



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
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CL/212/SR  
8 December 2023

# Summary records of the Governing Council

## 212th session

24, 25 and 27 October 2023

*National Assembly, Luanda, Angola*

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## First sitting

**Tuesday, 24 October 2023  
(Morning)**

*The sitting was called to order at 09:30, with Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), President of the IPU, in the Chair.*

### **OPENING OF THE SITTING**

**The President**, welcoming participants and expressing gratitude to the Angolan authorities and the National Assembly of Angola for their commitment to successfully organizing the 147th IPU Assembly and related meetings, said that the current multitude of conflicts around the globe underscored the need to appreciate the value of peace as an element essential to the achievement of all human goals and aspirations. Parliamentarians must therefore continue working for peace, and indeed for justice and tolerance, as a key priority.

**The Secretary General**, mindful of the busy agenda ahead, said that he would confine his opening remarks to wishing participants a successful 212th session.

#### Item 1 of the agenda

### **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA** (CL/212/A.1-rev.1)

*The agenda was adopted.*

#### Item 2 of the agenda

### **APPROVAL OF THE SUMMARY RECORDS OF THE 211TH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL** (CL/211/SR)

*The summary records of the 211th session of the Governing Council were approved.*

#### Item 3 of the agenda

### **ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE 147TH ASSEMBLY**

*At the proposal of Mr. A. Santos Silva (Portugal), seconded by Ms. E. Bias (Mozambique) and Mr. J. Fakhro (Bahrain), Ms. C. Cerqueira (Angola) was elected as President of the 147th Assembly by acclamation.*

#### Item 4 of the agenda

### **REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT**

- (a) On his activities since the 211th session of the Governing Council**
- (b) On the activities of the Executive Committee**

**The President**, accompanying his report with a digital slide presentation, said that the first aim of his activities since the 211th session of the Governing Council had been to continue reinforcing the visibility of the IPU as the world's largest parliamentary organization. To that end, he had visited numerous parliaments and participated in over 90 events held by the IPU and other organizations, also taking the opportunity thus provided to further raise the IPU's profile through traditional and social media.

The second aim had been to reinforce the IPU's universality by increasing its membership to include the parliaments of all 193 Member States of the United Nations. At the 146th Assembly, the Parliament of Liberia had rejoined the IPU fold and if, as anticipated, the Parliament of the Bahamas were to be admitted as a Member at the present Assembly, the IPU membership would rise to 180. The Organization was actively pursuing its efforts to attract the remaining 13 parliaments, including the United States Congress, into its membership so as to achieve universality.

The third aim had been to reinforce the IPU's good governance through such measures as the opening of an IPU regional office in Uruguay, the implementation of the refreshed Communications Strategy, the ongoing digital transformation of the IPU, and the amplification of parliamentary engagement with religion and belief to promote peace. Cooperation with the Association of Secretaries General of Parliament had been strengthened and the process of amending the IPU Statutes and Rules had been initiated, with the deadline for the submission of related proposals now extended to the end of November 2023. Proposals received would then be considered by a working group representing all geopolitical groups and transmitted, if agreed, to the Governing Council for consideration at its 213th session in March 2024, with a view to finalizing the proposed amendments for approval at the 149th Assembly in October 2024.

**Mr. J. Buttimer** (Ireland), in commending the President on his stewardship of the IPU, said that he wished to thank him for having risen with such distinction to the challenge of raising the IPU's visibility.

**Mr. S. Soendergaard** (Denmark), recalling that representatives of Human Rights Watch had been barred from attending the 146th Assembly in Bahrain owing to a last-minute revocation of their visas, asked whether the matter had been followed up and, if so, what the outcome had been.

**The President** said that the Bahraini authorities had complied with the key condition always attached to the hosting of an IPU Assembly, which was that visas must be granted to all participating delegates. The members of an observer delegation had had their visas revoked, however, for open and systematic criticisms made against the host country. Those criticisms had in truth been unjust and, to all intents and purposes, had also been directed at the IPU membership for its decision in favour of Bahrain's hosting of the Assembly. The IPU had nonetheless expressed its concern over the situation to the Bahraini authorities.

**Mr. J. Fakhro** (Bahrain), explaining that situation, said that his country's authorities had granted visas, as agreed, to all delegates attending the 146th Assembly. Regrettably, however, the visas issued to Human Rights Watch officials had subsequently been revoked following that organization's release of a highly derogatory statement about Bahrain that was liable to tarnish its domestic and international reputation, which was unacceptable.

**Ms. F. Cham** (Gambia) asked what the IPU could do to support parliaments in ensuring that IPU office-holders attended meetings of IPU bodies.

**The President** said that parliaments were expected to support the attendance of parliamentarians at meetings of IPU bodies of which they were members, failing which the IPU would communicate directly with the parliament concerned to seek a solution.

**The Secretary General** said that parliaments were in fact obliged to include IPU office-holders in their delegations to IPU meetings and would otherwise receive a reminder of the need to do so, which generally had the desired effect. Parliamentarians should alert the IPU to any difficulties encountered in that regard so that it could take appropriate action as necessary, including on a case-by-case basis in more problematic instances.

**Mr. K. Darwish** (Egypt) said that, in future, the IPU should devote more effort and attention than at present to bringing cultures closer together and to promoting respect for the different faiths, beliefs and principles on which countries were founded.

**The President** said that it was always crucial to work in concert for mutual tolerance and respect and that one of the IPU's many roles was to forestall divisive actions and strive for unity as a means of resolving problems and creating a better future for humankind.

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

Item 6 of the agenda

**FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR 2022**  
(CL/212/6-R.1 and R.2)

**The President**, introducing the item, recalled that, at its 211th session, the Governing Council had decided to defer approval of the financial results for 2022 until the present session, as the earlier-than-usual dates of the 146th Assembly had meant that the External Auditor had been unable to finish his report in time for it to be considered in conjunction with those results.

**Ms. J. Alm Ericson** (Sweden), member of the Executive Committee and Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance, presenting the financial results for 2022 set out in document CL/212/6-R.1, said that the Executive Committee had carefully examined those results, along with the report of the External Auditor, who had confirmed the accuracy of the Financial Statements and given a positive audit opinion, making only one minor recommendation.

One notable aspect of the 2022 accounts was that the investment market performance had led to an unrealized loss of CHF 774,000, which had reduced the IPU's net assets for the year. Now that global markets had recovered somewhat from the effects of the outbreak of war in Ukraine, interest rate rises and inflationary pressures, the IPU's long-term investment returns remained on target. In recent years, however, arrears in assessed contributions had been steadily increasing, owing largely — although not solely — to the situation of the Venezuelan Parliament, which currently had arrears amounting to CHF 625,600. All Members were requested to work through their geopolitical groups to reduce the number in arrears. For its part, the IPU had made provision for covering the write-off of outstanding debts.

The Executive Committee recommended that the Governing Council approve the Secretary General's financial administration of the IPU and the financial results for 2022.

**The President** expressed gratitude to the Sub-Committee on Finance for its work, describing it as essential to the good governance of the IPU.

**Mr. A. Gryffroy** (Belgium), Internal Auditor, after reading out his report of the 2022 accounts as set out in document CL/212/6-R.2, said that, in the light of the IPU's healthy financial situation and its financial management, firmly based on internal controls, he too recommended that the Governing Council approve the Secretary General's financial administration of the IPU and the financial results for 2022.

**The Secretary General**, thanking the Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance and the Internal Auditor for their work and welcoming their recommendations, said that the IPU had done its level best to address the long-standing issue of unpaid contributions. The good news was that the Parliaments of São Tomé and Príncipe and Guinea-Bissau had recently paid their assessed contributions, thereby reducing the overall arrears, the bulk of which was owed by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela with its two competing parliaments. The IPU had taken a stand that only a joint delegation with representatives from both parliaments could attend IPU events. That stance had not been accepted by the two parties, which accounted for the ongoing absence of Venezuelan delegations from IPU Assemblies. Once the country's situation had improved and new elections had been held, the payment of those arrears would be among the matters for discussion with the Venezuelan authorities. That apart, extra efforts were needed to ensure that all Members honoured their financial obligations to the Organization, which would continue to manage its resources with prudence so as to achieve value for money as well as seeking to address any related challenges in the interest of its membership.

**The President** said that it was only thanks to such prudent management that the IPU's growing number of activities had been successfully conducted over the preceding decade without any increase in assessed contributions.

**Mr. S.J.-C. Apithy** (Benin), congratulating the IPU management and the Secretary General in particular on the Organization's positive financial results, asked how the independence of the Internal Auditor was guaranteed.

**The Secretary General** said in response that the IPU's first level of auditing was conducted by an External Auditor — currently the Comptroller and Auditor General of India — who had no organic links with the IPU and was fully independent. At the second level, auditing was normally conducted by two Internal Auditors who were parliamentarians but who operated in their auditing role at arm's length from the IPU administration. Those two levels of auditing were in place to ensure proper management of the IPU's accounts and resulting value for money. While not ruling out the potential for a conflict of interest, he believed that all IPU auditors were fully independent in their work.

**The President**, underscoring the importance of such independence to the confidence of all Members in the IPU's accounts and in those who prepared and audited the same, said he took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the financial results for 2022 along with the Secretary General's financial administration of the IPU in 2022.

*It was so decided.*

Item 7 of the agenda

**FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE IPU**  
(CL/212/7-R.1)

**Ms. J. Alm Ericson** (Sweden), member of the Executive Committee and Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance, presenting the report on the financial situation of the IPU as at 31 July 2023, as set out in document CL/212/7-R.1, said that the IPU's budget performance was currently on track and that its finances were healthy and stable following the gradual recovery of investment returns after a difficult period in 2022. Moreover, the payment of outstanding arrears was continuing, as Members were naturally keen to exercise their full voting and participatory rights during what was an important week for the IPU.

**Mr. A. Shahid** (Bangladesh), observing that internal audits alone were not enough to guarantee transparency and were therefore best complemented by external audits, said that the IPU's efficient management of its finances and accounts clearly set a global standard.

**Ms. F. Cham** (Gambia) asked whether in previous years the IPU's financial situation had ever undergone any additional scrutiny before being presented to the Governing Council for consideration.

**A delegate from Iraq** suggested that transparency and Members' confidence in the financial and accounting information presented to them could be increased by way of side meetings organized at IPU Assemblies with the express aim of discussing the IPU's expenditures, revenues and related mechanisms. It would also be beneficial if parliamentarians especially familiar with the intricacies of finance and accounting were to attend such meetings and provide an objective view of those matters.

**The President** said that confidence was assured by the trust consistently placed in the IPU's Internal Auditors and similarly in its External Auditors, who were always fully independent national auditors from countries around the world.

**The Secretary General**, taking note of the comments made, said that he welcomed the keenness shown to promote transparency and accountability in the IPU accounting process. Under the statutory framework, the IPU's financial administration was overseen by the Executive Committee, which was representative of all IPU Members and geopolitical groups. In that context, the Executive Committee reviewed all draft budgets and financial results and made recommendations to the Governing Council on the basis of expert assessments by independent External Auditors with unimpeachable credentials, who were appointed by approval of the Governing Council. As to the Internal Auditors, their role was to check that the information to be provided to the IPU membership was accurate. Within the Executive Committee itself, the Sub-Committee on Finance was responsible for overseeing financial matters. Different levels of transparency and accountability were therefore in place, although there was always scope for methodological improvements.

All the financial reports for 2022 had been made available, including via the IPU website, and together formed the basis for the recommendations of the Internal Auditor and the Sub-Committee on Finance for the Governing Council to approve the Secretary General's financial administration. The Internal Auditor and the Sub-Committee would gladly provide any requested clarifications, failing which, the Iraqi proposal for further scrutinizing the accounts in a separate setting could perhaps be pursued. He was confident, however, that the internal and external controls in place were sufficient to ensure that the accounts presented to the Governing Council accurately reflected the reality. The IPU had taken on board previous recommendations for improving its accounting system, as noted in the Internal Auditor's report, and it would also be reporting in 2024 on its efforts to expand the scope of its accounting software, as newly recommended by the External Auditor.

**The President** said in conclusion that the news about the IPU's stable financial position was welcome but that all geopolitical group chairs were urged to encourage their members to pay their assessed contributions on time. It was, moreover, in their interest to do so, as any loss of voting rights among the Members in their group would weaken their standing within the Organization. The IPU was additionally grateful to all its donors for their assistance, which had boosted its activities.

*The Governing Council took note of the financial situation of the IPU.*

Item 8 of the agenda

**CONSOLIDATED BUDGET FOR 2024**  
(CL/212/8-P.1)

**Ms. J. Alm Ericson** (Sweden), member of the Executive Committee and Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance, presenting the 2024 consolidated budget set out in document CL/212/8-P.1, said that the budget anticipated a gross operating expenditure of CHF 17.7 million for the year. The IPU would continue working across the five objectives identified in its 2022-2026 Strategy, with a sustained focus on climate action and an added focus on peace-related activities in view of the multiple ongoing and emerging crises and conflicts around the world. It would also continue to invest in its digital transformation to enhance both impact and delivery for Members.

With regard to income, the core budget included an increase of 3% in total assessed contributions, as agreed by the Governing Council, with the aim of rebalancing such contributions towards their level in 2010. Voluntary income was initially projected to decrease slightly owing to the expiry of various large multiyear grants. Although new grants were likely to materialize, no contracts had yet been negotiated, which accounted for the prudent approach adopted in preparing the budget. All Members were encouraged to work on mobilizing voluntary funds for the IPU from within their countries and geopolitical groups. The Executive Committee had endorsed the budget and was pleased to recommend its adoption by the Governing Council.

**The Secretary General**, underlining those remarks, said that the 2024 consolidated budget was the outcome of agreements secured within the Governing Council, including the increase of 3% in assessed contributions aimed at expanding the IPU's resource base in line with its growing mandate and scope of activities. The projected decrease in voluntary funding was attributable to the impending expiration of numerous funding agreements that had not yet been extended. With voluntary contributions set to be down by almost 4% in 2024, prudence was key. The ongoing healthy mix between those contributions, representing about 23% of the budget, and assessed contributions continued to secure the IPU's independence in the implementation of its activities as opposed to it being beholden to any particular donor. Were the Governing Council to adopt the budget, the IPU would continue to implement its activities with prudence and ever greater efficiency to ensure that Members always obtained value for the money that they invested in their Organization.

**The President**, thanking the Secretary General for his prudent and effective management of the IPU budget, said he took it that the Governing Council wished to adopt the 2024 consolidated budget.

*It was so decided.*

**The President**, noting that Ms. Alm Ericson's term as Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance was about to end, said that it had been a pleasure to work with her and thanked her for her strong commitment to the IPU and for all her work on its behalf.

Item 10 of the agenda

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

**(a) Situation of IPU membership**

**The President**, introducing the subitem, said that the achievement of universality was a priority for the IPU, which sought to have among its membership the parliaments of all States recognized by the United Nations.

**The Secretary General**, in saluting the efforts made to woo more parliaments into the IPU fold, said that he wished to pay tribute to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for its robust support of the IPU's endeavours to bring in new Members. The most recent membership request received was from the Parliament of the Bahamas, which had presented the required supporting documentation and information.

**(b) Consideration of requests relating to IPU membership and observer status**  
(CL/212/10(b)-P.1)

**The President**, introducing the subitem, said that the IPU was endeavouring to attract more Caribbean and Pacific parliaments into its membership, in which context it was grateful for the efforts of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Having examined an affiliation request and related documentation submitted by the Parliament of the Bahamas, all as set out in Annex I to document CL/212/10(b)-P.1, the Executive Committee had recommended that the Governing Council should approve the decision also set out in that document to admit the Parliament of the Bahamas as a Member of the IPU. He took it that the Governing Council indeed wished to approve that decision by acclamation.

*It was so decided.*

**Ms. P. Glover-Rolle** (Bahamas), speaking as the IPU's newest and 180th Member, said that a resolution on joining the IPU had garnered universal support from her Parliament, which was fully committed to developing itself as an effective, representative and accountable institution. It shared many of the IPU's goals and objectives, in particular the promotion of global peace, democracy, human rights and sustainable development, and was now proud to be a part of the IPU community. The fact that even the smallest nations had a voice and a platform within the IPU was especially important for small island developing States – including the Bahamas – faced with an existential threat from an emerging climate reality. Her Parliament looked forward to working with the IPU community towards a more climate-resilient and sustainable future, starting with calls for a robust and well-funded loss and damage fund. Believing in diversity as an asset, it was also keen to advocate for more representative parliaments, with more women and youth in leadership positions.

The IPU was a powerful avenue for connecting, exchanging ideas and best practices, developing policies and advancing the shared agenda for a better world. Barriers to universal progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remained to be overcome, with all countries facing unique challenges. Aware that the IPU could make a difference in addressing such issues, the Parliament of the Bahamas hoped to contribute actively towards the IPU's important work.

**The President** said that he also hoped for fruitful cooperation with the Parliament of the Bahamas in the interest of continuing to empower democracy and the world's parliaments. In addition to the Bahamas, the Executive Committee had decided to endorse a request for Associate Membership submitted by the MERCOSUR Parliament (PARLASUR) – previously a permanent observer – and set out in Annex II to document CL/212/10(b)-P.1. Following a review of all IPU observers, it had also decided to maintain that status for the Nordic Council, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the Parliamentary Assembly of the



Economic Cooperation Organization and the Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas, and to restore it to the Organization of American States, all of which had been considered inactive but had expressed an interest in strengthening ties with the IPU.

As to the African Union, similarly considered inactive, the Executive Committee had deferred its decision, to allow the Secretary General the opportunity to meet with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, which he hoped to do by the end of October 2023.

Concerning the International Parliamentarians' Congress and the Permanent Conference of Political Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean, the Executive Committee had supported a proposal by the Secretary General for the IPU to continue to engage with both organizations with a view to identifying possible areas of cooperation.

Having also considered a request for it to reconsider the application for observer status from the Association of Secretaries General of Arab Parliaments, the Executive Committee had decided to hold a secret ballot on the matter, which had resulted in a recommendation for the Association to be granted that status.

**Mr. A. Gryffroy** (Belgium), speaking in his capacity as the Chair of the Twelve Plus Group, said that such a request from an organization of secretaries general of parliaments, which had nothing to do with members of parliament, was strange. The Twelve Plus Group wished to join those members of the Executive Committee who, as he understood it, had voted against granting observer status to the Association of Secretaries General of Arab Parliaments.

**The President**, remarking that that no one knew how anyone had voted in a secret ballot and taking note of the reservation of the Twelve Plus Group to the recommendation concerning the Association of Secretaries General of Arab Parliaments, said he took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the recommendations and decisions of the Executive Committee concerning requests relating to IPU membership and observer status.

*It was so decided.*

**Mr. A. Gryffroy** (Belgium), speaking in his capacity as Chair of the Twelve Plus Group on a point of order, said that his earlier intervention had been intended not only as a comment but also as a request for a vote on the issue he had raised.

**The President** asked the Secretary General to confirm whether there was a quorum for a vote.

**The Secretary General** said that, in conformity with Rule 34.2 of the Rules of the Governing Council, a quorum of 82 had been established for the current session on the basis of the number of members or substitutes participating in the first meeting, which amounted to 162. On that basis, he was able to confirm that there was a quorum for a vote. Rule 29 of those same Rules stipulated that the Governing Council should normally vote by show of hands or by standing vote. A roll-call vote could be taken, however, if the President deemed it necessary or if a member of the Governing Council so requested. It was for the Governing Council to decide how it wished to proceed.

**The President**, in the absence of any request to the contrary, invited the Governing Council to vote by show of hands on the Executive Committee's recommendation that observer status should be granted to the Association of Secretaries General of Arab Parliaments.

*The recommendation was rejected by 22 votes to 10, with 2 abstentions.*

*The sitting rose at 11:10.*

## Second sitting

Wednesday, 25 October 2023  
(Morning)

*The sitting was called to order at 11:05, with Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), President of the IPU, in the Chair.*

### Item 10 of the agenda (continued)

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

##### (c) Situation of certain parliaments

**The Secretary General**, accompanying with a digital slide presentation his overview of the situation of certain parliaments, starting with those that were non-functioning, said that there was no progress to report concerning the situation in Afghanistan, where the elected Parliament had been in suspension since the Taliban takeover in 2021. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should, as before, show solidarity with that Parliament by continuing to invite it to attend IPU Assemblies as an observer with non-voting rights.

**The President** said he took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

*It was so decided.*

**The Secretary General** said that, in Haiti, scheduled elections had not taken place for numerous reasons, including the prevailing violence and chronic instability, and there was no functioning parliament. In view of the worrying developments in the situation, the Executive Committee's recommendation was that the Governing Council should suspend Haiti's membership rights and express the hope that robust efforts would be made to organize elections in the country as soon as possible so that a newly elected and fully-fledged parliament could be welcomed in Haiti.

**The President** said he took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

*It was so decided.*

**The Secretary General**, recalling in the case of Myanmar that its Parliament had been suspended following the military takeover in February 2021, said the fact that ousted leader Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi had been moved from prison to house arrest signalled only slight progress. The Executive Committee's recommendation therefore was that the Parliament elected in 2020 should continue to be invited to attend IPU Assemblies as an observer with non-voting rights.

**The President** said he took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

*It was so decided.*

**The Secretary General** said that Niger had unfortunately joined the list of non-functioning parliaments following a military coup in July 2023, which had led to the dissolution of institutions, including parliament, and given rise to instability. The country's Prime Minister had very recently informed the IPU, however, that a transitional parliament to be installed imminently would remain in place until parliamentary elections were held. In expressing concern over the situation, the Executive Committee had condemned the military coup as a matter of principle and noted with regret the lack of parliamentary institutions in Niger. Its recommendation was that the IPU should continue engaging with the authorities in Niger with a view to restoration of the country's institutions in the wake of free and fair democratic elections.

**The President** said he took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

*It was so decided.*

**The Secretary General** said with reference to the Sudan that it had had no functioning parliament since April 2019 and that the parliamentary elections promised by the new military authorities had not taken place. In early 2023, the country had descended into a grave civil war, which did not bode well for the early establishment of a parliament, transitional or otherwise. Given that worrying development, the Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation in the Sudan, which should meanwhile remain suspended from the IPU.

**The President** said he took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

*It was so decided.*

**The Secretary General**, moving on to the situation in countries with transitional parliaments, said that the IPU had usefully engaged with the transitional authorities in Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali in a demonstration of support for efforts to effect a return to constitutional rule. He had reported to the Executive Committee on his mission in early 2023 to all three countries and it had taken note of his conclusions in each case.

In Burkina Faso, the Transitional Legislative Assembly had passed more legislation during its short lifespan than the previous parliament, now dissolved, and was also drafting a new constitution. In the hope that a return to constitutional rule could be accelerated, the Executive Committee's recommendation was that the Transitional Legislative Assembly should continue to retain its full membership rights and that the IPU should maintain its current support for the technical activities in progress, including outreach and training for parliamentary staff, in preparation for the country's return to constitutional rule.

**The President** said he took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

*It was so decided.*

**The Secretary General** said that Guinea also had a transitional parliament that likewise retained full IPU membership rights and received IPU technical support in drafting legal provisions for future use. As he had seen for himself, the Transitional National Council was working on constitutional amendments, including so as to bring about elections. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that Guinea should retain its status as a fully-fledged IPU Member and that the Guinean authorities should be encouraged to pursue efforts for a speedy return to constitutional rule.

**The President** said he took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

*It was so decided.*

**The Secretary General** said that, in Mali, positive developments included the adoption of a new constitution by referendum and the scheduling of presidential elections in early 2024, albeit potentially subject to a slight delay for technical reasons, followed by parliamentary elections. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that efforts should be stepped up to ensure the conduct of both elections as soon as possible and that the Transitional National Council should continue to retain its full IPU membership.

**The President** said he took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

*It was so decided.*

**The Secretary General** said in respect of Chad that the IPU had continued to provide technical assistance to the Transitional National Council established following the demise of the country's former Head of State in April 2021. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should continue to provide such assistance and that the Transitional National Council should also continue to maintain its full IPU membership while being encouraged to speed up its efforts for a return to constitutional rule.

**The President** said he took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

*It was so decided.*

**The Secretary General** said that a new addition to the list of countries with transitional parliaments was Gabon, where a military coup had taken place in August 2023 following presidential and parliamentary elections. The results of those elections had been annulled and the country's governing institutions dissolved. The new military leader had appointed a largely civilian government and established a transitional bicameral parliament with an appointed membership representing various segments of Gabonese society. At the present Assembly, the IPU would be discussing with the Gabonese delegation the potential support that it could offer towards ensuring a short and smooth transitional period.

The Executive Committee's recommendation was that Gabon should retain its IPU membership and that the IPU should work with the Gabonese authorities to establish a road map for a return to constitutional rule. He hoped to visit Gabon in the coming months for that purpose. A positive sign on another note was that a Gabonese parliamentarian imprisoned on charges of corruption and mismanagement had just been released following the intervention of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians with the new Gabonese authorities.

**The President** said that such cases were a good example of the IPU's work, which not only included assisting and cooperating with elected parliaments but also extended to engaging with transitional authorities to ensure a smooth return to democratic order in the country concerned.

**Mr. J.-F. Ndongou** (Gabon), clarifying the context for the situation in his country, said that the previous presidential elections in 2016 had sparked violence, whereas the military intervention following the similarly rigged elections in August 2023 had created no bloodshed and was backed by the people. In addition to former parliamentarians, moreover, the Transitional National Assembly included members from the former regime's party and government, from civil society and from the military. His delegation welcomed the opportunity to attend the 147th Assembly and was keen to draw on the successful experiences of other transitional parliaments with a view to returning Gabon to democratic order as soon as possible.

**The President** said he took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse the Executive Committee's recommendation concerning Gabon.

*It was so decided.*

**The Secretary General**, speaking on the situation in Libya, said that he was pleased to report some progress towards resolution of the country's long-standing crisis. The Libyan House of Representatives had recently adopted new electoral laws, giving rise to hope that elections would soon be held as foreseen, in which event the IPU could welcome a new fully-fledged Libyan parliament. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the IPU should continue to recognize the House of Representatives elected in 2014 as its legitimate interlocutor and urge the Libyan authorities to move towards those elections.

**The President** said he took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

*It was so decided.*

**Mr. F. Salim** (Libya) said that his country was now seeing positive progress among its political factions and that the House of Representatives had fulfilled all its legislative commitments in recognition of the need to hold elections and move forward along the democratic path. The fact was, however, that political progress and stability in Libya were undermined by the intervention of a group of international and regional powers in its domestic affairs.

**The Secretary General**, turning to the case of South Sudan, said that a transitional parliament was in place and that elections were planned for December 2024, although a delay was rumoured. The transitional period had been extended to February 2025 and the drafting of a new constitution was behind schedule. In the interim, the IPU was in discussion with the country's parliamentary authorities about possible technical assistance programmes for parliament. The Executive Committee's recommendation was that South Sudan should retain its status as a full IPU Member and be encouraged to speed up the establishment of new institutions.

**The President** said he took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse that recommendation.

*It was so decided.*

**The Secretary General** said that the third category of parliaments were those in countries where the political situation affected their capacity to function, namely Guinea-Bissau, Palestine, Tunisia, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen.

In Guinea-Bissau, the election of a new parliament and efforts under way to resolve the issue of constitutional reform represented positive progress and gave rise to hope that the situation would soon normalize. The IPU was keen to pursue discussions with that parliament on providing technical support to help it perform its role efficiently. In Palestine, no elections had taken place since 2006 and it was the country's legislative body, the Palestinian National Council, that had IPU membership. As to Tunisia, a standoff with the Government had led to the dissolution of parliament, since when parliamentary elections had been held in December 2022. The election and subsequent establishment of an upper house was expected to be complete by February 2024. Discussions between the IPU and the Tunisian authorities were ongoing concerning the provision of technical support to parliament and assistance in resolving some of the Tunisian cases before the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, elections were planned for 2024. The IPU recognized neither of the country's two competing parliaments, the first elected in 2015 and the second in 2020. In consistency with its policy of usefully engaging with all parliaments to help them along the path to democracy, the IPU was interacting with the Venezuelan legislative authorities in the interest of playing an active and productive role in ensuring that free and fair elections were organized. He would pursue efforts to normalize relations; an approach endorsed by the Executive Committee. Lastly, in Yemen, the House of Representatives was faced with the challenge of functioning in a context of crisis. The IPU hoped to make progress in the coming weeks and months in providing the technical assistance agreed with that parliament.

The Executive Committee's recommendation was that the Governing Council should take note of the developments in each of those five countries.

*It was so decided.*

**The Secretary General** said that the final category of parliaments were those in countries where the political situation constituted a potential threat to their capacity to function, namely Bosnia and Herzegovina, Eswatini, Peru and the Syrian Arab Republic. For the moment, those parliaments were functioning but in a political environment where their situation could become untenable. There were currently no recommendations in their regard from the Executive Committee. The IPU was flagging them for attention nonetheless as part of its early warning mechanism and monitoring of political developments in the countries concerned. It encouraged Members in a position to do so to support the institutions in those countries in a bid to prevent the situations from erupting into crisis.

Item 12 of the agenda

**UPDATE ON IPU POLICIES**

**(a) Policy to prevent and address harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and other IPU events**  
(CL/212/12(a)-P.1)

**Mr. A.R. Al Nuami** (United Arab Emirates), Chair of the Gender Partnership Group, presenting the *Policy to prevent and address harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and other IPU events*, as set out in document CL/212/12(a)-P.1, said that such a policy was essential to promoting human dignity and respect and that the IPU should serve as a role model in that regard for other organizations. Over the preceding year, the Group had worked hard to produce a policy that Members could own and feel proud of and that they would engage in implementing as well as in taking it forward to their parliaments and other institutions. The Group had consulted extensively with other organizations, including the United Nations, and parliamentary bodies during that process. The Executive Committee had approved the resulting comprehensive text, which was aimed at ensuring that all could participate in IPU Assemblies and events in an inclusive, respectful and safe environment, without harassment of any kind.

Adopting the same definition of harassment as in the *United Nations Code of Conduct to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment, at United Nations system events*, the policy comprised three main sections covering prevention of harassment, including through raising awareness of the policy; support and assistance for those reporting harassment; and procedures for investigating and resolving issues and establishing accountability. Also outlined were the steps to be followed in the event of harassment. For its part, the IPU Secretariat would develop and implement practical measures to accompany the policy and ensure its effective implementation. He trusted that the Governing Council would endorse the policy as an important document.

**The President**, thanking the Chair and members of the Gender Partnership Group for their work, said that the Executive Committee had unanimously supported the policy in the belief that it would promote a culture of protection, respect and dignity for women and men as well as for local communities. He took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse the policy, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

*It was so decided.*

**(b) Working Group on Transparency, Accountability and Openness**  
(CL/212/12(b)-P.1 and P.2)

**Ms. J. Alm Ericson** (Sweden), Chair of the Working Group on Transparency, Accountability and Openness, presenting the Code of Conduct for IPU Governance Officials set out in document CL/212/12(b)-P.1, together with the terms of reference for the IPU Oversight and Ethics Committee set out in document CL/212/12(b)-P.2, said that the code was intended to reinforce and sustain a culture of trust and accountability such as to achieve the IPU's vision for transparency, accountability and openness. It detailed the principles and values for achieving that vision, had an enhanced focus on the values of the IPU as an international organization, and explained the obligations of IPU governance officials. The code was unanimously supported by the Executive Committee, as were the terms of reference, and would ensure a more accountable, transparent and open IPU.

**The President**, underlining that such a code was essential to further strengthening good governance within the IPU, said he took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the code and the terms of reference.

*It was so decided.*

**(c) IPU priority theme 2024**  
(CL/212/12(c)-P.1)

**The Secretary General**, recalling that an IPU priority theme was to be identified for each year from among the objectives set out in the 2022-2026 Strategy, said that the IPU would continue in 2024 to build on and amplify the momentum created by the activities undertaken

throughout 2023 on the current priority theme of climate action. As explained in document CL/212/12(c)-P.1, however, the proposal was to shift the IPU's priority focus in 2024 towards peace and security in view of the multiplicity of crises around the world that posed a threat to both. The document served as a guide for scaling up robust action by the global parliamentary community in support of peace and security efforts, including in the light of the UN Summit of the Future to be held in September 2024 and the UN Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace, with related activities provided for in the newly approved consolidated budget for 2024.

**The President** said that, without peace and security, no progress would be achieved in such other areas as sustainable and social development. He took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse the Executive Committee's proposal of peace and security as the IPU priority theme for 2024.

*It was so decided.*

Item 13 of the agenda

**FUTURE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MEETINGS**  
(CL/212/13-P.1)

**The Secretary General**, drawing attention to the list of future inter-parliamentary meetings set out in document CL/212/13-P.1, said that all of those meetings were consistent with the objectives of the IPU 2022-2026 Strategy and that the list was intended to give visibility to and encourage Members' participation in the activities concerned. In the case of Assemblies, approval was needed for the 150th Assembly and related meetings, which Uzbekistan now proposed to host in March 2025 in place of hosting the 149th Assembly in October 2024, as originally planned. Consultations were under way to identify a new host for the latter.

As to the specialized and other meetings listed, all had secured funding and their venues were no longer a significant issue in view of the potential to hold meetings virtually. Only some of those meetings remained to be approved, in which event the IPU would continue its consultation with partners and donors so as to implement them as scheduled.

Concerning the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments scheduled for 2025, the proposal was that it should be held in Geneva, where the significant UN presence counted among the city's advantages in that context, taking into consideration the standard practice of organizing the Conference in close collaboration with the United Nations. A further proposal was that a related Preparatory Committee composed of 20 Speakers of Parliament representing the geopolitical groups should be established to work as from early 2024 on preparations for the Conference.

**The President**, noting that the list might in due course be supplemented as usual by further meetings organized by the geopolitical groups with their own resources and IPU technical support, said that the World Conference of Speakers of Parliament held every five years was among the IPU's most important meetings and that the Swiss Parliament would be involved in organizing its sixth iteration in Geneva. He took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the list of future inter-parliamentary meetings and the two proposals relating to the Sixth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament.

*It was so decided.*

Item 9 of the agenda

**IPU REGIONAL OFFICES**  
(CL/212/9-P.1)

**The Secretary General**, providing an update on progress achieved towards the opening of the two agreed IPU regional offices in Uruguay and Egypt, as presented in document CL/212/9-P.1, said that, in June 2023, the Parliament of Uruguay had signed a host agreement, pursuant to which the IPU was accorded the status of an international organization in Uruguay. Consultations were now ongoing concerning an operational agreement covering such matters as

logistical support and staff. The hope was that those matters would be finalized as soon as possible so that the office, for which premises in Montevideo had already been assigned, could be swiftly operationalized.

Concerning the regional office in Egypt, the IPU was in negotiations with the Egyptian authorities and hoped to conclude in the very near future a host agreement similar to that signed with the Uruguayan authorities. Thereafter, an equally similar operational agreement would be negotiated on the basis of the documentation provided to the authorities, which again mirrored that provided to the Uruguayan authorities, the aim being to ensure that both offices functioned in a standard fashion and employed the same modalities.

**The President**, pointing out that the first negotiations for any new venture were always hardest but could then be used as a model for facilitating subsequent negotiations of the same kind, said he took that the Governing Council wished to take note of the update provided.

*It was so decided.*

*The sitting rose at 12:20.*



## Third sitting

Friday, 27 October 2023  
(Morning)

*The sitting was called to order at 09:15 with Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), President of the IPU, in the Chair.*

### Item 5 of the agenda

#### **INTERIM REPORT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE IPU SINCE THE 211TH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL (CL/212/5-R.1)**

**The Secretary General**, accompanying with a digital slide presentation his interim report on the activities undertaken by the IPU in the preceding nine months, as contained in document CL/212/5-R.1, said that those activities were complemented by the activities of the President and of the IPU's statutory bodies and were highlighted in figures in the report. Those figures attested to the substantial impact of the refreshed Communications Strategy approved in 2022 and to the widespread engagement in the IPU's climate campaign *Parliaments for the Planet*. For activities carried out under Strategic Objective 1, dialogue and consultation with all parties were the watchword in dealing with cases involving the human rights of parliamentarians. In that connection, he thanked the Iraqi parliamentary authorities for facilitating a recent mission to Iraq by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians to follow up on one such case. Other activities under the same objective included the development of 25 Indicators for Democratic Parliaments as a self-assessment tool, while under Strategic Objective 2 they included the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament* campaign and the hugely successful Ninth Global Conference of Young Parliaments, for which congratulations were due to the host Parliament of Viet Nam.

Activities under Strategic Objective 3 included the continuing and growing work of the IPU Centre for Innovation in Parliament and development of the *Guide to digital transformation in parliaments* in cooperation with the Association of Secretaries General of Parliament, which Members were urged to use judiciously. As to Strategic Objective 4, activities carried out were focused on mobilizing the parliamentary voice in global forums, including the United Nations, examples being the processes of the Universal Periodic Review and voluntary national reviews undertaken in the context of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. A new handbook on the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol had also been produced. Lastly, activities under Strategic Objective 5 had centred on strengthening accountability, transparency and openness within the IPU through the two key tools adopted by the Governing Council at its preceding sitting, namely the anti-harassment policy and Code of Conduct for Governance Officials, with a data protection policy already in place and a policy on sustainability in the pipeline. The previous day's special accountability segment during the Assembly had moreover revealed a keen interest among Members in following up on the implementation of IPU resolutions and other decisions. Lastly, the IPU was pursuing the digital transformation of its own processes, including through holding virtual and hybrid meetings, improving documents management, and making data more accessible to all parliaments and partners.

**Mr. Y. Savadogo** (Burkina Faso), applauding the Secretary General on his leadership, said that it was vital to turn IPU resolutions and recommendations into action to promote peace, justice and calm across the world.

**Mr. A. Shahid** (Bangladesh) expressed thanks and congratulations to the IPU for its work to promote the exercise of democracy worldwide.

**Mr. K.K.P. Kouassi** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that the Secretary General's commendable work and leadership were conducive to action that would benefit those represented by its Members. On that score, the implementation of all IPU resolutions was key.

**Mr. C. Cajado Sampaio** (Brazil), applauding the Secretary General and the President on their efforts to enhance the IPU's efficiency and visibility, said that work should continue in that vein and that parliaments must make use of the digital tools available to them to improve their own efficiency.

**Ms. R.G. Gómez Jiménez** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that the absence of an emergency item on the agenda of the 147th Assembly, despite the existence of a major situation of international concern, was an issue that must be resolved through amendment of the relevant provisions of the IPU Statutes and Rules. That absence did nothing to promote crucial respect for human rights and the protection of women and children in situations such as that in the Gaza Strip, where people were suffering and being slaughtered en masse.

**The President** said that all IPU delegations had until the end of November 2023 to submit proposed amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules in connection with voting on requests relating to an emergency item.

**Mr. R. Cutajar** (Malta), observing that it was Mr. Pacheco's last Assembly as IPU President, expressed his delegation's thanks to him and his team for their sterling work over the preceding three years. The incoming President would surely continue working along the same lines.

**Mr. A. Santos Silva** (Portugal) said that his Parliament was honoured to have had one of its members at the helm of the IPU and commended Mr. Pacheco on his successful efforts to increase the IPU's standing and impact around the world. His delegation hoped that Mr. Pacheco would continue working within the IPU in his capacity as a parliamentarian and that his successor would follow his example in discharging her mandate.

**The President** expressed gratitude to the Portuguese delegation for its kind support to him throughout his three-year tenure.

**Ms. C. Cerqueira** (Angola), President of the Assembly, said that the organization of the 147th Assembly had been a challenging task that it had overcome thanks to the cooperation and assistance readily provided by the IPU President and, through him, the IPU Secretariat.

**The President** in turn thanked the Angolan Parliament and authorities for their hospitality and for their competence and engagement that had assured the success of the Assembly.

**The Secretary General** said in respect of his interim report that he acknowledged the comments and recommendations from the floor, to which he and his colleagues would give particular attention in their endeavour to improve further on the IPU's performance.

**The President** said he took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the interim report by the Secretary General.

*It was so decided.*

#### Item 15 of the agenda

### **APPOINTMENT OF TWO INTERNAL AUDITORS FOR 2024**

(cf. Rule 41 of the Governing Council)

(CL/212/15-P.1)

**The President** said that there were two candidates for the two positions of Internal Auditor for 2024, namely Ms. P. Glover-Rolle of the Bahamas and Mr. A. Gryffroy of Belgium. He took it that the Governing Council wished to appoint both candidates by acclamation.

*It was so decided.*

Item 16 of the agenda

**ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION**

(Article 19 of the Statutes and Rules 6, 7 and 8 of the Rules of the Governing Council)  
(CL/212/16-P.1, P.2, P.3-rev, P.4-rev and 16-Inf)

**The President**, noting that the election of the IPU President would take place in accordance with the IPU Statutes and Rules, said that four formal notifications of interest in running as a candidate in that election had been received by the deadline of 09:00 on 26 October 2023 and circulated on receipt to the entire IPU membership. In order of receipt of those notifications, the four candidates were Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté of Senegal, whose candidature had been received on 10 June 2023; Ms. C. Gotani Hara of Malawi, whose candidature had been received on 15 June 2023; Ms. T. Ackson of the United Republic of Tanzania, whose candidature had been received on 16 June 2023; and Ms. M. Abdibashir Hagi of Somalia, whose candidature had been received on 18 August 2023.

The Executive Committee had recommended that two of its members from regions without candidates in the election should be appointed as tellers, namely Ms. J. Alm Ericson of Sweden and Mr. S. Andújar of Uruguay, who would ascertain the results of the election with the support of the IPU Secretariat and one observer nominated by each candidate as her representative. Those observers were Mr. M.M. Diaw of Senegal, nominated by Ms. Mergane Kanouté; Mr. V. Musowa of Malawi, nominated by Ms. Gotani Hara; Ms. E. Anyakun of Uganda, nominated by Ms. Ackson; and Mr. M.A. Nadif of Somalia, nominated by Ms. Abdibashir Hagi. He took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the appointment of the two tellers and the nomination of the four observers.

*It was so decided.*

**The Secretary General** explained the voting procedure, set out in document CL/212/16-Inf, for the election of the IPU President by secret ballot.

**The President** invited the four candidates to introduce themselves and present their ideas and vision for the IPU, were they to be elected as its President.

**Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté** (Senegal) said that she had been a parliamentarian since 2017 and was now serving her second term, which would run until 2027. As Vice-President of her party's parliamentary group, she specialized in institutional communications and project follow-up and evaluation. With governance a paramount issue for her, she had been a member of several IPU bodies, including the Executive Committee, where her term as a Vice-President was about to end. She fully respected and espoused the ideals of the IPU's founding fathers and the values and principles promoted by the IPU. She had the passion, energy and commitment to devote herself to the IPU, where her experience as an office-holder would give her a head start as its President. In that role, she would work with parliaments towards people-centred activities, the full implementation of IPU decisions and resolutions, the opening of additional IPU regional offices, and further strengthening of the IPU's transparency. She would also condemn all violence and strive to promote religious tolerance and parliamentary diplomacy for peace. Lastly, she would seek amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules with the aim of resolving important concerns raised by the geopolitical groups.

**Ms. C. Gotani Hara** (Malawi) said that she was her country's first female Speaker of Parliament and was well qualified, thanks to her 15 years of ministerial experience in the areas of climate change, health, gender and community development, to guide delivery of the IPU's strategic objectives. Urgent and emerging issues must also be effectively addressed, however, especially now that people had lost faith in politicians and institutions for their failure to resolve problems. She therefore intended, if elected, to re-energize the IPU through measures to bring it closer to the people and create stronger engagement with global and regional bodies. Another aim would be to increase the IPU's overall responsiveness by establishing a body that could react swiftly to emerging issues. She would also work to enhance the roles and mandate of the geopolitical groups, promote lasting peace in war-torn areas through parliamentary diplomacy, and champion the adoption of modern laws on climate change, gender, disability and youth. Her mission would be to build a new, more proactive and effective IPU. Assuring the geopolitical groups of her commitment to achieving their ambitions vis-à-vis the issues of specific concern to each, she declared that Members need look no further for a visionary, determined, dynamic and decisive leader.

**Ms. T. Acksan** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that her priorities if elected as IPU President would include a focus on transparency and accountability, peaceful coexistence, global prosperity, effective participation and representation of the geopolitical groups in IPU organs, inclusion, and equitable representation in national parliaments for women, youth and under-represented groups in particular. Her vision for the IPU would revolve around the three fundamental pillars of collaboration, inclusivity and progress in prioritizing efforts to build solid and dynamic partnerships with international organizations, governments and civil society and successfully effect meaningful change. Her candidature had been endorsed by key African institutions and, in addition to her time as President of the IPU African Group, she was her country's Speaker of Parliament, a former Deputy Speaker and only the second woman since Tanzanian independence to serve her country as its Deputy Attorney General. A vote for her would be meaningful for all women and girls, advance gender equality and motivate other institutions to invest more in women. A vote for her would be a vote for IPU structural reform and inclusivity, climate action, human rights, peaceful coexistence, ethical use of artificial intelligence, and democracy for all.

**Ms. M. Abdibashir Hagi** (Somalia), stating her belief that she was the right choice for IPU President, said that, if elected, she would be passionately committed to listening to all voices and endeavour to meet members of all parliaments in person as well as advocate tirelessly for their needs. With her credibility and in-depth knowledge of the IPU, there would be no regrets in entrusting her with that responsibility. History would be made with the first-ever election of an African woman as President of the IPU, who should be dedicated to fostering global peace, democracy and cooperation through empowering parliaments. As someone whose only agenda was to serve and act in the best interest of Members, she fitted that description. She would be intent on advancing the IPU's global agenda in the areas of human rights, gender equality, sustainable development and international cooperation to address all urgent challenges, with accountability and transparency as a core principle. A vote for her would be a vote for new ideas and for a woman who fought for hope and democracy, who pledged to make the collective vision for the IPU a reality, and whose words were matched by action.

**The President** said that the four candidates were already demonstrating their capacity to work with the IPU and thanked them for their commitment to the Organization.

*A vote was taken by secret ballot.*

**The Secretary General**, following the vote, said in the absence of the President that the Governing Council might wish to resume its proceedings while the votes were being counted.

*It was so agreed.*

*In the absence of Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), President of the IPU, Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), IPU Vice-President took the Chair.*

#### Item 11 of the agenda

### **IPU TASK FORCE ON THE PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE**

**Mr. P. Katjavivi** (Namibia), Vice-President of the IPU Task Force on the peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine, delivering an oral report on the activities of the Task Force, said that the Task Force had met regularly since the previous Assembly in March 2023 to examine developments, maintain communication with the Ukrainian and Russian parliamentary delegations, and work towards a road map of next steps. While continuing to advocate for a ceasefire and a return to negotiations, the Task Force was seeking to engage in parliamentary diplomacy and concentrate on small steps towards dialogue and better understanding, with a focus on specific humanitarian issues, including nuclear safety, food security and the situation of conflict-affected children, with the aim of alleviating human suffering.

At its recent meeting in Luanda, the Task Force had held hearings with the Ukrainian and Russian delegations. After concluding from the discussion that both appeared keenest to engage on the issue of children, the Task Force had decided as a medium-term goal to focus its efforts on continuing consultations with both delegations on that issue. It had also agreed to conduct bilateral meetings between its members and the warring parties. In place of Ms. A Gerkens of the Netherlands, it had furthermore welcomed Ms. S. D'Hose of Belgium as a new member with her own connections and insights that could unlock new avenues for dialogue.

Next steps were focused on achieving progress through in-person meetings and more in-depth discussions with both delegations, including between IPU Assemblies, in the more tranquil setting of the IPU Headquarters, with support from Geneva-based experts and specialized UN bodies. The Task Force hoped for such a meeting in early 2024 and looked forward to reporting progress at the 148th Assembly.

**The Chair** said he took it that the Governing Council wished to take note of the oral report on the activities of the Task Force.

*It was so decided.*

#### Item 14 of the agenda

### **ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES**

(CL/212/14-P.1)

#### **(c) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians**

(CL/212/14(c)-R.1 and R.2)

**Ms. M.G.A. Odhiambo** (Vice-President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians), presenting the draft decisions prepared by the Committee at its recent session in Luanda, as contained in document CL/212/14(c)-R.2, said that she would present the cases concerned by region and in alphabetical order.

#### **Africa**

##### **Democratic Republic of the Congo**

The Committee had examined several cases in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including three new cases, and wished to thank the Congolese delegation for the information provided during its hearing with the Committee and for its willingness to welcome a mission to the country after the presidential elections.

The Committee had reviewed the new case of Mr. Chérubin Okende, an opposition member of parliament who had been found shot in the head in his car. The Committee was appalled at that murder, and in light of the information given during the hearing, it was confident that the means employed by the authorities to conduct the investigation would reveal in the coming weeks who was behind the crime.

The Committee had also examined the case of Mr. Kabund, another opposition member of parliament. He had been sentenced to seven years in prison for criticizing the Head of State. The Committee was concerned at the severity of Mr. Kabund's sentence for exercising his right to freedom of expression. The Committee called on the authorities to strengthen the protection of that fundamental right by aligning the laws on offences constituting defamation against the Head of State with international human rights standards.

Lastly, the Committee had examined the new cases of Mr. Sakanyi and Ms. Mushobekwa, two parliamentarians whose parliamentary mandates had been arbitrarily invalidated for absenteeism despite medical certificates explaining their absence. The Committee took note of the information submitted by the authorities and called on the National Assembly to provide a copy of the report of the special committee tasked with reviewing cases of absenteeism.

*The Governing Council adopted unanimously the three draft decisions relating to, respectively, the case of Mr. Jean Marc Kabund, the cases of three Congolese parliamentarians, and the case of Chérubin Okende Senga.*

## **Eswatini**

The case in Eswatini concerned three parliamentarians, two of whom had been in detention on various charges since July 2021 in the aftermath of protests calling for democratic reforms in the country. On 1 June 2023, the judge in the case had found them guilty of the most serious charges but reserved sentencing for December 2023. Both men risked spending 20 years in prison.

The findings of the IPU trial observer and the Committee's analysis of the verdict confirmed earlier concerns that the criminal cases brought against the parliamentarians had come in response to their actions to support political change. Indeed, the Committee was convinced that both men should never have been prosecuted in the first place. The Committee sincerely hoped that the matter would still be resolved, in a way that was in line with applicable human rights standards, before the men were sentenced.

At the same time, the Committee remained keen to travel to Eswatini to discuss with the relevant authorities and other stakeholders the issues that had emerged in the case.

*The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the cases of three Eswatini parliamentarians.*

## **Senegal**

The draft decision concerned the case of Mr. Ousmane Sonko, in Senegal. The Committee sincerely thanked the Senegalese delegation for the productive hearing held during the current Assembly. It had been reassured to learn that Mr. Sonko was receiving medical care. Nevertheless, it remained very concerned by Mr. Sonko's state of health. The Committee also had concerns regarding the possibility that Mr. Sonko could be prevented from carrying out the necessary steps to validate his candidacy for the upcoming presidential election.

The Committee wished to send a delegation to Senegal as soon as possible to visit Mr. Sonko in detention and to be able to settle the case in a satisfactory manner. It thanked the Senegalese delegation for its assurances that it would cooperate in that regard.

*The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Ousmake Sonko.*

## **Zimbabwe**

The Committee thanked the Speaker of the National Assembly for the exchange it had had with him during a hearing and for his assurance that an on-site mission to Zimbabwe was welcome. The Committee looked forward to receiving the details of the organization of such a mission as soon as possible.

However, the Committee was concerned by alarming reports about the rapidly deteriorating health of Mr. Job Sikhala, a seasoned parliamentarian of the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) opposition party who had spent more than a year in a maximum-security prison over a speech he had made in June 2022.

The Governing Council had before it the report of the IPU trial observer who had attended some of the court hearings in the case. His findings confirmed allegations that Mr. Sikhala's rights to a fair trial had been violated, including his right to bail. The observer had highlighted several breaches of due process and concluded that there was no evidence to support the verdict that Mr. Sikhala was guilty of obstructing the course of justice.

The Committee deplored the fact that the continued arbitrary detention of Mr. Sikhala made it impossible for him to practically exercise his right to take part in the 23 August elections. The Committee urged the authorities to free Mr. Sikhala at once and to ensure that all his rights were respected.

The Committee had received a new complaint from 23 parliamentarians from the CCC party, claiming that the Speakers of both Houses had revoked their mandates in an arbitrary manner. It alleged that the Speakers had acted on a fraudulent letter from an imposter claiming to act as the interim Secretary General of the CCC while ignoring all communications coming from the CCC parliamentarians. The Committee believed that those 23 newly elected opposition parliamentarians should never have lost their seats in parliament and called on the authorities to consider modifying that procedure to ensure that all members of parliament could carry out their mandate freely.

*The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the cases of 23 Zimbabwean parliamentarians.*

## **Asia**

### **Myanmar**

In Myanmar, 72 parliamentarians had been subject to serious violations, including arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and inhumane treatment following the military coup d'état of 2021. Their situation was alarming as all visits to the detained parliamentarians and their communication with the outside world had been banned for over a year. In addition, the Committee was shocked to learn that five parliamentarians had lost their lives while avoiding arrest.

The Committee strongly condemned those crimes against IPU colleagues and once again urged the military authorities to release all parliamentarians immediately. It also reiterated its call to Members, and all fellow parliamentarians, to take action in solidarity with their colleagues in Myanmar, who all needed their support. The Committee requested the IPU to take action to help put an end to impunity in the case.

*The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the cases of 72 parliamentarians of Myanmar.*

### **Pakistan**

The Committee thanked the member of the Pakistani delegation for the constructive exchange that had taken place during a hearing.

However, the Committee was deeply concerned by the deteriorating situation of opposition parliamentarians in Pakistan, as it had received a new complaint with allegations of arbitrary arrest and detention, inhumane treatment and violations of due process against four parliamentarians of the Pakistan *Tehreek-e-Insaf* (PTI) party, including its chairperson, Mr. Imran Khan. The complaint also covered allegations concerning the case of Senator Swati of the PTI, who had been forced to go into hiding to avoid further persecution.

The Committee was troubled by allegations that military and intelligence authorities used threats and acts of intimidation and infringed the right to privacy of PTI parliamentarians who remained loyal to their party or were critical of the authorities, and that such pressure ceased as soon as they changed their affiliation.

The Committee urged the Pakistani authorities to ensure that crimes against their colleagues were not left unpunished – regardless of their affiliation – and to ensure that such cases did not recur. It also hoped to go to Pakistan urgently to meet all parties to make progress towards the resolution of the growing number of cases in the country.

*The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the cases of six Pakistani parliamentarians.*

### **Philippines**

The Committee was presenting to the Governing Council draft decisions in four cases in the Philippines. The positive news in the cases of Mr. Ocampo and Mr. Trillanes was that the doubtful legal action taken against them had finally been dismissed, which was why the Committee was pleased to recommend that the Governing Council close those cases.

The situation was not very rosy, however, in the two remaining cases. Former Senator de Lima continued to linger in detention on drugs charges even though the prosecution's case had collapsed. Indeed, a full analysis of her situation showed convincingly that she had been charged in response to her criticism of former President Duterte. The Committee therefore renewed its call on the Filipino authorities to release Ms. de Lima immediately.

With regard to the final case, which concerned a current parliamentarian, Ms. Castro, and a former parliamentarian, Ms. Elago, both had been vilified or worse, threatened by prominent figures within the political or military establishment. In fact, days earlier, former President Duterte had made it clear on television that he thought that Ms. Castro should be killed. The Committee was appalled that a former President had made those remarks, which could put Ms. Castro's life in real danger. The Committee was pleased that the parliamentary authorities had quickly spoken out against that serious incident. It trusted that they, along with the judicial authorities, would take all further steps that might be required.

*The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of Saturnino Ocampo.*

## **Sri Lanka**

The Committee presented to the Governing Council a draft decision regarding the assassination of four Sri Lankan parliamentarians. They had been murdered between 2005 and 2008 at a time when Sri Lanka was facing a civil war that pitted the Government against a Tamil insurgency.

The pursuit of justice had significantly advanced regarding two of those murders. However, that was not the case for the assassinations of Mr. Pararajasingham and Mr. Raviraj, who both belonged to the Tamil National Alliance.

The Committee was convinced that further steps could, and should, be taken to find and punish the culprits of those two murders. It believed that those steps should be part of a comprehensive approach by the Sri Lankan authorities, including parliament, to put in place stronger mechanisms of accountability to address the serious crimes committed in Sri Lanka in the past.

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

## **Middle East and North Africa**

### **Iraq**

The Committee undertook its first mission to Iraq in August 2023, as described in the report contained in document CL/212/14(c)-R.1, to promote a satisfactory resolution of the case of former Iraqi parliamentarian Mr. Ahmed Al-Alwani.

On behalf of the Committee, she wished to warmly thank the Iraqi authorities, particularly the parliamentary authorities, for having received the mission and facilitated its smooth conduct, including a meeting with Mr. Al-Alwani in prison.

The mission report before the Governing Council called for the immediate release of Mr. Al-Alwani in light of the flawed legal proceedings and the abuses he had suffered in the early stages of his detention and urged the judicial authorities to lift the death sentence passed against him. The Committee also called on the Iraqi authorities to end impunity by immediately investigating Mr. Al-Alwani's allegations of torture and holding those responsible accountable.

The Committee would continue supporting the Iraqi authorities' efforts in promoting a satisfactory resolution of Mr. Al-Alwani's case and hoped that he would be released soon.

*The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Ahmed Jamil Salman Al-Alwani.*

*Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), President of the IPU, resumed the Chair.*

**Ms. M.G.A. Odhiambo** (Vice-President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians) said that the cases she had referred to were only some of the numerous cases before the Committee. In view of the record growing number of cases, it could be seen that being a parliamentarian could be truly dangerous. Unfortunately, that trend was apparent in all the regions of the world. The Committee counted on the support of Members to help their colleagues under threat.

**The President** said that the Governing Council was called upon to elect one member of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and that it would be necessary to proceed to a vote as there were three candidates for the vacancy, namely Ms. L. Fehlmann Rielle of Switzerland, Mr. Wong Chen of Malaysia, and Ms. A.D. Brosas of the Philippines.

**The Secretary General** said that, in accordance with Rule 29 of the Rules of the Governing Council, a vote in such cases was normally conducted by show of hands or by standing vote unless a roll-call vote was deemed necessary by the President or requested by a member of the Governing Council.



**The President**, after confirming that each of the three candidates still intended to stand for the vacancy, said that, in the absence of any objections, the Governing Council would proceed to a vote by show of hands.

*It was so agreed.*

**The Secretary General**, in response to questions from Mr. R. Edwards (Chile) and Mr. W. William (Seychelles), said that the voting procedure would be the same as followed in the vote taken during the first sitting and that the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians currently comprised three members from the African Group, one from the Asia-Pacific Group, two from the Group of Latin America and Caribbean, and three from the Twelve Plus Group.

*A vote by show of hands was taken.*

*Number of votes obtained:*

Ms. R. Fehlmann Rielle (Switzerland)	73
Mr. Wong Chen (Malaysia)	49
Ms. A. Brosas (Philippines)	15

*Having obtained the required majority, Ms. R. Fehlmann Rielle (Switzerland) was elected a member of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians for a five-year term ending in October 2028.*

**The President** congratulated Ms. Fehlmann Rielle on her election to that important committee.

Item 16 of the agenda  
(resumed)

**ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION**

(Article 19 of the Statutes and Rules 6, 7 and 8 of the Rules of the Governing Council)  
(CL/212/16-P.1, P.2, P.3-rev, P.4-rev and 16-Inf)

**The President** said that he had been informed by the tellers that they had ascertained the results of the election for the President of the IPU, which were:

*Number of ballots:* 303

*Required majority:* 152

*Number of votes obtained:*

Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal)	59
Ms. C. Gotani Hara (Malawi)	61
Ms. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania)	172
Ms. M. Abdibashir Hagi (Somalia)	11

*Having obtained the required majority, Ms. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania) was elected as President of the IPU for a three-year term ending in October 2026.*

**The President**, expressing thanks to all four candidates and congratulating Ms. Ackson on her election, said that it had been important to have more than one candidate and also to have women candidates, especially from the very continent where the election had taken place.

**Ms. T. Ackson** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that she was humbled by her election and overwhelmed with gratitude for the confidence bestowed on her by fellow parliamentarians. She accepted the position with all humility and recognized the many responsibilities that it entailed. She was indebted to the Tanzanian President and Government for their unwavering support of her candidacy and reserved special thanks for her campaign team led by Speakers of Parliament and comprising parliamentarians and comrades from around the world. The campaign had been dignified and well fought, for which she was grateful to her fellow contestants – all very able women. Inviting all three of them to join her on the podium, she confirmed that, as IPU President, she would harness ideas such as theirs in working hand in hand with all representatives towards further enhancing the IPU's effectiveness, accountability and transparency, making it a better place and ensuring that it served as a voice for all. In that endeavour, she foresaw that she would be consulting often with the outgoing IPU President, whom she thanked for his service, and indeed with his predecessors.

**The President**, wishing the very best of luck to Ms. Ackson in her new IPU role, said that to be IPU President was not an easy task but that she was a great woman from Africa known for her capacity and competence, which boded well for her and the IPU alike.

*The sitting rose at 12:45.*

## Fourth sitting

Friday, 27 October 2023  
(Afternoon)

*The sitting was called to order at 14:35, with Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), President of the IPU, in the Chair.*

### Item 14 of the agenda (continued)

#### **ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES** (CL/212/14-P.1)

##### **(a) Forum of Women Parliamentarians** (CL/212/14(a)-R.1)

**Ms. F. Malaquias** (Angola), President of the 36th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, presenting the report of that session held on 23 October 2023, as contained in document CL/212/14(a)-R.1, said that, in contributing from a gender perspective towards the work of the 147th Assembly on the draft resolution on orphanage trafficking, participants had called for strong legislation and international cooperation to tackle the root causes of child trafficking and its gender-related aspects, proposing amendments since incorporated into the draft approved for transmission to the Assembly. The Forum had also examined in an interesting panel discussion the challenges facing women in politics, as described in the report, and the sharing of family responsibilities, with male participants advocating for the involvement of men in child rearing and domestic tasks. In conclusion, she expressed admiration for the incoming IPU President, whose accession to that prestigious leadership role was an inspiration for all women. Her evident determination, commitment, integrity and passion for public service would surely take the IPU to new heights in its work to promote a fairer and more balanced world.

##### **(b) Forum of the Young Parliamentarians of the IPU** (CL/212/14(b)-R.1)

**Ms. E.T. Muteka** (Namibia), member of the Board of the Forum of the Young Parliamentarians of the IPU, presenting the report of the Forum's meeting held on 24 October 2023, as contained in document CL/212/14(b)-R.1, said that, at that meeting, the persistently low level of youth participation in parliament had been highlighted as a wake-up call for action to implement measures promoted by the IPU *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign. In addition to learning about positive youth-related developments in various countries, the Forum had contributed a youth perspective to the work of the 147th Assembly, specifically in respect of the General Debate and the draft resolution on orphanage trafficking. The Forum had also held hearings with the candidates for the IPU presidency, welcoming each candidate's commitment to boosting the presence of young parliamentarians at IPU Assemblies and in related leadership structures. It had furthermore approved the nomination of a new member of the Board, which itself had met to discuss ways of further advancing youth participation at the IPU and possible themes for the Tenth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in 2024.

**The President** said that the participation of so many young parliamentarians in IPU Assemblies was highly welcome and infused energy into the proceedings.

##### **(d) Committee on Middle East Questions** (CL/212/14(d)-R.1)

**Mr. H.-J. Talsma** (Netherlands), member of the Committee on Middle East Questions, presenting the report of the Committee's four recent meetings in October 2023, as contained in document CL/212/14(d)-R.1, said that the Committee had agreed that parliamentarians must transcend differences to unite in finding peaceful solutions to the Israel-Palestine crisis. Any lack of

a common position would fail innocent Israeli and Palestinian civilians, including children, who had been killed or wounded, lost family and homes, lived in daily fear of their lives and would continue to suffer without an immediate halt to the bloodshed, which was an utmost priority for the Committee.

**Mr. K. Darwish** (Egypt), member of the Committee on Middle East Questions, continuing the presentation, said that the Committee had also proposed the six recommendations listed in the report for resolving the Israel-Palestine crisis through immediate action. Those recommendations entailed a complete ceasefire, the lifting of the humanitarian blockade of the Gaza Strip, the release of all hostages, unconditional respect for international humanitarian law and UN resolutions, the resumption of negotiations on a two-State solution and, lastly, a visit to the region at the earliest opportunity by a delegation from the Committee.

**The President**, thanking the Committee for its hard work, said that three candidatures had been received for the three vacancies on the Committee, namely those of Mr. H. Arshakyan of Armenia, Mr. S. Mantamiharja of Indonesia, and Ms. A. Erdoğan of Türkiye.

**The Secretary General** said that those candidatures posed a difficulty, as two of the three vacancies were to be filled by women. In similar situations in the past, the practice had been to invite the Governing Council to endorse the election of the one woman candidate as a member of the Committee and then elect one of the two male candidates to the one vacancy reserved for a man, leaving the third vacancy open until it could be filled by a woman.

**The President**, on that basis, after ascertaining that Mr. Arshakyan and Mr. Mantamiharja still intended to stand as candidates, said he took it that the Governing Council wished to endorse by acclamation the election of Ms. Erdoğan as a member of the Committee.

*It was so decided.*

*A vote by show of hands was taken to elect one of the two male candidates as a member of the Committee.*

*Number of votes obtained:*

Mr. H. Arshakyan (Armenia) 43

Mr. S. Mantamiharja (Indonesia) 56

*Having obtained the required majority, Mr. S. Mantamiharja (Indonesia) was elected a member of the Committee on Middle East Questions.*

**(e) Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law**  
(CL/212/14(e)-R.1)

**Mr. J.K. Waweru** (Kenya), President of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, presenting the report of the Committee's meeting held on 24 October 2023, as set out in document CL/212/14(e)-R.1, said that he would highlight two specific matters in that report, the first being the plight of refugees and internally displaced persons. With the multiplication of conflict situations, the overall picture had recently worsened, especially for women and children. Already experiencing the dire and challenging situations identified in the report, displaced persons were now also disproportionately affected by climate-related disasters. As to the second matter of conflict situations, the Committee had underscored the obligation of all parties to respect – and ensure respect for – international humanitarian law through the actions listed in the report. It had also called for a stop to war and for the provision of humanitarian assistance to all conflict-affected civilians. In conclusion, he drew attention to the Global Refugee Forum scheduled for December 2023 in Geneva and called on all Members to work towards committing new pledges for achieving the objectives of the important Global Compact on Refugees.

**The President** said that there were only two candidates for the three vacancies on the Committee to Promote International Humanitarian Law, namely those of Ms. L. Carvajal of Chile, nominated by the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, and Mr. A. Farrugia of Malta, nominated by the Twelve Plus Group. He took it that the Governing Council wished to elect by acclamation both those candidates as members of the Committee.

*It was so decided.*

**(f) Gender Partnership Group**  
(CL/212/14(f)-R.1)

**Ms. J. Alm Ericson** (Sweden), member of the Gender Partnership Group, presenting the report of the Group's 48th session on 22 and 26 October 2023, as set out in document CL/212/14(f)-R.1, and citing figures shown in the report and its annexes, said that the Group had found that women accounted for just over one third of delegates at the 147th Assembly, a proportion that was not good enough and indeed had been bettered on a few previous occasions. Compared with the 146th Assembly, however, fewer delegations had been sanctioned for repeated failure to observe gender equality in their composition and more delegations were gender-balanced, which was commendable. The Group had also begun discussing an action plan for implementation of the new *Policy to prevent and address harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and other IPU events*, which it had been proud to develop. As part of its work to support parliaments with few women members, the Group had held a constructive follow-up dialogue with the Nigerian delegation covering the persistent challenges facing Nigerian women in politics and the renewed efforts envisaged to address that situation, which it would continue to monitor.

**The Secretary General**, responding to requests from representatives of Mozambique, Namibia and Burundi for the correction of omissions or errors in the information contained in Annex II of the report concerning the percentages of women parliamentarians in delegations, said that inaccuracies in that information would be corrected as necessary. It should be noted, however, that only delegations composed of between 40% and 60% of each gender were listed in that Annex, the idea being to give such delegations visibility as a way of promoting gender parity within all IPU delegations.

**The President** said that any perceived errors should be reported to the IPU Secretariat, which would verify the figures concerned and produce an amended version of the report, as necessary, for circulation to all Members.

**(g) Advisory Group on Health**  
(CL/212/14(g)-R.1)

**Ms. L. Clifford-Lee** (Ireland), member of the Advisory Group on Health, presenting the report of the meeting of the Advisory Group on Health held on 24 October 2023, as set out in document CL/212/14(g)-R.1, said that the Group's rules and practices in the context of amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules had featured among its discussions, as had peace and security, the IPU's priority theme for 2024, with an emphasis on the linkages between conflict, climate change, displacement and health. After learning during an informative field visit to a maternity hospital in Luanda about the main indicators for maternal and child health, it had made the recommendations detailed in the report, notably concerning access to primary health care and the sharing of good practices in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights. Lastly, the Group had received updates on the activities of its technical partners – welcoming in that regard the six-month extension of the IPU's Memorandum of Understanding with the World Health Organization – and on the ongoing collaboration with the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health.

**The President** said that Ms. Clifford-Lee had been elected President of the Advisory Group and Mr. F.E. Ndugulile of the United Republic of Tanzania as its Vice-President.

**(h) High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism**  
(CL/212/14(h)-R.1)

**Ms. Á. Vadai** (Hungary), Acting Chair of the High-Level Advisory Group (HLAG) on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, presenting the report of the 14th and 15th HLAG meetings held respectively on 11 May 2023 and 24 October 2023, as contained in document CL/212/14(h)-R.1, said that, at its 14th meeting, the HLAG had updated participants on the second phase of its mobile application and discussed preparations for the two thematic meetings of the *Call of the Sahel* since held in September 2023. At its 15th meeting, the HLAG had discussed the pressing challenges in the Sahel, where the worsening conflict and ongoing instability increased the region's vulnerability and merited the same global attention as crises elsewhere. The HLAG had ultimately concluded that strategic measures were required to address the pervasive security, governance and corruption issues obstructing the region's development. In conclusion, she outlined the proceedings of the recent Second Global Parliamentary Summit on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism described in the report, highlighting from among its conclusions the need for the establishment of an ad hoc mechanism within the HLAG to coordinate, monitor and follow up on the second phase of the *Call of the Sahel*.

**Mr. M. Bouden** (Algeria) said that the report presented did not reflect the entirety of the discussions conducted during the 15th HLAG meeting, at which many had commented on the situation in Gaza and raised the related issue of war crimes. Regrettably, those matters had not been added as an item on the meeting's agenda as requested. There could be no monopoly of the truth – and especially not in a multilateral organization that was the world's oldest, founded, moreover, with the aim of bringing together ideas. His fear was that reports from other IPU bodies might be similarly incomplete. The matter should be investigated by the Secretary General and the report rewritten to the required standard.

**The President** said that the IPU Secretariat took it as read that reports received from any IPU body had been agreed by consensus of their respective members. The IPU had no interest in interfering in the content of any report.

**Ms. Á. Vadai** (Hungary), Acting Chair of the HLAG, said that mutual respect among parliamentarians, irrespective of whether they shared the same views, was a basic IPU principle. Passion about politics and rudeness should not, however, be confused. Requests had been made to amend the HLAG's agenda, focused on the *Call of the Sahel*, after it had already been adopted, which was against the rules as she understood them and therefore not a matter for any Chair to decide, in particular when legal advice promised by the IPU Secretariat had not materialized. Indeed, the HLAG's wish to address certain issues under any other business had been thwarted by those very same rules. Noting that she had simply delivered the report provided to her by the IPU Secretariat, she stressed that personal political agendas were off limits within the HLAG.

**The Secretary General** said that the IPU Secretariat had drafted the HLAG report on the basis of the deliberations that had taken place during the meetings concerned. In so doing, it had sought to focus on the chosen theme of the *Call of the Sahel* in addition to capturing what it believed was the consensus among participants. In making his views known, Mr. Bouden had not in effect rejected the report but rather expressed a reservation thereto.

**The President** said that the reservation would be placed on record.

**Mr. M. Bouden** (Algeria), welcoming that response, reiterated that, during the meeting, several HLAG members had spoken forcefully and at length about the situation in Gaza, which was moreover an utmost priority. Their views on the subject had warranted coverage and deserved respect.

**The President**, after again taking note of the Algerian reservation to the report, said that there were four candidates for six vacancies on the HLAG. Those candidates were: Mr. C.H. Arrien Cronembold of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, nominated by GRULAC; and Ms. L. Saint-Paul of France, Mr. Z. Mojškerc of Slovenia and Ms. C. Badertscher of Switzerland, each nominated by the Twelve Plus Group. He took it that the Governing Council wished to elect by acclamation those four candidates as HLAG members.

*It was so decided.*

**(i) Working Group on Science and Technology**  
(CL/212/14(i)-R.1)

**Mr. D. Naughten** (Ireland), Chairperson of the Working Group on Science and Technology, presenting the report of the Group's online meeting of 6 September 2023 and its two meetings of 24 and 26 October 2023, as contained in document CL/212/14(i)-R.1, said that the Group was ever ready to assist Members in support of their evidence-based decision-making within the IPU. At its first meeting, it had discussed final preparations for the Science for Peace Parliamentary Meeting on water security and rebuilding peaceful coexistence with science, since held in Viet Nam, and pilot projects proposed for engaging the scientific community with parliamentarians. At its second meeting, it had agreed to develop a parliamentary toolkit on such engagement, based on the outputs from existing pilot projects, and heard about activities conducted and future plans in the area of evidence-based policy and in the UN multistakeholder context. At its third meeting, it had discussed how best to implement the outcomes of the Science for Peace Parliamentary Meeting, its involvement in future water- and climate-related events, and the ethics of artificial intelligence as the theme for the 2024 Science for Peace Schools programme in Jordan.

**The President** said that there were three candidates for the four vacancies for membership of the Working Group, namely: Ms. N. Kpochan Razaki of Benin, nominated by the African Group; Ms. C.M. Mumma of Kenya, also nominated by the African Group; and Ms. Á. Vadai of Hungary, nominated by the Twelve Plus Group. He took it that the Governing Council wished to elect those three candidates by acclamation.

*It was so decided.*

Item 17 of the agenda

**ELECTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
(cf. Article 2(k) of the Statutes and Rules 37, 38 and 39  
of the Rules of the Governing Council)  
(CL/212/17-P.1)

**The President**, after expressing gratitude to the outgoing members of the Executive Committee for their tireless commitment to contributing to the work of the IPU, said that, as listed in document CL/212/17-P.1, the 10 candidatures received for the 10 announced vacancies were those of: for the African Group, Mr. G.O. Akpabio of Nigeria and Ms. N.B.K. Mutti of Zambia, both for a four-term ending in October 2027; for the Asia-Pacific Group, Mr. M. Dick of Australia and Mr. F. Zon of Indonesia, both for a four-term ending in October 2027; for the Eurasia Group, Ms. S. Mikayilova of Azerbaijan for a four-term ending in October 2027; for GRULAC, Mr. C. Cajado Sampaio of Brazil for a four-year term ending in October 2027; and for the Twelve Plus Group, Mr. L.-J. de Nicolaÿ of France to complete the term of Mr. F. Marchand ending in October 2026, Ms. D.-T. Avgerinopoulou of Greece to complete the term of Ms. O. Kefalogianni of Greece ending in October 2025, Mr. A. Almodobar of Spain to complete the term of Mr. J.I. Echániz of Spain ending in October 2025, and Ms. G. Morawska-Stanecka of Poland for a four-year term ending in October 2027. Along with accompanying letters and curricula vitae, those candidatures had been shared with the full membership. He took it that the Governing Council wished to elect by acclamation the 10 candidates as members of the Executive Committee.

*It was so decided.*

Item 18 of the agenda

**REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED MEETINGS**  
(CL/212/18-R.1)

**The President**, introducing the item, said that oral or video presentations would be made on a number of the specialized meetings listed in document CL/212/18-R.1, which also contained links to more detailed information available on each meeting via the IPU website.

*A video on the Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue, held in Marrakesh, Morocco, from 13 to 15 June 2023, was screened.*

**Mr. A. Gryffroy** (Belgium), reporting on the Parliamentary Forum at the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2023, held on 18 July 2023 in New York, said that the event had included three panel discussions on the work of parliaments to advance the SDGs, which were on life support, with few of the targets in sight and others regressing. Parliaments played a critical role in promoting the attainment of those Goals through stronger political will and a new economic model prioritizing people and nature above profits. The Parliamentary Forum had produced 10 recommendations for tackling SDG-related challenges, including through the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders and increased participation in the national voluntary review process, and looked forward to progress in 2024.

*A video on the Second World Summit of the Committees of the Future, held in Montevideo, Uruguay, from 25 to 27 September 2023, was screened.*

**Mr. D. Carden** (United Kingdom), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, reporting in a pre-recorded video message on the Ninth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians held in Hanoi, Viet Nam, from 15 to 17 September 2023, said that the Conference – the largest ever of young parliamentarians – had focused on ways of accelerating the achievement of the SDGs through digital transformation and innovation. The actions proposed to that end in the Conference statement included enhancing digital structures, strengthening innovation and start-up ecosystems, ethically and sustainably harnessing frontier technologies such as artificial intelligence to mitigate potential risks, and increasing networking in cooperation with the IPU Centre for Innovation in Parliament. Young parliamentarians had left the Conference feeling energized, emboldened and empowered to champion digital transformation in their parliaments and stood ready to do their part towards attainment of the SDGs.

*A video on the Ninth G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit and Parliamentary Forum, held in New Delhi, India, from 12 to 14 October 2023, was screened.*

#### Item 19 of the agenda

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

**The Secretary General**, prefacing his remarks with congratulations to incoming IPU President Ms. T. Ackson of the United Republic of Tanzania, on her deserved victory in the election of the IPU President and pledging the IPU Secretariat's loyal collaboration in taking forward the IPU in accordance with her vision, said that many delegates had expressed a wish to pay a resounding tribute to the outgoing IPU President for the outstanding manner in which he had discharged his functions throughout his term of office. He had therefore suggested the inclusion of a segment for that purpose under the present item.

*A video retrospective of Mr. D. Pacheco of Portugal in his role as the 30th IPU President was screened.*

**Mr. A. Gryffroy** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the Twelve Plus Group, said that Mr. Pacheco was known to all as a Portuguese parliamentarian with big ideas, a constant smile and the warmest of hearts alongside his enormous commitment to democracy and human rights. In word and deed, he had been an exceptional IPU President whose term had come to its inevitable end. The good news was, however, that he would continue inspiring parliamentarians as a member of the Portuguese delegation to the IPU. The Twelve Plus Group thanked him for all his work at the helm and eagerly anticipated his return to the ranks.

**Ms. S. Carvajal Isunza** (Mexico), speaking on behalf of GRULAC, said that a greatness of spirit, humility, modesty and humanitarianism were characteristic of the IPU President, as were his openness to dialogue and willingness to listen. GRULAC was grateful for his record support to its region, which, thanks to his enthusiastic efforts, was poised to welcome the opening of a long-awaited IPU regional office in Uruguay. His many achievements had transpired from his close



interaction with the geopolitical groups and his understanding of their respective needs and those of the IPU itself, benefiting Members and promoting multilateral cooperation. His commitment to IPU values had left an undoubted mark on the Organization.

**Ms. D. O'Neill** (Australia), speaking on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, said that Mr. Pacheco was greatly admired by the Group and attended its meetings at every Assembly to give a brief update on his many activities around the world. The video screened had provided but a glimpse of his passion, vigour, hope and firm engagement in the service of democracy. Thanking him for his tireless efforts in the interest of the Asia-Pacific region and all geopolitical groups, the Group looked forward to working with him as a delegate for Portugal.

**Ms. S. Mikayilova** (Azerbaijan), speaking on behalf of the Eurasia Group, said that she wished to thank Mr. Pacheco for his outstanding work, great legacy and valuable contribution to bilateral relations that would guide Members in the coming years, with his visit to Azerbaijan well remembered. The Group looked forward to continuing and enhancing its fruitful cooperation with the IPU under its new President.

**Mr. P. Katjavivi** (Namibia), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the Group acknowledged with thanks and appreciation Mr. Pacheco's tremendous passion and energy for the work of the IPU. He had lived up to his promises and led from the front, inspiring Members' confidence and making them feel a true part of the institution and minded to do more. He had also inspired them to believe in what he stood for and to trust that his aims were achievable. The Group wished him well in his future endeavours and would continue to consult him going forward so as to consolidate the work begun under his mandate.

**Mr. S. Tynkkynen** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, said that Mr. Pacheco had set a precedent through his constant engagement with young parliamentarians and his participation in their activities. His job entailed hard work with a great deal of travel, yet he always had a smile and immense energy for which he was much appreciated. He had worked to build a better world for future generations and unfailingly stood up for democracy, a rules-based order and human rights. The Forum was extremely proud of the outgoing IPU President.

**Ms. C. López Castro** (Mexico), speaking on behalf of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, said that Mr. Pacheco was among the best Presidents in IPU history, setting many precedents and building solid friendships. He had bravely forged ahead with an in-person Assembly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and devoted himself to the IPU, which was now proud to have its own anthem. Highlighting his energy, discipline and respectful demeanour, she applauded his efforts to promote youth and women's participation in the IPU, which had left a lasting imprint. She was thankful for the privilege of having worked with him and joined all others in looking forward to his participation in the 148th Assembly.

**Mr. S. Patra** (India), describing Mr. Pacheco as a dear friend to his country, said that his passionate commitment to promoting parliamentary democracy had touched parliaments worldwide and that his inspirational leadership in taking the IPU forward had left a rich legacy for others to emulate. He would be remembered for having explored new and broader frontiers, thereby opening bigger and brighter horizons for the IPU as it strived to build a more peaceful, tolerant and progressive world. On behalf of the world's largest democracy, he thanked Mr. Pacheco for his service and wished him well going forward.

**Mr. C. Cajado Sampaio** (Brazil) said that Mr. Pacheco was born not only to be IPU President but the best on record, to which his ample capabilities stood as testimony. He had welcomed and shown respect for all Members while taking on board any criticisms. He had also enriched the IPU's own democracy, boosting youth and women's participation in its activities, and had motivated Members to do more. To have brought the 147th Assembly to a Portuguese-speaking country in Africa was a further sign of his distinction. The principles he had instilled during his presidency would surely be perpetuated by Members and his successor alike.

**The Secretary General**, paying his own tribute, said that he viewed Mr. Pacheco as a friend and brother and that the video retrospective shown had perfectly encapsulated his presidency in active support of the IPU's vision and strategy. As confirmed by the preceding tributes, that presidency had indeed been characterized by Mr. Pacheco's commitment and selfless service to the IPU. His boundless energy and well-recognized achievements for and within the IPU stemmed from his quality as a collaborative team player – and notably one who looked ahead with his aims for the Organization in the same direction as himself. While not denying their skirmishes along the way, they had always reached the same end destination in the interests of the IPU. Emphasizing Mr. Pacheco's quality as a President for all IPU Members, he wished to present him personally with a symbolic gift to remind him of the IPU motto "For democracy. For everyone", of the IPU's founding ideals of peace through dialogue and mediation, of the friendships forged at the IPU, and of his accomplishments in its service. He hoped to see him using the gift in continuing his same duties in future as a proponent of democracy.

*The Secretary General presented the gift of an IPU fountain pen to Mr. Pacheco.*

**The President**, expressing thanks for the many kind words of tribute, said that such words were unnecessary, as he had worked simply to fulfil his obligations as IPU President. His successor would undoubtedly show the same commitment and readiness to serve, which was what all IPU Presidents knowingly signed up for. He had always sought to be of equal service to all Members, irrespective of their size or geographical location. Many of the changes he had pursued under his watch had been accomplished through the hard work of the IPU Secretariat. As a humble human being, he was not perfect and had made mistakes, but his approach had always been to do as much as possible, as best as possible.

Stressing that his achievements as IPU President would have been impossible without the help he had received, he thanked the Portuguese Parliament for its understanding of his absences on IPU business and was grateful to its staff, in particular his assistant Mr. A. Reis, for having so efficiently organized his life. He also thanked each and every IPU staff member for their exemplary teamwork and all countries around the globe that had hosted his visits, of which he had unforgettable memories. Lastly, he thanked his family for their unwavering support and strength, at the same time apologizing for having missed his children's university graduations while away. On that note, he declared the 212th session of the Governing Council closed.

*The sitting rose at 17:15.*