceland		Absent		Qatar	2		
Belgium			2	India	3			Republic of Korea		Absent	
Benin	2			Indonesia		Absent		Romania			1
Bhutan		Absent		Iran (Islamic Republic of)	2			Russian Federation	3		
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)		Absent		Iraq	1			Rwanda		Absent	
Bosnia and Herzegovina		Absent		Ireland		Absent		San Marino		Absent	
Botswana		Absent		Israel		Absent		Sao Tome and Principe	1		
Brazil		Absent		Italy	1			Saudi Arabia		Absent	
Bulgaria		Absent		Japan	2			Senegal	1		
Burkina Faso	2			Jordan	1			Serbia	3		
Burundi	3			Kazakhstan		Absent		Singapore		Absent	
Cabo Verde		Absent		Kenya		Absent		South Africa	3		
Cambodia	3			Kyrgyzstan	1			South Sudan	2		
Cameroon	3			Lao People's Dem. Republic		Absent		Sri Lanka		Absent	
Canada		3		Latvia		Absent		Sudan	2		
Chad	2			Lebanon	3			Suriname	3		
Chile	1			Lesotho	3			Swaziland		Absent	
China	3			Liechtenstein		Absent		Sweden		3	
Colombia		Absent		Lithuania		Absent		Switzerland	2		
Comoros		Absent		Luxembourg		Absent		Syrian Arab Rep.	3		
Costa Rica		Absent		Madagascar		Absent		Thailand		Absent	
Cuba	3			Malawi	2			Timor-Leste	2		
Cyprus		Absent		Malaysia	1			Togo	1		
Czech Republic		Absent		Maldives		Absent		Tunisia	2	1	
DPR of Korea		Absent		Mali		Absent		Turkey		Absent	
DR of the Congo	3			Mauritania	2			Uganda	2	1	
Denmark	1			Mauritius		Absent		Ukraine		3	
Djibouti		Absent		Mexico		Absent		United Arab Emirates	3		
Dominican Rep.		Absent		Micronesia (Fed. States of)		Absent		United Kingdom	3		
Ecuador		Absent		Monaco		Absent		Uruguay	2		
Egypt		Absent		Morocco	1			Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep. of)	3		
El Salvador		Absent		Mozambique		Absent		Viet Nam	2		
Equatorial Guinea		Absent		Myanmar		Absent		Zambia	3		
Estonia		2		Namibia	3			Zimbabwe	3		
Ethiopia		Absent		Netherlands		Absent					
Fiji		Absent		New Zealand		3					

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.

Decisions concerning the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

DRC/32 - Pierre Jacques Chalupa

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 199th session (Geneva, 27 October 2016)

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Referring to the case of Mr. Pierre Jacques Chalupa, a former member of the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and to the decision it adopted at its 198th session (March 2016),

Referring to letters from the Speaker of the National Assembly of 21 April, 3, 13 and 19 October 2016 and information provided by the complainants,

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

Recalling that Mr. Chalupa, a former member of the majority who joined the opposition at the 2011 elections, was: (i) arrested on 2 February 2012 by soldiers from the President's military guard, after having been given a bogus appointment by telephone, just as the strongly contested election results were being proclaimed; (ii) accused of having fraudulently obtained Congolese nationality and charged with forgery and the use of falsified documents; (iii) remanded in custody and then sentenced to three years in prison and deprived of his Congolese nationality,

Recalling that it had observed that the judicial proceedings were marred by flaws; that many of the items in the file tended to indicate that the case was political in nature and that it could not rule out that the judicial proceedings initiated against Mr. Chalupa were intended to neutralize him politically as a result of his having joined the political opposition,

Recalling that Mr. Chalupa was released on 22 November 2013, having served over half of his sentence, following the adoption of a presidential pardon order by the Head of State as part of measures taken to ease political tensions after national consultations in October 2013,

Further recalling that Mr. Chalupa suffers from serious health problems, which worsened while he was in detention; that he failed to receive appropriate treatment while in detention or after his release for want of specialist services in the DRC; that in November 2015, doctors stated that, given the time lapse since the appearance of the first symptoms, the advanced stage of the illness is life threatening for Mr. Chalupa and recommended an urgent transfer abroad for specialist treatment; that Mr. Chalupa was unable to travel abroad for treatment because his passport had been confiscated; and that the question of his nationality had not been settled by the Congolese authorities,

Recalling lastly that no progress has been made towards recognition of Mr. Chalupa's Congolese nationality since 2013, even though the latter has no other nationality and is therefore a stateless person; that the issue of the forfeiture of his nationality was not considered to be covered by the presidential pardon process; and that the following facts were provided in the file on this issue:

- Mr. Chalupa's nationality was never contested before he joined the opposition during the 2011 elections;
- Mr. Chalupa was elected a member of parliament of the DRC and undeniably has long ties with that country (place of birth, residence, married to a Congolese national, etc.);
- Mr. Chalupa considers that he is Congolese because he was born in the DRC and was unable to obtain Portuguese nationality through his father because of Portuguese nationality law; such cases are covered by article 9(2) of the 2004 nationality law, which stipulates that "... children born in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to foreign parents who cannot transmit their nationality to the child because their State of origin recognizes only *jus soli* or does not allow natural parents to transmit nationality";

- Portugal's Basic Law No. 2/2006 on nationality recognizes only *jus soli*; article 1(c) provides that, in exceptional cases, "children with one Portuguese parent, if they are born abroad and provided that they declare their wish to be Portuguese or register the birth with the Portuguese civil register" may request Portuguese nationality; according to Mr. Chalupa, his parents did not register his birth at the consulate and he never wrote to the Portuguese authorities declaring that he intended to acquire Portuguese nationality, as the Portuguese authorities have officially confirmed; Mr. Chalupa therefore does not have Portuguese nationality and explicitly renounced the possibility of acquiring it in 1992 in order to obtain recognition of his Congolese nationality at birth, which is unique and exclusive under article 10 of the Constitution of the DRC;
- Mr. Chalupa applied for nationality in 1992; according to the Minister of Justice, the attestation of nationality issued to Mr. Chalupa in 2001 (and deemed a forgery by the Congolese courts during the above-mentioned judicial proceedings) did not confer citizenship on him; the procedure for obtaining nationality requires a decree from the Council of Ministers to be successful and the application for citizenship was therefore still pending with the Congolese authorities, which had failed to complete the procedure;
- In its appeal ruling of 23 January 2013, the Supreme Court found that Mr. Chalupa was born in Burundi and not in the DRC, even though neither the court of first-instance ruling nor the parties had challenged his birthplace; the Court held that nothing in his birth certificate indicated that his parents had Congolese nationality and that he had made several applications for citizenship, but had yet to obtain Congolese nationality;
- During the hearing organized at the 130th IPU Assembly (March 2014), the delegation of the DRC stated the following: Mr. Chalupa was not a Congolese citizen by birth because his parents were not Congolese; Congolese law did not recognize *jus soli*, only *jus sanguine*; Mr. Chalupa therefore had only one option, namely to request Congolese nationality by applying for citizenship; it would appear, but had not been confirmed, that Mr. Chalupa's dual citizenship was the cause of the current situation; in view of the principle of the separation of powers, parliament could not intervene in a matter that came under the jurisdiction of the executive; the Congolese authorities have repeatedly stated that it was up to Mr. Chalupa to initiate a citizenship application procedure according to the law;
- The nationality law and its implementing decrees do not provide for a specific procedure for recognizing or establishing proof of Congolese nationality at birth in the case cited by Mr. Chalupa – which is different from an application for naturalization; the clarifications sought since January 2014 from the Congolese authorities regarding the procedure applicable to this case have not been provided as yet,

Considering the following new information supplied by the parties:

- Following the Speaker of the National Assembly's intervention, the authorities granted a passport to Mr. Chalupa in late April 2016, for humanitarian reasons, to allow him to seek treatment abroad; this passport, which is valid until 2021, states that Mr. Chalupa has Congolese nationality; Mr. Chalupa was thus able to begin chemotherapy overseas;
- In August 2016, Mr. Chalupa was informed of the adoption by the Council of Ministers of Decree No. 16/026 of 22 July 2016; this decree rejects Mr. Chalupa's application to obtain citizenship by naturalization on the grounds that "the applicant has provided no proof of having rendered outstanding services to the Democratic Republic of Congo, and granting him naturalization would not be of interest, as it would not have a visible impact (...)" and that "on the contrary, his behaviour and conduct are a sign of lack of respect for the institutions", without giving further clarification; the decree does not specify the date or the reference number for the application for naturalization;
- The complainant stated that Mr. Chalupa feared that the passport could be confiscated on the basis of this decree,
- The Speaker of the National Assembly sought clarification from the Minister of Justice on the potential possibilities for appeal against the decree of 22 July and concerning Mr. Chalupa's fears about confiscation,

Recalling the following: the right to nationality is set out in many international instruments, notably article 24(3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 5(d)(iii) of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, both of which the DRC has ratified; United Nations Human Rights Council resolution 20/5 of 16 July 2012, on human rights and arbitrary deprivation of nationality, calls on “States to observe minimum procedural standards in order to ensure that decisions concerning the acquisition, deprivation or change of nationality do not contain any element of arbitrariness”, “[r]eaffirms that the right to a nationality of every human person is a fundamental human right” and “[r]eiterates that arbitrary deprivation of nationality, especially on discriminatory grounds such as political or other opinion (...) is a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms”,

Bearing in mind the recommendations adopted in November 2015 at the conclusion of a world conference on the right to nationality in order to address statelessness, organized jointly by the IPU, the Parliament of South Africa and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR),

Taking into account that article 2 of the 2004 law on nationality stipulates that the law applies “subject to the application of the international treaties and principles of law recognized with regard to nationality” and that article 12 of the DRC Constitution provides that all Congolese are equal before the law and have the right to equal protection,

1. *Notes with satisfaction* that a passport has been issued to Mr. Chalupa for humanitarian reasons, which has enabled him to begin appropriate medical treatment, and *thanks* the Speaker of the National Assembly for his intervention; *wishes* to receive confirmation as soon as possible that this passport remains valid and that Mr. Chalupa can continue his medical treatment abroad without fear;
2. *Deeply regrets* that the issuance of the passport has not also led to the settlement of the question of Mr. Chalupa’s nationality once and for all; *again urges* the relevant authorities to recognize Mr. Chalupa’s nationality as soon as possible, in accordance with articles 2 and 9(2) of the law on nationality;
3. *Once again emphasizes* that Mr. Chalupa’s nationality had never been contested before he joined the opposition and that he has undeniable ties with the DRC, particularly as a former member of parliament; *recalls* that it considers that Mr. Chalupa was wrongfully deprived of his nationality and left stateless by the Congolese authorities after a conviction for forgery and the use of falsified documents, following a trial marred by serious flaws and in the absence of any form of appeal;
4. *Is, as a result, dismayed and deeply disturbed* by the Council of Minister’s decree and the reasons behind it; *wishes* to receive further clarifications on the decree, including whether it was issued in response to the application for naturalization filed in 1992 and whether there are any forms of appeals process against this decree;
5. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the parliamentary authorities, the Minister of Justice 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.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

DRC/85 - Martin Fayulu

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 199th session (Geneva, 27 October 2016)

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Referring to the case of Mr. Martin Fayulu, a member of the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and to the decision it adopted at its 198th session (March 2016),

Referring to the letters from the Speaker of the National Assembly of 21 April and 3, 13 and 19 October 2016, and information provided by the complainant,

Considering that Mr. Fayulu, an opposition member of parliament and leader of the political party *Engagement for Citizenship and Development* (ECIDÉ), was arrested by intelligence service officers on 14 February 2016 and that the following has been placed on the file regarding the incident:

- According to the complainant, Mr. Fayulu was assaulted, arrested and arbitrarily detained by the aforementioned officers before being released the same evening; his vehicle and personal belongings were confiscated and never returned back to him; Mr. Fayulu filed a complaint against his arbitrary arrest and violation of his rights and parliamentary immunity, but there has been no progress in the legal proceedings to date;
- According to the complainant, this incident was intended to prevent a day of national protest scheduled for 16 February 2016 ("Dead City Day"), which was being jointly organized by opposition parties;
- According to the complainant, the Public Prosecutor had initiated proceedings against Mr. Fayulu (file reference: RMP V/039/PGR/SMM) and requested the National Assembly to lift his parliamentary immunity; Mr. Fayulu had not been informed of the charges laid against him, or of the lifting of his immunity;
- The Speaker of the National Assembly stated that he had intervened immediately to secure Mr. Fayulu's release, referring the matter to the Public Prosecutor to ensure compliance with the Constitution and his parliamentary immunity, and publicly expressing his position in a tweet; he believed that, as the case had been referred to the courts, the National Assembly was no longer responsible for the matter; he recommended that Mr. Fayulu should hire the services of a lawyer and use the procedure provided for in Congolese law (*procédure de prise à partie*), instead of relying on the Bureau of the National Assembly's intervention; he has not confirmed whether legal proceedings were initiated against Mr. Fayulu, or a request submitted for the lifting of his parliamentary immunity;

Considering that, on 19 September 2016, Mr. Fayulu sustained a serious head injury during a protest organized by the opposition in Kinshasa, and that the following allegations and information have been placed on file concerning the incident:

- The complainant alleges that a police officer deliberately targeted Mr. Fayulu, firing a rubber bullet at him at point-blank range; he stated that six young people surrounding the member of parliament at the protest were themselves hit by live bullets; he criticizes the National Assembly for not denouncing the incident and failing to provide assistance to Mr. Fayulu; the complainant further expresses concern following the announcement by the Public Prosecutor of charges being brought against the organizers of the protest and several members of the opposition following the demonstrations, and of a foreign travel ban being imposed on them; the complainant stated that it was not known whether these measures had been taken against Mr. Fayulu;
- The Speaker of the National Assembly underscored that the 19 September 2016 protest had had "no direct impact" on the authority of Mr. Fayulu as an elected representative, and reiterated that the National Assembly had condemned the acts of violence committed during the public protests of 19 and 20 September 2016; he reported that criminal investigations were under way and that the National Assembly could not interfere in the conduct of the case; he expressed the hope that the investigations would proceed quickly and that the identified perpetrators of these acts of violence would be brought to justice; he reaffirmed his commitment to the protection of human rights and the rights of parliamentarians "provided they also prove themselves to be exemplary models in respecting the rights of others and the laws of the Republic";
- The Speaker of the National Assembly emphasized that he had instructed the 2nd Deputy Speaker to enquire about Mr. Fayulu's situation following the protest and to take appropriate measures; he affirmed the Bureau's willingness to provide Mr. Fayulu with support, while recalling that the process to provide medical care was subject to fulfilling certain normal administrative formalities; he pointed out that it was Mr. Fayulu's responsibility to inform the Bureau of the circumstances and place of his hospitalization, so that the assistance mechanism could be activated, as the Bureau did not have the authority to do so on its own,

Considering that the complainant alleges that the two incidents that took place in 2016 involving Mr. Fayulu came after a number of previous tactics had been used to impede his political activities and to weaken the opposition; that these tactics were orchestrated against him because of his role in coordinating an opposition platform, his stance in favour of the Head of State stepping down at the end of his term of office, and the announcement of his intention to run in the presidential elections,

Considering that these successive incidents occurred at a time of political tension and mounting repression of the opposition because of the elections initially scheduled for the end of 2016, which had been postponed despite objections from the opposition,

Considering that the preliminary investigation report published on 20 October 2016 by the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the DRC on the acts of violence committed during the protests in Kinshasa from 19 to 21 September 2016 concluded that more than 422 people had been victims of human rights violations by State agents (with at least 48 killed, 75 injured and nearly 300 persons illegally arrested and detained by State agents); that the report states that security forces are responsible for most of the violations committed during the protests and that they used excessive force to prevent the protesters from peacefully exercising their freedom of assembly and protest; the report confirms that the Government announced that charges were being brought against the “organizers of the protest, those involved in the acts of violence and the masterminds” and that a travel ban was being imposed; that the report recommends, in particular, that the Congolese authorities promptly carry out independent, thorough, credible, transparent and impartial investigations into the violations committed by State agents and to bring the alleged perpetrators to justice, regardless of their ranks and positions, and to guarantee the protection of the fundamental rights of the political opponents; that the report further confirms that the protesters are also to blame for several acts of violence, including the death of four police officers and the destruction and looting of numerous public buildings, and also recommends investigations and the imposition of sanctions against those responsible for the violence,

1. *Thanks* the Speaker of the National Assembly for the information provided and his cooperation;
2. *Expresses its concern* about the violence to which Mr. Fayulu was subjected during the 19 September 2016 protest and the inaction of the Congolese courts with respect to the incidents of February 2016, even more so given the worsening political situation in the DRC;
3. *Urges* the relevant authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice as soon as possible following independent, credible, transparent and impartial investigations, and to return the belongings illegally confiscated back to Mr. Fayulu as a matter of urgency;
4. *Recalls* that impunity constitutes a threat both to parliamentarians and to those they represent and therefore assaults against parliamentarians, if they remain unpunished, not only violate the fundamental rights of those concerned, but affect the ability of parliament to fulfill its institutional mission; *stresses* that parliament has an obligation to ensure that no effort is spared in holding the perpetrators accountable; and *urges* the National Assembly to take all appropriate steps as soon as possible and to keep the Committee informed in that regard;
5. *Also wishes to know* whether Mr. Fayulu: (i) is currently subject to legal proceedings, a request to lift his parliamentary immunity and/or a travel ban; (ii) filed a formal complaint following the 19 September 2016 protest; (iii) submitted a formal request for medical assistance to the National Assembly, in accordance with the normal procedure; and (iv) used the *procédure de prise à partie* with respect to the incidents of February 2016;
6. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the competent authorities, the Minister of Justice 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.

ECUADOR

EC/68 - José Cléver Jiménez Cabrera

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 199th session (Geneva, 27 October 2016)

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Referring to the case of Mr. José Cléver Jiménez, a former member of the National Assembly of Ecuador, 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 on file as presented by the complainant:

- Following a complaint filed in August 2011 by President Rafael Correa, Mr. Jiménez, together with adviser and journalist Fernando Alcibíades Villavicencio and union leader Carlos Eduardo Figueroa, was prosecuted for criminal judicial defamation against the President;
- The defamation case stems from a complaint filed in 2011 by Mr. Jiménez, Mr. Villavicencio and Mr. Figueroa before the Public Prosecutor, claiming that on 30 September 2010 President Rafael Correa had allegedly committed crimes against humanity, as well as other offences under the Ecuadorian Criminal Code, such as inciting political chaos and civil discord. It should be noted that unrest broke out that day as police protested against cuts to their benefits. After Mr. Correa personally visited Quito's main barracks in an attempt to defuse the situation, the tension rose further, and he was forced to flee the scene and taken to hospital. He was besieged for 12 hours and declared a state of emergency, before finally escaping with the help of an elite squad. The complaint alleges that the President ordered that shots be fired during his escape and is responsible for what ensued that day;
- The National Court of Justice ordered the closing of the case, classifying the complaint as "malicious and reckless". Following these events, the President filed a complaint against the applicants for criminal judicial defamation;
- On 16 April 2013, the National Court of Justice convicted and sentenced Mr. Jiménez and Mr. Villavicencio to a year and a half of imprisonment and the payment of financial compensation equivalent to the monthly salary of President Rafael Correa, for each month since the date when the complaint was filed (August 2011) and the notification of the judgment. The Court ruled that the allegations of serious crimes against President Correa evidently lacked foundation, that they were made knowing their falsehood and with intent to cause harm to his reputation. The ruling provided that the defendants must offer a public apology to President Rafael Correa by print media, television and radio and publish an excerpt of the judgment in four media outlets, in addition to the payment of the President's attorney fees. On 24 July 2013, the National Court of Justice rejected the applications for annulment and appeal filed by the defendants. The Court upheld the first-instance ruling, whereupon the applicants filed a cassation appeal. On 14 January 2014, the National Court of Justice rejected that appeal and upheld the decision. Mr. Jiménez and Mr. Villavicencio were never detained, as they went into hiding and were never found;
- The complainant states that Mr. Jiménez's prosecution is politically motivated and is due to the fact that he has denounced corruption as part of his oversight responsibilities and because he has expressed critical views against the President. According to the complainant, the proceedings were marred by lack of due process, in particular the failure to lift the parliamentary immunity and impediments to a fair trial, which would enable the accused to refute the charges against him,

Considering that, on 24 March 2014, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) requested that precautionary measures be adopted for Mr. Villavicencio, Mr. Jiménez, and Mr. Figueroa, and requested the State of Ecuador to immediately suspend implementation of the 14 January 2014 decision issued by the National Court of Justice; and *bearing in mind* that, according to the complainant, the Ecuadorian Government has rejected the request because it believes that the IACHR lacks the power to issue such measures,

Considering that, on 5 May 2014, Mr. Jiménez presented a legal action before the Constitutional Court for non-observance of the IACHR precautionary measures, in conformity with Article 436.5 of the Ecuadorian Constitution and that, according to the complainant, this action is still pending,

Considering that, according to media reports, on 23 March 2015, judge Luis Enríquez of the National Court of Justice declared that the statute of limitations under recently adopted legislation put an end to the carrying out of the sentence and therefore ordered the police not to arrest Mr. Jiménez,

Considering that, the Committee received a new communication that affirms that Mr. Jiménez is currently facing charges of espionage, divulgation of secret information and attempting to stage a coup d'état, all of which allegedly relate to the same offences as those for which he was tried by the National Court of Justice in 2013. Moreover, the complainant reports that President Correa has initiated a new legal action to obtain financial compensation based on the sentence of 16 April 2013,

Bearing in mind that Ecuador is party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and, by virtue of articles 2, 9, 14, 19, 25 and 26 in particular, has committed to the requirement to respect and guarantee the fundamental rights of its citizens, including members of parliament, notably the rights to liberty, freedom of expression, the right to vote and to be elected in elections that ensure the free expression of the will of the electorate, the right to participate freely in the management of public affairs, the right to equality before the law, and the prohibition of all forms of discrimination and equitable and effective protection against all forms of discrimination, particularly with regard to political opinions; that the American Convention on Human Rights, to which Ecuador is also a signatory, includes similar provisions,

Also bearing in mind that Articles 11.3, 11.9 and 128 of the Ecuadorian Constitution stipulate that rights and guarantees established in the Constitution and in international human rights instruments will be of direct and immediate application, that the State will be responsible for arbitrary detention, unjustified delay or inadequate administration of justice, violation of the right to effective judicial protection, and violations of the principles and rules of due process, and that parliamentarians are not liable for opinions expressed in the exercise of their duties, within or outside parliament,

1. *Is deeply concerned* that Mr. Jiménez was convicted and sentenced for criminal judicial defamation against President Rafael Correa in connection with what appears to be the legitimate exercise of his rights to freedom of expression; *is unclear* as to the status of the application of the sentence in light of contradictory information; *wishes* therefore to receive official information, in particular relevant legal documentation as to whether the National Court of Justice did indeed consider the application of the sentence moot and, if so, whether this also means that the petition before the Constitutional Court for non-observance of the IACHR precautionary measures is no longer pending, or whether to the contrary, President Correa's legal action means that the original sentence remains applicable;
2. *Notes with concern* the allegation that Mr. Jiménez is now subject to new criminal accusations in connection with the same facts that formed the basis of his conviction in 2013; *wishes* to receive clarifications from the relevant authorities in this regard, including copies of legal documents that would explain the facts and legal provisions underpinning such accusations, as well as the status of the legal action should it exist;
3. *Stresses* that reprisals against members of parliament for expressing their views, as part of their oversight responsibility, undermine their ability to exercise their parliamentary mandate and have a chilling effect on other parliamentarians and affect the ability of parliament as an institution to fulfil its role;
4. *Considers* therefore that the Parliament of Ecuador has a vested interest in using its powers to the fullest to help ensure that the concerns and questions regarding Mr. Jiménez are addressed; *wishes* to receive official information from the parliamentary authorities on any action that parliament has taken to this effect;

5. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the competent 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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VENEZUELA

VEN/10 - Biagio Pillieri
VEN/11 - José Sánchez Montiel
VEN/12 - Hernán Claret Alemán
VEN/13 - Richard Blanco Cabrera
VEN/14 - Richard Mardo
VEN/15 - Gustavo Marcano
VEN/16 - Julio Borges
VEN/17 - Juan Carlos Caldera
VEN/18 - María Corina Machado (Ms.)
VEN/19 - Nora Bracho (Ms.)
VEN/20 - Ismael García
VEN/21 - Eduardo Gómez Sigala
VEN/22 - William Dávila
VEN/23 - María Mercedes Aranguren (Ms.)
VEN/24 - Nirma Guarulla (Ms.)
VEN/25 - Julio Ygarza
VEN/26 - Miguel Tadeo
VEN/27 - Rosmit Mantilla
VEN/28 - Enzo Prieto
VEN/29 - Gilberto Sojo

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 199th session (Geneva, 27 October 2016)

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Referring to the existing cases under file name VEN/10-23, which concern allegations of human rights violations affecting members from the coalition of the former opposition, the Democratic Unity Round Table (MUD), in the previous Venezuelan legislature, and the decision adopted on their cases by the Governing Council at its 194th session (March 2014); *noting* that of these members, Mr. Pillieri, Mr. Sánchez, Mr. Alemán, Mr. Blanco, Mr. Borges, Ms. Bracho, Mr. García and Mr. Dávila were re-elected in the parliamentary elections of 6 December 2015, in which the MUD obtained a majority of seats,

Having before it the new cases of Ms. Nirma Guarulla, Mr. Julio Ygarza and Mr. Miguel Tadeo, who were elected as titular members in the parliamentary election on 6 December 2015, and Mr. Rosmit Mantilla, Mr. Enzo Prieto and Mr. Gilberto Sojo, elected as alternate deputies in those elections, which have 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),

Recalling the following information on file with regard to the previous cases:

- **With regard to Mr. Pillieri, Mr. Sánchez, Mr. Alemán and Mr. Blanco:**
 - The four men have been exercising their parliamentary mandate, but remain subject to criminal proceedings; according to the complainant, the proceedings are baseless, which the authorities deny; they were instigated before their election to the National Assembly in September 2010, at which time Mr. Pillieri and Mr. Sánchez were detained; they were released in February and December 2011, respectively;

- **With regard to Mr. Richard Mardo:**
 - On 5 February 2013, Mr. Diosdado Cabello, then Speaker of the National Assembly, reportedly displayed, in the course of an ordinary session, public documents and cheques to support the hypothesis that Mr. Mardo had benefited from third-party donations, arguing that this amounted to illicit enrichment; the complainant affirms that what the Speaker displayed were falsified cheques and forged receipts;
 - On 6 February 2013, Mr. Pedro Carreño, in his capacity as President of the Parliamentary Audit Committee, pressed criminal charges against Mr. Mardo and called for him to be placed under house arrest in view of the alleged flagrante delicto situation;
 - On 12 March 2013, the Prosecutor General's Office formally requested the Supreme Court to authorize proceedings against Mr. Mardo on charges of tax fraud and money laundering, following accusations that were levelled against him by the then Speaker of the National Assembly which, according to the complainant, were based on falsified cheques and forged receipts; according to the authorities, Mr. Mardo was officially charged on 25 June 2014;
 - There is no information on file to show that the authorities have advanced with the criminal proceedings;
- **With regard to Ms. María Mercedes Aranguren:**
 - On 12 November 2013, the National Assembly lifted Ms. Aranguren's parliamentary immunity so as to allow charges of corruption and criminal association to be filed in court; the complainant affirms that the case against Ms. Aranguren is not only baseless, but had been dormant since 2008 and was only reactivated in 2013 in order to pass the enabling legislation; the authorities stated that, on 10 December 2014, the court in charge of the case ordered her arrest;
 - There is no information on file to show that the authorities have advanced with the criminal proceedings;
- **With regard to Ms. María Corina Machado:**
 - On 24 March 2014, the Speaker of the National Assembly announced, without any discussion in plenary, that Ms. Machado had been stripped of her mandate after the Government of Panama had accredited her as an alternate representative at the March 2014 meeting of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington, DC, so as to allow her to present her account of the situation in Venezuela;
 - According to the complainant, days before Ms. Machado was stripped of her parliamentary mandate, the National Assembly had requested the Prosecutor General's Office, in a document signed by 95 parliamentarians from the majority, to initiate pretrial proceedings against her for, according to the Speaker, "the crimes, devastation and damage in the country" following the large demonstrations and violent clashes between protestors and government forces that took place in the early months of 2014;
 - Two criminal investigations were subsequently initiated against her; the complainant states that the investigations relate to allegations that she was accused of involvement in an alleged plot to carry out a coup d'état and assassinations and of incitement to violence; Ms. Machado has denied the accusations and charge against her; the authorities state that the formal written charge (*escrito de acusación*) was presented on 30 September 2014 and that on 6 July 2015 a preliminary hearing took place on the case; as for the second investigation, the authorities maintain that it derives from a complaint presented by several members of the National Assembly at the time, in which they asked for an investigation into the possible commission by Ms. Machado of several criminal offences; on 3 December 2014, formal charges were reportedly brought by the prosecutor's office; no information is on file with regard to the current status of the proceedings;
 - On 14 July 2015, the Comptroller General of the Republic fined Ms. Machado and suspended her from her duties for 12 months, thereby blocking her intention to stand in the parliamentary elections scheduled for 6 December 2015 for a further term as a member of the National Assembly; the Comptroller alleges in his decision to suspend her that María Corina Machado concealed income in her sworn financial disclosures, consisting of food and transport vouchers available to members of parliament; Ms. Machado claims, however, never to have used such vouchers; according to the complainant, the suspension is totally disproportionate and unconstitutional and a violation of human rights;

- **With regard to Mr. Juan Carlos Caldera:**

- On 26 November 2014, the Supreme Court authorized Mr. Caldera's prosecution, referring to article 380 of the Code of Criminal Procedure; the complainant claims that, contrary to the Court's ruling, the acts for which Mr. Caldera is to be investigated are not crimes; the complainant states that an illegal audio recording emerged showing several persons plotting to frame Mr. Caldera by making a lawful act – the receipt of private funds for a mayoral election campaign – appear criminal in the eyes of the public; the complainant points out that, in Venezuela, public funding of political parties and election campaigns is prohibited;

- **With regard to Mr. Ismael García:**

- In November 2014, the Supreme Court upheld a request for pretrial proceedings in the case brought against Mr. García by General Carvajal, who claims to have been defamed and is currently being held in Aruba at the request of the United States Government on accusations of drug trafficking; the complainant points out that Mr. García had formally requested the Prosecutor General's Office to investigate General Carvajal for his alleged role in criminal activity; according to the complainant, none of these facts was considered by the Supreme Court before upholding the request,

Further recalling the concerns expressed by the complainant in several of these cases about the lifting of parliamentary immunity which, while it has the effect of suspending the parliamentary mandate, requires a three-fifths majority vote in the National Assembly, whereas the parliamentary authorities state that a simple majority is sufficient,

- **With regard to the new cases of Ms. Nirma Guarulla, Mr. Julio Ygarza and Mr. Miguel Tadeo:**

- On 30 December 2015, the Electoral Chamber of the Supreme Court ordered the suspension of a number of acts of proclamation issued by the Electoral Council for the state of Amazonas. The judgment related to allegations of fraud during the election of Ms. Nirma Guarulla, Mr. Julio Ygarza and Mr. Miguel Tadeo (all from the coalition of the former opposition, the MUD) and Mr. Romel Guzamana (from the PSUV);
- On 5 January 2016, the National Assembly decided to disregard this judgement and resolved that the deputies from Amazonas should take their seats. On 11 January 2016, the Supreme Court determined that any decision taken by the National Assembly would be invalid as long as the members of parliament whom the Court had suspended remained in their seats. The MUD coalition parties in parliament first decided to continue legislating in defiance of the court ruling, but on 13 January 2016, the suspended members requested to leave the legislature "without losing their status of members of parliament and in expectation of more favourable conditions in resuming their seats";
- On 21 July 2016, the suspended members of parliament from the State of Amazonas decided to retake their seats at the National Assembly, despite the Supreme Court's earlier decision to suspend their election;
- On 1 August 2016, the Supreme Court declared again that any decision taken by the National Assembly would be invalid as long as the members of parliament remained in their seats, and declared that the suspended members of parliament and the opposition (new majority) members of parliament were in contempt of court, and therefore could be liable to criminal prosecution;

- **With regard to the new cases of Mr. Rosmit Mantilla, Mr. Enzo Prieto and Mr. Gilberto Sojo:**

- Mr. Rosmit Mantilla, Mr. Enzo Prieto and Mr. Gilberto Sojo, elected as alternate members of parliament in the parliamentary election on 6 December 2015, have been deprived of their liberty since 2014 in connection with ongoing legal proceedings, according to the complainant for political reasons, and have therefore been unable to exercise their parliamentary mandate. The complainants state that the National Assembly granted authorization for the installation of alternates. In this regard, the National Assembly had asked the General Prosecutor and the corresponding judges for the release of the three alternate deputies in order to allow their installation in parliament. However, this request was refused;

- The complainants state that, according to Article 200 of the Venezuelan Constitution, parliamentary immunity is acquired by deputies from the moment of their proclamation as elected members of the National Assembly and that, with respect to alternate deputies, immunity is effective as soon as their installation is required in parliament;
- On 22 April 2015, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention considered that the detention of Mr. Mantilla constituted arbitrary detention,

Recalling that a delegation of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians was due to travel to Venezuela in June 2013 to address, among other things, the issues that had arisen in these cases, but that the mission was postponed at the last minute in order to allow the parliamentary authorities more time to organize the meetings requested,

Taking into account the numerous letters from the current Speaker of the National Assembly, including his most recent letter of 17 October 2016, in which he expressed full support for the mission by the Committee and underscored the need for it to take place as soon as possible, all the more so in light of his concerns about increased encroachment by the executive and judicial authorities on the powers of the National Assembly,

Taking into account the official visit to Venezuela by the Secretary General in late July 2016, during which he met, amongst others, with the President of Venezuela, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Ombudsman and parliamentarians from majority and opposition parties, and that his visit laid the groundwork for the organization of the mission by the Committee,

1. *Thanks* the Speaker of the National Assembly for the extensive information provided and for his continued readiness to receive the mission by the Committee;
2. *Is concerned* that more than 10 months after the election, there is still no clarity on the status of three individuals whose election was suspended by the Supreme Court; *reaffirms* that this situation not only directly affects their individual political rights, but also deprives their constituencies from representation in parliament; *calls on* the Supreme Court to rule on the matter as quickly as possible, with due consideration for all the facts and with full respect for the right to defence of those concerned;
3. *Notes* that three alternate members of parliament remain in preventive detention and that the allegation that they are detained arbitrarily has been confirmed in the case of Mr. Mantilla by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention following a complaint submitted by the individual concerned; *is keen* therefore *to have* full details on the legal grounds and facts that underpin the accusations against them and the stage reached in the legal proceedings; *is also eager* to hear from the authorities why these parliamentarians should not be allowed to exercise their parliamentary mandate, in particular to attend parliamentary sessions, as this would be in line with the fundamental principle of presumption of innocence;
4. *Recalls* its previous questions, as well as earlier preliminary concerns, regarding the cases of the other current and former parliamentarians whose cases were already under examination by the Committee before the elections of December 2015, and which relate primarily to the legal and factual justification for the legal proceedings brought against them individually and for the lifting of their parliamentary immunity;
5. *Requests* the Secretary General to liaise with the parliamentary authorities with a view to the swift organization of the mission, which would have as its mandate to address the current concerns and questions in the aforesaid cases, bearing in mind, where relevant, the current political context in which they have to be seen; *trusts* that the delegation will be able to meet with the relevant judicial and executive authorities and other entities that may be of help in the fulfilment of its mandate as well as the current and former parliamentarians directly concerned;
6. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

CAMBODIA

CMBD/27 - Chan Cheng

CMBD/48 - Mu Sochua (Ms.)

CMBD/49 - Keo Phirum

CMBD/50 - Ho Van

CMBD/51 - Long Ry

CMBD/52 - Nut Romdoul

CMBD/53 - Men Sothavarin

CMBD/54 - Real Khemarin

CMBD/55 - Sok Hour Hong

CMBD/56 - Kong Sophea

CMBD/57 - Nhay Chamroeun

CMBD/58 - Sam Rainsy

CMBD/59 - Um Sam An

CMBD/60 - Kem Sokha

CMBD/61 - Thak Lany (Ms.)

*Decision adopted by consensus by the IPU Governing Council
at its 199th session (Geneva, 27 October 2016) ¹*

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Referring to the cases of the following 12 parliamentarians from the opposition Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP): (i) Mr. Chan Cheng; (ii) Ms. Mu Sochua, Mr. Keo Phirum, Mr. Ho Van, Mr. Long Ry, Mr. Nut Romdoul, Mr. Men Sothavarin and Mr. Real Khemarin; (iii) Mr. Sok Hour Hong; (iv) Mr. Kong Sophea and Mr. Nhay Chamroeun; and (v) Mr. Sam Rainsy, leader of the opposition and the decision adopted at its 198th session (Lusaka, March 2016),

Having also before it the cases of Mr. Um Sam An, Mr. Kem Sokha and Ms. Thak Lany, members of the National Assembly and the Senate of Cambodia from the CNRP, which were considered by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians pursuant to the Procedure for the examination and treatment of complaints (Annex 1 of the Revised Rules and Practices),

Referring to the final report on the visit of the Committee conducted to Cambodia in February 2016 (CL/199/11(b)-R.1),

Taking into account the letters dated 11 July and 11 October 2016 of the Secretary General of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia, and the information submitted by the complainant and reliable third parties,

Referring to the hearings held with the Cambodian delegation to the 135th IPU Assembly and Mr. Sam Rainsy (Geneva, October 2016),

Recalling the following information already on file regarding the cases of the following 12 opposition parliamentarians:

- Mr. Chan Cheng, a member of the National Assembly, was convicted to two years' imprisonment on 13 March 2015 after long-dormant proceedings, which were believed to have been dismissed in 2012 and were suddenly re-activated in mid-2014 amid a tense political standoff between the ruling and opposition party. Mr. Chan Cheng has appealed the court ruling and the appeal is pending. His parliamentary immunity has not been lifted. He is free;

¹ The delegation of Cambodia expressed its reservations regarding the decision.

- Ms. Mu Sochua, Mr. Keo Phirum, Mr. Ho Van, Mr. Long Ry, Mr. Nut Romdoul, Mr. Men Sothavarin and Mr. Real Khemarin, all members of the National Assembly, were arrested on 15 July 2014, with other opposition activists, after a demonstration calling for the reopening of the Phnom Penh protest site known as Freedom Park (or Democracy Plaza) had turned violent. They were charged as criminal instigators by a Phnom Penh court for leading an insurrectional movement, committing aggravated intentional violence and inciting others to commit an offence, and face up to 30 years in prison. The Committee received clear video evidence that the members of parliament had tried to prevent and stop the violence (although protesters did not listen to them), while no evidence has been submitted to prove their alleged direct involvement in the violence, or that the violence fitted the legal requirements of the crime of insurrection. Their parliamentary immunity has not been lifted. The members of parliament concerned were released on bail on 22 July 2014, after the announcement of a political agreement between the Government and the opposition to end the political crisis. The charges, however, remain pending against them. A confidential judicial investigation is still ongoing and no date has been set for a trial. They are free;
- Mr. Sok Hour Hong, a senator, was arrested and charged after a video clip was posted on the Facebook page of the leader of the opposition, Mr. Sam Rainsy, on 12 August 2015. The video clip featured Mr. Sok Hour Hong discussing his views about the Viet Nam-Cambodia border, a controversial and sensitive issue in Cambodia, and showing a copy of an article of a 1979 Viet Nam-Cambodia treaty, providing that the border would be dissolved and re-delineated, which proved to be incorrect. On 13 August 2015, the Prime Minister of Cambodia accused the senator of treason and ordered his arrest. The senator was subsequently detained on 15 August 2015 and charged with forging a public document, using a forged public document and inciting social disorder. He could incur up to 17 years of imprisonment. His immunity was not lifted because the authorities considered that he had been arrested in flagrante delicto. He remains in detention, as his requests for pretrial release have been systematically rejected by the court. The trial, which had started in October 2015, has since been suspended on repeated occasions;
- Mr. Kong Sophea and Mr. Nhay Chamroeun, members of the National Assembly, were dragged from their cars and violently beaten as they were leaving the National Assembly on 26 October 2015. An anti-opposition protest organized by the ruling party was in progress in front of the National Assembly at that time. Neither security officers of the National Assembly, nor police officers present, took any action before, during or after the assault, as shown on video clips of the incident. The assault left both members of parliament with significant injuries. The attack was condemned by the National Assembly and an investigation was initiated, leading to the arrest of three suspects in November 2015, after they reportedly confessed to being involved in the violence. No further action has been taken against the other assailants or the instigator(s), despite complaints lodged by the members of parliament concerned and clear video records of the assault showing the identity of the attackers and the fact that they were communicating to others through walkie-talkies;
- Mr. Sam Rainsy, the leader of the opposition and a member of the National Assembly, has been targeted by an ever-increasing number of court cases initiated against him since November 2015 (including one related to the case of Senator Sok Hour Hong for posting the video clip on his Facebook page). His immunity was not lifted, but his parliamentary mandate was revoked in connection with the first court case. He has been forced to go into exile to avoid imprisonment since November 2015,

Further recalling the following information in relation to the prior treatment of the cases:

- The Committee decided at first, on an exceptional basis, to treat the cases as confidential in order to give an opportunity to the parties to find a solution through political dialogue, given that such dialogue resumed between the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and the CNRP following a July 2014 agreement. This agreement put an end to the 2013 post-election crisis and established a mechanism for dialogue between the two main political parties represented in parliament, known as the "culture of dialogue". The culture of dialogue was seen by both parties as crucial to ending the past prevailing culture of violence. It opened more space for political dialogue within the parliamentary institution and allowed the parties to achieve progress on some issues of national interest between July 2014 and mid-2015;

- The Cambodian delegation to the 133rd IPU Assembly (Geneva, October 2015) welcomed the Committee's proposal to conduct a visit to Cambodia. The visit was conducted from 15 to 17 February 2016 by its members, Mr. Ali A. Alaradi and Mr. Alioune Abatalib Gueye. The visit had two main objectives: first, for the Committee to gain a better understanding of the cases of the 12 opposition parliamentarians concerned, and of the political and human rights context in which they occurred; second, to help promote satisfactory solutions in the cases at hand, in line with Cambodia's constitutional framework and international human rights law. The Committee considered its visit as a "visit of last resort", after extensive time had repeatedly been given by the Committee to both parties to find negotiated solutions,

Considering that the Governing Council subscribed to the Committee's preliminary observations and recommendations on the visit at the 134th IPU Assembly (Lusaka, March 2016), which have now been fully confirmed. The final report of the visit has further included specific conclusions on each individual case before it and found that the 12 parliamentarians have been victims of violations of their fundamental rights. It made concrete recommendations to resolve their situation in compliance with the relevant national and international legal framework,

Considering that the official observations of the National Assembly of Cambodia on the report of the visit, shared in a letter dated 11 July 2016, have further confirmed the positions previously expressed by the authorities during the visit and have been duly annexed to the final report; that the authorities deny that any violations of human rights have been committed in the cases at hand and continue to claim that all opposition parliamentarians concerned are criminals who must be punished in accordance with the law; that, accordingly, this is a purely judicial matter for the court to decide and not a political matter that can be resolved through the culture of dialogue, as political dialogue cannot replace or violate the law in their view,

Considering that, following the visit of the Committee, both parties expressed their wish to resume the political dialogue, but that it has remained stalled to date. No progress has been made on the cases under examination. The situation has further deteriorated according to the following information and allegations submitted by the complainant and reliable third parties, on which the observations of the authorities have not been received,

- **Deterioration of the situation of Mr. Sam Rainsy:**
 - On 28 July 2016, Mr. Sam Rainsy was found guilty of defaming the President of the National Assembly, according to the complainant. The trial was held in the absence of the defendant and of his lawyers. The verdict was delivered after merely 10 minutes of deliberation. The court decision made no reference to the right to freedom of expression or parliamentary immunity. Mr. Sam Rainsy has appealed the conviction;
 - A series of new criminal cases have also been brought against Mr. Sam Rainsy, according to the complainant, including: (i) new defamation charges brought in early August 2016 by the Prime Minister in relation to remarks made by Mr. Sam Rainsy that allegedly suggested the involvement of the Prime Minister in the murder of political analyst Kem Ley; (ii) a new arrest warrant issued against Mr. Sam Rainsy in late August 2016 accusing him of complicity in forgery, using fake public documents and incitement in relation to yet another case related to the Cambodia-Viet Nam border controversy; (iii) another defamation complaint filed by the CPP website administrator after Mr. Sam Rainsy claimed that that the CPP had created fake Facebook accounts to "like" Mr. Hun Sen's page so as to obtain more "likes" than Sam Rainsy's; (iv) a new complaint was allegedly lodged on 20 October 2016 by the Minister of Interior in relation to a call for mass protests made by Mr. Sam Rainsy in September;
 - The complainant alleges that, on 18 October 2016, the Prime Minister issued instructions to all relevant authorities to "use all ways and means" to prevent Mr. Sam Rainsy from returning to Cambodia after the latter had announced his wish to return from exile in order to participate in the upcoming elections.
- **Investigations into the October 2015 attack against Mr. Kong Sophea and Mr. Nhay Chamroeun**
 - Reliable third parties have indicated that the three suspects arrested after confessing the crime were convicted to four years' imprisonment (including three years suspended) on 27 May 2016. Neither the complainant, nor the authorities, have shared any information to date on this significant development;

- The international NGO Human Rights Watch (HRW) stated, in a report published in late May 2016 after conducting thorough investigations into the incident, that the suspects admitted that they were members of the Prime Minister's bodyguard's unit, but maintained that they had not acted on orders from superiors but solely out of individual personal anger. HRW, however, concluded that the trial was designed to cover up the ultimate responsibility for the crime, rather than uncover it, on the grounds that: (i) the attack had all the hallmarks of an operation carried out by the Cambodian State security forces; (ii) the confessions of the suspects took place in dubious circumstances and were not consistent with the clear video evidence recorded; (iii) the suspects refused to answer questions about their chain of command during the public trial hearings; (iv) the judges blocked all attempts by the lawyers of the two members of parliament to question the suspects about the role of their superiors and whether they had received orders to participate in the attack. The judges and the prosecution argued that these lines of inquiry were outside the scope of the trial and the evidence showing the direct involvement of many others in the attack was ignored during the trial; (v) investigations into the instigators, planners and other participants in the attack against the members of parliament were blocked despite clear evidence;
- The European Parliament resolution dated 9 June 2016 has called on the Cambodian government to ensure full and impartial investigations into the attacks, with the participation of the United Nations.
- **New cases referred to the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians**
 - According to the complainant, the three following parliamentarians of the CNRP have also been targeted by politically motivated prosecutions, violations of parliamentary immunity and of their fundamental rights to freedom of expression and association, non-discrimination and to standards of due process;
 - **Mr. Um Sam An**, a CNRP member of the National Assembly, was arrested on 11 April 2016 upon his return to Cambodia and convicted on 10 October 2016 to two and a half years of imprisonment for inciting violence and discrimination. According to the complainant, the case was triggered following comments and videos he posted on Facebook in 2015 about the Cambodia-Viet Nam border issue, in particular assertions that the Government used "fake maps" to delineate the border. His parliamentary immunity was not lifted. According to the complainant, the authorities have argued that he was arrested in flagrante delicto because the crime continued as long as his comments were not removed from Facebook (although the court denied him bail on the grounds that there was a risk that he would destroy evidence by removing the comments from Facebook if he was granted a provisional release);
 - **Mr. Kem Sokha** is Vice President of the CNRP and its acting President since Mr. Sam Rainsy went into exile again in October 2015. He was the first Vice President of the National Assembly of Cambodia until October 2015 and remains a member of the National Assembly to date. According to the complainant, Mr. Kem Sokha has allegedly been the victim of the following harassment since April 2015: repeated threats (particularly from April to October 2015); an attack on his residence (October 2015); his removal from office as first Vice President of the National Assembly (October 2015); and the "Mon Srey" case, which has been ongoing since late February 2016. In that case, it is claimed that Mr. Kem Sokha had an affair with his hairdresser and gave her expensive gifts. Although his immunity has not been lifted, an attempt to arrest Mr. Kem Sokha was made in May 2016 and he has been holed up at the CNRP headquarters since that date under de facto house arrest, according to the complainant. Mr. Kem Sokha was also convicted to a six-month prison term on 9 September 2016 for refusing to appear for questioning;
 - **Ms. Thak Lany**, a CNRP member of the Senate, was accused by the Prime Minister of slander and incitement in early August 2016, after a video was posted online in which she appears to be suggesting that the Prime Minister was involved in the murder of political analyst Kem Ley. According to the complainant, the senator has denied making such a statement and claims that the video has been edited. The senator was summoned to appear before the prosecutor twice before her parliamentary immunity was lifted on 1 September 2016. Ms. Thak Lany is currently in exile. Her trial is due to take place on 28 October 2016.

Considering that the authorities of Cambodia have not provided any official information or their observations on the new cases and allegations submitted to the Committee,

Considering further that the complainant claims that the cases of the 15 CNRP members of parliament under examination demonstrate that the ruling party is attempting to weaken and silence the opposition in order to derail the upcoming 2017 and 2018 local and national elections by excluding the leaders and key members of the main opposition party in Cambodia from standing in the elections and campaigning freely, including by putting them in jail, in exile or by maintaining dangling charges and permanent threats of arrest against them; that the CNRP continues to boycott parliamentary work and has submitted a petition to the King to facilitate a solution to the ongoing political crisis,

Considering that, in the past few months, an increasing number of States and international organizations, including the United Nations, have expressed deep concern about the deterioration in the political and human rights situation in Cambodia, in particular the worsening climate for opposition politicians and human rights activists in Cambodia given the escalation of politically motivated charges, judicial harassment and acts of violence. They have urged the Government of Cambodia to ensure full respect for human rights, including the freedoms of expression, association and assembly, and to adhere strictly to international fair-trial standards, thus ensuring that the law is applied without discrimination on any ground. They have called for the urgent resumption of political dialogue between the CPP and the CNRP and for the creation of a political environment in which opposition parties and civil society can all function freely and without fear of arrest or persecution, so that Cambodia is able to conduct free and fair elections which would ensure the legitimacy of the next government. In a resolution adopted on 9 June 2016, the European Parliament has recalled that a non-threatening environment of democratic dialogue is essential for political stability, democracy and a peaceful society, and urged the Government to take all necessary measures to ensure the security of all democratically elected representatives of Cambodia, irrespective of their political affiliation. It has urged the Cambodian authorities to revoke the arrest warrant for and drop all charges against the opposition leaders and CNRP parliamentarians, as well as to reinstate them immediately and restore their parliamentary immunity,

Considering that two separate hearings were held with the Cambodian delegation to the 135th IPU Assembly, on the one hand, and with the leader of the Cambodian opposition, Mr. Sam Rainsy, on the other hand; that they reaffirmed their previous positions on the cases; that they stated their respective will to work in the best interests of the Cambodian people and to resume the political dialogue; that they both appealed to the IPU to assist them to that end; that furthermore:

- Mr. Sam Rainsy confirmed that he had been banned from returning to Cambodia and participating to the upcoming electoral process by the Prime Minister and expressed concern at the fairness of the upcoming electoral process if the CNRP is unable to participate fully and freely;
- The delegation stated that it hoped that progress could be achieved on the cases by the next IPU Assembly. It observed that the CNRP was among the 58 political parties registered for the upcoming elections and could participate to the electoral process; only the members who had committed crimes were prevented from participating and the party was free to appoint new leaders who would be able to stand in the elections. No court decision prevented Mr. Kem Sokha from leaving the CNRP headquarters and he had been able to do so to register as a voter. Freedom of speech in Cambodia was different from other western countries and needed to be balanced with the need for stability in the country. Only “genuine criticism” of the Prime Minister was authorized. The opposition party would not be in the current situation if it stopped “putting gas into the fire” and adopted a more constructive stance, going beyond constant criticism of the Prime Minister and of the Royal Government of Cambodia,

Bearing in mind the following in relation to Cambodia’s international obligations to respect, protect and promote fundamental human rights:

- As a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Cambodia is bound to respect international human rights standards, including the fundamental rights to freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, equality before the law and to a fair trial conducted by an independent and impartial court and to participate in public affairs. Restrictions on freedom of expression and freedom of association are only permitted when they are absolutely necessary to protect the rights of others or in case of a serious threat to public security, and such restrictions should be proportionate to their purpose, limited in scope

and duration, and subject to independent judicial review, in line with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the IPU resolution on freedom of expression and the right to information adopted at the 120th IPU Assembly (Addis Ababa, 10 April 2009);

- Following the second cycle of the universal periodic review (UPR) of Cambodia, conducted by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2014, the Cambodian authorities accepted, inter alia, recommendations to “promote a safe and favourable environment that allows individuals and groups to exercise the freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly and put an end to harassment, intimidation, arbitrary arrests and physical attacks, particularly in the context of peaceful demonstrations” and “take all necessary measures to guarantee the independence of justice without control or political interference” (Report of the Working Group on the UPR of Cambodia A/HRC/26/16),

Also bearing in mind Chapter 3 of the Constitution of Cambodia on the rights and obligations of Khmer citizens, in particular article 31, which states that “The Kingdom of Cambodia recognizes and respects human rights as stipulated in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human rights and the covenants and conventions related to human rights (...)” as well as article 80 and 104, which provide that: (1) members of the National Assembly and the Senate shall enjoy parliamentary immunity; (2) no member of parliament shall be prosecuted, detained or arrested because of opinions expressed in the exercise of his/her duties; (3) a member of parliament may only be prosecuted, arrested or detained with the permission of parliament; (4) in cases of flagrante delicto offences, the competent authority shall immediately report to parliament and request permission; (5) such permission requires the lifting of parliamentary immunity by a two-thirds majority vote; and (6) parliament can request the suspension of the detention or prosecution of any member of parliament following a three-quarters majority vote,

1. *Thanks* the Committee for the final report of its visit to Cambodia and *endorses* its conclusions and recommendations; *notes* the observations conveyed by the Cambodian authorities and *further thanks* both parties for sharing their respective views with the Committee;
2. *Notes with consternation* that no progress has been made in resolving the cases and that the situation has further escalated;
3. *Is deeply concerned* that a total of 15 opposition parliamentarians, including the leaders of the main opposition party, continue to face serious violations of their fundamental rights and are therefore being prevented from effectively playing their role as parliamentarians and members of the opposition freely without fear of persecution, particularly given the fast-approaching local and national elections;
4. *Once again urges* the Cambodian authorities to ensure full respect for human rights and that the law is applied without discrimination; *renews its call* on all branches of power and all political parties to work hand in hand to ensure that:
 - (i) There is full respect for parliamentary immunity and for the parliamentary mandate conferred upon members of parliament by the Cambodian population, as well as for their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, the right to an independent judiciary and to fair judicial proceedings – including by bringing relevant legislation and regulations in line with international standards and the practices of democratic parliaments;
 - (ii) Persons who have instigated and perpetrated attacks, threats and intimidation against parliamentarians are held accountable and that, in the future, systematic protection measures are promptly granted and effectively put in place by the relevant authorities whenever parliamentarians feel under threat;
 - (iii) Ongoing judicial processes against the parliamentarians concerned are completed without undue delay in a fair, independent, impartial and transparent manner, including – when warranted by exculpatory evidence and mitigating circumstances – by decisions to drop or requalify charges, discontinue proceedings or acquit the suspects, in line with the relevant provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Constitution of Cambodia, which require respect for the presumption of innocence and the rights of the accused;

5. *Continues to consider* that it is critical for the ruling party and the opposition to resume the political dialogue towards building a stable political environment in which there is sufficient space for dissent and for the peaceful exercise of the freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly in the context of the fast-approaching elections; *is convinced* that making progress towards sustainable solutions on the individual cases in compliance with human rights standards would pave the way for the resumption of a constructive political dialogue and contribute to creating a political environment conducive to the conduct of free and fair elections; *reiterates* the availability of the IPU to facilitate the political dialogue and to provide technical assistance to the Cambodian parliament;
6. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the competent 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.

MALDIVES

MLD/16 - Mariya Didi*	MLD/45 - Ahmed Sameer
MLD/28 - Ahmed Easa	MLD/46 - Afrasheem Ali
MLD/29 - Eva Abdulla*	MLD/48 - Ali Azim*
MLD/30 - Moosa Manik*	MLD/49 - Alhan Fahmy
MLD/31 - Ibrahim Rasheed	MLD/50 - Abdulla Shahid*
MLD/32 - Mohamed Shifaz	MLD/51 - Rozeyna Adam*
MLD/33 - Imthiyaz Fahmy*	MLD/52 - Ibrahim Mohamed Solih
MLD/34 - Mohamed Gasam	MLD/53 - Mohamed Nashiz
MLD/35 - Ahmed Rasheed	MLD/54 - Ibrahim Shareef*
MLD/36 - Mohamed Rasheed	MLD/55 - Ahmed Mahloof*
MLD/37 - Ali Riza	MLD/56 - Fayyaz Ismail*
MLD/39 - Ilyas Labeeb	MLD/57 - Mohamed Rasheed Hussain*
MLD/40 - Rugiyya Mohamed	MLD/58 - Ali Nizar*
MLD/41 - Mohamed Thoriq	MLD/59 - Mohamed Falah*
MLD/42 - Mohamed Aslam*	MLD/60 - Abdulla Riyaz*
MLD/43 - Mohammed Rasheed*	MLD/61 - Ali Hussain*
MLD/44 - Ali Waheed	

***Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council
at its 199th session (Geneva, 27 October 2016)***

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Referring to the cases of the abovementioned current and former parliamentarians and to the decision adopted at its 196th session (April 2015),

Recalling that most of the above members of the People's Majlis belong to the opposition Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) and that the case before the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians was initiated following their brief arrest at demonstrations in February 2012, during which the police used excessive force. However, the case has since evolved to include other instances of alleged arbitrary arrest and detention, frivolous legal proceedings, and acts of threat and violence, including murder in the case of Mr. Afrasheem Ali, a former member of the ruling Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM),

Recalling that threats intensified in the lead-up to and aftermath of the 2014 parliamentary elections, as exemplified by the stabbing attack on the then member of parliament, Mr. Alhan Fahmi, in February 2014. Since then, the complainant claims that at least seven parliamentarians have been the

* (Re-)elected to parliament in the elections of March 2014.

subject of physical attacks and death threats, as well as unlawful arrests and ill-treatment by the police. Moreover, several parliamentarians were said to be facing criminal charges allegedly for conducting peaceful protests,

Considering that member of parliament, Mr. Ahmed Mahloof, was convicted and sentenced on 18 and 25 July 2016 on two consecutive charges to a prison term of 10 months and 24 days for “obstructing police officers in the execution of their duties”,

Taking into account that a delegation of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, comprising its President, Mr. Fazle Chowdhury, and one of its members, Ms. Fawzia Koofi, conducted an on-site mission to the Maldives from 10 to 12 October 2016; its full mission report will be presented to the Governing Council at its next session (April 2017), after being shared with all parties for their observations; the delegation wishes to share the following preliminary observations on its mission:

- The delegation was pleased to be able to meet with the relevant legislative, judicial and executive authorities, in particular the Speaker of the People’s Majlis, parliamentarians belonging to all political parties represented in the People’s Majlis, the parliamentary Privilege Committee, the Minister of Home Affairs, the Chief Justice, the Attorney General, the Prosecutor General and senior police officers. The delegation also met 10 of the current and former members of parliament concerned, as well as the wife of Mr. Ahmed Mahloof. He is currently serving a prison sentence;
- **Death threats against members of parliament**
- The delegation is concerned about death threats targeting several prominent parliamentarians from the MDP and the fact that apparently no one has been held to account for these threats. The delegation is also concerned about reports that the special security arrangement in place for Mr. Abdulla Shahid was withdrawn, despite his entitlement to such protection as a former Speaker and in light of the multiple threats he has faced. The delegation notes that the authorities maintain that they are doing everything possible to protect the members of parliament at risk and to look into the threats, but that it is often difficult to identify the culprits and the victims sometimes fail to cooperate. The delegation is keen to receive details from the authorities on the precise steps taken to investigate the threats brought to their attention. It is also keen to know the precise protection measures in place for each of the members of parliament under threat and to receive clarification regarding the alleged withdrawal of former Speaker Shahid’s security detail;
- **Murder of Mr. Afrasheem Ali**
- With regard to the murder of Mr. Afrasheem Ali, a member of the People’s Majlis, on 2 October 2012, the delegation notes the fact that the conviction of Mr. Humaam, on the basis of his own confession along with other evidence, including forensic reports, was upheld by the Supreme Court on 24 June 2016. A second suspect, Mr. Ali Shan, was acquitted in September 2015 for want of sufficient evidence to sustain a conviction. The delegation was told that the authorities are still investigating the identity of the mastermind(s) of the murder;
- **The stabbing of former member of parliament Mr. Alhan Fahmy in February 2014**
- The delegation notes that, according to the Prosecutor General, charges were pressed in March 2014 against one suspect, who is serving a sentence for a drug-related crime until March 2017, and that the trial was about to be completed;
- **Ill-treatment of members of parliament at the hands of police officers**
- The delegation expresses concern that, more than four years after the events, there has apparently been no accountability for the ill-treatment by law enforcement officers of parliamentarians on 8 February 2012, which include Ms. Mariya Didi, Ms. Eva Abdulla, Mr. Imthiyaz Fahmy and Mr. Ibrahim Rasheed. The delegation considers that, although it might not be easy to identify the officers involved, the authorities should redouble their efforts – in particular where concrete video evidence is available, as in the case of Mr. Ibrahim Rasheed – in taking decisive measures against those responsible. The delegation is therefore pleased that the authorities have undertaken to provide further information in this regard;

- The delegation is also concerned about repeated reports of continued intimidation and harassment by the police against opposition members of parliament, including by summoning them for questioning in connection with their legitimate exercise of freedom of expression and the use of pepper spray at close range during police interventions;
- **Legal status of specific criminal cases initiated against three (former) members of parliament**
- The delegation notes that, in September 2015, the Prosecutor General withdrew the legal case against Mr. Ibrahim Rasheed for obstructing police officers in the execution of their duties, and that the investigation by the police against Mr. Mohamed Shifaz for producing pornographic cards had not been forwarded for action to the Prosecutor General. The delegation trusts that the authorities will inform the persons directly concerned that they are no longer subject to any legal action. The delegation notes that the legal case against Mr. Mohamed Rasheed, on charges of terrorism in connection with acts of arson in February 2012, during which public buildings were burnt down or damaged, is still ongoing. It welcomes the initiative by the Prosecutor General to ask the court to speed up consideration of this case. The delegation hopes that this will happen and with full respect for due process;
- **The conviction of Mr. Ahmed Mahloof in July 2016**
- The delegation notes the contradictions presented by the authorities, Mr. Mahloof's wife and others with regard to the facts and legal basis underpinning Mr. Mahloof's conviction and sentence to 10 months and 24 days of imprisonment, on two charges of obstructing police officers in the execution of their duties, for allegedly crossing a protest barricade and trying to flee the scene after leaving the court house following a hearing to extend his detention. The delegation is concerned about the severity of the sentence and reports that basic fair-trial standards were not respected. The delegation fails to understand how it can be argued that Mr. Mahloof would have tried to flee from the police in the presence of a sizeable police force at the court building. The delegation would greatly appreciate receiving a copy of the lower-court verdict in order to clarify this and other matters related to his prosecution. The delegation hopes that the appeal proceedings, to which it proposes sending an observer, will take place smoothly and with respect for the right to a fair trial. In the meantime, it hopes that the authorities will allow him to serve his sentence in the form of house arrest, in light of reports about Mr. Mahloof's poor health;
- **Undue restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly**
- The delegation is concerned about human rights developments that have a direct impact on the cases at hand. This concerns the recent adoption of the Protection of Reputation and Good Name and Freedom of Expression Act and the recent amendment to the Peaceful Assembly Act. Although the delegation agrees that freedom of expression is not absolute, it considers that the new legislation overly restricts the exercise of this right, due to its scope, the vagueness of some of its key provisions and the hefty fine imposed as punishment. Similarly, although it understands that Male is a small island prone to congestion, it also believes that legislation on the right to freedom of assembly should at all times have real practical meaning. The delegation considers in this regard that the very limited designated areas for demonstrations and the fact that prior police authorization is required unduly restrict the exercise of this right;
- **Limited space for the opposition to contribute meaningfully to the work of parliament**
- Although the delegation appreciates that the current People's Majlis has adopted an impressive number of bills, it feels that this output should not come at the expense of the need for a substantive and meaningful discussion of each piece of legislation. The delegation is therefore concerned about reports that the adoption of important legislation has been fast-tracked and adopted without any changes and proper discussion or consultation with stakeholders outside of parliament. Likewise, the delegation is concerned about reports that parliament, drawing on the majority of its members belonging to the

ruling coalition parties, has not carried out any serious oversight, even in the face of serious issues warranting public scrutiny. The delegation is also concerned in this regard about allegations of strong ties between the Government and members of independent oversight institutions such as the Elections Commission and the National Human Rights Commission, as well as the improper dismissal of the Auditor General, which hampers effective oversight;

- **Unacceptable behaviour in parliament and the handling of such incidents**
 - The delegation notes that the parliamentary authorities and the opposition acknowledge that there has been unruly behaviour in parliament on both sides. The delegation believes that the Speaker fulfils a paramount function in making sure that unacceptable behaviour, such as the spitting incident in February 2016, is immediately reprimanded and that all sides in parliament respect one another. It is absolutely crucial that the Speaker treats all sides impartially and is perceived as being above party politics. Here, it is also important that the Speaker allows the opposition to make a meaningful contribution to the work of parliament and that the opposition respects his authority;
- **Importance of dialogue between the majority and the opposition and of engagement with the international community**
 - The delegation strongly believes that the cases at hand have to be seen in the context of the ongoing political polarization in the Maldives. It believes that it is vital for all sides to redouble their efforts to engage in meaningful dialogue, with the help of the international community, to produce effective and inclusive institutions and long-term political solutions that enjoy the trust of all Maldivians. The delegation therefore deeply regrets the recent decision by the Maldivian authorities to leave the Commonwealth, and hopes that the authorities will re-consider this decision,
 1. *Thanks* the Maldivian authorities for their cooperation and assistance;
 2. *Takes note* of the preliminary observations of the Committee's mission and *eagerly awaits* the final mission report at the next IPU Assembly (April 2017);
 3. *Notes* the preliminary concerns, in particular with regard to the death threats against several opposition members of parliament, the lack of accountability for the ill-treatment of members of parliament by law enforcement officers, the reduced space for freedom of expression and assembly and for the opposition to meaningfully contribute to the work of parliament;
 4. *Expresses concern* about the severity of the sentence against Mr. Mahloof; *fails* to understand the justification for his conviction and sentence; *calls on* the relevant authorities to address his appeal swiftly and with full respect for fair-trial standards; *decides* to send a trial observer to follow the appeal proceedings; *calls on* the authorities, in the meantime, to allow Mr. Mahloof to serve his sentence in the form of house arrest;
 5. *Looks forward* to receiving further official information on the various pending issues that the authorities undertook to provide;
 6. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

TURKEY

TK69 - Gülser Yildirim (Ms.)	TK97 - Ali Atalan
TK70 - Selma Irmak (Ms.)	TK98 - Alican Önlü
TK71 - Faysal Sariyildiz	TK99 - Altan Tan
TK72 - Ibrahim Ayhan	TK100 - Ayhan Bilgen
TK73 - Aycan Irmez (Ms.)	TK101 - Behçet Yildirim
TK74 - Ayşe Acar Başaran (Ms.)	TK102 - Berdan Öztürk
TK75 - Bedia Özgökçe Ertan (Ms.)	TK103 - Dengir Mir Mehmet Firat
TK76 - Besime Konca (Ms.)	TK104 - Erdal Ataş
TK77 - Burcu Çelik Özkan (Ms.)	TK105 - Erol Dora
TK78 - Çağlar Demirel (Ms.)	TK106 - Ertuğrul Kürkcü
TK79 - Dilek Öcalan (Ms.)	TK107 - Ferhat Encü
TK80 - Dilan Dirayet Taşdemir (Ms.)	TK108 - Hişyar Özsoy
TK81 - Feleknaş Uca (Ms.)	TK109 - Idris Baluken
TK82 - Figen Yüksekdağ (Ms.)	TK110 - Imam Taşçier
TK83 - Filiz Kerestecioğlu (Ms.)	TK111 - Kadri Yildirim
TK84 - Hüda Kaya (Ms.)	TK112 - Lezgin Botan
TK85 - Leyla Birlik (Ms.)	TK113 - Mehmet Ali Aslan
TK86 - Leyla Zana (Ms.)	TK114 - Mehmet Emin Adiyaman
TK87 - Meral Daniş Beştaş (Ms.)	TK115 - Nadir Yildirim
TK88 - Mizgin Irgat (Ms.)	TK116 - Nihat Akdoğan
TK89 - Nursel Aydoğan (Ms.)	TK117 - Nimetullah Erdoğan
TK90 - Pervin Buldan (Ms.)	TK118 - Osman Baydemir
TK91 - Saadet Becerikli (Ms.)	TK119 - Selahattin Demirtaş
TK92 - Sibel Yiğitalp (Ms.)	TK120 - Sirri Süreyya Önder
TK93 - Tuğba Hezer Öztürk (Ms.)	TK121 - Ziya Pir
TK94 - Abdullah zeydan	TK122 - Mithat Sancar
TK95 - Adem Geveri	TK123 - Mahmut Toğrul
TK96 - Ahmet Yildirim	

***Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council
at its 199th session (Geneva, 27 October 2016)***

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Having before it the case of the above-mentioned 55 members of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT), which were considered by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians pursuant to the Procedure for the examination and treatment of complaints (Annex 1 of the Revised Rules and Practices),

Taking into account the letter dated 13 October 2016 of the President of the Turkish IPU Group and the allegations submitted by the complainant,

Referring to the hearing held with the complainant,

Pointing out that the possibility of a hearing was also offered to the Turkish delegation at the 135th IPU Assembly,

Referring to the mission report on the mission conducted to Turkey by the Committee in February 2014 (CL/195/11(b)-R.1),

1. *Notes with deep concern* that 55 of the 58 parliamentarians of the People's Democratic Party (HDP) are facing over 600 terrorism charges in prosecutions initiated throughout Turkey, after they were stripped of their parliamentary immunity following the adoption of a constitutional amendment on 20 May 2016; this suspended the ordinary procedure for the lifting of immunity and authorized a blanket removal of immunity for a total of 139 members of parliament from all political parties;

2. *Further notes with concern* that the complainant alleges that the evidence adduced to support the charges against the 55 members of parliament relates to public statements, rallies and other peaceful political activities that they carried out in furtherance of their parliamentary duties and of their political party programme, such as mediating between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the Turkish Government as part of the peace process between 2013 and 2015, advocating publicly in favour of political autonomy, and criticizing the policies of President Erdogan in relation to the current conflict in South-Eastern Turkey (including denouncing the crimes committed by the Turkish security forces in that context);
3. *Is concerned* furthermore that the need to respond to the many charges and likely court hearings across the country will make it impossible for many members of parliament to devote themselves meaningfully to their parliamentary responsibilities;
4. *Recalls* that the fundamental rights of parliamentarians must be upheld at all times, that members of parliament should be able to speak freely without fear of reprisals, that parliamentary immunity is crucial to protect members of parliament from politically motivated allegations, but also to protect the independence and integrity of the institution of parliament as a whole;
5. *Reaffirms* its long-standing position that parliament should set aside the necessary time to consider requests for the lifting of parliamentary immunity, and to apply the basic principles of due process, including a hearing of the parliamentarian(s) affected, and that a decision to lift immunity should always be agreed by a parliamentary vote on a case-by-case basis and should require valid and credible allegations supported by serious evidence;
6. *Observes* that these requirements were all the more important at a time of increased polarization, when the Grand National Assembly of Turkey should have carefully checked that peaceful and legal political activities by Turkish members of parliament were not presented as evidence of criminal and terrorist acts, given the serious allegations made in the present case and the long-standing concerns over freedom of expression and association in relation to anti-terrorist legislation;
7. *Considers* that the developments in Turkey since the failed coup d'état of 15 July 2016 make it all the more necessary to monitor extremely closely the ongoing judicial proceedings related to the 55 HDP parliamentarians; *refers* in this regard to the numerous reports pointing to the summary dismissal of prosecutors and judges and the increasingly limited opportunities afforded to journalists, civil society and others to voice any criticism of the authorities;
8. *Considers* that the magnitude and seriousness of the cases at hand may well make it essential to promote a comprehensive solution that goes beyond the consideration of the concerns in each individual case; *requests* that the Committee enhances its contacts with the parliamentary authorities, in tandem with the executive and judicial authorities, in order to examine all possible avenues to reach such a solution;
9. *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;
10. *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 199th session (Geneva, 27 October 2016)***

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Referring to the case of Mr. Talib Al Mamari, a former member of the *Majlis A'Shura* (the Lower House of Parliament) of Oman, to the decision it adopted at its 193rd session (October 2014) and to the public decision adopted by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians on 30 November 2015,

Taking into account the letter of 12 May 2016 from the Chairman of the *Majlis A'Shura*,

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

- Mr. Al Mamari, then a member of the *Majlis A'shura* of Oman, was sentenced on 10 October 2013 to a seven-year prison term and a fine of 1,000 riyals in connection with his participation in a demonstration on 22 August 2013 calling on the Government to adopt measures to combat pollution; he was convicted on charges of: (i) participating in a "riotous assembly" of more than 10 persons with intent to disrupt public order; (ii) deliberately obstructing public highways; and (iii) inciting the people of Liwa to demonstrate in front of Sohar port, and deliberately spreading biased reports violating the dignity of the State;
- Mr. Al Mamari was released on bail on 11 October 2013 pending the appeal, but rearrested later that same day on accusations that he was responsible for incitement during Friday prayers at the mosque; brief video material, presumably linked to the incident, was presented by the Chairman of the *Majlis A'Shura* to the Committee and shows Mr. Al Mamari saying: "If the government policy towards citizens does not change in the coming five years, there will be a storm";
- On 16 December 2013, the Court of Appeal sentenced Mr. Al Mamari to three years in prison and a 500-riyal fine for impairing the honour of the State, as well as one year in prison and a 500-riyal fine for "disturbing public order" and "obstructing traffic"; in the whole period preceding the appeal, Mr. Al Mamari's lawyer was denied access to his client; the Supreme Court overturned the appeal decision against him in February 2014 and ordered a retrial in the Court of Liwa – the town in which the alleged crime took place – as opposed to the Court in Muscat; despite that ruling, the retrial was held in Muscat, with Mr. Al Mamari continuously detained for several months without the possibility of bail; after a series of proceedings, where several violations of due process and a lack of judicial independence were alleged by one of the complainants, Mr. Al Mamari was sentenced on 6 August 2014 to one year's imprisonment and a 200-riyal fine for participating in the demonstration and three years' imprisonment and a 500-riyal fine for organizing the demonstration; the court also ruled that the sentences would be served consecutively; the verdict was upheld on 30 October 2014, but the sentence was reduced to three years in prison; the verdict was confirmed by the Supreme Court on 24 February 2015,

Recalling that, with regard to the demonstrations in which Mr. Al Mamari took part and the precise circumstances of his arrest, the complainants have affirmed 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 on account of his having exercised his freedom of peaceful assembly; they emphasize 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 public demands;
- 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; he 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,

Recalling the following information provided by the Chairman of the *Majlis A'Shura*:

- The region of Liwa had received 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, parliament would have been the first to know about it and to adopt a critical position;

- Mr. Al Mamari had not discussed the issue of pollution with him before his arrest, or raised it at the appropriate parliamentary committee; Mr. Al Mamari's colleagues in parliament had advised him not to take to the streets and instead to use his powers in parliament to plead his cause;
- Mr. Al Mamari was prone to grandstanding, had an agitated personality and had caused trouble on previous occasions; he had been involved in the demonstrations in retaliation for the Sohar Port authorities' having withdrawn funding to his constituency, as attested by a letter from Mr. Al Mamari to those authorities,

Considering that the video footage provided by the Chairman of the *Majlis A'Shura* regarding the demonstration shows a group of some 100 individuals marching peacefully in the surroundings of Sohar Port in the presence of a large number of riot police, with part of the footage filmed from one of the vehicles equipped with a high-pressure water cannon as it shot water at the crowd; the film also briefly features some individuals throwing rocks, including members of the riot police,

Recalling that the complainants maintain 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 public 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 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 his report on the mission (A/HRC/29/25/Add.1), the Special Rapporteur concludes the following:

- The legal environment for the exercise of the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association in Oman is problematic and needs to be strengthened with reference to international human rights standards. The country's impressive achievements in building the economy, maintaining stability and modernizing society are threatened in the long term by a climate in which the populace is not free to associate and organize itself to address its concerns or pursue its own interests. Silencing voices of dissent is not a viable approach going forward. When a Government fails to provide an outlet for popular sentiment, it loses a valuable opportunity to feel the pulse of the nation, and effectively creates a sealed vessel under pressure that will eventually explode with dire consequences,

Considering that the case of Mr. Al Mamari had been referred to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and, upon examination of all the information made available from the complainants and the authorities, it had concluded on 21 November 2014 that Mr. Al Mamari's detention had been arbitrary and called on the authorities to release him immediately; with regard to the legal provisions criminalizing the harming of the dignity of the State with the gathering of at least 10 individuals intending to breach public order, it was the opinion of the working group that, "The law allows a broad interpretation which may result, as it occurred in the case under consideration, in a violation of the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association",

Recalling that the Omani parliamentary authorities have repeatedly claimed that freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of peaceful assembly are fully protected in Oman, including for members of parliament,

Considering that a Committee delegation, which visited Oman in May 2015 and was allowed to meet Mr. Al Mamari in detention, understood from the meetings with the Omani authorities that a clear consensus emerged that he should and would be released soon,

Considering that Mr. Al Mamari received a special royal pardon and was released on 4 May 2016,

1. *Thanks* the Chairman of the *Majlis A'Shura* for his continuous personal commitment to promoting a satisfactory solution to the case of Mr. Al Mamari;
 2. *Notes* that Mr. Al Mamari was finally released;
 3. *Deeply regrets* that the release came only four months before he had served all of his three-year prison term and that his conviction was based on charges and legal provisions that infringed his legitimate rights to freedom of assembly and freedom of expression;
 4. *Decides to close* further examination of the case, in the light of his release;
 5. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the authorities and the complainants.
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FIJI

FJI/02 - Tupou Draunidalo

Decision adopted by consensus by the IPU Governing Council at its 199th session (Geneva, 27 October 2016)²

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Having before it the case of Ms. Tupou Draunidalo, a member of the Parliament of Fiji, 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 in writing by the parliamentary authorities and the complainant, as well as at the hearing that the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians held on 24 October 2016 with the Fijian delegation, led by the Speaker,

Considering that, on 3 June 2016, the Parliament of Fiji decided to suspend Ms. Draunidalo for the remainder of her term in light of the following remarks she made in Parliament on 1 June 2016 as part of an exchange, as recorded in the *Daily Hansard*:

“Hon. Dr. M. Reddy (Minister for Education): Madam Speaker, we have also recognized our toppers³, our great minds who are the ones who will be pushing the frontier, Madam Speaker. Therefore, we have got a policy for them, to look after these people who will come and push the frontier in this country, Madam Speaker. I cannot see any toppers from the other side, Madam Speaker, I cannot see, Madam Speaker.

(Laughter)

If there was any toppers from the other side, Madam Speaker, they would not have raised this issue of petition, Madam Speaker, unfortunately, there are no toppers there, Madam Speaker, I tell you in another ten years' time, five years' time, there will be some toppers sitting that side but they will be part of this side, Madam Speaker.

Hon. T. Draunidalo: fool...

Hon. A Sayed-Khaiyum⁴: Hey, do not call him a fool. Do not call him a fool.

Hon. Dr. M. Reddy: Madam Speaker, as the Finance Minister has said, is the last... Madam Speaker, I was a topper.

Hon. A Sayed-Khaiyum: Madam Speaker, a point of order. Hon. Draunidalo called the Minister for Education “a fool”.

Hon. T. Draunidalo: And he provided worse in his speech, calling us “dumb natives, you idiot”,

² The delegation of Fiji expressed its reservations regarding the decision.

³ Tertiary Scholarship (TOPPERS) Programme

⁴ He is also Fiji's Attorney General

Considering the following information on file regarding the complaint which was subsequently submitted to the Privileges Committee:

- On 2 June 2016, a matter of privilege was raised with the Speaker pursuant to Standing Order No. 134(1). In response, the Speaker ruled that, in her opinion, there had been a *prima facie* breach of privilege, and so she referred the matter to the Privileges Committee and ordered a report to be tabled in parliament no later than the following day, 3 June 2016;
- The opposition insisted that Ms. Draunidalo should attend. The Attorney General proposed that both he and Ms. Draunidalo should withdraw as members of the Privileges Committee and allow substitutes in their place. Both sides sought time to secure substitutes and the Chairperson also took the opportunity to seek the advice of the Speaker. The Committee reconvened at 5.50 pm. Mr. Karavaki advised the Committee that, unfortunately, a substitute could not be arranged and indicated that he would not participate in the proceedings, as he believed that there was little point in continuing and the opposition would raise their view in the House, considering that the Committee had prejudged Ms. Draunidalo, which is denied by the parliamentary authorities, including during the hearing on 24 October 2016 with the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians;
- The Attorney General presented his views to the Committee on the witness evidence. He tendered as evidence a copy of the audio recording of the exchange in parliament, previous cases from the High Court of the Republic of Fiji⁵ and social media postings. Ms. Draunidalo was invited to present her views on the matter. She asked to be excused because she had chosen to exercise her right to silence and believed that she would not receive a fair hearing;
- The Secretariat provided collated precedents from Fiji and other relevant jurisdictions to enable the Committee to consider the available sanctions, ranging from the mild to the most severe. The research team were asked to find similar offences in other jurisdictions and were given an hour to research. After reconvening, the Committee was informed that there was very little that could be gathered specific to the members' request – with the only similar circumstance being the suspension of a British Labour member of parliament from her party duties for anti-Semitic statements on social media;
- The Committee, after deliberating, was able to reach a consensus and resolved unanimously to endorse the following findings and recommendations:
 - (i) "What you say in parliament is subject to the standing orders. The dignity and respect of this House must at all times be upheld:
 - (ii) In this regard, Standing Order No. 62(4) states: It is out of order for a member, when speaking, to use – (a) offensive words against parliament or another member; (b) treasonable words; (c) seditious words; or (d) words that are likely to promote or provoke feelings of ill-will or hostility between communities or ethnic groups within Fiji;
 - (iii) The use of the words "fool" and "dumb natives" and "you idiot" are matters that are out of order in this parliament. The words "dumb natives" and "you idiot" are clearly offensive to any member of this House and has the potential to promote or provoke feelings of ill-will or hostility between communities or ethnic groups and constitute a *prima facie* breach of privilege";
- In Fiji, there is a pressing need to strengthen institutions, and in particular parliament or the legislature, which was directly and physically attacked in the coups of 1987 and 2000;
- As the Committee noted in its report last year, given the implementation of the Constitution, which has been internationally recognized, and the fact that Fiji finally has true democracy, contempt for matters such as this must be taken seriously to protect the dignity of the legislature;
- The comments of Ms. Draunidalo have led to a flurry of social media responses that bring parliament into serious disrepute. It is not the example to be set as the standard or acceptable pattern of behaviour for members of parliament, and equally for the Fijian

⁵ This concerns the cases of Mr. Sakeasi Butadroka and Mr. Anand Baba, who were suspended in the 1990s from parliament for two consecutive meetings and, in the second case, for three sittings and subsequently for two months.

population, because it will undermine the very institution that the Constitution and all people need to protect to ensure that there is sustained parliamentary democracy and respect for this very critical branch of the State;

- It is also critical that children and the younger population are not exposed to these types of racial slurs as the norm, or do not see that this parliament is condoning such behaviour by an honourable member of parliament;
- It should be noted that under section 20(h) of the Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act (Cap.5), any person who utters or publishes any false or scandalous slander or libel against parliament or any member of parliament is committing an offence, and such an offence warrants, inter alia, imprisonment for a maximum of two years;
- Standing Orders Nos 62(4)(a) and (d) are progressive provisions, which seems to be quite rare and made it difficult to find contempt of a similar nature in other jurisdictions. However, the Committee was unanimous in its finding that contravention of the standing orders in question in these circumstances was not only a grave and serious breach of privilege, but a contempt of parliament;
- Given that the Privileges Committee has unanimously found that Ms. Draunidalo has contravened Standing Order Nos 62(4)(a) and (d) in circumstances that were not only a grave and serious breach of privilege, but a contempt of parliament, the Privileges Committee strongly recommends that:
 - Ms Draunidalo must formally apologize in parliament, while under formal censure and before leaving the parliament precincts, to the following: (i) the Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts; and (ii) the people of Fiji;
 - The apology must reflect the severity of the breach and the fact that it has had far-reaching effects and gone viral on social media here and abroad. The apology should also recognize that the honourable minister did not, in fact, utter the words “dumb natives”;
 - Ms. Draunidalo should be suspended for the remainder of the term of parliament, with immediate effect from 3 June 2016, upon tendering of the apology and imposition of the censure by parliament;
 - During the period of suspension, Ms. Draunidalo is not allowed to enter the parliamentary precincts, including the Opposition Office. Immediately upon her suspension, Ms. Draunidalo must be ordered to leave the precincts of parliament and to remain outside of the parliament precincts; and
 - If Ms. Draunidalo fails to comply with any of the above, necessary enforcement measures must be imposed to ensure compliance,

Considering that the complainant disagreed with the Privileges Committee’s findings and recommendations for the following reasons, which were also stated on 3 June 2016 in parliament by Ms. Draunidalo and others:

- (i) The recording of the exchange in parliament was not heard in parliament. In this regard, Ms. Draunidalo claims that *Hansard* does not pick up all of the free-flowing discussions, interjections and words spoken at the time, with the audio recording being clearly different. She says that the recording underscores that, in response to the Attorney General’s complaint, she said, “And he implied worse in his speech”. Then she asked, “Calling us dumb natives?” before she said, “You idiot”. It was also pointed out that it is not clear to whom the words “idiot” or “dumb natives” were addressed;
- (ii) When Ms. Draunidalo made the alleged remarks addressed to Minister Reddy, the latter did not raise a point of order in that regard, as the Speaker had remarked during the debate, which is why the Speaker did not ask for a withdrawal of the comments, but allowed the debate to continue;
- (iii) The minister’s initial remarks were degrading for the opposition, which is composed almost exclusively of indigenous Fijians and iTaukei. The remarks are part of a pattern of humiliation and mocking, through words and gestures, that the minister and Attorney General have used against the opposition in parliament;
- (iv) The recommended suspension for the remainder of Ms. Draunidalo’s term is not provided for in law: Standing Order No. 76 provides for a maximum suspension of 28 days;

- (v) Ms. Draunidalo apologized in parliament by saying, “If anyone in this House or outside, or anyone else in Fiji, takes offence for what they think they have heard or manufactured to have heard, I unreservedly apologize”,

Considering that, on 3 June 2016, parliament accepted the Privileges Committee’s recommendations with 28 votes in favour and 16 against, after an amendment had first been defeated proposing that Ms. Draunidalo: (i) immediately withdraw the words “dumb natives”; (ii) apologize to the Honourable Minister, Dr Mahendra Reddy, the House and Fiji; (iii) be subject to a suspension from the House for a term that is allowed within Standing Order No. 76 and to the maximum of 28 days,

Considering the following relevant legal provisions in the Standing Orders:

“Article 75:

(1) The Speaker may order any member whose conduct is highly disorderly or repeatedly violates the standing orders to withdraw immediately from parliament or a period of time that the Speaker decides, being no more than the remainder of that sitting day.

Article 76: Naming of member and suspension for grossly disorderly conduct

(1) The Speaker may name any member whose conduct is grossly disorderly and call on parliament to judge the conduct of the member by immediately putting the question “That [member] be suspended from the service of parliament”. There is no amendment or debate on the question.

[...]

(3) If the majority of all members vote in favour, the member is suspended, -

(a) on the first occasion, for three days (excluding the day of suspension);

(b) on the second occasion during the same session, for seven days (excluding the day of suspension); or

(c) on the third or any subsequent occasion during the same session, for 28 days (excluding the day of suspension).

[...]

(5) The fact that a member has been suspended under clause (3) or (4) does not prevent parliament from also holding the member’s conduct to be in contempt.”,

Considering also that Article 73(2) of the Constitution states that: “(2) parliament may prescribe the powers, privileges and immunities of members of parliament and may make rules and orders for the discipline of members of parliament”,

Considering, finally, that the complainants claim that the exaggerated suspension imposed on Ms. Draunidalo is the culmination of a long-running effort to silence indigenous voices in parliament and to leave it to the non-indigenous minority to run the country, which allegation the authorities fully deny,

1. *Thanks* the parliamentary authorities for their cooperation and the information they provided, including during the hearing with the Committee;
2. *Is deeply concerned* about Ms. Draunidalo’s suspension for the remainder of her term; *considers* that Article 73 of the Constitution, read together with Standing Order 76(5) of parliament, does not provide sufficient legal certainty and clarity as a basis for such a suspension; *considers* also that the suspension is wholly disproportionate, as it not only deprives Ms. Draunidalo of her right to exercise her parliamentary mandate, but also deprives her electorate from representation in parliament for a period covering half the parliamentary term; *is also concerned* about what appears to be a recent trend in Fiji to impose long-term suspensions on vocal opposition parliamentarians and the serious consequences this has for the opposition’s ability to carry out its work effectively;
3. *Reaffirms* that freedom of expression is absolutely essential to the parliamentary mandate and that the exercise of this right includes not only statements that are favourably received or regarded as inoffensive, but also those that may offend, shock or disturb others;

4. *Considers* in this regard that, although Ms. Draunidalo could have responded differently to the situation at hand, her words fall squarely within her right to freedom of expression; *considers* also that any concern about her words would have been best settled directly and immediately in the plenary of parliament;
 5. *Believes* that, in light of the above, the best way forward is for parliament to swiftly lift Ms. Draunidalo's suspension; and *calls on* parliament to take the necessary action;
 6. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the competent 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.
-

FIJI

FJI/03 - Ratu Isoa Tikoca

*Decision adopted by consensus by the IPU Governing Council at its 199th session (Geneva, 27 October 2016)*⁶

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Having before it the case of Mr. Ratu Isoa Tikoca, a member of the Parliament of Fiji, 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 in writing by the parliamentary authorities and the complainant, as well as at the hearing that the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians held on 24 October 2016 with the Fijian delegation, led by the Speaker,

Considering that, on 29 September 2016, the Parliament of Fiji decided to suspend Mr. Tikoca for the remainder of his term in light of the following remarks he made, and comments which ensued, in parliament on 5 July 2016, as recorded in the *Daily Hansard*:

- *"Fiji has recently adopted the title Minister of Economy. That is an appointment used in Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Islamic State of Afghanistan. In the Fiji context, anything that is economy in Government, public and private enterprises comes under the Minister of Economy. This is unprecedented for Fiji. This self-proclaimed appointment will make the Minister of Economy the most powerful man in Fiji. He totally disregarded the democratic concern of the people of Fiji and of course this side of the House - a promotion of no separation of powers under the false pretence of a democratic Fiji. This was clearly demonstrated in the removal of two opposition members of parliament to the total disregard of their own Constitution and the standing orders of parliament. The Prime Minister must understand that such actions promote ill-will or hostility between communities in Fiji.*
- *Honourable Deputy Speaker, the Ministry of Economy has direct oversight over strategic sectors. One, sugar industry under the management of Mr. Abdul Khan. Two, the Fiji Hardwood and Fiji Pine under the management of Mr. Faiz Khan. Three, Fisheries PAFCO under the chairmanship of Mr. Iqbal Janiff and who is also the Vice-Chancellor of FNU. Four, Tourism, and I refer to Airports Fiji Limited by Mr. Faiz Khan as Board Chairman and CEO. Air Terminal Services chaired by Mr. Riyaz Sayed-Khaiyum. Border Security is managed by Mr. Xavier Khan. State broadcasting, managed by Riyaz Khaiyum, has been allocated \$6.7m for public service broadcast radio and public service broadcast TV \$4.6m. Seven, Commerce Ministry managed by Shaheen Ali. Eight, Commerce Commission has a board member, Mr. Feroz Ahmed Ghazali, who is a Pakistani deserter. The Central Bank is co-managed by Mr. Ariff Ali. Finance intelligence managed by Razim Buksh. Elections office is managed by Mr. Mohammed Saneem. Government ITC managed by Mr. Nisar Ali.*

⁶ The delegation of Fiji expressed its reservations regarding the decision.

They are also digitizing the Vola ni Kawa Bula and TLTB. Our Geneva mission, where the World Trade Organization is based, is managed by Mrs. Nazhat Shameem Khan. Hamid, founder of the road contractor Naim from Malaysia – a close friend of some people on that side.

- *Recently, FTCAC laws were amended and given same powers as police. Now Fiji has two police forces. One controlled by the Commissioner of Police and one controlled by the AG himself.*
- *The recent bickering in parliament has drawn concerns of the Fijians and negative feeling against certain elite groups in Fiji being the minority group, however assuming critical chairmanship and CEO leadership positions in Fiji. Honourable Speaker, there appears to be rampant cronyism of the economy. Fiji faces the biggest threat since independence. We have never faced such threats before in our history. Our civilization, lifestyle and culture is under threat. The nation is under threat. Honourable Deputy Speaker, the sunset clause is fully operational. Honourable Deputy Speaker, I am concerned about this important issue. It's not a laughing matter. Government needs to address this immediately, as Fijians are disgusted about this. The concentration of economic power seems to be with a few elite. There is animosity growing within our various Fijian groups questioning why this elite group is being advanced over others. The fury with the stigma of one man leading the nation with his kind. People of Fiji have started to build misconception about others within this group, but have failed to identify that it is only one man that we need to isolate as the real dictator.*

[...]

- *What are you afraid of? What is quite clear is that we are witnessing a coup within a coup. Understand that."*
- Following these remarks, member of parliament Mr. Sudhakar raised a point of order. The Deputy Speaker, who was presiding at the time, made the ruling that Mr. Tikoca should continue, with a warning that he should consider his words carefully so as to "confine the debate to the budget and not make implications against any other member of parliament",

Considering the following with regard to the complaint, which was subsequently submitted to the Privileges Committee:

- According to the complainant, the Deputy Speaker's ruling was also in accordance with an earlier ruling by the Speaker that matters should be brought up immediately after the action giving rise to the complaint and not two or three days later. On 9 August 2016, the Speaker confirmed the Deputy Speaker's ruling and that such rulings were not subject to appeal except by motion of parliament. Nevertheless, much later, the Prime Minister submitted an official complaint to the Speaker, asking that she refer the matter to the Privileges Committee, which she did in a letter of 27 September 2016. The Privileges Committee met in the afternoon of the following day and concluded the following in its report:
- "On Tuesday, 5 July 2016, the Hon. Ratu Isoa Tikoca made certain statements, which quite clearly and selectively and more importantly intentionally targeted Fijians who are Muslims or adherents of Islam, contrary to Standing Order No. 62(4)(a) and (d).
- Privilege is afforded to all honourable members as a matter of right. Standing Order No. 133, however, makes it clear that freedom of speech and debate in parliament is subject to standing orders. Therefore, any member can say whatever they wish in the House, but subject to the standing orders. The dignity and respect for the House must at all times be upheld.
- In this regard, Standing Order No. 62(4) states:
"It is out of order for a member, when speaking, to use: offensive words against parliament or another member; treasonable words; seditious words; or words that are likely to promote or provoke feelings of ill-will or hostility between communities or ethnic groups within Fiji."
- The selective naming of Arab countries in reference to the usage of the name Ministry of the Economy, the naming of only Muslim officials serving in the offices of State listed, the use of the words "my kind" and "this elite group" make it clear that Mr. Tikoca was not only in breach of Standing Order No. 62(4) but that this breach was an intentional abuse of the parliamentary privilege of freedom of speech that this parliament cannot ignore, and he must therefore be dealt with decisively.

- In Fiji, there is a pressing need to strengthen institutions, and in particular parliament or the legislature, which was directly and physically attacked in the coups of 1987 and 2000.
- As this Committee had noted in both its previous reports, given the implementation of the Constitution, which has been internationally recognized, and the fact that Fiji finally has true democracy, contempt matters such as this must be taken seriously to protect the dignity of the legislature.
- The thinly veiled attack by Mr. Tikoca against a minority community must not be tolerated. The absolute privilege enjoyed by members must not be used to incite racial discord, as was so often done in the past. It is not the example we want to set as the standard or acceptable pattern of behaviour for members of parliament, and equally for the Fijian population, because it will undermine the very institution that we all need to protect to ensure that there is sustained parliamentary democracy and respect for this very critical arm of the State.
- It is also critical that our children and the younger population are not exposed to this type of racial profiling and vilification as the norm, or do not see that this parliament is condoning such behaviour by an honourable member of parliament.
- It should be noted that, under section 20(h) of the Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act (Cap. 5), any person who utters or publishes any false or scandalous slander or libel on parliament or upon any member of parliament commits an offence, and such an offence warrants, inter alia, imprisonment for a maximum of two years. That is how important the reputation of parliament is. This privilege protects our right to freedom of speech in the House by protecting our very reputations, and this privilege must not be abused to incite ill-will or hostility between the communities.
- Government Members were firmly of the view that Mr. Tikoca's actions were not only a grave and serious breach of privilege but a contempt of parliament.
- Given the above, the Privileges Committee recommends by majority that: Hon. Ratu Isoa Tikoca be suspended for the rest of the term of parliament; during the period of suspension, Hon. Ratu Isoa Tikoca is not to be allowed to enter the parliamentary precincts; and if Hon. Ratu Isoa Tikoca fails to comply with any of the above, that necessary enforcement measures must be imposed to ensure compliance”.

Considering that, on 29 September 2016, parliament accepted the findings and recommendations of the Privileges Committee, after first defeating a proposed amendment to reduce the penalty to a 30-day suspension,

Considering that the complainant considers that the suspension is arbitrary for the following reasons:

- The Privileges Committee made it clear that it found Mr. Tikoca guilty before hearing him first, which allegation was denied by the parliamentary authorities;
- Mr. Tikoca's remarks were not directed at the Muslim community as such and were not likely to provoke and promote feelings of ill-will or hostility, as was also borne out by the comments made on social media in the weeks and months that followed;
- Mr. Tikoca made an apology in parliament;
- The Deputy Speaker, as confirmed by the Speaker, had already ruled on the matter, so it therefore cannot be reopened;
- The recommended suspension for the remainder of Mr. Tikoca's term is not provided for in law: Standing Order No. 76 provides for a maximum suspension of 28 days;
- If the House finds that a member has been in breach of privilege, then the usual practice, which is also borne out by Fiji case law, is to ask the member to withdraw the comments, which would be the end of the matter,

Considering that the parliamentary authorities, in their letter of 18 October 2016, as well as during the hearing with the Committee, have stated in response that:

- The Privileges Committee minutes note that, although they had deliberated and come to a conclusion on the first day of their proceedings, and initially did not wish to call any witnesses, they had decided on the second day that they did want to hear from Mr. Tikoca;
- The Privileges Committee, and later parliament, were in no doubt as to whom the remarks were directed;
- Mr. Tikoca's apology was noted;
- The Deputy Speaker did not rule on any matter of privilege;
- The standing order deals with gross disorderly conduct. Article 76(5) of the standing order clearly states that being suspended under clause (3) or (4) does not prevent parliament from also holding the member's conduct to be in contempt. It is therefore clear that matters of privilege and contempt are not covered by that particular standing order; and
- Ultimately, the sanction imposed by parliament is for parliament to determine. Section 73(2) of the Constitution of Fiji states: "Parliament may prescribe the powers, privileges and immunities of members of parliament and may make rules and orders for the discipline of members of parliament",

Considering the following Standing Orders:

"Article 75:(1) The Speaker may order any member whose conduct is highly disorderly or repeatedly violates the Standing Orders to withdraw immediately from parliament or a period of time that the Speaker decides, being no more than the remainder of that sitting day.

Article 76: Naming of member and suspension for grossly disorderly conduct

(1) The Speaker may name any member whose conduct is grossly disorderly and call on parliament to judge the conduct of the member by immediately putting the question "That [member] be suspended from the service of parliament". There is no amendment or debate on the question.

[...]

(3) If the majority of all members vote in favour, the member is suspended:

(a) on the first occasion, for three days (excluding the day of suspension);

(b) on the second occasion during the same session, for seven days (excluding the day of suspension); or

(c) on the third or any subsequent occasion during the same session, for 28 days (excluding the day of suspension).

(4) A member who is suspended who refuses to obey a direction of the Speaker to leave the Chamber is, without any further question being put, suspended from the service of parliament for the remainder of the calendar year.

(5) The fact that a member has been suspended under clause (3) or (4) does not prevent parliament from also holding the member's conduct to be in contempt",

1. *Thanks* the parliamentary authorities for their cooperation and the information they provided, including during the hearing with the Committee;
2. *Is deeply concerned* about Mr. Tikoca's suspension for the remainder of his term; *considers* that section 73 of the Constitution, read together with Standing Order 76(5) of parliament, does not provide sufficient legal certainty and clarity as a basis for such a suspension; *considers* also that the suspension is wholly disproportionate, as it not only deprives Mr. Tikoca of his right to exercise his parliamentary mandate, but also deprives his electorate from representation in parliament for a period covering half the term of parliament; *is also concerned* about what appears to be a recent trend in Fiji to impose long-term suspensions on vocal opposition parliamentarians and the serious consequences this has for the opposition's ability to do its work effectively;

3. *Reaffirms* that freedom of expression is absolutely essential to the parliamentary mandate and that the exercise of this right includes not only statements that are favourably received or regarded as inoffensive, but also those that may offend, shock or disturb others;
4. *Considers* in this regard that Mr. Tikoca's words, although touching on sensitive societal matters, fall within his right to freedom of expression; *considers* also that any concern about his words would have been best settled directly and immediately in the plenary of parliament, as seemed to have happened at first;
5. Believes that, in light of the above, the best way forward is for parliament to swiftly lift Mr. Tikoca's suspension; and *calls on* parliament to take the necessary action;
6. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the competent 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.

