



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

# 143rd IPU Assembly

## Madrid, Spain

### 26-30 November 2021



Assembly  
Item 2

A/143/2-P.4  
25 November 2021

## Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda

### Request for the inclusion of an emergency item in the agenda of the 143rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union submitted by the delegation of the Russian Federation

On 25 November 2021, the Secretary General received from the delegation of the Russian Federation a request and accompanying documents for the inclusion in the agenda of the 143rd Assembly of an emergency item entitled:

"The vital necessity of ensuring uninterrupted parliamentary activities during pandemics".

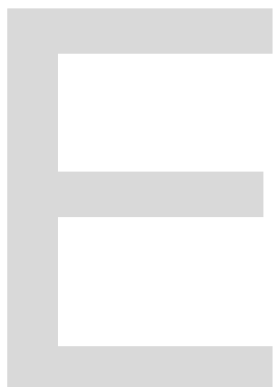
Delegates to the 143rd Assembly will find attached the text of the communication submitting the request (Annex I), as well as an explanatory memorandum (Annex II) and a draft resolution (Annex III) in support thereof.

The 143rd Assembly will be required to take a decision on the request of the delegation of the Russian Federation on Saturday, 27 November 2021.

Under the terms of Assembly Rule 11.1, any Member of the IPU may request the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda. Such a request must be accompanied by a brief explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution which clearly define the scope of the subject covered by the request. The IPU Secretariat shall communicate the request and any such documents immediately to all Members.

Furthermore, Assembly Rule 11.2 stipulates that:

- (a) A request for the inclusion of an emergency item must relate to a recent major situation of international concern on which urgent action by the international community is required and on which it is appropriate for the IPU to express its opinion and mobilize a parliamentary response. Such a request must receive a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in order to be accepted.
- (b) The Assembly may place only one emergency item on its agenda. Should several requests obtain the requisite majority, the one having received the largest number of positive votes shall be accepted.
- (c) The authors of two or more requests for the inclusion of an emergency item may combine their proposals to present a joint one, provided that each of the original proposals relates to the same subject.
- (d) The subject of a proposal that has been withdrawn by its authors or rejected by the Assembly cannot be included in the draft resolution submitted on the emergency item, unless it is clearly referred to in the request and title of the subject adopted by the Assembly.



#IPU143

**COMMUNICATION ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL BY  
MR. KONSTANTIN KOSACHEV, DEPUTY SPEAKER OF THE FEDERATION COUNCIL  
OF THE FEDERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

25 November 2021

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

Pleased be informed that the delegation of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation wishes to submit a request for inclusion of an emergency item on the agenda of the 143rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to be held in Madrid, Spain, 26 – 30 November 2021 in accordance with Article 14.2 of the IPU Statutes.

The proposed item is titled:

“The vital necessity of ensuring uninterrupted parliamentary activities during pandemics”.

Kindly find attached a brief explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution in support of this request.

Please accept the assurance of my highest regards.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)

Konstantin KOSACHEV  
Deputy Speaker of the Federation Council  
of the Federal Assembly  
of the Russian Federation

## **THE VITAL NECESSITY OF ENSURING UNINTERRUPTED PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITIES DURING PANDEMICS**

### ***Explanatory memorandum submitted by the delegation of the Russian Federation***

In September of the current year, the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments was held in Vienna under the auspices of the IPU. The final declaration, adopted on 8 September 2021, entitled *High-level declaration on parliamentary leadership for more effective multilateralism that delivers peace and sustainable development for the people and the planet*, states that the COVID-19 pandemic has provoked a multilateral crisis that undermined progress in achieving the sustainable development goals, made states more fragile and weakened international cooperation, which in turn has led to increased poverty, hunger, inequality and violence spreading around the world.

Parliaments must respond to this challenge by protecting the norms and principles of peace, development, democracy, human rights and respect for the rule of law in the first place. Apart from that, the multiple benefits of inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation must also be applied so as to forge links for deeper understanding in order to lay the foundation for a stronger, more prosperous and sustainable world where all people can live in freedom and with due respect for their dignity.

Parliaments remain open to work despite the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. At the same time, the world's parliaments and their international associations can and should play a much larger role in solving the most crucial international problems of our time. A wide exchange of views is required in order to promote best practices in the ongoing all-encompassing parliamentary activities aimed at fighting the coronavirus pandemic.

We call on the Inter-Parliamentary Union to support this extremely vital agenda item of the 143rd Assembly.

## THE VITAL NECESSITY OF ENSURING UNINTERRUPTED PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITIES DURING PANDEMICS

### *Draft resolution submitted by the delegation of the Russian Federation*

The 143rd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

- (1) *Recalling* the fundamental principles of international law, including the sovereign equality of all States, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and the fulfillment in good faith of international commitments as well as others;
- (2) *Also recalling* the 2019 IPU resolution, *Achieving universal health coverage by 2030: The role of parliaments in ensuring the right to health*, as well as the 2012 IPU resolution, *Access to health as a basic right: The role of parliaments in addressing key challenges to securing the health of women and children*, and the 2017 addendum to that resolution, and expressing appreciation for the national and international efforts that have been made to advance the right to health for all;
- (3) *Taking into account* the *High-level declaration on parliamentary leadership for more effective multilateralism that delivers peace and sustainable development for the people and the planet* adopted unanimously at the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in Vienna on 8 September 2021;
- (4) *Underlining* that the world's governments have set achieving universal health coverage (UHC) by 2030 as a target of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (in particular Goal 3), and welcoming coordination mechanisms such as the *Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Wellbeing for All* and multi stakeholder platforms, including UHC2030;
- (5) *Acknowledging* the important role of parliaments and parliamentarians in advancing the UHC agenda, and the need for meaningful collaboration with public authorities, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, private sector entities and all relevant stakeholders in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals;
- (6) *Recognizing* that the COVID-19 pandemic has also resulted in increasing threats to our democratic principles and institutions and that, in addressing the pandemic, the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government have had to take challenging decisions, notably curtailing freedom of movement, which has sometimes led to disillusionment and citizens losing trust in the political processes and in their representatives;
- (7) *Having in mind* that, left unchecked, this dissonance, which is often fed by misinformation and extremist ideology, can create serious security threats to our institutions and to the physical safety of our legislators and staff;
- (8) *Aware* that we live in an interdependent world and face a wide array of transnational challenges, which no single State can solve alone, in the areas of peace and security, democracy, human rights, health, migration, climate change and sustainable development;
- (9) *Also aware* that parliaments can play an appropriate and positive role in promoting mutual understanding and trust;
- (10) *Conscious* of the key role of parliaments and of the IPU in helping to build the political will and forge the commitment to tackle the world's many challenges;
- (11) *Recognizing* that the application of sanctions against parliamentarians is not an acceptable way to encourage States to change their foreign and/or domestic policies, since in times of tension and confrontation they further complicate dialogue, exchanges and confidence-building efforts as well as measures to fight the global pandemic;

- (12) *Convinced* that parliamentary diplomacy helps build bridges between countries and significantly contributes to strengthening political, economic, social and cultural relations among peoples, while preserving national specificities;
- (13) *Recalling* the vision for international cooperation set out in numerous IPU resolutions and the declarations of the World Conference of Speakers of Parliament;
- (14) *Also recalling* the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly on interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU;
- (15) *Underlining* the international dimension of democracy, as set out in the 1997 Universal Declaration on Democracy;
- (16) *Welcoming* a diversification of forms and mechanisms for inter-parliamentary cooperation that usher in new ways of deliberating on regional and global issues;
- (17) *Also welcoming* the International Day of Democracy (15 September) and the International Day of Parliamentarism (30 June) as annual opportunities to pursue dialogue on the international role of parliaments;
- (18) *Underlining* the utmost importance of the *Declaration on Parliamentary Diplomacy* and urging parliaments and governments throughout the world to be guided by its content:

*Enhancing political dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy*

*Parliaments are founded on the value of dialogue between different perspectives. By building an environment of confidence and mutual respect, political dialogue makes a vital contribution to enhancing understanding and finding solutions. Parliaments are therefore exceptionally well placed to promote and practise political dialogue internationally, as well as nationally.*

*By supporting political dialogue and mediation, parliamentary diplomacy plays a constructive and effective role in conflict prevention and crisis management, and contributes to reducing tensions and finding solutions to political problems within and between States.*

*Parliaments regularly address sensitive issues, such as cases before the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. This dialogue is an expression of inter-parliamentary solidarity and can help resolve difficult political situations, while making sure that parliamentarians can exercise their responsibilities safely and effectively.*

*Effective parliamentary diplomacy requires strong parliaments that have the autonomy and capacity to act, including in international affairs.*

*Parliaments should therefore continue to build their capacity and play an active role in international affairs, including by raising awareness among parliamentarians, establishing the appropriate parliamentary bodies to coordinate and liaise between inter-parliamentary activities and national parliamentary work, and ensuring they have sufficient skilled staff to support parliamentarians in their work.*

*An appropriate balance between national, regional and international parliamentary activities must be preserved, guided by a constant focus on the needs of citizens.*

*A key element of parliamentarism is that parliamentarians represent their voters, and as such it is important to ensure citizens' right to express their political choice and beliefs and determine their own political future.*

*Given that citizens' interests are directly or indirectly impacted by a range of transnational issues, parliaments are frequently required to engage in inter-parliamentary cooperation in order to take effective action on these issues.*

*Parliaments themselves need to strengthen their efforts to be representative, transparent, accessible, accountable and effective institutions, and to be inclusive of the views of all groups in society, including those of women, young people and the most marginalized.*

(19) *Reaffirming* the determination to move towards the strategic goals proclaimed at the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament in Vienna since sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic will depend to a large extent on international cooperation and solidarity;

1. *Reiterates* its support for the World Health Organization, in particular in terms of its work on research, rapid response and better pandemic preparedness through enhanced cooperation among nations;
2. *Calls for* strengthened international cooperation on vaccine research and development, production and distribution, and improving accessibility and affordability; in this regard, vaccines must be distributed rapidly, fairly and equitably, as well as universally; no one will be safe from COVID-19 until everyone is safe; innovative measures, such as voluntary licensing and exchange of know-how and technology must be taken to enhance equitable access to affordable vaccines and to scale up global vaccine production and distribution in the long term;
3. *Commends* the collaboration among countries, along with health organizations and manufacturers, including through the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator and the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) programme; however, much remains to be done to ensure unimpeded and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for all countries;
4. *Urges* collaboration on continued research and innovation into the treatment and elimination of COVID-19 and coronaviruses more generally, including the debilitating long-term impacts of post-COVID-19 syndrome (also known as “long COVID”);
5. *Calls on* all Parliaments to use their potential to activate international efforts for the speediest mutual recognition of vaccines to lift all the restrictions implied;
6. *Calls for* close co-operation to prepare the world for future pandemics; in this regard, it is important to work towards the establishment of a global health charter, to be agreed upon by world leaders, which guarantees health security for the world’s population, without exception, and to confront epidemics and disasters of a global nature with common universal principles and values, and in a manner that guarantees respect for human health rights;
7. *Requests* Parliaments to use their primary aim in exercising controls over government activities to provide the maximum assistance in combating the pandemic;

(20) *Proceeding* from the fact that dialogue is the best way to overcome differences, settle disputes and strengthen mutual trust between States;

(21) *Taking into account* that the restriction and, in the future, the removal of barriers to the movement of people, goods, services and capital will contribute to strengthening trust between States and increasing the level of security in the world;

(22) *Noting* that travel restrictions as a result of the introduction of sanction regimes against parliamentarians complicate dialogue and cooperation within multilateral forums, including inter-parliamentary forums;

8. *Calls on* all Governments to take people-centred measures, in full respect of human rights, in order to restore public trust that was eroded during the pandemic;

9. *Urges* all Parliaments to serve as the centre of democratic accountability and transparency, including for COVID-19 responses, by systematically integrating public engagement into their work, which will enhance the legitimacy and the quality of parliamentary processes;
  10. *Insists* that parliaments must remain open for business despite restrictions on their ability to meet in person;
  11. *Encourages* parliaments to continue to innovate and expand the use of digital technologies in order to be appropriately prepared for future emergencies, enhance access to parliaments, and ultimately increase their accountability, transparency and openness to the public;
  12. *Calls upon* States to use all opportunities to maintain and strengthen inter-parliamentary dialogue and interaction, the importance of which is particularly increasing in times of pandemics;
- (23) *Noting* that travel restrictions as a result of the introduction of sanction regimes have a negative impact on parliamentary diplomacy and contribute to the aggravation of tensions between the States;
- (24) *Proceeding* from the assumption that parliaments are the most important instrument for the expression of the will of the people, and even in the most difficult conditions associated with the current pandemic situation, the work of parliamentarians should not be interrupted;
- (25) *Taking into account* the need for prompt responses to new, modern threats and challenges, such work should be continuous;
13. *Urges* a search for optimal forms of work that, on the one hand, make it possible to ensure the continuity of the work of parliaments, and on the other do not create additional risks either for parliamentarians themselves or for society;
  14. *Invites* the exchange of best practices and solutions for holding meetings in absentia;
  15. *Calls for* a serious discussion on whether special working conditions and requirements should be imposed on parliamentarians;
  16. *Remains* absolutely confident that there is a vital necessity to ensure uninterrupted parliamentary activities during pandemics, especially for parliamentarians who are elected by the people and who should work in the interests of the people even in the most difficult conditions, such as the present coronavirus pandemic, because parliaments are the most important tool of democracy.