

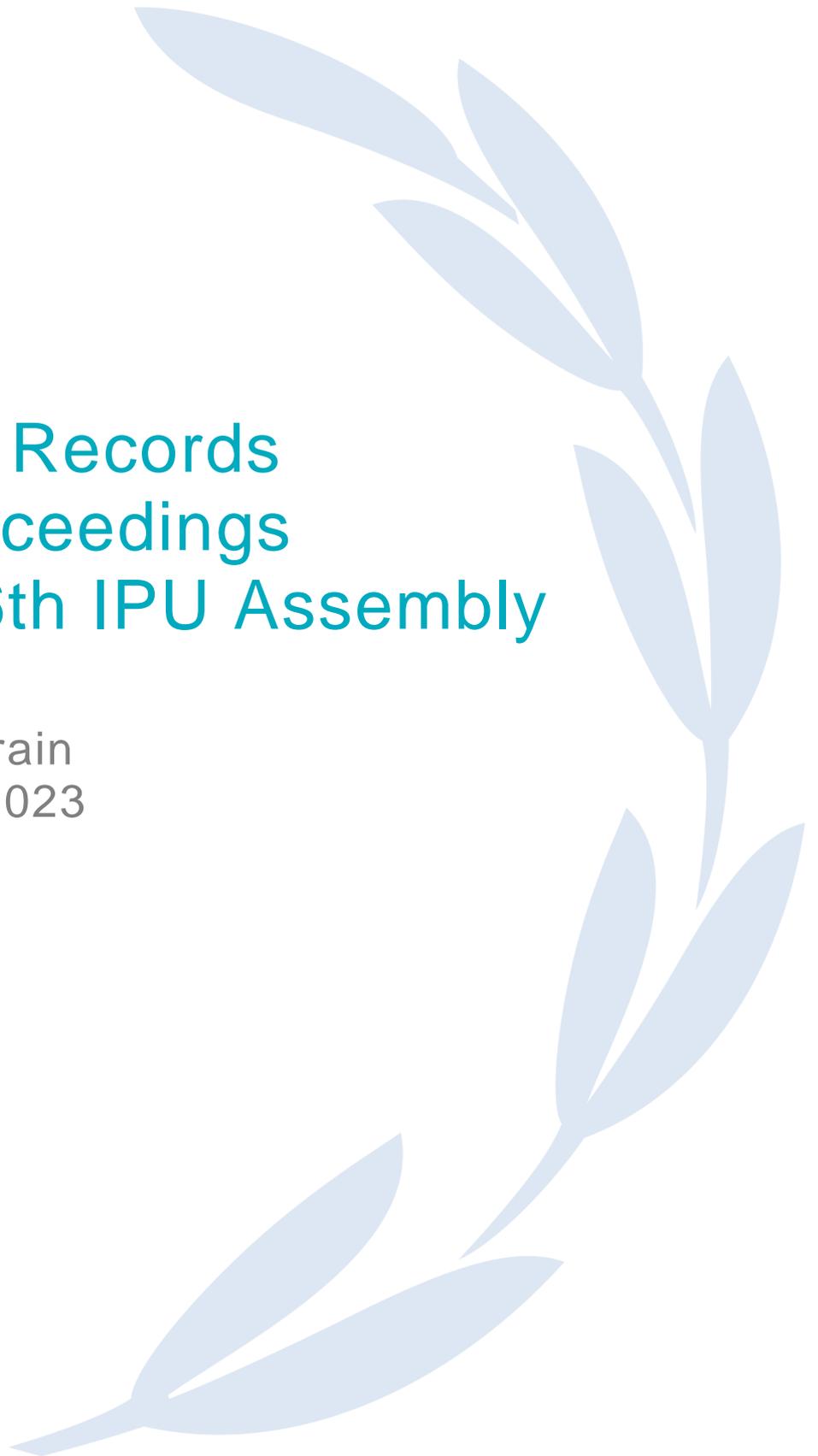


Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

# Summary Records of the Proceedings of the 146th IPU Assembly

Manama, Bahrain  
11-15 March 2023

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Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

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## Introduction

Delegations from 136 Member Parliaments took part in the work of the Assembly.

Afghanistan\*, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia (The), Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar\*, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The parliaments of the Bahamas and Kiribati also attended the Manama Assembly in an observer capacity, with a view to future affiliation.

The following seven Associate Members also took part in the Assembly: the Arab Parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), the Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA-CIS), the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO), the Pan-African Parliament, the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie.

Observers included representatives of:

(i) the United Nations and related organizations: United Nations, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), World Health Organization (WHO), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM);

(ii) parliamentary assemblies and associations: League of Arab States, African Parliamentary Union (APU), Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA), Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), Association of Senates, Shoora and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World (ASSECAA), Collective Security Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly (CSTOPA), Forum of Parliaments of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (FPICGLR), Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC), Maghreb Consultative Council (MCC), Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), International Parliament on Tolerance and Peace (IPTP), Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries (TURKPA), Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM), Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and Russia, Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Member States (PUIC), Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF);

(iii) Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria;

(iv) Centrist Democrat International (CDI).

Of the 1,205 delegates who attended the Assembly, 683 were members of parliament (661 from Member Parliaments and 22 from Associate Member delegations). Those parliamentarians included 58 Presiding Officers, 43 Deputy Presiding Officers, 233 women MPs (34.1%) and 150 young MPs (22%).

\* As per the decision of the Governing Council in Madrid in November 2021, the IPU continues to engage with the former, democratically elected parliamentarians from Afghanistan and with the Committee to Represent Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) for Myanmar. The corresponding delegations attend Assemblies in a non-voting observer capacity.

# Inaugural ceremony of the 146th Assembly

**SATURDAY, 11 MARCH 2023**

*The inaugural ceremony of the 146th IPU Assembly took place at Exhibition World Bahrain, Manama, Bahrain, at 19:00 on Saturday, 11 March 2023.*

*The national anthem of Bahrain was played.*

**H.E. Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa** (Deputy Prime Minister of Bahrain), speaking on behalf of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, welcomed delegates and wished them a pleasant stay in Bahrain, the country of love and tolerance. The theme of the Assembly, *Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance*, had been chosen to reflect the history of Bahrain as a meeting place of cultures living together in harmony. The rejection of division and hatred and the embrace of human solidarity would make the world safer, more stable and more prosperous, and create the right conditions for sustainable development.

The world was facing multiple crises of hatred, enmity, war, terrorism, natural disasters, climate change, and threats to water and food security. For the sake of future generations, leaders and parliamentarians needed to work in partnership towards a more just, equitable and secure world. Parliamentary diplomacy was a cornerstone of that cooperation, allowing parliamentarians to exchange experiences and work together to find more effective solutions to shared challenges. Two fundamental considerations of parliamentary diplomacy were respect for human rights, freedom and dignity, alongside respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and the principle of non-intervention.

Bahrain was a vibrant democracy, with a voter turnout of 73% in its most recent parliamentary elections, and was fully committed to human rights and the freedom of its citizens and residents. He looked forward to the Assembly reaching a consensus on the many issues on its agenda and invited delegates to spend some time discovering the reality of Bahrain, a secure, peaceful, tolerant and prosperous country.

*H.E. Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa declared the 146th IPU Assembly open.*

**Mr. Ahmed Bin Salman Almusalam** (Speaker of the Council of Representatives of Bahrain) said that parliamentary diplomacy could be used to find innovative solutions to the issues the world was facing. Bahrain had been a democracy for over 100 years and was home to people of many different beliefs, cultures and ethnicities who were nonetheless united in support of the ideals of tolerance, peace, love and coexistence. Bahrain was also a champion of interreligious dialogue and peace.

The Assembly would offer the delegates present in Manama the opportunity to highlight best practices from their own parliaments, agree on collective commitments to human values, expand their horizons and join together to raise the voices of parliaments in favour of coexistence, tolerance and peace in the best interests of all humankind.

**Ms. Haya Rashed Al-Khalifa** (President of the 61st session of the United Nations General Assembly) welcomed delegates to the land of tolerance, peace and diversity. Bahrain was home to many migrants and had extensive legislation to ensure protection of their freedoms. Bahrain's commitment to peace, love, coexistence and tolerance had been evidenced by the visit of Pope Francis to the country in November 2022. The world was facing many intertwined conflicts and crises. The recent earthquakes in the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye were mirrored by man-made "earthquakes" stemming from coups d'état and conflict and, combined, had resulted in the displacement of millions of people.

Working together, parliaments could raise the voices of the people they represent, demonstrate tolerance and peaceful coexistence, and find workable solutions to conflict. Security was the main need of humanity, and the salvation of the world lay in working towards a new culture of tolerance, hope and justice. The Assembly could be a window to that new world if delegates first acknowledged that peace was cheaper than war, and tolerance was cheaper than hatred.

In a video message, **Mr. António Guterres** (Secretary-General of the United Nations), said that the Assembly was taking place at a time of many interconnected challenges. Hate speech, persecution, xenophobia and racism were on the rise and feeding off one another. The international

community could address them only by joining forces, recognizing diversity, investing in social inclusion and confronting mis- and disinformation online. Parliamentarians could play a pivotal role by translating people's hopes for a fairer and more equitable society into actions, both nationally and internationally.

**Mr. Martin Chungong** (Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union) invited delegates to observe a minute's silence in memory of those who had lost their lives in recent disasters and ongoing conflict. He thanked the National Assembly of Bahrain for hosting the Assembly and acknowledged the instrumental role of His Majesty the King in bringing the Assembly to fruition. He noted that the 1200 delegates from 130 Member Parliaments attending the Assembly covered the diversity of the human race in terms of culture, religion, background and political affiliation. It was particularly noteworthy that a delegation from Israel was present, which would not have been possible until very recently.

Democracy should always be considered an aspiration, not a finite product. Bahrain had shown considerable progress towards becoming a fully democratic nation, especially in terms of inclusiveness and gender equality, but more could always be done. The theme of the Assembly closely echoed the IPU's vision for a world where every voice counted, and it was the responsibility of parliamentarians to respond to the expectations of all. He believed that parliamentary diplomacy, as espoused by the founders of the IPU, would be on proud display during the Assembly and that progress would be made on the many common goals of humanity.

**Mr. Duarte Pacheco** (President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union) thanked the National Assembly of Bahrain for its gracious and capable hosting of the Assembly and the Deputy Prime Minister for his presence, which was testimony to the importance that Bahrain placed on multilateralism and parliamentary diplomacy. Recalling the country's recent hosting of the Pope and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar for the Bahrain Dialogue Forum, he said that Bahrain was an ideal location for an Assembly devoted to peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies. Numerous indicators showed that intolerance and discrimination were on the rise, and parliamentarians had an important role to play in addressing the issue. Women in particular were facing violations of their rights in many places, but most notably in Afghanistan, where they were being excluded from society in multiple ways.

The global situation was painfully familiar from previous Assemblies. War continued to rage in Ukraine, terrorism was still affecting many places, in particular the Sahel, and the conflict in Palestine was unresolved after many decades. The climate crisis remained an existential threat to humankind and extreme climate events had killed thousands around the world in recent months. The IPU would be launching its new *Parliaments for the Planet* campaign at the present Assembly to mobilize all parliaments to introduce green laws and reduce their own carbon footprints. Democracy was still under threat, with the proliferation of disinformation and fake news on the rise. Progress was being made towards greater representation of women and youth in parliament but at a slow pace. In response, parliaments needed to be made stronger: more effective, inclusive, resilient and accountable. He hoped that delegates would use the golden opportunity of the Assembly to learn from one another, combine their strengths and find concrete solutions to the world's problems.

He looked forward to a productive Assembly ahead.

## Sitting of Sunday 12 March 2023

(Morning)

*The sitting was called to order at 11:00 with Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), President of the IPU, in the Chair.*

### Item 1 of the agenda

#### **Election of the President of the 146th Assembly**

**Mr. D. Pacheco** (Portugal), President of the IPU, welcomed delegates to the 146th IPU Assembly and invited Mr. A.B.S. Almusalam, Speaker of the Council of the Representatives of Bahrain, to preside over the Assembly following his election by the Governing Council.

*Mr. A.B.S. Almusalam, Speaker of the Council of the Representatives of Bahrain and President of the 146th IPU Assembly, took the Chair.*

#### **Opening remarks**

**The Chair** drew attention to the theme of the General Debate, *Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance*. Many different societies suffered from violence, extremism and intolerance which undermined peace around the world. It was vital to build societies that were stable and inclusive. Parliamentarians around the world must work together to define a common vision.

Urgent measures must be taken to address pressing global challenges. First, it was necessary to step up multilateral cooperation on COVID-19 recovery. Sustainable development solutions were needed to rectify the socioeconomic damage caused by the pandemic and create more prosperous societies. Second, the international community must find the material and human resources needed to protect the environment and combat climate change. Environmental degradation and climate change were causing massive problems, such as displacement, desertification and water scarcity. Third, more must be done to promote gender equality and youth empowerment. Women and young people were key to development. Fourth, vigilance was needed over human rights and social justice. Vulnerable groups such as children and people living in poverty must be protected in legislation.

Parliaments were encouraged to unite in their efforts to foster sustainable development and long-lasting peace. They must pave the way for dialogue in times of conflict and reduce threats to security, including those caused by nuclear weapons. It was vital to ensure that all commitments made were implemented on the ground and reflected in national legislation.

**Mr. D. Pacheco** (Portugal), President of the IPU, said that it went without saying that the world was facing many crises, including war, climate change and economic recession. There was also a crisis of solidarity and values which was causing intolerance and social division. It was necessary to regulate social media and other digital platforms, where xenophobia, racism and hate speech were rampant, not as a form of censorship, but to protect populations. Parliamentarians must lead by example by stopping hate speech amongst themselves both in the national and international context. Disagreements were a normal part of democracy but should be done in a respectful manner.

The IPU was an institution that promoted values such as peaceful coexistence and dialogue which were needed now more than ever. The theme of the General Debate was therefore very relevant, particularly in Bahrain where respect for human beings, including those of different cultures and religions, was a prominent part of society. Peaceful coexistence could be created by putting people at the centre of all activities, including within the IPU.

The COVID-19 pandemic had demonstrated how small the world really was. The virus had spread very quickly across borders without discriminating between cultures, religions or economic backgrounds. It was only because of international cooperation that the vaccines had been developed with such speed. He encouraged parliamentarians to learn from the solidarity shown during the pandemic. They must work together to eliminate hatred and promote peace.

**Ms. N. Ghanea** (United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights), keynote speaker, in her pre-recorded video message, said that promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies was a high objective that the international community had pursued for many decades. Parliamentarians had a critical role to play in advancing equality and coexistence as well as in countering discrimination and intolerance.

The 1981 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief provided definitions of a number of key terms. The phrase “intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief” referred to any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on religion or belief that had as its purpose or as its effect the nullification or impairment of the recognition, enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis. The phrase “religion or belief” included thought, conscience, religion or belief. It was important to recognize that all people were worthy of rights and dignity merely by virtue of being human. State authorities and non-State actors alike had the obligation and responsibility to provide full access to those rights.

The Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constituted incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence was another critical set of human rights standards. The plan of action distinguished between unlawful incitement on the one hand, and morally reprehensible speech on the other – a distinction that was ever more necessary given the amplification of hate speech on social media and the visible consequences of populism, including by parliamentarians, on hate speech targeting religious and other minorities. The responsibilities of parliamentarians were unique and critical. She looked forward to seeing constructive results on peaceful coexistence in the years ahead.

**Ms. F.M. Sulem Yong** (President of Afrogiveness Movement (#Afrogiveness) and Positive Youths Africa (PYA)), keynote speaker, said that, having once been bullied into depression, she had searched for peace and found in the divine power of forgiveness. In the process, she had learnt that she could only be at peace with others if she was at peace with herself. Since then, she had dedicated her life to advancing tolerance, forgiveness, empathy, and human fraternity as keys to sustainable peace. Peace was not just the absence of violence but a state of being and a lifestyle.

She was speaking on behalf of the millions of people whom intolerance had rendered physically broken, emotionally shattered and socially petrified. Not a day passed in the world today without instances of man’s inhumanity to man. It was common for unnecessary conflicts to be triggered by religion, culture, ethnicity, gender and race which could have been easily avoided by learning to tolerate differences. The statistics were alarming. In 2021, it had been reported that at least 119,000 people had died as a result of organized violence while 89.3 million people had been forced to flee their homes due to conflict and persecution. Unfortunately, many people sitting in the room were complicit in those monstrosities. They had allowed greed, envy and discontent to linger in the minds of men unhindered. They had normalized an international space bound by self-interest and an ugly thirst for power. They had neglected and stigmatized mental health, forgetting that mental health was linked to inner peace and productivity. Issues such as racism, tribalism, and xenophobia were born from a distorted mindset and a desire to raise oneself above the other.

Her country, Cameroon, should be a beacon of pluralism but had instead fallen into deadly interfaith and intercultural conflict. In 2016, the separatists in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon had clashed with the central Government, which was majority francophone, thus splitting the country along linguistic lines and breeding tensions between ordinary citizens. She longed for a Cameroon where people were not judged by the language they spoke. However, after interacting with victims, she had realized that that would only be possible when everyone's voice mattered.

As a result, in 2018, she had founded the Afrogiveness Movement which was coined from two words: “Africa” and “forgiveness”. The movement used the unifying language of art to heal and diffuse tensions between survivors on opposite sides of conflict. However, she had quickly realized that little progress could be made, as most victims had been stuck in bitterness, vengeance and depression. Unless the minds of the victims were healed, her efforts would remain futile, and the vicious cycles of violence would continue. As such, she had decided to empower survivors with basic resources that not only allowed them to live in dignity and agency, but also gave them the emotional intelligence needed to transform pain into purpose. The hope was that, even in seeking justice, survivors would shun violent extremism.

As a trained art therapist, she had sought to fill the mental health gap in relief efforts by using the cathartic power of the arts to help heal survivors and puncture the beliefs that bred bigotry, sowed divisions and triggered conflicts. Tolerance was not about condoning what was wrong but about allowing people the space to be themselves as long as they did not hurt anybody. In 2020, she had founded a forgiveness choir, the first interfaith and refugee choir in Cameroon, which used music to heal, connect and uplift survivors of conflict and intolerance while enabling dialogue, mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence. Recently, the choir had resolved a dispute between three groups of choristers. One was a group of Muslims who had found the use of musical instruments non-permissible while the other two groups, one Muslim and another Christian, were in favour of using

instruments. After doing some research, the choir had come across Halal Beats, a company that created music using vocal-based soundtracks. Two versions of each song were therefore created – an inclusive version and the halal version. The solution had satisfied both the Christian and Muslim choristers and showed that it was always possible to find ways to coexist.

In an increasingly fragmented but globalized world, it had become imperative to make peaceful coexistence part of the rule of law. Although US\$ 15 billion was spent on peace building processes each year, the world continued to know conflict and intolerance. It was an alarm bell demonstrating the need to change the approach. Real peaceful coexistence would require a change in the dynamics of power. The most powerful countries must not be measured by their nuclear force or military superiority but by their ability to stand for justice and love. Changing the dynamics of power would encourage an atmosphere of collaboration rather than competition and would help rebuild trust between countries and systems. Parliamentarians must include the people in the development of every law enacted on their behalf and continue to walk the talk on tolerance. They must lead by example and ensure that tolerance was not just an empty word.

It was possible to create peaceful coexistence through peace education and mental health. Peace education taught people values that kept them at peace with themselves, with others and with nature. For peace to reign, those values must become law. Values were like pillars that compelled people to do good even when tempted by evil and created a sense of security even during trying times. As such, she encouraged legislators to enact laws on gratitude, integrity, forgiveness, kindness and love. Peace education would stamp out the “us versus them” syndrome and combat victimhood. It would enlighten people on their shared rights and freedoms as well as their common humanity while countering the spread of online hate speech, fake news and cyberbullying. It must therefore become a mandatory subject in formal and informal education programmes.

In addition, there could be no peace without mental health. Every conflict was brewed in the minds of human beings. Laws on mental health would help end stigma and discrimination against survivors of trauma and mental illness, making it easier for people to seek help before transferring their aggressions to others.

There was a kind of peace and a version of the world that was yet to emerge. Its emergence, however, depended on every single person on Earth. Peaceful coexistence was a shared responsibility and a collective process that should be nurtured in the mind. Wars began in the minds of all. It was thus in the minds of all that the defences for peace must be constructed.

**Ms. L. Vasylenko** (Ukraine), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, said that discrimination and violence fuelled by intolerance and hatred remained rampant in the world. The Ukrainian people were witnessing that first hand every day as their country continued to suffer the consequences of the Russian Federation's unprovoked aggression. Examples of intolerance perpetrated by Russian Federation included kidnapping of children to erase their identity, sexual violence, forced migration, separation of families and claims that one nation had more right to exist than another. However, intolerance was and always would be a losing game. It had always led humanity to the brink of annihilation, questioned the relevance of social contracts and placed democracy at risk.

It was vital to stand strong against inequalities and exclusions and promote the fulfilment of human rights for all. The work must include initiatives that supported gender equality, the rights of women and girls, and women's participation in leadership and decision making. The cure for intolerance was inclusion and empowerment.

Unfortunately, political inclusion was still an illusion. Women formed only 26.5% of parliamentarians, 11.3% of Heads of State, less than 10% of Heads of Government and less than 23% of Ministers worldwide. As such, approximately 73% of parliamentarians, 90% of Prime Ministers and 77% of Ministers were male. The dominant model was one of exclusion. There was an urgent need to redress the outrageous imbalance and reach 50/50 parity in politics. The world urgently needed women as role models if it wished to create peaceful coexistence, inclusive societies and tolerance. Some good role models included Olena Zelenska (First Lady of Ukraine) who had been an inspiration worldwide for her work building just and inclusive societies as well as Mia Mottley (Prime Minister of Barbados) who had been fighting for climate inclusivity.

Strength lay in collective action. It was her hope that the Assembly would provide parliamentarians with ideas and incentives to promote tolerance, inclusion and equality in themselves, their communities, their nations and worldwide.

**Ms. S. Albazar** (Egypt), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, said that young people, when looking into the future, saw many challenges ahead – from climate change and natural disasters to poverty and inequalities to conflict and wars. All generations must work

together to tackle those challenges nationally and internationally. They must do so by fighting exclusion and leaving no one behind. Exclusion caused inequalities, alienation, intolerance and mistrust to grow.

Young people were often the first victims of exclusion. Economically, almost a quarter of the world's youth were unemployed or without access to education or training. Politically, only 3% of parliamentarians were below the age of 30. Despite that, young people were keen to be more involved in politics and society, and their presence could do a great deal to bridge gaps. They were particularly well-positioned to reach youth populations through social media.

She encouraged parliamentarians to use the tools outlined in the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign. Two tools were particularly important: quotas and youth caucuses. Quotas would help secure seats for young parliamentarians at the decision-making table. Youth caucuses or committees would help channel the views and perspectives of young people in parliamentary work.

The link between inclusion and peace was clear. Parliaments must lead by example and include young people in their work. Young people want to be part of the solution.

### Item 3 of the agenda

#### **General Debate on the theme *Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance* (A/146/3-Inf.1)**

**Mr. A. Simonyan** (Armenia), commencing the high-level segment of the General Debate reserved for Speakers of Parliament, said that the main principles of peaceful coexistence – respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, equal rights, self-determination and non-interference in domestic affairs – should govern relationships between States but were often violated. Peaceful coexistence went hand in hand with unity. When united, individuals and States were more likely to work together and resolve conflicts peacefully.

In Armenia, minorities such as Yezidis, Kurds, Russians, Ukrainians, Assyrians, Jews and Greeks lived side by side as equal members of society. Under the Armenian Constitution, Parliament must be made up of at least four representatives from national minorities. The cornerstone of Armenian international policy was to maintain peaceful relations with all countries. However, the country was facing many threats. For instance, Azerbaijan continued to violate the territorial integrity of Armenia having illegally occupied 150 square kilometres of Armenian land. Despite the challenges, Armenia sought to build sustainable peace and had no territorial claims on any of its neighbours.

Azerbaijan had enforced a blockade over the Lachin corridor, the only road connecting Armenia and the world to Nagorno-Karabakh. The blockade was a gross violation of the ceasefire agreement signed in November 2020 in which Azerbaijan had agreed to guarantee the safe movement of citizens, vehicles and cargo in both directions along the Lachin corridor. The road had been inaccessible to civilian and commercial traffic since December 2022, leaving approximately 120,000 ethnic Armenian residents of Nagorno-Karabakh without access to essential goods and services. In addition, Azerbaijan was spreading disinformation about Armenia, in particular about their role in planting mines, and had recently killed three Nagorno-Karabakh police officers in a pre-planned ambush. The actions of Azerbaijan were a form of ethnic cleansing. Intolerance, demonization and violence directed against people based on their race or religion must not be condoned.

The looming catastrophe in Nagorno-Karabakh had rightfully attracted international attention. The European Court of Human Rights had applied measures against Azerbaijan over the blockade while the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights had urgently called for it to be lifted. Peace and harmony could only be built upon on the pillars of democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and peaceful coexistence.

**Ms. S. D'Hose** (Belgium) said that 2023 marked the 20th anniversary of the legalization of same-sex marriage in Belgium which had been a moral victory and a victory for humanity. In a free and equal society, people must have the right to build their private lives however they wished. Someone's love for another could and should never be a reason to become a second-class citizen. Equality implied freedom for all, not just for some.

Many positive developments could be observed in countries where marriage equality was a reality. People were happier, safer and more prosperous in equal societies than in societies with discriminatory laws. The recognition of same-sex marriage, which was merely a recognition of love, was a step towards an open and tolerant society where people were not afraid to walk the streets or hide who they were. Same-sex marriage opened people's eyes and acknowledged the existence of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people, showing that there was nothing abnormal about them.

Belgian society did not collapse when it had legalized same-sex marriage but in fact became collectively happier. It was not a perfect society, however. At times, savage acts of violence continued to occur against the LGBTI community and suicide rates among LGBTI people remained much higher than the broader population. As such, it was vital to continue developing initiatives to accelerate acceptance.

Equal rights had only just arrived and were still missing in many parts of the world. It was the responsibility of parliamentarians to further the cause of the people by fighting for their freedom and showing that they cared. Political acceptance was the first step towards an accepting society. She called on parliamentarians to liberate love by treating LGBTI people as equals and lifting the restrictions imposed upon them.

**Mr. O. Birla** (India) said that India was the largest functional democracy on the planet, the roots of which went back to ancient times. Its Constitution was based on the ideals of liberty, equality, fraternity and justice for all. The values of tolerance, multiculturalism and peaceful coexistence were also enshrined in the Constitution. Followers of different religions, faiths and cultures had coexisted peacefully in India for thousands of years. The country was proud of its very diverse culture and heritage.

India had a robust participatory democracy and a vibrant multiparty system. Citizens were able to express their hopes and aspirations through their parliamentary representatives. The increasing number of voters in elections reflected the faith that people had in the country's system of governance.

The Parliament had worked relentlessly over the years to bring socioeconomic transformation, particularly through the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The aim was to ensure the welfare of every section of society, particularly of vulnerable groups such as youth and women. Various schemes had been put in place to improve education, health, housing and skills development. India was committed to people-centred governance for a more egalitarian society.

All global issues should be resolved peacefully through dialogue. The Parliament of India had always held extensive and meaningful debate and deliberations on contemporary global challenges. Some of the topics discussed in Parliament were climate change, gender equality, sustainable development and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Global institutions must better reflect the realities of the rapidly changing world order. As such, reform of the United Nations Security Council could not be delayed any further. Reform would enable the international community to better address challenges.

Inclusive development would help promote peaceful coexistence and tolerance. By eliminating socioeconomic inequalities, it was possible to restore faith in democracy. Parliamentarians could play a decisive role in building peaceful coexistence and were encouraged to come together to build a better future for humanity.

**Mr. A. Safadi** (Jordan) said that Islam was based on the values of compassion and peace. Sadly, however, many Muslims had suffered terribly as a result of terrorism.

Five actions were required to build peaceful coexistence. First, parliamentarians must condemn religious hate speech and prevent freedom of expression from being used as a pretext to silence people for their faith. Second, social media platforms must do more to prevent the spread of hatred online. Third, countries must stop supplying weapons to the Middle East and elsewhere. Fourth, coordinated action must be taken to combat terrorism and extremism. Fifth, development programmes were needed on issues such as education and health. All of the above actions required dialogue and respect for others.

Jordan was an example of a country where Christians and Muslims lived happily together with both groups part of the culture and civilization. The Jordan River, where Jesus had been baptized, was a symbol of coexistence between many different religions. His country had refused to accept intolerance and had instead fostered harmony.

**Mr. A. Farrugia** (Malta) said that keeping peace and promoting peaceful coexistence was a continuous process not limited to a particular geographical region or point in history. It must form the basis of every policy and law and required the whole-hearted participation of every person in society. Parliamentarians had a particularly important role in fostering fundamental values such as non-violence, respect and tolerance. They must use parliamentary diplomacy as a catalyst for promoting tolerance and peace. Interparliamentary forums should serve to strengthen dialogue and identify actions to eliminate intolerance and hatred from the collective discourse.

Malta was a country located in the Mediterranean where it was surrounded by diverse cultural, economic and social realities. Since independence, and as a neutral country, it had always advocated for peace in the region. Among the measures taken were promoting inclusive political dialogue in

international forums and facilitating the organization of numerous meetings and events aimed at promoting peace. Malta was also the host country of the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace – an international organization that spread the culture of tolerance between countries. The Maltese Parliament was engaged in the activities carried out by the Global Council and would soon hold a conference on building tolerance and peace in the Middle East and North Africa region.

The IPU must serve as a platform to promote peace internationally. In particular, it was crucial to seek tangible results on the war in Ukraine through the work of the task force set up under the IPU resolution entitled *Peaceful resolution of the war in Ukraine, respecting international law, the Charter of the United Nations and territorial integrity*.

**Mr. A. Al-Saleh** (Bahrain) said that Bahrain was a crossroads of cultures, civilizations and religions with a parliamentary culture rich in discussion. It had enshrined values such as mutual respect and tolerance in its Constitution and taken many initiatives to implement them. For instance, the King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence had been established with the aim of disseminating peace globally and countering all forms of intolerance. He called on parliaments to strengthen legislation that criminalized hatred, racism and disrespect for religion.

He supported the emergency item proposed by Qatar entitled *Criminalizing contempt for religions and the spreading of hatred, and promoting coexistence, tolerance, peace and international security*. It was a pressing topic in light of current global circumstances.

Parliamentarians must work together to strengthen solidarity helping people move away from religious and community-based divisions. Human beings must be at the centre of parliamentary efforts in order to create inclusive societies and achieve the SDGs.

**Mr. E. Mayara** (Morocco) said that there was a link between peaceful coexistence and the SDGs. Indeed, development issues, such as climate change and food insecurity, contributed to conflict around the world and vice versa. The situation was particularly concerning in Sub-Saharan Africa, especially the Sahel. Every effort must be made to achieve sustainable development.

It was vital to lay the foundations of peaceful coexistence by eliminating the root causes of intolerance and hatred. Dialogue, particularly among different cultures and civilizations, was extremely important. Every new project must have peaceful coexistence at its centre. He urged delegates to support the emergency item proposed by Qatar and invited them to the Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue in Marrakech in June 2023.

Morocco was one of the founders of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and wished to maintain its status as a land of openness and coexistence. It was only through peace that countries could fulfil their potential.

**Mr. J. Buttimer** (Ireland) said that promoting peace and building inclusive societies required leadership. It required parliamentarians to challenge each other. Action, not talk, was needed. He encouraged parliamentarians to pass the necessary legislation to promote peaceful coexistence.

Ireland took its own role very seriously. Since 1958, it had engaged in peacekeeping missions around the world and introduced legislation against incitement to violence and hatred, including online. Ireland today was a modern and inclusive society. He himself was an openly gay man, and as was the Prime Minister of Ireland. Ireland had been the first country in the world to vote by popular vote for marriage equality.

The 2022 Global Peace Index revealed the world was becoming more divided, less tolerant and less peaceful. It was important to question why that was the case and how parliamentarians had contributed to the situation. Parliamentarians had a duty to lead, to remove intolerance, to fight hate crime as well as to stamp out discrimination and prejudice. It was through parliamentarians that the battle against intolerance began.

There was a vital need to match pledges with actions. There could be no more obfuscation. Parliamentarians must reaffirm their commitment to peacebuilding, gender equality, climate change action, human rights, democracy, free and fair elections, and equal participation of women in parliament. It was particularly important to support the people of Ukraine, making sure their voices were heard at all times.

**The Secretary General** said that, in conformity with rule 33 of the Rules of the Assembly, the quorum for the Assembly would be established on the basis of the number of delegations participating at the first plenary meeting. The number of delegations present in the room was 125. The quorum had therefore been set at 63 delegations for the deliberations to be valid.

*The sitting rose at 12:50.*

## Sitting of Sunday, 12 March 2023

(Afternoon)

*The sitting was called to order at 14:30 with Mr. A.B.S. Almusalam in the Chair.*

### Item 3 of the agenda (continued)

#### **General Debate on the theme *Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance*** (A/146/3-Inf.1)

**Mr. A.T. Gessesse** (Ethiopia) said that he wished to express his deepest sympathies to all those affected by the recent devastating earthquakes in Türkiye and the Syrian Arab Republic.

The acute challenges facing the global community meant that even so-called established democracies were struggling to cope. Deteriorating economic conditions were leading to further polarization of societies and growing disbelief in political systems. The subtle line between freedom of expression, and disinformation, hate speech and fake news, was at risk of being completely erased. In such circumstances, the function of national parliaments must be thoroughly evaluated.

Noting the importance of peace and security for democracy, human rights and sustainable development, he said that Ethiopia was undertaking peacemaking efforts in the Sudan, Somalia and South Sudan and had achieved recent success in resolving its long-standing no-war no-peace relationship with Eritrea. On 2 November 2022, the Pretoria peace agreement had been signed between the Ethiopian Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front. A peace and reconciliation commission had recently been set up across the nation to promote the mutual coexistence of its communities and fight intolerance.

The Horn of Africa faced many natural and human-made disasters. Climate change was disproportionately affecting the African region even though the roots of that challenge lay elsewhere. Global meetings on climate change were rich with rhetoric, but hardly ever backed up with action. Ethiopia was not waiting for external solutions and was taking climate change mitigation and adaptation measures to ensure its survival as a nation.

He concluded by noting that his country was also undertaking major reforms to ensure equal representation of women in political decision-making bodies and at the parliamentary level.

**Mr. A. Al-Salihi** (Iraq) said that all peoples around the world should be able to enjoy peace, security and safety. However, successive global economic, social and cultural crises had had an adverse impact on living conditions in countries and led to the development of racial tensions. Trust and confidence had been undermined and some communities were choosing to isolate themselves, since the States in which they lived were failing to protect them. Tensions were on the rise and hate speech was visible across social media platforms, yet the international community had failed to adopt instruments and legislation to counter the growing trend.

Iraq had experienced some of the worst forms of oppression, persecution, hatred, destruction, sedition and loss of freedom of expression. Had it not been for the solidarity, unity and cohesion of the Iraqi people, the country would have been divided. The international community should take a closer look at the Iraqi experience in overcoming challenges and preventing such dangerous practices from taking hold.

**Mr. R. Mancienne** (Seychelles) said that, as representatives of the people, parliamentarians must take the lead in seeking solutions to the multiple threats and challenges facing the global community. At the national level, governments and parliaments must be committed to continuous efforts to fight discrimination and intolerance. Although his country had stable democratic governance and did not experience ethnic or religious conflict, there were issues to be addressed at the national level, including greater protection for women and children from domestic violence, the inclusion of women in political leadership, the participation of persons with disabilities in the workplace and the protection of migrant workers. It also recognized the importance of responding to emerging threats such as the impact of modern communication and social media networks in spreading intolerance, and had recently passed a wide-ranging cybercrime law to fight abuse, insults and hate speech on social media.

At the international level, the Seychelles continued to add its voice against armed conflict. It had consistently voted in support of United Nations resolutions against the invasion of Ukraine and for the end of aggression against a sovereign country. Noting various ongoing conflicts and terrorist threats in other areas of the world, the Seychelles called for joint efforts by the international community to promote peace and peaceful coexistence.

**Mr. A. Vitorino** (Director General, International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that the theme of the general debate could not be more relevant, at a time when conflicts, social unrest, discrimination and racism were on the rise. For many minorities, including migrants, the COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated a pre-existing culture of distrust, xenophobia and intolerance. It had also exacerbated structural inequalities for migrants, further aggravating their isolation and exclusion.

Current challenges, such as conflict, food insecurity and climate change must be addressed in a holistic manner, drawing on society's capacity for innovation, adaptation and cooperation. Parliamentarians had a responsibility to create avenues to de-escalate conflict, and build community capacities and pathways to steer communities away from intolerance and towards peaceful coexistence. Cooperation and leadership were essential.

The IOM had been supporting community engagement, social cohesion and reintegration programmes in conflict-affected countries for decades. Through various programmes, it offered support to reintegrate former combatants into civilian life and help communities to recover and rebuild. The role of parliamentarians in supporting such processes was critical in creating the opportunity for communities and individuals to flourish and build a framework embracing peaceful coexistence, inclusion and tolerance. Migrants must have opportunities to connect and engage with communities, since social interactions not only nurtured trust and mutually supportive relations, but also contributed to efforts to reduce inequalities within society.

The task of creating an environment of peaceful coexistence and inclusion was a difficult one and was a whole-of-society endeavour. The fair and equitable application of the law, inclusive social protection systems, youth engagement, gender equality and the constructive participation of all members of society were critical for establishing a social contract that valued inclusion, peaceful coexistence and tolerance.

**Ms. G. Triggs** (UN Assistant Secretary-General and Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) said that the world was responding to an unprecedented movement of refugees. In 2022, some 30 million refugees had been reported to be seeking international protection and approximately 70 million people were internally displaced because of factors including conflict, persecution and natural disasters. The Global Compact on Refugees, which complemented the Global Compact for Migration, offered a way forward. It built on the 1951 Refugee Convention and asked nations to share equitably the burdens and responsibilities of refugees and stateless persons. Both compacts addressed the root causes of displacement and sought to promote international solidarity to support the generous host countries. It was, however, a sad reality that most refugees were protected by the poorest or low and middle-income countries, and that 40% of those host nations were among the most vulnerable to climate change.

The Global Compact on Refugees called on States and civil society to tackle the drivers of refugee flights, especially the need to respect human rights and the rule of law, and to ensure equality for all, particularly women. Parliamentarians were absolutely central to achieving its objectives by ensuring that their governments enacted laws and policies and by reaching out to communities and stakeholders to provide appropriate levels of protection. Statelessness could be both a cause and consequence of refugee movements and she urged parliamentarians to support the Global Action Plan to End Statelessness: 2014-2024.

Since the first Global Refugee Forum in 2019, many of the 1700 pledges made had been fulfilled. The next global forum in 2023 would assess the extent to which the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees were being met. The global landscape was, however, markedly different than in 2019 and solutions and resources were seriously outpaced by mounting humanitarian emergencies throughout the world. While good practices such as the European Union's temporary protection directive for Ukrainian citizens and Colombia's 10-year protection pathway for Venezuelan refugees and migrants should be recognized, the narrative should remain focused on the need to share responsibility with respect to continuing invisible or misunderstood conflicts in poor and developing countries. Parliamentarians should use their voice to highlight the plight of refugees, ensure the policy and legal changes necessary and provide multi-year budget allocations to move from aspiration to action, protection and inclusion. She counted on their support at the next Global Refugee Forum in 2023.

**The IPU President** thanked Mr. Vitorino and Ms. Triggs for their contribution to the debate and commended their long-standing efforts and dedication to protecting migrants and refugees.

**Mr. M.Y. Abeywardana** (Sri Lanka) said that democracy was not a set of constitutional and legislative rules but a culture and practice that adhered to law and respected human rights principles. Peaceful coexistence at all levels was key in that regard, but its achievement was more challenging than ever before because of various factors leading to a rise in national and international conflicts. Many countries were facing challenges in protecting viable democratic values and the situation was being further exacerbated by the direct and indirect challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated political unrest.

As a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural nation, Sri Lanka remained committed to building a society in which the rights, safety and security of all communities were assured. Following the conclusion of the civil war, the Government had renewed its commitment to reconciliation and embarked on several initiatives, including a trilingual national policy in the Parliament and free and fair elections. Steps were continuously being taken to ensure that all communities were able to express their identity, culture, religion and language. In 2007, the Sri Lankan Parliament had passed Act No. 56 on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and laws were strictly enforced to prevent religious or racial hatred. In response to recent requests to enhance accountability, measures were being taken to give young people and women greater representation in parliament and offer redress to underprivileged communities.

**Ms. N.N. Mapisa Ngakula** (South Africa) said that the words of Nelson Mandela – that no one was born hating another person because of the colour of their skin, their background or religion and that if people learned to hate they could learn to love – were particularly relevant in a world characterized by the escalation of strife, hatred and conflict. As defenders of democracy, parliamentarians should hold themselves accountable for promoting unity and cohesion and seek to reverse the trends that had led to peaceful coexistence being at its lowest ebb for 15 years.

Given its painful history of colonialism and apartheid, South Africa knew only too well the devastating effects of intolerance, exclusion and division. Although South Africa had succeeded in convincing its people that the country belonged to all of them, the legacy of the past persisted through inequality, racism, poverty and underdevelopment, xenophobia and mistrust. In their efforts to foster peaceful coexistence and cohesion, parliaments must recognize the unique reality for the historical basis of divisions and intolerance in society.

Current efforts to fight intolerance in South Africa were focused on creating platforms for dialogue and negotiation, establishing mechanisms for truth and reconciliation, amending or abolishing legislation that promoted intolerance, and ensuring that parliament served as a platform for public debate. Dialogue and negotiations were key for ending wars and building tolerance and understanding. The concerns and fears of minorities must be taken seriously and decisions should be taken by consensus in order to ensure inclusivity.

**Mr. A. Bictogo** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that, with hate speech and intolerance on the rise, parliamentarians should take urgent and concerted action to promote peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies. They should adopt national legislation criminalizing all forms of discrimination, exclusion, hatred and incitement to violence, and take action to help the most vulnerable in society.

Côte d'Ivoire, which was a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country, had experienced a difficult decade of intolerance, discrimination and post-election violence. It was now recovering and the 2016 constitution had identified tolerance as a fundamental element of governance. A new criminal code had also been adopted. Côte d'Ivoire recognized the importance of free and compulsory education for all and the inclusion of women in all areas of decision-making in building peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies.

He called for tangible commitment and support for the Sahel region, which was greatly affected by terrorism, and called on the 146th IPU Assembly to adopt a resolution criminalizing all forms of intolerance.

**Mr. R. Fatooh** (Palestine) said that peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies, which were essential for peace and international security, required the acceptance and respect of others and the right to self-determination. Yet the Palestinian people continued to suffer as a result of the Israeli occupation. Israeli terrorist settlers and occupying forces continued to perpetrate the worst crimes against innocent civilians. The Zionist government continued to impose restrictions on the Palestinian

people, seized Palestinian funds and lands and passed laws targeting the Palestinian population, including one permitting the execution of Palestinian prisoners who had simply resisted the illegal occupation.

Respect for religions and the sanctity of holy sites and symbols was a precondition for peaceful coexistence. However, the government of the occupying power was still depriving Muslims and Christians of the freedom to access their religious sites. He reiterated that the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan remained the sole legitimate custodian of the holy sites in Jerusalem and called on the international community to remain committed to the historic status of the holy city of Jerusalem. Those in favour of a two-state solution should recognize the Palestinian State according to the 1967 borders.

The international community should stop practising double standards and put the necessary pressure on Israel to respect international resolutions and agreements with the Palestine Liberation Organisation. It should compel Israel to enter into serious negotiations about a two-state solution, withdraw the occupying forces, lift the unjust siege on the Gaza Strip and immediately release all prisoners. Only then could the people of the Middle East enjoy peace, security and good neighbourly relations.

He expressed support for the emergency item proposed by the delegation of Qatar.

**Ms. S. Gafarova** (Azerbaijan) said that the rejection of multiculturalism by certain political leaders had led to a rise in radicalism, xenophobia, racism, Islamophobia, discrimination and hatred. In order to overcome intolerance and achieve peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies, which were essential for peace, justice, stability and sustainable development, she said that diversity must be accepted as an enriching factor rather than a divisive one. Efforts should be made to provide equal rights and opportunities to all, and to promote dialogue between members of different cultures, ethnicities and religions. Azerbaijan's cultural diversity was its strength, and the Government actively promoted multiculturalism, tolerance and dialogue between religions.

The issue of refugees and internally displaced persons was a concern and was, in many cases, related to the violation of peace and security. When 20% of Azerbaijan's territory had been occupied by Armenia, more than 1 million Azerbaijanis had been internally displaced. Historical, cultural and religious sites had been vandalized by Armenia. Despite the years of occupation, Azerbaijan had initiated normalization of relations with Armenia and a peace agenda based on five principles of international law immediately after liberating its territories in 2020. However, Armenia was failing to fulfil its obligations and continued to keep its armed formations in the internationally recognized territories of Azerbaijan.

It was regrettable that the Assembly's General Debate on such an important topic had been opened by the representative of a country well known for its aggressive, discriminatory and intolerant policy. Armenia should enable the safe and dignified return of ethnic Azerbaijanis to their homes and the realization of their collective and individual rights. She recalled that the Azerbaijani leadership had repeatedly stated that all 25,000 citizens of Azerbaijan of Armenian origin would enjoy the same rights as other citizens. Lastly, the Lachin corridor was open for unimpeded free passage of all civilian and humanitarian vehicles, as confirmed by relevant international organizations cooperating in the field.

**Ms. C. Cerqueira** (Angola) said that she had been elected as the first female Speaker of Parliament in Angola in the September 2020 elections, when the number of female deputies had increased to its highest ever level of 38.7%. Respect for the democratic principle of participation by all was essential in order to address current social problems and achieve peace. However, a lack of transparency and good governance was resulting in a deteriorating security and well-being situation in the world, with increased poverty, unemployment and inadequate social infrastructure, as exemplified by the migrant crisis in Europe.

Efforts were required to find new ways to resolve conflicts and promote human dignity and fundamental human rights, including with respect to gender issues and women's rights. Human solidarity should be enhanced to promote democracy and social stability and to encourage peaceful coexistence. The current generation should live up to its responsibilities and achieve a balanced agreement in the fight against climate change to mitigate the effects of natural disasters. Angola supported the emergence of a new global revolution of the circular economy that focused on a more equitable, resilient and inclusive future based on environmental protection and conservation.

Parliamentarians had a responsibility to commit to a frank and open dialogue to strengthen mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, which were often motivated by intolerance and took place in countries where mechanisms of solidarity and social inclusion were marginalized. Her country had been actively involved in the promotion of peace in Africa, and its President had been awarded the title of African Union Champion for Peace and Reconciliation. She expressed her

country's solidarity with those countries in Africa subjected to acts of terror, and its hope that the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine would swiftly be resolved.

Angola looked forward to hosting the 147th IPU Assembly in October 2023.

**Ms. B. Argimón** (Uruguay) said that inclusive societies that respected human rights were more peaceful, democratic and better able to progress. Increasing intolerance and exclusion in the world was leading to greater social and economic inequalities. It was important to have faith in democracies, which were being threatened by violent extremism and disinformation. Dialogue should be encouraged as the basis for achieving peaceful coexistence.

Various democratic governments in Uruguay had defended actions against discrimination and any forms of intolerance. Parliament had ratified numerous international instruments concerning discrimination and human rights and had implemented the programme of action of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. It was also following up to ensure that norms were properly implemented.

Her country supported the IPU 2022-2026 Strategy. Noting the five significant trends identified therein, she suggested that the growth of certain values in 21st century society should also be included. She invited all IPU Members to attend the Second World Summit of the Committees of the Future to be held in October 2023 in Montevideo, where such issues would be discussed.

**Ms. T. Ackson** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that many factors came into play in promoting peaceful coexistence, including resilient institutions and mechanisms to address challenges. Diversity was not always a negative element; however, it must be well managed and not used to sow disunity. With their traditions, customs and values, communities played an important role in addressing diversity and in creating an environment conducive to upholding the values and aspirations of society. Parliaments also had a role in encouraging coexistence and inclusivity.

Concerted efforts had been made after independence in her country to forge unity among the more than 120 ethnic communities, which had different languages, customs and cultures. Outlining some of the steps taken, she said that points of divergence had been identified and addressed. Kiswahili, which was spoken by almost all, had been adopted as the national language. The Government provided free primary and secondary education and limited loans for higher education. Such a step addressed high levels of illiteracy and poverty, improved social cohesion and created better opportunities. The United Republic of Tanzania was also a secular society and allowed its people to practice their religion freely, without interference. The large Muslim and Christian communities worked together on the basis of mutual respect.

Parliaments should ensure that governments were properly advised on the adoption of policies and implementation of programmes promoting coexistence. They should also act in a timely manner to pass laws and oversee regulations to promote inclusiveness, fight intolerance and criminalize actions and speech dividing societies.

**Mr. F.K.L. Fakafanua** (Tonga) said that if intolerance was allowed to fester it would threaten the peaceful coexistence of nations, and his country therefore welcomed the call to stamp out its roots. The Parliament of Tonga had always endeavoured to create a legal framework that built on the core values of mutual respect and cooperation, humility and commitment to others. It had sought to build a more inclusive and resilient legislature committed to passing national laws to safeguard important rights, including freedom of expression, association and religion, integrate minority ethnicities and protect against intolerance. Awareness and education could help to build societies where differences were not only tolerated, but respected and embraced.

As one of the countries most vulnerable to external shocks, Tonga called for unprecedented action and cooperation on climate change, which was threatening peaceful coexistence. Other threats included acts of aggression, terrorism and systemic inequality. Free and fair elections, the rule of law, transparency and accountability were essential to develop a society free of racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination and intolerance. An ongoing shift in attitude and the development of legal frameworks to promote peace and stability, economic prosperity and sustainable development were required.

The proliferation of fake news, hate speech and misinformation undermined democracy and due process and served to promote further intolerance, and parliaments must not allow it to continue. Mobilization of youth could help bring about a change of attitude towards intolerance and he hoped that the current Assembly would generate further political will in that regard.

**Ms. E. Bias** (Mozambique) said that she welcomed the IPU's commitment to promoting cohesion and inclusion in striving for peace and cooperation among peoples, which was essential for social and economic development and unity. Recalling the Quebec City Declaration on citizenship, identity and linguistic and cultural diversity in a globalized world adopted at the 127th IPU Assembly, she said that IPU Members remained convinced that it was possible for people to coexist despite their differences.

Her country had developed actions aimed at promoting patriotic awareness and citizenship in order to preserve national unity and peace, consolidate democracy and combat social inequalities and poverty. However, the terrorist actions in the Cabo Delgado province since 2017 had caused thousands of deaths and the displacement of thousands of people, mainly women and children. She called for regional and international cooperation to eradicate terrorism, which was a global phenomenon that threatened peace and stability worldwide. As a current non-permanent member of the Security Council, her country was guided by the desire to promote dialogue, peace and international security.

As the national guardians of peace, parliamentarians should encourage all individuals to fully enjoy their human rights. They should pass laws to minimize the factors causing fractures in social cohesion and harmony and encourage the public to participate actively in debates on draft laws, as her country had done.

**Mr. H.B.A. Al-Ghanim** (Qatar) said that today's world was unstable. The multiple conflicts, exacerbation of tensions and dissemination of hate speech were making it difficult to achieve peaceful coexistence and reduce violence in communities. The occupation of Palestine had led to much of the tension and violence in the Middle East. The international community had not incriminated the occupying power, whose senior officials continued to call for violence against Palestine, and he hoped that measures would be taken to put an end to the acts perpetrated against the Palestinian people.

Qatar was making significant efforts to combat intolerance and violence and promote a culture of tolerance, and had undertaken a number of initiatives to foster dialogue between different cultures. Parliamentarians had a responsibility to adopt legislation to preserve the social fabric, combat intolerance and promote peace and coexistence. He called for support for the emergency item proposed by Qatar on criminalizing contempt for religions and the spreading of hatred, and promoting coexistence, tolerance, peace and international security.

**Mr. M. Abdou** (Comoros) said that history had shown that conflicts did not resolve problems, but simply caused death and destruction, and that they came to an end through negotiation. There could be no justification for genocide, the massacre of civilian populations or terrorist attacks and parliamentarians should be fostering a culture of peace. They should mobilize resources and share experience to eliminate the scourge of war and conflict and alleviate the suffering of populations. Efforts should be focused more on conflict prevention, mediation and fighting intolerance and discrimination; political decision-makers, members of civil society and religious leaders should be involved.

Under the leadership of the Head of State, the cycle of instability that had plagued Comoros since independence in 1975 had been broken in 1999 and efforts had since been focused on securing the country's development. Parliaments should use all the tools at their disposal to promote peace and fight intolerance and all forms of discrimination.

**Ms. T. Narbaeva** (Uzbekistan) said that, because of economic uncertainties and the political situation, peaceful coexistence was threatened and discrimination was growing. According to the Global Peace Index 2022, peacefulness had declined to its lowest level in 15 years. Countries were facing difficult challenges, and inclusive societies were essential if the key principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of leaving no one behind was to be achieved.

Uzbekistan's development strategy for 2022-2026 was being implemented. A particular focus was on human capital, which was essential for inclusive growth. Access to education and health care was provided, special measures were in place for persons with disabilities, and the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities were being respected. Other priorities included the reduction of poverty, inclusive socioeconomic development and the maintenance of peace and good neighbourly relations in Central Asia.

Different approaches should be considered in building cooperation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including efforts to improve the legislative base and build dialogue and mutual respect with representatives of different religions and tolerance among young people.

**Mr. D.J. Ghimire** (Nepal) said that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognized the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. As a multi-ethnic, multilingual and multicultural country, Nepal was committed to preserving and promoting cohesiveness, solidarity, tolerance and goodwill. The 2015 Constitution embodied the principles of inclusiveness and provided for the participation of all sections of society, and women's participation in the federal Parliament currently stood at 34%. By adhering to the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the Constitution also laid the foundation for balanced and independent foreign policy and diplomacy, allowing Nepal to remain an advocate of peace and coexistence.

While information was more easily and more widely accessible today than ever before, the proliferation of misinformation and hate speech was making the promotion of peaceful coexistence and the fight against intolerance challenging. The IPU had always made cohesiveness and inclusion a key element of its work and he pledged the support of Nepal's parliamentarians to peaceful coexistence and to the establishment of equitable and inclusive societies.

**Ms. J.N. Kumba** (South Sudan) said that the world was becoming more divided and less tolerant and efforts must be made to promote peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies. Violence against women and girls was increasing, and during a recent pilgrimage to South Sudan, His Holiness Pope Francis had called for protection and respect for women.

Most of the conflicts in the world had resulted from intolerance and exclusion, including religious, cultural and political differences and marginalization. Application of legal provisions providing for the respect and promotion of human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law remained challenging in some nations. The legacy of a lengthy war in her country manifested itself through underdevelopment, gender and economic inequality, and high levels of illiteracy. However, the people of South Sudan were striving to create a united country and the Parliament reflected its diversity as a multi-ethnic, multicultural, multilingual and multi-religious country. The Transitional National Legislative Assembly was composed of different political bodies. Young people, women and persons with special needs were working at all levels of government to ensure that the peace agreement was fully implemented and to rebuild the social fabric destroyed by the war.

South Sudan's foreign policy supported friendly neighbourliness and her country had played a role in mediating peace and bringing stability to the people of Sudan. It had also contributed to regional peacekeeping forces to address the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In order to promote peaceful coexistence, parliamentarians must uphold laws promoting the respect of human rights, including the rights of women and girls, inclusivity and gender equity. They could also learn from and replicate good practices, mechanisms and strategies used by other countries.

**Mr. S. Ghobash** (United Arab Emirates) said that conflicts were no longer limited to one country or region and their impact was felt by all, including in areas such as food security. Countries must work together to tackle economic, social and environmental crises and combat climate change, and his country looked forward to hosting the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28) later in the year.

The shift to the digital era had been faster than any other change in history and had opened up a gulf between the haves and have nots. In order to develop a world in which all shared responsibilities, peaceful coexistence and tolerance were essential. At the national level, parliamentarians must bring in the requisite legislation to guarantee justice and equality for all members of society, criminalize intolerance and hate speech and address the impact of climate change to ensure sustainable development for all. At the international level, the values of peaceful coexistence and tolerance should be defined. Intolerance and terrorism should be identified as clear red lines.

**Mr. G.D. Ndabirabe** (Burundi) said that the political parties represented by parliamentarians must respect the principles of peaceful coexistence and tolerance. A major challenge, however, was to ensure that peaceful coexistence became a reality. Parliamentarians must not fail to speak the truth; they should support the sovereignty of their States more and discourage outside influences. Parliamentarians must also foster stronger exchanges at the subregional, regional and international levels and avoid action that could foster instability and insecurity between countries. Efforts should also be made to remove elements that could stigmatize or hurt others.

Item 2 of the agenda**Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda**  
(A/146/2-P.1-rev, P.2, P.3, P.4, P.5 and P.6)

*The IPU President took the Chair.*

**The IPU President** said that the Secretariat had received six proposals for the emergency item. In the order in which they were received, these were:

- *Argentina: The urgent need to combat violence against women in politics, particularly in light of the proliferation of hate speech, fake news and violent incidents.*
- *Qatar: Criminalizing contempt for religions and the spreading of hatred, and promoting coexistence, tolerance, peace and international security.*
- *Argentina, Chile, Germany, Netherlands and Ukraine, with the support of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) and the Twelve Plus Group: Raising awareness and calling for action on the serious humanitarian crises affecting the peoples of Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and other countries, and on the particular vulnerability of women and children.*
- *Indonesia: Combating Islamophobia, fighting intolerance, eliminating racial discrimination, and promoting peaceful coexistence among peoples and regions.*
- *African Group: Creation of a global fund for countries vulnerable to natural disasters to address loss and damage from climate change.*
- *Democratic Republic of the Congo: Call for urgent action to stop aggression, occupation and massive human rights violations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to preserve its sovereignty and territorial integrity.*

He reminded participants that the sponsor would be invited to introduce each proposal and that one speaker could present a contrary opinion.

**The Secretary General** said that the Steering Committee had considered the proposals and had decided that all six complied with Rule 11.2 of the Rules of the Assembly. He explained the procedure for examining and adopting the emergency item with reference to Rules 11.1, 11.2 and 12.

**Ms. S. Sapag** (Argentina) presented her Parliament's proposal entitled *The urgent need to combat violence against women in politics, particularly in light of the proliferation of hate speech, fake news and violent incidents*. Drawing attention to the recent assassination attempt against the Vice-President of Argentina, Ms. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, an assassination attempt against the Vice-President of Colombia and the murder of a Bolivian councillor, she said that parliamentarians must not remain silent. Such attacks against female political figures who were seeking to improve the well-being of their populations constituted an attack against democracy. The proliferation of hate speech, fake news and violent incidents against women in politics was undermining the political influence of women and their full participation in public life.

**The IPU President** noted that no delegate wished to present a contrary opinion.

**Mr. H.B.A. Al-Ghanim** (Qatar) presented his Parliament's proposal *Criminalizing contempt for religions and the spreading of hatred, and promoting coexistence, tolerance, peace and international security*. Attacks against holy sites and places of worship around the world were increasing and being accompanied by an alarming rise in violent extremism and hatred. Although such attacks were deplorable and posed a serious threat to social cohesion and peaceful coexistence, some countries were using freedom of expression as a pretext and justification for them.

Parliamentarians had a huge responsibility to preserve peace and social cohesion, fight tolerance and combat hatred. The right to freedom of religion and belief was a fundamental human right and parliamentarians must adopt a firm and clear stance to curb contempt for religions.

**The IPU President** noted that no delegate wished to present a contrary opinion.

**Mr. J.M.R. Edwards** (Chile), speaking on behalf of his own country and also on behalf of Argentina, Germany, Netherlands and Ukraine, with the support of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) and the Twelve Plus Group, introduced the proposal entitled *Raising awareness*

*and calling for action on the serious humanitarian crises affecting the peoples of Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab republic, Ukraine, Yemen and other countries, and on the particular vulnerability of women and children.* Three times more people than a decade ago were living under a declared humanitarian crisis, including as a result of climate change. Many such crises were underreported and long forgotten. The proposal sought to raise awareness and call for action on all humanitarian crises on an equal footing.

**Ms. L. Crexell** (Argentina) added that the proposal called for strengthened humanitarian assistance for women and children who were among the most vulnerable members of society and at greater risk of economic difficulties, violence and discrimination.

**The IPU President** noted that the delegates of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Peru, the Russian Federation, South Africa and Yemen had indicated that they wished to take the floor. They were free to do so on a point of order. However, according to Rule 12 of the Rules of the Assembly, only one speaker could present a contrary opinion.

**Mr. S.S. Al Barkani** (Yemen), speaking on a point of order, asked whether an IPU Member could present more than one proposal for an emergency item.

**The Secretary General** said that there was nothing in the Rules of the IPU to prohibit any country from presenting more than one proposal for an emergency item. The two proposals submitted by Argentina were therefore admissible.

**Mr. K. Kosachev** (Russian Federation) said that he did not object to the topic *per se* but was concerned about the limited number of countries listed in the title. Many other countries were experiencing serious humanitarian crises, including Cuba and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which were subject to sanctions by the United States of America, and Iraq and Libya, which had been bombed by countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Mentioning selected countries would unavoidably politicize a very serious topic and he therefore was not in favour of the proposal as it was presented.

**Mr. F. Zon** (Indonesia) drew attention to the proposal entitled *Combating Islamophobia, fighting intolerance, eliminating racial discrimination, and promoting peaceful coexistence among peoples and religions*. The Indonesian delegation had decided to withdraw its proposal since its important message was reflected in the proposal put forward by the delegation of Qatar.

**The IPU President** said that a contrary opinion would not be presented given that the proposal of Indonesia had been withdrawn.

**Ms. T. Ackson** (United Republic of Tanzania) presented the proposal of the African Group entitled *Creation of a global fund for countries vulnerable to natural disasters to address loss and damage from climate change*. Responses to natural disasters were currently fragmented, uncoordinated and often came with conditionalities. There was therefore an urgent need to put in place strategies to support vulnerable countries affected by natural and climate-related disasters, which were threatening human existence.

Noting the merits of some of the other emergency items proposed, she said that the IPU Statutes and Rules should be changed to allow more than one emergency item to be added to the Assembly agenda. A clear deadline for submission should be set so that all geopolitical groups could have sufficient time to consider all emergency items.

**The IPU President** noted that no delegate wished to present a contrary opinion.

**Mr. A. Mbata Betukumesu Mangu** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) presented his Parliament's proposal entitled *Call for urgent action to stop aggression, occupation and massive human rights violations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to preserve its sovereignty and territorial integrity*. The crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which was the result of armed conflict, occupation and aggression by a neighbouring country, was the most serious on the African continent. More than 10 million people had died and thousands more had been forcibly displaced. Recalling the findings of the Group of Experts, established pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 1533 (2004), on Rwanda's support to the March 23 Movement (M23), he

urged parliamentarians to show solidarity with the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo by adopting a resolution calling for an end to the aggression, occupation and massive human rights violations.

**Ms. E. Nyirasafari** (Rwanda), speaking against the proposal, said that the proposal from the Democratic Republic of the Congo sought to distract the Assembly from the real cause of the continued conflict in the east of the country and its impact on the security of neighbouring states, including Rwanda. With more than 120 armed groups operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the government of that country needed to take full responsibility for its internal problems instead of continuing to scapegoat Rwanda. It should prioritize a political solution rather than pursuing a military option, which would only lead to further suffering and aggravate ethnic tensions. There could not be a lasting peace without the neutralization of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), which was still active in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**The Secretary General** said that the Assembly would now proceed to a vote by roll call on the five proposals that remained. He explained the voting procedure.

*A vote by roll call was taken.*

*With 393 votes in favour, 727 against and 373 abstentions, the request submitted by the delegation of Argentina failed to obtain the required two-thirds majority of the votes cast and was therefore rejected.*

*With 756 votes in favour, 444 against and 293 abstentions, the request submitted by the delegation of Qatar failed to obtain the required two-thirds majority of the votes cast and was therefore rejected.*

*With 817 votes in favour, 317 against and 358 abstentions, the request submitted by the delegations of Argentina, Chile, Germany, Netherlands and Ukraine, with the support of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) and the Twelve Plus Group obtained the required two-thirds majority of the votes cast.*

*With 535 votes in favour, 640 against and 318 abstentions, the request submitted by the African Group failed to obtain the required two-thirds majority of the votes cast and was therefore rejected.*

*With 88 votes in favour, 705 against and 700 abstentions, the request submitted by the delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo failed to obtain the required two-thirds majority of the votes cast and was therefore rejected.*

*Having obtained the required two-thirds majority and the largest number of positive votes cast, the request submitted by the delegations of Argentina, Chile, Germany, Netherlands and Ukraine, with the support of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) and the Twelve Plus Group was added to the agenda of the Assembly.*

**Ms. M.d.C. Alva Prieto** (Peru) called for a minute of silence in memory of the former Afghan member of parliament, Ms. Mursal Nabizada, who had been shot dead in Kabul in January.

*A moment of silence was held in memory of Ms. Mursal Nabizada from Afghanistan, Mr. Yakup Tas, the Turkish member of parliament who had died in the recent earthquake in Türkiye, and Ms. Ivonne Passada, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Uruguay and Vice-President of the Uruguay IPU Group who had just passed away.*

*The sitting rose at 19:30.*

## Final Agenda

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1. Election of the President of the 146th Assembly
  2. Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
  3. General Debate on the theme *Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance*
  4. Special accountability segment on the implementation of IPU resolutions and other decisions
  5. Cybercrimes: The new *risks to global security*  
(Standing Committee on Peace and International Security)
  6. *Parliamentary efforts in achieving negative carbon balances of forests*  
(Standing Committee on Sustainable Development)
  7. Reports of the Standing Committees
  8. Approval of the subject items for the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and for the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development for the 148th Assembly and appointment of the co-Rapporteurs
  9. Emergency item: *Raising awareness and calling for action on the serious humanitarian crises affecting the peoples of Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and other countries, and on the particular vulnerability of women and children*
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**Emergency item entitled *Raising awareness and calling for action on the serious humanitarian crises affecting the peoples of Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and other countries, and on the particular vulnerability of women and children***

**SITTING OF MONDAY, 13 MARCH 2023**

(Morning)

*The sitting was called to order at 9 a.m. with Ms. N.N. Mapisa-Nqakula, Speaker of the National Assembly of South Africa, in the Chair.*

Item 9 of the agenda

**Plenary debate on the emergency item *Raising awareness and calling for action on the serious humanitarian crises affecting the peoples of Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and other countries, and on the particular vulnerability of women and children***

(A/146/2-P.3)

**The Chair** invited delegates to voice their views regarding the emergency item.

**Ms. R. Mirza** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the voice of peace, love and development must be heard. Parliamentarians were encouraged to raise awareness, promote education, foster gender equality, encourage openness and reject all forms of intolerance and violence. Doing so would help empower men and women alike, reduce humanitarian crises and strengthen peaceful coexistence.

**Ms. T. Vardanyan** (Armenia) said that parliamentarians should feel responsible for the suffering and loss experienced by regular people – especially women, children and the elderly – as a result of war, climate change and other disasters. Not only was it paramount to address large-scale crises but also smaller-scale ones, such as the crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan had recently closed off the Lachin corridor, leaving approximately 120,000 ethnic Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, including around 30,000 children, without access to essential goods and services. The humanitarian aid delivered by the Red Cross and other peacekeepers had not met demand, and disruptions to the supply of electricity and gas had created extreme hardship. Azerbaijan continued to keep the corridor closed despite calls from the international community for it to be reopened.

According to Azerbaijan, the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh enjoyed all the rights and freedoms of the citizens of Azerbaijan. The country, however, had scored very low (9 out of 100) in the 2023 edition of the *Freedom in the World* report showing that it was not able to guarantee the rights and freedoms of its own citizens, let alone those of Armenians. In addition, Azerbaijan's calls to facilitate the mass deportation of Armenians could not be interpreted as anything but a State policy of ethnic cleansing. The illegal blockade of the Lachin corridor, the hostage-taking of Armenians and frequent aggression of Azerbaijani armed forces demonstrated the urgent need for an international presence within Nagorno-Karabakh.

**Ms. S. Matos** (Portugal) said that migratory movements occurred for many different reasons but were mostly down to terrorism and natural disasters. International cooperation was essential to mitigate the suffering of migrants as well as to support receiving countries which were struggling to cope.

Migration policies could and should add value to receiving countries. In Portugal, migrants contributed to the labour force, to the social security system and to democracy. That said, the human rights and dignity of all people, especially the most vulnerable such as women and children, must be defended regardless of whether they brought value or not. It was impossible to ignore that women and children were more likely than others to be exposed to violence and sexual exploitation.

Those suffering from humanitarian crises were the same as everyone else. Anyone could be in their position. It was therefore important to offer them support.

**Mr. A.A. Paredes Gonzales** (Peru) said that, to create peaceful and inclusive societies, parliamentarians must address the many different crises occurring around the world, which meant fighting discrimination and exclusion. Peru would do all that it could to achieve peace. Society could not go on dehumanizing people and remaining indifferent to discrimination. As a means of prevention, it was important to teach compassion in schools.

**The Chair** said that, under Rule 16 of the Rules of the Standing Committees, the composition of the drafting committee for the emergency item should take into account equitable geographical distribution and political and gender balance. The number of members should not exceed 11.

**Ms. A. Shkrum** (Ukraine) said that people did not truly appreciate peace until it had been taken away from them. Before 2022, she could never have imagined having to wake up to sirens every day and to vote in Parliament under shelling. Currently, however, that was her reality. Despite numerous United Nations and IPU resolutions, the Russian Federation had continued to attack Ukraine. Since the 145th IPU Assembly in October 2022, it had killed 41 more children, launched 1,327 missiles against civilians, and destroyed 10,000 houses. In addition, more than 16,000 Ukrainian children had been stolen from their parents and forcibly displaced to the Russian Federation with no guarantee of return. Those kinds of crimes could not be tolerated. She called on parliamentarians to adopt the emergency item resolution, put a stop to humanitarian crises all over the world, including in Ukraine, and punish all aggressors.

**Ms. V. Walters** (New Zealand) supported the comments made by Ukraine. The scale of humanitarian crises across the globe was significant. Because of the Russian aggression, millions of Ukrainians had poured into neighbouring countries in search of safety while others were hiding underground, sheltering from bombs. Homes, schools, hospitals and other critical civilian infrastructure had been destroyed and entire cities heavily damaged. In Afghanistan, almost all Afghans were facing dangerous humanitarian hardships, struggling to obtain food, health care and financial resources, with women and girls particularly affected. Under Taliban policies, women had been barred from most paid jobs which had been devastating for households where women were the sole or main earners. In Myanmar, the military had created a perpetual human rights crisis.

It was important to acknowledge the scale of the above crises and consider how best to respond. Root causes must also be addressed. She urged the drafting committee to look back at the resolutions passed at the 144th and 145th IPU Assemblies when preparing the final draft of the current emergency item resolution.

**Mr. K. Kosachev** (Russian Federation) said that the topic of the emergency item had been politicized by the delegate of Ukraine. The situation in Ukraine was a civil war that had not started in 2022, but in 2014 following an unconstitutional change of power opposed by a large part of the Ukrainian population. More than 14,000 civilians, including 200 children, had been killed since the start of the civil war in 2014. The Russian Federation had done its best to restore peace and stability in Ukraine, including by contributing to the Minsk agreements. Unfortunately, Ukraine had never been willing to fulfil its commitments under the Minsk agreements and neither had other signatories, such as France and Germany. Ukraine was instead planning military operations against its own people.

The Ombudsman for Human Rights in Ukraine, Ms. Denisova, had been spreading lies about the mass rape of women and deportation of children by the Russian Federation but had been forced to resign due to the lack of evidence surrounding her claims. The delegation of Ukraine to the IPU also continued to spread disinformation. It was Ukraine that was blocking a peaceful resolution of the war.

**Mr. R. Fogiel** (Poland) said that the lies told by the delegate of the Russian Federation were disgraceful. He urged the Russian delegation to acknowledge the barbaric truth of what its country was doing in Ukraine. It was, however, true that the crisis in Ukraine had not started in 2022. It had started in 2014 when Russia had illegally annexed Crimea, in 2008 when Russia had attacked Georgia and in the 1940s when Russia had enslaved and murdered Poles.

**Mr. F. Marchand** (France), raising a point of order, said that it was a lie, and even a defamatory statement, to suggest that France had never wished to fulfil its commitments under the Minsk agreements. The delegate of the Russian Federation must officially apologize for his remark. France, like many other European countries, had done its utmost to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Russian Federation. He wished to endorse the comments made by the other delegates, particularly the delegate of Ukraine. The denial of reality by the Russian Federation was very impressive: it was an attempt to completely rewrite history. The situation in Ukraine was not a civil war but a clear-cut aggression and attempted annexation which must be totally and definitively denounced.

**The Chair** reminded delegates that the topic of discussion was humanitarian crisis, not the war in Ukraine.

**Mr. F. Shivambu** (South Africa) said that the emergency items for the previous two Assemblies were on the war in Ukraine. Today's debate was meant to be on the many different humanitarian crises occurring globally, including in Afghanistan and Yemen, but was shifting yet again to the war in Ukraine. Western European countries, who were historically associated with colonialism and repression, were imposing their own agenda on the entire world and showing complete disregard for the issues affecting other regions. It was completely unacceptable.

**Mr. G. Silberschmidt** (Director, Health and Multilateral Partnerships, World Health Organization (WHO)) welcomed the focus of the resolution on humanitarian crises around the world. WHO was present on the ground in every one of the crises mentioned in the resolution and in many others. It played an important role in supporting local authorities to provide health care to affected populations, particularly women and children. WHO would soon hold a meeting with national public health institutes to discuss its emergency response to such crises. It worked with people on both sides of a conflict putting health at the forefront. There was also a WHO initiative on health for peace which used health to bridge political divides. The resolution should refer to the work carried out jointly by the IPU and WHO on health.

**Mr. J.M.R. Edwards Silva** (Chile), co-author of the emergency item proposal, said that the tone expressed by the delegate of Syria was exactly the tone that would be reflected in the resolution. Given that the resolution was concerned with all humanitarian crises, he was happy to include a reference to the situation of Armenians. He agreed with the delegate of Portugal on the need to address the rights of women and children, particularly those who had been forcibly displaced. In response to the delegate of Peru, the resolution referred to many different crises but could be amended to include more. He expressed his heart-felt sympathies to the people of Ukraine who were suffering as a result of the unprovoked Russian aggression. WHO deserved recognition for its work in many different crisis situations and was encouraged to provide inputs to the drafting committee. As suggested by the delegate of New Zealand, the drafting committee would take into account the resolutions passed at previous Assemblies.

Responding to the delegate of the Russian Federation, he said that the resolution had not in any way been politicized. The humanitarian crisis in Ukraine could be easily resolved if the Russian Federation stopped bombing the country. He reminded the delegate of South Africa that the main authors of the resolution, Chile and Argentina, had also been colonized. That fact, however, did not prevent them from recognizing the existence of humanitarian crises around the world. The aim of the resolution was to signal to the millions of people suffering that they had not been forgotten. All people must be taken care of regardless of religion, race or gender.

**Mr. J. Atsma** (Netherlands) fully supported the emergency item and echoed the words of the delegate of New Zealand. The remarks made by the delegate of the Russian Federation were unacceptable.

**Ms. S. Mikayilova** (Azerbaijan) wished to object to the statement made by the delegate of Armenia. The Lachin corridor was open for deliveries and was being used for humanitarian purposes. Dozens of vehicles passed along every day under the control of Russian peacekeepers. In addition, Azerbaijan was facing a humanitarian crisis caused by mines planted by Armenia. Approximately 300 people had been killed and over 1 million people had been expelled from their homes as a result. She called on Armenia not to aggravate the situation and to stop using the Lachin corridor for the illegal transportation of weapons.

Item 3 of the agenda  
(continued)

**General Debate on the theme *Promoting peaceful coexistence  
and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance***  
(A/146/3-Inf.1)

*Ms. E. Nyirasafari, Vice President of the Senate of Rwanda, took the Chair.*

**Mr. M. Dick** (Australia) said that Australia was a vibrant and multicultural country with a proud first nations heritage dating back 65,000 years. Its rich cultural and linguistic diversity was central to the country's unique national identity.

In Australia, there was an expectation of equal opportunity which meant treating people without discrimination. Australia was a founding member of the United Nations and an original signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Inclusivity should be promoted across a number of levels: through legislation and policy as well as in society amongst the people.

Social and economic inequalities, experiences of discrimination and concerns about national and global issues were undeniably linked to social cohesion. In Australia, trust in government and democracy remained high. Trust was driven by accountability, responsiveness and reliability of government institutions and was closely tied to citizen satisfaction with democracy.

He drew attention to the trend by which people were deliberately disseminating false information. Research suggested that false information could shape hateful extremist beliefs and behaviours. Violent extremism had no place in Australia or the world. Australia's approach to countering violent extremism comprised of four key activities: (1) building strength in diversity and social participation; (2) ensuring early intervention, disengagement and reintegration; (3) engaging in targeted work with vulnerable communities and institutions; and (4) addressing terrorist propaganda online. To maintain social resilience, it was important that people online could identify extremist behaviours and misinformation.

One of the most important ways in which the Australian Parliament promoted cooperation was through parliamentary friendship groups. There were over 100 groups whose focus ranged from health, transport safety and housing to cultural diversity.

Australia's current Parliament was the most ethnically and culturally diverse in the country's history. Having a diverse Parliament which better reflected society added legitimacy to its democratic processes. It enabled Parliament to provide greater scrutiny and better respond to the experiences, needs, views and aspirations of the community. It also encouraged engagement which reduced the likelihood of extremism. All of the above elements were what drove peaceful coexistence and inclusive democracy in Australia.

**Mr. H. Gibaly** (Egypt) said that diversity enriched lives but also posed challenges to peaceful coexistence. Egypt was doing its utmost to build peace and reject intolerance and had established an observatory with that very objective. It supported the rights of all citizens without discrimination and had enshrined the right to religious freedom, be it Christian, Jewish or Muslim, in the Constitution. It was also working with the Vatican and the Church to fight the discourse of intolerance both nationally and internationally. Promoting peaceful coexistence required the concerted efforts of all. It was only through peace that prosperity and security would prevail.

**Ms. N.B.K. Mutti** (Zambia) said that inclusive societies were key to peaceful coexistence. As such, it was critical for leaders to embrace ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. She had witnessed first-hand the devastating impact of intolerance on her continent, including death, displacement and socioeconomic hardship. Women and children had been particularly affected. There was an urgent need to address intolerance with the involvement of all stakeholders. Measures that could be undertaken included: (1) introducing policies that reduced inequalities; (2) facilitating interpersonal healing; and (3) promoting ideologies that built on communal identities. Parliaments must spearhead the fight against intolerance through their legislative, oversight and representative functions.

Zambia was very diverse in terms of tribes and ethnic groups but remained a model of peace and stability. Some degree of intolerance and exclusion did, however, exist which had resulted in conflicts over political leadership, land and boundary issues as well as over poverty and inequality. The President was required to report to the National Assembly every year regarding the progress made towards addressing those challenges.

The Zambian Parliament played a critical role in promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusivity. It had passed laws promoting gender equity, minority protection and equal employment opportunities as well as laws to eliminate cybercrime and electoral violence. The Parliament strived to lead by example by practising inclusiveness and peaceful coexistence within its institutions. Parliamentarians of different genders, ages, ethnicities, occupations and educational backgrounds took part in committees and other engagements. A number of parliamentary caucuses had been set up with the aim of fighting intolerance, including the caucus on the rights of people with disabilities. In addition, the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (Zambia Chapter) was working to promote a culture of peace through education, sports, arts and media.

Parliamentarians should be at the heart of the fight against intolerance. They were encouraged to work more closely with their citizens without discrimination.

**Ms. C. Gotani Hara** (Malawi) said that parliamentarians had a key responsibility to foster unity and coexistence among the people they represented. Peaceful coexistence and inclusiveness were essential to preventing conflict, displacement, socioeconomic disruption, death and political violence. It was important to integrate cultural, religious, political and socioeconomic diversity.

An inclusive society was a society that provided equal opportunities to all people regardless of race, gender, class, generation or geography. It was also one that promoted tolerance. Intolerance was sometimes attributed to ignorance and fear, including fear of the unknown. It caused permanent separation between groups and could eventually lead to violence.

In Malawi, the most common form of intolerance was violence against the elderly, especially elderly women, who had reported abuse, mistreatment, insults and even stoning. Sexism was also present in politics with women's role in development completely underappreciated. Equally, intolerance sometimes led to clashes between people of different political affiliations. There had been many demonstrations over the past 15 years in Malawi owing to a lack of inclusivity in the political environment. The role of parliament was key in resolving those situations.

Some common drivers of intolerance in Malawi were unemployment, poverty, hunger as well as social media. Indeed, the unemployment rate in Malawi was expected to reach 7.4% with young people heavily affected and discriminated against. Widespread poverty and hunger shifted people's focus towards their immediate needs which exacerbated intolerance. Social media was full of online hate speech and cyberbullying. Malawi granted people freedom of speech under its Constitution but had recently amended its Penal Code to curb misuse of social media.

To create peaceful coexistence, it was necessary to have a well-functioning government with all three branches of power working together. It was the role of the legislature to enact laws in the best interests of the citizens, the role of the judiciary to interpret them, and the role of the executive to ensure their proper implementation. Equal distribution of resources was also important. Parliaments must introduce relevant socioeconomic policies that promoted equal distribution of resources and monitor their implementation.

**Mr. S.S. Al Barkani** (Yemen) said that peaceful coexistence was a pillar of stability and should be based on the fulfilment of rights, such as freedom of expression, belief and religion as well as equal participation of women. Relations between countries should be governed by mutual respect.

The Islamic Republic of Iran was undermining peaceful coexistence in the Arab world by violently imposing its religion and culture on countries like Yemen with the aim of erasing their entire existence. Parliamentarians, journalists, women and children had been victims of the violence perpetrated by the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, the Islamic Republic of Iran did not stop at the Arab world. It was also imposing its presence in Western Asia, Africa, the Mediterranean, the Arabian Gulf and the Red Sea. Its actions could be described as nothing other than an invasion. It was seizing regional resources, dominating regional and international policy and taking advantage of politics to infiltrate the region, including the situation in Palestine. The Islamic Republic of Iran's intention was to dominate the Islamic world. It posed an existential threat to all countries in the Middle East.

Peaceful coexistence was vital to protect people's future. All countries must join forces to promote diversity and combat intolerance.

**Mr. J.F.N. Mudenda** (Zimbabwe) drew attention to the United Nations Year for Tolerance which had been in 1995. The year had coincided with the golden jubilee of the United Nations – an opportune moment to reflect on the historical events that had preceded the organization's formation. They were events characterized by the denial of dignity, equality and mutual respect. Equally, he drew attention to United Nations General Assembly resolution 61/271 which called on Member States to secure a culture of peace, tolerance, understanding and non-violence. Parliaments under the umbrella of the IPU must strive for diplomacy and dialogue with a view to achieving peaceful coexistence.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was unequivocal in its proclamation that the foundation of peaceful and inclusive societies rested on the promotion of the inalienable rights of humankind regardless of race, creed, political affiliation, gender and sexual orientation. While progress had been made towards justice, peace and harmony, recent history showed the archetypal banality of those efforts.

Societies continued to face many challenges in their endeavours to coexist peacefully, including climatic shocks, earthquakes and the COVID-19 pandemic. The situation had been exacerbated by the adverse ripple effects of the Russia-Ukraine war which had destabilized global economies. Peaceful coexistence, inclusive and tolerant societies were essential to mitigating global challenges.

Parliaments must formulate laws and policies that deconstructed the barriers to peaceful coexistence, inclusivity and tolerance. They must ratify and domesticate all relevant multilateral agreements and pass national budgets that supported low-income households, gender equality, youth

development and disability empowerment. They must be the voice of the voiceless and promote inclusive democracy. They must exercise oversight over the executive ensuring that it operated in a non-partisan manner. In doing so, parliaments would be eloquently fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 16 which aimed to establish peaceful coexistence, equitable justice, accountability and inclusive institutions at all levels of governance. The African philosophy of *Ubuntu*, meaning “I am because you are”, was a good guiding principle.

*Ms. C. Gotani Hara, Speaker of the National Assembly of Malawi, took the Chair.*

**Ms. S.S. Chaudhury** (Bangladesh) said that, despite aspirations for peace, justice, freedom and harmony, the world was engulfed in endless wars, conflict and violence. Peace was undermined by factors such as nationalism, authoritarianism, racism, populism, protectionism and militarism. Inclusiveness was an essential prerequisite for peace and harmony. Peace, respect for human rights and human dignity could be instilled by promoting equality and non-discrimination.

Bangladesh had time and again stood firm against all forms of discrimination. Its Constitution safeguarded the equality of all citizens irrespective of religion, race, caste, gender or place of birth. As a State party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Bangladesh supported the comprehensive implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action. Historically, communal harmony was a significant trait of Bangladeshi society which was built on the values of peace, pluralism, democracy, freedom, liberalism, gender equality and development.

An inclusive society was one that went beyond differences of race, gender, class, generation and geography to ensure inclusion, equality of opportunity and space for all citizens. It was one that aimed to build trust between people from diverse backgrounds, encouraging them to coexist peacefully by solving issues without conflict or violence. The idea was to get people to work together towards a common purpose while still allowing them to pursue their own interests. It was important to create a vision based on collective values such as inclusion, diversity, tolerance and empowerment.

Parliamentarians were the centrepiece of a parliamentary democracy responsible for representing the voice, aspirations and will of the people. They had powerful tools at their disposal to bring about positive and transformative change.

The following measures must be taken to build peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: (1) reduce inequalities through promotion of democracy, the rule of law and tolerance; (2) eliminate and amend laws that bred discrimination; (3) provide legislative and policy support to vulnerable groups; (4) address mindsets and stereotypical thinking; (5) bridge poverty gaps; and (6) instill core values through education. By applying concerted efforts, it was possible to build a tolerant, equitable, peaceful and inclusive world for all.

**Mr. A. Frick** (Liechtenstein) said that it was important to curb the trend of rising intolerance and discrimination around the world. To do so, parliamentarians must implement the SDGs, including SDG 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies. Liechtenstein had been promoting the SDGs nationally and internationally. The SDGs were front and centre of all parliamentary debates in Liechtenstein and every proposal was required to include an SDG impact report. In addition, Liechtenstein's total expenditure on official development assistance had risen by 13%. Not only had his Parliament increased the international humanitarian cooperation and development budget but had also approved supplementary budgets in light of the staggering increase in demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

During its upcoming Council of Europe presidency, Liechtenstein would do its utmost to uphold and strengthen human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It was also a strong supporter of the International Criminal Court and called on parliamentarians around the world to speak up in its favour. Respecting the international rules-based order must be a high priority. As such, he called for an immediate end to the Russian aggression against Ukraine. The Russian Federation must withdraw its armed forces from sovereign Ukrainian territory and be held fully accountable for its crimes. Liechtenstein would continue providing political and financial support to the people of Ukraine. Democracy, justice and the rule of law were the only ways to prevent atrocities.

Modern slavery was a human rights crisis which was often fuelled by discrimination and intolerance. It sadly generated huge profits amounting to US\$ 150 billion each year. The number of people living in modern slavery had increased by over 10 million over the past decade despite international commitments to bring an end to the phenomenon. Liechtenstein would continue to prioritize efforts to eliminate modern slavery.

To overcome intolerance and build inclusive societies, there was a need for a comprehensive response that put the people first.

**Mr. P. Katjavivi** (Namibia) said that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognized the equal and inalienable rights of all individuals without discrimination. Societies that upheld those principles were more likely to be peaceful, cohesive and democratic. Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies was a critical aspect of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and part of the core mandate of the IPU. Parliamentary representatives played a vital role in promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies.

Namibia was a diverse country with many different ethnic groups, languages and cultures. Its diversity should be used as a tool to build a more inclusive and tolerant society. To that end, the Parliament had passed several legislative interventions, including laws on employment equity, gender discrimination and domestic violence. It was committed to being more inclusive in its engagement with citizens taking their voices into account when developing policies and legislation. He stood ready to share best practices, identify key drivers to combat intolerance and develop comprehensive approaches.

Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies by fighting intolerance was essential for creating a more cohesive, democratic and resilient world. It was imperative that parliamentarians took the necessary steps to address those challenges. The commitment of the IPU to coherence and inclusion was an important step towards building a more peaceful and prosperous future for all.

**Mr. K.H.N. Al Maawali** (Oman) said that achieving development, progress and prosperity for all peoples and nations relied on just and open dialogue. It was only through dialogue that bridges could be built between cultures and civilizations.

Respect for diversity was an utmost priority for Oman. The country had a solid legal system that aimed to curb intolerance. It had achieved a good ranking in the Global Terrorism Index after having triumphed over terrorism and extremism. The triumph, however, did not happen overnight but after a long, strenuous effort involving many different institutions. The country had many strong laws that guaranteed the freedoms and rights of all religious groups. It also provided opportunities for learning foreign languages and harnessed media outlets to raise awareness about the importance of mutual respect and cohesion. A number of high-level conferences and events had also taken place in Oman on promoting tolerance and coexistence between different religions.

It was vital to say no to extremism in stronger terms than ever before, especially in the context of social media, which was being used to sow hatred between communities and cultures. It was the responsibility of parliamentarians to build bridges of understanding between peoples.

**Mr. A.M. Diop** (Senegal) said that many of the crises that had arisen over the past few years had been caused or exacerbated by intolerance or lack of dialogue. Peaceful coexistence came under threat as a result of fixed mindsets, sectarianism and a lack of empathy. Building an inclusive and harmonious society required parliaments to recognize the value of diversity, promote openness and foster mutual understanding.

Senegal had a long standing history of promoting peaceful coexistence regionally and internationally. The values of freedom, solidarity, diversity, non-discrimination, tolerance and inclusion were the cornerstones of the nation and clearly affirmed in the Constitution. The first President of Senegal, who had reigned for 20 years, had welcomed all religious confessions. His open approach aimed to enrich lives and promote prosperity.

Senegal had developed a national plan for gender equality and passed a law on parity aiming to ensure equal representation of men and women on electoral lists and in decision-making positions. Currently, the National Assembly had 89 men and 76 women.

Policies of exclusion and intolerance were disastrous for international peace and security. It was the responsibility of parliamentarians to be aware of the dangers of such policies but also to take measures against them. Parliamentarians must use education to fight exclusion and intolerance. Communication was also important. It was necessary to encourage open discussion, cultural diversity in the media and expression of different opinions. There was a need to have a strong legislative, regulatory and institutional framework as well as to bolster friendships between peoples by setting up cooperation programmes, issuing supportive resolutions and recommendations and carrying out awareness raising campaigns. The fight against intolerance called for concerted efforts by all stakeholders.

**Mr. M.R. Rahmani** (Afghanistan) said that the people of Afghanistan were under increased Taliban pressure for the second year in a row experiencing severe economic and social crises, discrimination, poverty and insecurity, as well as a lack of education and basic rights for women and girls. Although the Afghan Parliament had previously celebrated many significant achievements in areas such as sports, economy, education, freedom of speech, human rights, government and the military, it had unfortunately stopped functioning and was in serious need of establishing inter-parliamentary relations with other countries.

Afghanistan was composed of different ethnic groups all of which had played a valuable role in the building of modern Afghanistan. The participation of all ethnic groups was what contributed to a truly inclusive democratic system and should be considered an important principle of statehood. However, the current Taliban regime in Kabul did not respect inclusive democracy paying no attention to the needs or security of the Afghan people. Currently, around 125 Afghan parliamentarians were living in danger, as exemplified by the assassination of Ms. Mursal Nabizadeh. He called on delegates to consider how to evacuate them and save their lives.

The Taliban regime must be obliged to provide justice and security to the people, eradicate poverty, distribute humanitarian aid in an equitable manner and treat all Afghans without discrimination, including by providing basic rights to women and girls. It must give women and girls immediate access to schools and universities.

To solve the current crisis in Afghanistan, he suggested forming a global consensus on making Afghanistan a democratic and progressive system. It was important to engage in political dialogue and ensure that all ethnic groups had a share in the system.

**Mr. A.C. Bundu** (Sierra Leone) said that despite the rights and obligations enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the world was facing growing uncertainty and insecurity with rising injustice, discrimination, inequality and intolerance. Peaceful coexistence and inclusion must, therefore, remain at the top of the agenda. Nowhere was the lack of peace more conspicuous than in the areas of gender inequality and religious intolerance. Parliaments must continue to play a crucial role in society as the primary channel through which grievances and concerns were expressed.

Sierra Leone, despite its small territory and population, stood out as a bright emblem of religious tolerance. With a population divided between Muslims and Christians, the country had been able to successfully normalize intermarriages between people of different religions, faiths and beliefs. It had done so without generating as much as an iota of tension, much less of violence, in the country.

There was no better exemplar to demonstrate the height of religious tolerance in Sierra Leone than the current Head of State who was a practising Catholic married to a Muslim woman. His example had helped to cascade a culture of religious tolerance to the middle and lower echelons of Sierra Leonean society. The same tolerance could be seen within the Government's development programme which offered free education and health care to all without religious discrimination.

The current Government of Sierra Leone was doing its best to build a comprehensive and resilient national culture of gender equality and women's empowerment. The year 2022 would go down in history as a watershed year in which the country had moved from rhetoric to positive legislative action. The Public Elections Act and the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act had both been enacted setting out legal minimums for the representation and participation of women in the legislature as well as in the public and private sectors.

Overall, Sierra Leone would continue to prioritize interventions that addressed vulnerabilities and exclusion among women, girls, youth, the elderly and people with disabilities. It would scale up financial inclusion, skills development and job creation and continue to pursue its national social protection policies.

**Mr. A. Al-Asoomi** (Arab Parliament) said that reinforcing dialogue and peaceful coexistence between religions and cultures was the cornerstone of world peace. There was a need to promote tolerance within religious discourse as well as to build an education system that fostered acceptance. Unfortunately, peaceful coexistence was under threat in many parts of the world.

The Arab region as a whole faced many unresolved conflicts which had arisen as a result of external interference. In particular, the international community continued to perpetuate double standards in Palestine where the population was being deprived of basic rights such as freedom and self-determination. A lasting solution must be found to the Palestinian question.

All religions in the world called for peaceful coexistence, dialogue and understanding, but intolerance continued to persist, including in Europe where there had recently been reports that people had been burning and shredding copies of the Quran. Those crimes were a provocation of 200 million Muslims around the world. He proposed that an international legal framework be put in place to hold perpetrators of such crimes to account.

All people belonged to the same humanity. It was important to work together to strengthen the social fabric of the world and ensure that peace prevailed. Once again, he urged the IPU to end the suffering of the Palestinian people, put a stop to external interference in the internal affairs of States and reject any attempts to attack or undermine religion.

**Mr. A. Riyaz** (Maldives), commencing the second segment of the General Debate reserved for first speakers of delegations, said that intolerance severed human bonds and undermined efforts to create a peaceful and just world. It was a collective responsibility to stand up against it. Parliamentarians, as the guardians of the rule of law, human rights and justice, had a duty to embrace inclusivity and honour diversity.

Intolerance could manifest itself in many ways, such as through prejudice against particular racial or ethnic groups or bigotry motivated by one's political, religious or gender views. It could be subtle or apparent. Online hate speech was a particular type of intolerance that continued to sow division. Parliamentarians must protect the populations affected, especially minorities, by passing legislation and holding governments accountable.

Public trust and confidence in politics was waning, including in the Maldives. It was his belief that distrust stemmed from the inability of politicians to address people's concerns.

The Maldives was a nation of one language, race and religion with very few factors causing societal division. Yet, religious intolerance had managed to creep in. The individuals responsible were fanatics aiming to destroy social cohesion. Their violence, however, had nothing to do with religion.

The Maldives had been coping with violent extremism since 2007 and had adopted a series of laws to bolster the legal armoury against it. All laws were regularly amended in an effort to promote social cohesiveness and religious unity. However, the Maldivian youth were often drawn to participating in internal conflicts occurring elsewhere. Education was the most crucial weapon to prevent them from doing so.

As a matter of urgency, parliamentarians must work together to fight all forms of extremism and intolerance. They must speak up when they observed it and educate people about different cultures, faiths and traditions.

The IPU was moving in the right direction by choosing the current theme for the General Debate. An important element of the work was to make rules and procedures inclusive and non-discriminatory. Fighting intolerance must be a continual endeavour and commitment of all.

**Mr. P. Moatihodi** (Botswana) encouraged parliamentarians to identify the factors underlying intolerance and division, both locally and globally, and catalyse action towards inclusion and peaceful coexistence. Peaceful coexistence required all communities to show mutual respect, work together and resolve conflict. As a bastion of peace, Botswana promoted peaceful coexistence by embracing all faiths and religions.

The Parliament of Botswana continued to strengthen its laws to protect, mainstream and empower marginalized groups, such as women and youth. It had passed laws on citizen's economic inclusion, public procurement and public finance management to support disadvantaged sectors. A new Ministry of Entrepreneurship had also been established responsible for inclusive entrepreneurship development. Equally, there were laws to curb gender-based violence and bestow equal land rights for all married persons. Financially, parliament was prioritizing funding for ICT development aiming to provide connectivity in small villages. It was also investing in education and health for all, including in prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV and comprehensive sexuality education.

Meaningful public engagement was at the centre of all parliamentary activities in Botswana and had been strengthened through the Botswana Speaks programme. The programme aimed to connect constituents with their elected representatives for policy dialogue and decision-making.

It was by allocating appropriate budgets that parliamentarians could empower marginalized communities, reduce rising economic inequalities and help women and young people reach their full potential. It was through oversight that parliamentarians could ensure the rule of law, human rights and justice for all.

The above actions were but small steps towards leaving no one behind and harnessing the power of diversity to foster peace and development. Attaining world peace and democracy required the collective efforts of parliaments. Those efforts must protect human rights, empower minorities and uphold democratic principles such as the rule of law, good governance and tolerance.

**Mr. M. Karidio** (Niger) said that the modern world was a very dysfunctional place as exemplified by the many political and economic crises that had emerged. Evidence suggested that peaceful coexistence and inclusion was declining around the world while intolerance and discrimination was growing. People must find a way to live together in a spirit of peace, tolerance and solidarity without leaving anyone behind. All members of society had the right to participate fully.

Whole regions and even continents were currently enflamed by war, murder and terrorism. The Sahel, for instance, was overrun with terrorists who were killing innocent people, raping women, stealing assets, setting fire to crops, destroying businesses, schools and hospitals, and forcing a mass exodus of people. Victims were losing faith in the political system which had failed to protect them. He called on the international community to resolve the tragic situation in the Sahel.

Many countries favoured hostility over solidarity, which meant that a small minority benefitted while a large majority was left at the wayside. It was essential that parliamentarians re-establish dialogue with the people they represented. They must listen to each and every citizen, group and sector of society and take their concerns into account when putting together development policies. Major decisions should not be taken without consulting the people.

He recommended the following actions to help fight intolerance, promote peaceful coexistence and build inclusive societies. First, parliaments should consider the specific needs of women and young people in public policies and development programmes. Second, they must address corruption and cronyism to regain the trust of populations. Third, they must work towards more equitable access to justice.

**Mr. S. Soendergaard** (Denmark) said that the task of promoting peaceful coexistence, building inclusive societies and fighting intolerance was one that concerned everyone. Denmark was a prosperous, well-functioning and peaceful country. However, that was not a guarantee against intolerance.

An essential part of Danish democracy was freedom of speech. It was crucial for people to raise their voices when faced with racism or lack of respect for their beliefs. Parliamentarians had an enduring obligation to fight intolerance.

A Danish citizen of Bahraini origin called Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja had been imprisoned in Bahrain since 2011. He was not a violent criminal but a peaceful human rights defender. The United Nations had described his arrest and imprisonment as arbitrary – a position supported by the European Union and the Human Rights Council. Al-Khawaja was in a very bad condition as a consequence of ill-treatment and torture during his imprisonment. The Danish IPU delegation had repeatedly asked the Bahraini authorities for permission to visit him during their stay in Bahrain but had received no reply. It was, however, never too late. He called on the Bahraini authorities to free Al-Khawaja as a symbol of good faith.

**Ms. M. Bartos** (Hungary) said that the world was becoming a more divided and less tolerant and peaceful place. Despite many efforts to eliminate intolerance, the international community was failing. Something was therefore very wrong. It was important to ask why coexistence was deteriorating to such a degree. One reason was that there was increasing competition between groups for natural resources, energy and other basic needs. Indeed, the human population was growing while the impacts of climate change and overconsumption were increasing in severity. Competition was therefore becoming more and more intense. The frustration arising from competition led to anxiety, tension, intolerance, scapegoating and selfishness all of which could be felt at an individual, community, national and international level. The only way to redress the crisis of intolerance was to make progress towards the SDGs. However, the world was not on track in that regard.

The world was facing uncertain times. Mankind had been shocked by the COVID-19 pandemic and was currently dealing with 28 different wars. Fear and anxiety were rampant, thus leading to confusion, self-interest and double standards. The solution was to change attitudes. Every effort must be made to achieve the SDGs individually and collectively. There was also a need to establish dialogue based on mutual respect.

**Mr. T. Kivimägi** (Estonia) said that no two people living on Earth were the same. Differences had been written into the very code of humanity. Those differences offered immense value. Acceptance of differences, be it of skin colour, sex, language, appearance or religious beliefs, should not be a constraint but a natural part of everyday life. Empathy and tolerance were important keywords.

The greatest challenge in the world was to protect peace, democratic values and the sovereignty of countries. It was important to resolve disputes peacefully rather than through military power. The arms race was taking place at the expense of everyone because it took away money from other areas, such as education, culture and social affairs.

Unfortunately, some countries spoke the language of bombs and viewed human life only as a tool to achieve their own ambitions. One such country was the Russian Federation, as demonstrated by its war of aggression in Ukraine. Countries around the world must show more resolve in the context of the war. In particular, he wished to appeal to China who held great sway and could therefore help end the war. The Russian Federation must not win as their victory would inspire other authoritarian regimes to use the same methods.

The world was facing turbulent times. The values underpinning the rules-based world order, such as freedom, democracy, human rights and equality, were at stake. The Russian Federation's war was a war against democracy. Together, the world was stronger and in a better position to protect a democratic and inclusive future. Democracy was key to achieving peace.

**Mr. H. Traore** (Mali) said that the world was going through particularly turbulent times that were threatening peaceful coexistence. Mali had witnessed a great deal of intolerance over the past 10 years and its population had paid a high price. There had been widespread displacement, closure of schools, lack of basic sanitation and food insecurity with women and children primarily affected. It was for that reason that Mali had chosen to work with partners that respected the country and its people. Extra resources towards the fight against terrorism had also been given to the army.

The time had come to take pragmatic action in support of vulnerable populations. The citizens of the world were waiting for results which had so far been lacking. High-income countries must shoulder their responsibilities to developing countries. Above all, they must provide significant investment for their development programmes. It would thus be possible to improve living conditions and in turn promote peaceful coexistence.

**Mr. Youngjin Park** (Republic of Korea) said that a culture of hatred and discrimination was on the rise even in pluralistic and diverse societies. The anonymity of cyberspace was allowing hate speech and discriminatory language to spread at an alarming rate. Inclusion and tolerance were needed not just for the disadvantaged but as a precondition to achieve prosperity for all.

Parliaments could do a great deal to build inclusive societies. Above all, they had a role in strengthening anti-discrimination laws helping to affirm the principle of equality and to prevent exclusion. The principle of equality was enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Korea and served as the basis for a number of national laws, such as the Framework Act on Gender Equality. Equally, the Parliament would soon pass its Anti-discrimination Act. The Act had been previously brought to a standstill as a result of hatred and discrimination but would be finally reaching its conclusion.

Parliaments must serve as an inclusive platform for diverse views to be expressed thus minimizing blind spots in decision-making and laying the foundation for inclusive policies. Part of that was ensuring diversity in their own composition. The National Assembly of the Republic of Korea had a variety of programmes and policies in place that allowed citizens to participate in Parliament. One of those policies was the live-streaming of standing committee meetings. Work was ongoing to provide real-time captioning of those meetings to support the participation of people with hearing impairments. There was also a public petition system which allowed the diverse needs of the people to be communicated and discussed.

Parliamentary solidarity was instrumental to building more inclusive societies. International conferences, workshops and seminars were important opportunities to raise awareness about tolerance among parliamentarians. By exchanging ideas and converging different views, it was possible to adopt joint declarations and resolutions. Qualitative growth was possible only when prosperity was truly inclusive.

**Mr. A. Lins** (Brazil) said that inclusion and peace were not possible without tolerance. Parliaments must therefore lead discussions around promoting tolerance.

The world was still a long way from peaceful coexistence despite many efforts to achieve it. Among the efforts taken in Brazil were the adoption of guidelines on hiring employees and the promotion of equal access to public services. Another possible course of action was to carry out educational initiatives that promoted tolerance and respect. Such initiatives might include school programmes, social media campaigns and events. Teachers and educators must be consulted when putting together educational initiatives.

In an increasingly connected and virtually integrated world, peaceful coexistence between peoples and nations was not a utopia but a necessity. There was no time to lose in building policies that promoted harmony and tolerance. The solutions found during the General Debate must guide parliaments around the world and pave the way for a better future. Peaceful coexistence was possible but only through collective efforts.

**Mr. J.I. Echániz** (Spain) said that the world was becoming more divided, less tolerant and less peaceful. New forms of violence were constantly emerging thus increasing polarization and breaking down social cohesion. Hate speech, particularly on social networks, was also growing. The situation had led to distrust in governments and the media, a decline in religious freedom and an increase in discrimination. In addition, exclusion and intolerance went hand in hand with socioeconomic inequalities which damaged democracy, undermined human rights and increased security threats.

As representatives of the people, parliaments played a very important role in promoting cohesion and inclusion. Five principles underpinned peaceful coexistence on an international level: (1) respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; (2) non-aggression; (3) non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries; (4) equality; and (5) mutual benefits. Flagrant violations of those principles were occurring in many different parts of the world, including in Ukraine.

In an inclusive society, diversity should always be viewed as an opportunity and never as a threat. Equality should prevail over differences. Vulnerable people who were at the greatest risk of social exclusion must be duly protected.

Intolerance was at the root of hateful attitudes and behaviours. It was based on stereotypes that did not view people as people in their own right, but as an identity. Tolerance, on the other hand, was a political and legal necessity for creating peaceful coexistence. Without it, there would be fertile ground for terrorism, xenophobia, racism, violence and conflict. Parliaments must work together to guarantee inclusion and combat intolerance.

**Mr. S.S. Njie** (Gambia) said that it was essential for all stakeholders in the broader ecosystems of democracy to foster inclusive societies that upheld rights, liberties and peaceful coexistence. Diversity in culture, race, skin colour, language, ethnicity, religion, gender and political affiliation should be used to strengthen peaceful coexistence rather than to undermine it. Parliamentarians and citizens alike had a duty to promote inclusive societies. It was the only way forward in a world of hostilities, polarization and divergent interests.

A year had passed since the Russian Federation had invaded Ukraine – a conflict that had affected the whole world directly or indirectly. Thousands of lives had been lost and millions of people had been displaced in addition to huge disruption caused to financial markets and global supply chains leading to price hikes and energy supply issues. He commended Türkiye for its role in securing the Ukrainian grain deal and its success in negotiating a prisoner swap. He urged the IPU, the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Security Council to begin serious negotiations to bring the two countries together.

The Constitution of the Gambia set out a Bill of Rights safeguarding fundamental rights and freedoms, including religious freedom. The aim was to build an inclusive society where tolerance was guaranteed. Following the change of government in 2017, the Gambia continued to gain standing on the international stage thanks to its tolerant and democratic leader.

The IPU, as the sole global parliamentary network, must continue to provide the necessary support to institutions of parliament with a view to promoting tolerance and inclusiveness in their working procedures. Parliaments must not rest on their laurels but instead preach the message of peace wherever possible.

**Mr. O. Korniyenko** (Ukraine) said that, since the Russian Federation had escalated its aggression against Ukraine, people of all nationalities, faiths and background had united in support of his country, fighting for freedom, democracy and peace. Many were joining Ukrainian defences, delivering aid and helping displaced people. In the past few days, the Russian Federation had fired 81 missiles at Ukrainian civilian targets killing 6 people and damaging energy facilities. To establish peace in Ukraine, he called on countries to support President Zelensky's 10-point peace plan which addressed areas ranging from food security to sustainable peace. However, the Russian Federation must first withdraw its troops and restore Ukraine's internationally recognized borders, including Crimea.

It was important to ask the question whether enough had been done to eliminate intolerance at the Assembly. It was unacceptable that the Russian Parliament had been invited to discuss peaceful coexistence after it had unanimously voted to legitimize its aggression against Ukraine. The IPU must

take action by suspending the membership of the Russian Federation until it stopped its aggression or, at the very least, limit its right to vote and participate in debates. The Russian Federation must take responsibility for its crimes and be held accountable in a special tribunal. It was the only way to prevent impunity and prevent other such aggressions being committed around the world. The Russian Federation must pay for its crimes by rebuilding hospitals, schools, universities, factories and churches destroyed by its artillery, shells and missile attacks. He urged the international community to support the comprehensive compensation mechanism already endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly. He underlined that the Russian aggression was a challenge to every human on the planet and required a common strategy.

**Mr. P. Bakovic** (Slovenia) said that it was a major concern that peaceful coexistence and inclusion were in decline while intolerance and discrimination were rising. He drew attention to growing polarization and criticism of administrative structures along with decreased tolerance for opposing views. Particularly worrying was the rise of online hate speech which sowed division under the guise of anonymity. Other concerning trends included growing socioeconomic inequalities, deteriorating trust in democracy and human rights standards as well as violent extremism and misinformation. All of the above posed a risk to social cohesion and global peace.

Slovenia acknowledged the importance of fostering inclusive societies and creating equal opportunities for all. It had passed a number of laws such as the Protection Against Discrimination Act and the Equal Opportunities between Men and Women Act. A new resolution was also being developed aiming to tackle sexist stereotypes and mainstream gender equality perspectives into all policies and measures. There were two autonomous state bodies responsible for tackling discrimination, namely the Human Rights Ombudsman and the Advocate of the Principle of Equality. Although much progress had been made, Slovenia could not afford to be complacent as discrimination in the country continued to rise.

It was vital to ensure greater transparency and accountability in decision-making and increased involvement of civil society in decision-making processes locally, nationally and globally. Efforts promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies required engagement from all, particularly from parliamentarians. Parliamentarians must set an example for all by promoting zero-tolerance for discrimination and condemning discriminatory practices. Society would then follow their lead. In that way, it would be possible to change mindsets and behaviour, restore trust in politics and change the culture.

**Mr. S. Yang** (Cambodia) said that the peaceful coexistence was not just about avoiding conflict but about creating an environment where people could live together in harmony. It was necessary to create a society where everyone was welcome and accepted regardless of their differences and given the same opportunities.

Cambodians had been through war, genocide and serious national division and thus understood very well the vital importance of national reconciliation, peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies. After the fall of the genocidal Khmer Rouge regime in 1979, the principle of freedom for all had been restored and enshrined in the Constitution. The country had established a number of national human rights mechanisms and was in the process of creating a national human rights committee. It was party to eight out of the nine international human rights treaties and participated in the universal periodical review of the Human Rights Council. Since 1993, Cambodia had been the only member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to have welcomed the Special Rapporteur of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights to monitor the human rights situation in the country. It had deployed peace keeping missions to countries such as Sudan, Chad, Lebanon, Mali and Cyprus and provided demining training to Ukrainians in collaboration with Japan. Although the Constitution of Cambodia enshrined Buddhism as the State religion, the Cambodian people were free to choose any religion they wished. There was also a national social policy which had been developed to support low-income and vulnerable families. Cambodia promoted social, political and cultural rights such as the right to life, the right to education and the right to health care, including through the effective management of COVID-19.

**Mr. K. Murungi** (Kenya) said that, to promote peace and inclusive societies, it was essential to fight intolerance. Intolerance could lead to discrimination, exclusion and even violence. By promoting peace, countries encouraged people to respect each other's differences and find common ground. Inclusive societies helped to ensure that everyone had a voice thus promoting a sense of belonging.

Kenya was a diverse multi-ethnic country with various cultures, languages and religions. To promote peaceful coexistence and inclusion, it had introduced a devolved system of government.

The devolved system ensured decentralization of power and resources, equitable distribution of national revenue and increased public participation in decision-making which in turn helped to reduce conflict. The Constitution had clear provisions on inclusivity, equality, non-discrimination, human rights, the rule of law, democracy and fundamental freedoms.

Various peacebuilding efforts had been implemented to address the root causes of conflict and promote peaceful coexistence in Kenya. They included the establishment of the National Gender and Equality Commission responsible of mainstreaming issues affecting marginalized groups; formulation of a national policy on peacebuilding and conflict management; and the establishment of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission to address historical injustices.

There was no discrimination in the Parliament of Kenya. The whole of society was represented with special and nominated seats for women, youth, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups. Women represented 31.3% of the Senate and 23.5% of the National Assembly. A total of 56 young parliamentarians were present across both chambers.

Parliaments could address the drivers of intolerance and promote inclusion by: (1) addressing the socioeconomic factors that led to inequality and discrimination; (2) promoting and protecting all forms of diversity; and (3) promoting better community relationships. It was paramount to appreciate diversity and foster unity by looking favourably and humanely upon fellow global citizens. By working together to promote understanding, respect, and inclusion, it was possible to create a more peaceful and just society which valued and respected everyone.

**Mr. M. Rezakhah** (Islamic Republic of Iran), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the so-called representative of Yemen had misconstrued the reality on the ground. Instead of making false accusations, he should address the disorder that existed among his own officials and tackle the real problems affecting the Yemeni people. The Islamic Republic of Iran had always stressed that the Yemeni crisis could only be resolved internally through peaceful means rather than through military interventions. It was very important to improve conditions inside the country. Although the Islamic Republic of Iran did have power and influence, it would never use it to subjugate others but, rather, to support the oppressed.

He wished to reiterate the fact that the only historically recognized name for the border between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Arabian Peninsula was the Persian Gulf. Any other names were fabricated or incomplete and therefore lacked credibility and a legal basis.

**Mr. J. Fakhro** (Bahrain), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, urged the representative of Denmark to request a friendly meeting with Bahrain to discuss the truth in relation to Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja. The individual in question was a Bahraini citizen who had been found guilty of a number of crimes and had therefore been subjected to legal recourse, including imprisonment. He had not suffered any form of mistreatment. Bahrain had a number of institutions in place, including the Ombudsman and Prosecutor's Office, which would have denounced his mistreatment had it taken place.

*The sitting rose at 1 p.m.*

## Sitting of Monday, 13 March 2023

(afternoon)

*The sitting was called to order at 14:30 with Mr. A.B.S. Almusalam, President of the Assembly, in the Chair*

### Item 3 of the agenda

(continued)

#### **General Debate on the theme *Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance***

(A/146/3-Inf.1)

**Mr. M. Rezakhah** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that peaceful coexistence was an important Islamic concept to Iranians. The Islamic civilization resulted from tolerance and peaceful coexistence and, since its inception, his country had incorporated peaceful Islamic teachings into its policies, using initiatives to strengthen multilateralism and foster peace and cooperation in international forums. Rather than build walls through racial discrimination, xenophobia, violence and hatred, bridges should be built through dialogue, tolerance and peaceful coexistence. He quoted two famous sayings in Iran: “people are either your brothers in faith or your equals in humanity” and “peace in this life and the next can be found in compassion for friends and tolerance for others”.

Unfortunately, Iranian tolerance had not been returned in kind. Despite its neutrality during the First and Second World Wars, his country had been occupied by British and Soviet forces. In addition to an appreciation of peaceful coexistence and tolerance, sacrifices were necessary, and Iranians had made many: to overthrow a Western-backed monarch, defend their country, and endure sanctions and the martyrdom of their scientists. Sacrifices would guarantee national strength and peaceful coexistence. It was thanks to those sacrifices, and despite a recent American hybrid attempt to provoke regime change, that his nation was represented at the current Assembly. Those sacrifices had also ensured that his country was key to defeating Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. Countless people owed their security to Iranian commander Qassem Soleimani, who had become a martyr.

His country had supported oppressed nations, including Palestine. Following the February 2023 earthquake, his country and other Muslim and Arab nations had swiftly provided aid to the Syrian Arab Republic when others feared American sanctions for doing so. His country supported nations’ right to peaceful coexistence and upheld its pledge to be the friend of the oppressed and a voice for the voiceless. He welcomed mutual cooperation to strengthen nations and increase equality to prevent a power monopoly and facilitate peaceful coexistence.

**Mr. F.H. Naek** (Pakistan) said that propaganda had associated the Islamic world with intolerance and extremism, the real causes of which were inequality and lack of education. It was important to remember that the Islamic greeting, “assalamu alaikum”, wished peace.

Political, social, cultural and religious differences had always led to conflict but violence, aggression and military force were not solutions and should be denounced. He asked whether the world equally defended Kashmir, Palestine and other illegitimately occupied areas. The world only defended its own political and economic interests, regardless of the consequences; promoting humanity was not a priority. Peace could only be guaranteed through dialogue and democratic processes based on equality, tolerance, justice and non-discrimination.

The pursuit of geopolitical and geoeconomic goals worsened poverty, hunger, climate change, intolerance, extremism and terrorism. Economic inequality created global conflict, poverty and hunger and political leaders must therefore recognize the danger of unequal resource distribution. Promoting interfaith harmony could address global issues, and parliamentarians and society should shape opinions and promote dialogue, pluralism and understanding.

Inequality and the denial of basic rights also caused intolerance, poor societal structure and lack of peace and prosperity, which had a global impact. Millions of people could not access basic health care or education and those issues should be prioritized. Education drove development and ensured a better future. It was necessary to increase investment, train teachers, create innovative teaching methods and address barriers, such as poverty and gender discrimination.

If equality and basic rights were not ensured, peace could never be achieved. Social, technological and political progress should be reflected as a widespread model of pluralism. Only sincere dialogue and action could overcome challenges, and peaceful coexistence and equality were prerequisites for inclusive societies. He hoped that collective actions would not lead to a dystopian future; the time to act was now.

**Ms. P. Cayetano** (Philippines) said that different stakeholders influenced progress and its pace. Legislation therefore had to be crafted to ensure no one was left behind. The Philippines was committed to integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into development plans and policies and the Senate Committee on the SDGs, Innovation and Futures Thinking had been established to track progress and examine legislation to prepare for different scenarios. It had produced the Committee Report on the Future of Education, which had examined the current situation, problems, aspirations, and expert and stakeholder recommendations to ensure the best future for education. Funding from the national budget had been provided for Futures Offices in the Departments of Education, Health and Science and Technology and for research on the future of food systems, security and production.

Recognizing the importance of education, the Parliament had created the Second Congressional Commission on Education, which co-chaired the Sub-Committee on Early Childhood Education and Development and Basic Education. The Commission had undertaken to reform the education sector by addressing social inequalities and ensuring inclusion in education. The Alternative Learning System Act decreased the number of out-of-school youth, provided free basic education and was in line with the Inclusive Education Act, which ensured that learners with a disability had equal access to education. The Universal Health Care Act guaranteed access to quality and affordable health care. The Sin Tax Reform Laws taxed harmful products to fund universal health care. The Cheaper Medicines Act allowed the Secretary of Health to cap drug retail prices.

The Magna Carta of Women required at least 5% of the total budget of government agencies to be allocated to gender and development programmes. Maternity leave had been increased from 60 to 105 days in the public and private sectors and Solo Parents Welfare Act had been introduced. The Domestic Administrative Adoption and Alternative Child Care Act had simplified the domestic adoption system and there were many other laws protecting children, including during disasters. There were laws on ageism and promoting inclusive workplaces. Women must participate in decision-making bodies to make their voices heard and achieve genuine gender partnership. Participating in IPU Assemblies and discussing with other women parliamentarians had given her the confidence to discuss women's issues in her Parliament.

**Mr. S. Ito** (Japan) expressed his gratitude for the support Japan had received following the Great East Japan earthquake in 2011 and his condolences to the Syrian and Turkish victims of the February 2023 earthquake. Japan would assist recovery and reconstruction efforts.

The spread of intolerance and discrimination threatened peace and inclusiveness. The Russian invasion of Ukraine had intensified conflicts, deepened international divisions and jeopardized peaceful coexistence. There were human rights violations worldwide, which Japan condemned, and many people were demanding peace, freedom and human rights. The universal values of freedom, democracy and the rule of law were critical to creating a peaceful and inclusive society. Japan would work with international organizations and engage in discussions with the parties concerned to understand different views, cooperate and improve human rights. It would also assist countries in developing human resources, advancing elections and justice systems, and ensuring freedom of speech. It would lead efforts to create inclusive societies in which different cultures and opinions could coexist peacefully.

**Ms. J. Kronlid** (Sweden) said that parliaments represented the heart of democracies, formed the highest decision-making power and examined governmental work. A century earlier, Sweden had introduced universal and equal suffrage. Following the 2022 elections, 46% of members of parliament were women, many of whom felt that they had to meet higher expectations than men. They increasingly faced threats and violations on social media, and the organization of the working week hindered efforts to combine parliamentary work and parenthood. However, highlighting gender issues and working systematically could improve conditions to achieve a gender equal parliament. The cross-party Working Group on Gender Equality protected members of parliament from harassment and threats, and helped those with young children. Work should continue to ensure that men and women had equal career opportunities and political influence, and that gender-based discrimination and violence were eradicated. It was vital for parliamentarians to represent different parts of society. If they could not respect each other despite their differences, they could not expect citizens to do so. People with disabilities, who often faced exclusion, should be able to participate in society and achieve basic financial security.

Security in Europe was under threat and human rights were being violated worldwide. Parliamentarians should stand up for democracy, human rights, national sovereignty, peace and security. Russian aggression against Ukraine had caused much suffering.

There was hope for a world that respected religious freedom and did not tolerate hate and persecution in the name of religion. The fight for democracy, political freedom and free speech should not be abandoned. She knew that Bahrain strove for tolerance and respect for human rights and she hoped that the case of Danish-Bahraini citizen Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja would be resolved. It was crucial for democracies to respect freedom of speech and the right to criticize governments but it was individuals' responsibility to remain respectful. Parliamentarians should not miss their opportunity to create change and improve the world.

**Mr. R. Lopatka** (Austria) said that the current Assembly was taking place amid challenges to the climate, global economy, and international peace and security. He regretted that there was war in Europe and parliamentarians had to take responsibility in honour of the IPU's founders. Tolerant and inclusive societies were cornerstones to peace. Austria, which had become more peaceful in the last decade, had ranked fifth in the Global Peace Index 2022. However, migration and the COVID-19 pandemic had led to greater polarization and intolerance in Austria, which were fuelled by disinformation and hate speech on social media. Trust had to be restored in traditional media, especially in Europe, where newspapers were losing readers. In Austria, democracy workshops had been launched to involve young people in Parliament and demonstrate that society needed young people's courage and engagement. His delegation supported the Council of Europe's No Hate Speech Movement and Austrian parliamentarians were encouraged to implement international standards within the national legal framework.

**Mr. C. Wong** (Malaysia) said that Malaysia was unique because it was a multiracial and multireligious nation. Minorities represented a substantial part of the population and coexisted peacefully. Interestingly, there were different racial groups within religious groups, and interracial marriages were accepted and more common than a decade earlier.

In the Global Peace Index 2022, Malaysia had ranked 18th globally and fourth in the Asia Pacific region. That achievement was due to Asian values of peace, respect and tolerance, which were promoted in Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. Enjoying diverse foods and supporting national sports teams also cemented the multiracial society. The quest to find a Malaysian identity was ongoing, and it was a main preoccupation for youth. Governmental efforts to build a more united Malaysia had had mixed results. In the aftermath of the 1969 race riots, Malaysian governments had positively discriminated to increase equality. However, the corruption and abuses of power of the political elite had undermined those policies. Malaysian government successes included pushing for a national identity through the National Principles, promoting national unity through the education system and State media, safeguarding religious freedom, and recognizing cultural and religious holidays for all.

The discovery of oil and the adoption of liberal economic policies had created a large middle class, which tended to be more tolerant and progressive. However, during recent elections, greater emphasis had been placed on religious and race politics. That trend was concerning, especially when coupled with fake news, which challenged democracy. Although social media companies must filter extremist content and fake news, the younger generation must also continue to receive high-quality education to become discerning and critical citizens. Civic mindfulness and social media moderation were essential.

**Mr. K. Kosachev** (Russian Federation) said that the general debate topic was important. Solving issues related to intolerance and coexistence started in homes and spread to universities, offices, municipalities and countries. He was proud to represent a country that had centuries of experience in promoting peaceful coexistence, creating inclusive societies and fighting intolerance. Although there had been challenges and internal conflicts, including in Chechnya, his country had learned lessons.

In the Russian Federation, four traditional religions and some 200 nationalities coexisted peacefully and some 300 languages were spoken. In Mari El there were three state languages, in Dagestan there were 14, and in Crimea there were three, including Ukrainian and Tatar. Although there were Russian nationalists, they did not come to power and therefore, no ethnic or religious groups wanted to leave the Russian Federation.

However, in other countries, including Ukraine, nationalists had come to power. When the Soviet Union had collapsed, half of Ukraine's 22,000 schools had taught in Russian but today the only state language was Ukrainian. There was no religious freedom because the Ukrainian authorities had illegally removed traditional Russian Orthodox churches and monasteries.

The Russian Federation had tried to help Ukraine solve its internal problems and maintain its territorial integrity. The Minsk agreements had aimed to promote peaceful coexistence, fight intolerance and build an inclusive society in Ukraine. However, the former President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, the former Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, and the former President of France, François Hollande, had all asserted that the Minsk agreements had bought Ukraine time to strengthen its armed forces. Those comments revealed how the opportunity to ensure peaceful coexistence, create inclusive societies and fight intolerance in Ukraine had been missed.

**Mr. A.S.K. Bagbin** (Ghana) said that there were many issues worldwide and the general debate theme was appropriate given the extent of violence, statelessness, conflicts, poverty, migration, cataclysmic turmoil and deaths. There was no choice but to accept diversity and reduce polarization. That vision was shared by most, but an intolerant minority was jeopardizing global efforts to promote peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies. However, parliaments were well positioned and empowered to counter those destructive efforts.

The Ghanaian Parliament continued to promote peaceful coexistence through the 1992 Constitution. Parliament had enacted the National Peace Council Act, the Vigilantism and Related Offences Act, and the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice Act. It had also established a well-structured and independent judiciary and justice system. Ghana was committed to developing a democratic culture that promoted respect for all people, human rights and freedoms, dignity, equality, women's empowerment, gender parity and inclusiveness in decision-making. In the Global Peace Index 2022, Ghana had ranked second among African countries due to its high level of internal peace.

Global populations had to work towards harmony now and the SDGs provided guidance, particularly in the areas of global partnerships and inclusive societies. Countries would need to collaborate and, even when goals coincided, a healthy sense of competition could improve lives. Inclusive growth and development should be promoted by supporting least developed nations because underdevelopment and poverty drove intolerance. It was legislators' responsibility to encourage tolerance and inclusive development through laws and through oversight of the executive. They had to ensure that governments handled corruption and eliminated waste, ignorance and greed.

His Parliament would work with the IPU and its Members to fight intolerance promote peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies. It was translating democratic values and principles into benefits for Ghanaians. The delegation of Ghana to the current IPU Assembly was gender equal and included members of opposition parties.

**Ms. P. Krairiksh** (Thailand) said that Thailand continued to handle increasingly complex international challenges, including building a peaceful, harmonious and multicultural society. The ability of democracies to be tolerant and diverse was being challenged. Thailand had always embraced diversity, tolerance, cultural pluralism and intercultural dialogue. As a predominantly Buddhist and secular nation, acceptance, moderation and compromise had been essential to fostering interreligious and interethnic harmony and respect. The Thai monarchy continued to unify people and it was constitutionally upheld as the patron of all faiths. The Sufficiency Economy philosophy had ensured sustainability, inclusive societies and social equity.

Racism and gender-based discrimination were not tolerated. Domestic legislation enshrined international instruments to protect against racial, ethnic and religious discrimination. The Constitution had laid the groundwork for the 20-year national strategy promoting development based on social and cultural diversity and it protected the cultural rights of ethnic groups. The National Assembly had actively promoted inclusivity and tolerance. Since 2019, ethnic groups and the community of people who were lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or had other identities had been included into the title and mandate of a parliamentary standing committee.

Parliamentarians had to collaborate to foster understanding and solidarity among communities and build a better, safer world in which differences were cherished, diversity thrived and differences were a source of strength.

**Mr. F. Salim** (Libya) said that promoting peaceful coexistence and tolerance, and rejecting hatred, violence and intolerance, were necessary to maintain national and international relations. Coexistence and tolerance were essential to stability, security and development. Acceptance of different ethnicities and religions would create a tolerant and open society and reduce hatred, intolerance and extremism.

Islam promoted peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies and Libya had adopted laws to fight intolerance, terrorism and crime. The concept of peaceful coexistence was key to properly managing diversity and societies, and enhancing security to prevent marginalization, exclusion, hatred, intolerance, violence, conflict, terrorism and chaos.

Digital media could share information and opinions, raise awareness and educate communities. However, it had also led to the globalization of radicalism and extremism. Terrorist groups and radicalized individuals could use it to spread hatred, incite violence and promote dangerous ideologies, which threatened national security. To maintain peaceful coexistence and tolerance, religious, educational and social institutions should use digital media to promote peaceful coexistence and tolerance. The public interest should be promoted over individual interests and awareness should be raised among communities and individuals.

**Mr. F. Marchand** (France) said that inclusive societies benefited everyone, ensured individual independence, and accepted and drew their strength from diversity. In France, the principles of equality and non-discrimination had led to the prioritization of integration and the uniform application of the rule of law. The principle of different treatment for different situations had appeared gradually. The Constitution had been amended twice to ensure gender parity in electoral lists and in professional and social responsibilities. In 2013, it had become obligatory for parties to present one male and one female candidate in departmental elections.

Demands for true equality and the right to be different had developed the French concept of equality. However, inclusion policies should be implemented without harming equality. In 2005 and 2013, laws on education for children with disabilities had been passed. In 2019, a public service for inclusive schooling had been established to ensure educational needs were met and facilitated cooperation between the State, organizations and families. The term “inclusion” had begun to be used in the 2000s, replacing “the fight against poverty” and “the fight against exclusion”. It was also used in the field of immigration, although “integration” continued to be used. Recently, the issue of digital inclusion had gained traction and lack of access to the internet had become a major factor for exclusion. In 2017, a digital inclusion plan had been launched and the Senate had recently considered a law to promote digital inclusion.

**Ms. E. Cuesta** (Ecuador) said that parliaments ensured fairer societies and had a moral, ethical and legal obligation to fight intolerance. They challenged regimes and governments that used persecution, violence and lawfare.

Women represented 45% of the Ecuadorian National Assembly thanks to the law ensuring an alternation between men and women on electoral lists. However, challenges persisted in ensuring that women participated in decision-making and paved the way for other women to participate. Parliaments and their schedules had been designed for men. Parliaments should consider measures to be more inclusive of mothers, including single mothers, such as providing breastfeeding spaces and nurseries. There was a collective obligation to tackle sexual harassment, which women parliamentarians continued to experience.

According to the law, 25% of electoral candidates should be under the age of 30, which had led to the election of six young assembly members. Moreover, 56% of legislators were under the age of 43. They had regularly and fearlessly ensured political oversight, including the investigation of the President for corruption and tax evasion.

Those fighting for democratic progress had suffered political and legal persecution in Latin America, particularly in Ecuador. Lawfare attacked human rights and aimed to destroy an individual morally, politically and economically to force a political outcome, prompting some Ecuadorian legislators to flee abroad. Women politicians were often harassed on mainstream media and through the legal system based on unsubstantiated claims.

Parliamentarians must continue to foster fair societies that respected diversity and promoted citizens' participation, equal opportunities and the eradication of discrimination and intolerance. There should be systematic training on human rights, non-discrimination and the fight against intolerance. Parliaments should develop regulations to prevent political violence and discrimination. The Global Parliamentary Code of Democratic Conduct presented several good practices in that regard.

**Ms. H. Jarvinen** (Finland) said that her country was one of the least corrupt and most stable, egalitarian and free in the world, with a political opposition and free press. It tolerated criticism, discussions and different opinions. Although the Government had failed to ratify an international agreement on Sami rights and guarantee equal opportunities for people with disabilities, Finland and its Scandinavian neighbours remained peaceful, inclusive and developed. In the Russian Federation, however, leaders had discriminated against political opposition and had impeded the work of human rights and international organizations. The Russian Federation had started a brutal and unacceptable war in Ukraine, whose right to exist was gravely threatened.

The value of a country lay in its defence of citizens' rights. She asked parliamentarians how their countries could improve. The first step was admitting to issues, and it was important to propose solutions. As a gesture of goodwill, Bahrain could release Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja.

**Ms. N. Jhakry** (Suriname), expressing her sympathy for those affected by the February 2023 earthquakes, said that the Constitution of Suriname upheld fundamental freedoms and human rights and ensured the protection of people and property. Suriname's multiethnic and multicultural society cemented its belief in equality and non-discrimination. Respect for differences, and a desire to build a society with others, ensured peaceful coexistence. Intolerance, including online hate speech, had to be addressed. A recent reform had enabled children to learn in their community language to tackle educational barriers and gender inequality and the Parliament had started to translate its activities into other languages.

The Parliament had enacted labour legislation on parental leave, sexual harassment and equal treatment. It had also ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and ensured access for all to buildings and services; safeguarded the right to health rehabilitation; ensured non-discrimination in employment; upheld the right to property, a private life, dignity and to participate in cultural life; ensured access to financial services, social protection and medical data; and ensured digital inclusiveness. Organizations implemented projects to encourage inclusiveness and Parliament held meetings with stakeholders. People with disabilities worked in Parliament. A young person with a physical disability had been appointed an ambassador of the Parliament. He would encourage other youth with disabilities and combat bullying.

The National Assembly could promote inclusiveness by encouraging transparency and access to public information, accountability and citizen participation. Parliaments could address intolerance and promote inclusion and peaceful coexistence by supporting the implementation of the SDGs, particularly SDG 10, exchanging best practices, working with non-governmental and international organizations, and encouraging countries to accede to the CRPD.

**Ms. K. Bradley** (United Kingdom) said that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Vienna Convention and the Good Friday Agreement demonstrated how parliamentarians could positively impact lives through words, leadership and persuasion. Having participated in the 63rd plenary of the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly (BIPA), she had marked the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement. BIPA had met since 1992, before the signing of that agreement, and had been crucial to forming relationships between parliamentarians personally affected by the Troubles and creating an understanding that it was in the collective interest to find a solution. Among the speakers at that plenary had been members of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, who had shown particular bravery by risking terrorist retribution for cross-community engagement.

It should not be brave or unusual for women to participate in politics. However, in the United Kingdom, women served on average one less parliamentary term than their male counterparts. They often represented seats with lower majorities than men, had family commitments, and experienced unbearable abuse on social media. The Online Safety Bill was imperative to tackling that issue. Many of the architects of the Good Friday Agreement believed that social media would impede the creation of such an agreement today.

Parliamentarians must stand up for those they represented and hold the executive to account. UN Member States must deliver on the SDGs to meet climate change obligations and respect national laws and borders. Moreover, they should call out those who flouted rules and demand action. Regarding SDG 8.7, there were an estimated 50 million victims of modern slavery globally. They were present in every country and many industries. Disasters and traumas created opportunities for exploiters to find new victims, which in turn created more trauma. Forced labour victims carried out 40% of deforestation, which worsened climate change and created conditions for more exploitation. Modern slavery should therefore be discussed at the next UN General Assembly.

**Mr. E. Teirumnieks** (Latvia) said that, since the 2017 debate on promoting peace through interfaith and inter-ethnic dialogue, the global situation had not improved. According to the Global Peace Index, the world was at its least peaceful for 15 years. Violent demonstrations, hate speech, fake news, social and economic differences, and distrust of democracy did not justify the use of force. The current IPU Strategy focused on climate change, democracy, human rights, respect for women and sustainable development, but it also had to address wars in Europe and elsewhere.

For centuries, many ethnic groups, including Russians, Belarussians and Ukrainians, had lived in Latvia, which had created tolerance for different cultures, lifestyles and beliefs and shaped Latvian identity. Schools were inclusive, with 77% teaching in Latvian and 20% teaching in Russian and

Latvian. Eleven schools taught in Polish, Ukrainian, Belarusian and other languages. All were State funded. There was a strong language-learning tradition, which promoted intercultural dialogue and increased tolerance. Chinese, Danish, French, German, Jewish and Russian cultural centres were also important. The Catholic, Lutheran and Orthodox traditions engaged in dialogue and Latvians were tolerant of other religions, including Buddhism, Islam and Judaism. The Constitution forbade intolerance and the Parliament supported equality. Standing committees addressed ethnic dialogue and social integration issues.

Nobody had the right to use force to demonstrate the primacy of their culture, faith, religion or world view. However, conflicts based on ethnicity, religion and intolerance persisted and there was war near Latvia. Parliamentarians were mandated to shape the present and future; nobody would choose intolerance, war, the murder of children and the rape of women. Human dignity, equality, peace and the right to integrity had to be promoted to ensure tolerance in words and actions.

**Ms. C. Mix** (Chile) said that the theme of the General Debate reflected concerns that certain democracies were weakening. Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies and fighting intolerance set priorities and collectively mobilized nations to overcome challenges. Scientific and technological developments should solve global issues. However, children continued to suffer malnutrition and starvation despite the global availability of food. Many people still had not received COVID-19 vaccinations and some people lacked safe drinking water while rising sea levels threatened other nations. Three decades earlier, the world had seemed on course for peaceful coexistence and the emergence of democratic societies but progress had increased international competition for global dominance. Despite some advances, resistance had been greater than expected. In Chile, the return of democracy had been expected to increase inclusivity, but instead society had become increasingly polarized.

Parliamentarians had the opportunity to identify sources of intolerance and division and promote inclusion and peaceful coexistence, particularly through the IPU. The next IPU Assembly should focus on: (1) humanitarian crises in developing countries, where populations were vulnerable to violence, sectarianism, pandemics and civil wars; (2) the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, which had displaced populations, threatened lives and worsened the global situation in which governments demanded all measures be taken to restore dialogue and prevent a new cold war; (3) gender equality, particularly in Afghanistan, where the degradation of women's rights affected family life and access to education and work; (4) the Sustainable Development Goals; and (5) the strengthening of democracy. Those topics should be part of the collective goal to promote peaceful coexistence and inclusion and fight intolerance. She urged those present to continue developing the founding principles of the IPU.

**Mr. R. Brinkhaus** (Germany) said that the global population had quintupled since the establishment of the IPU and, despite that growth, living conditions in many parts of the world had improved. Life expectancy had almost doubled worldwide, levels of infant mortality, hunger and malnutrition had decreased, and diseases and epidemics had been defeated. Although further progress was needed, religious minorities, women and the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community enjoyed better rights. People could better communicate, share knowledge and travel. That progress gave hope, but it was parliamentarians' task to ensure that all people enjoyed those benefits and to preserve those achievements for future generations. Climate change posed the greatest challenge to humankind and solutions required solidarity from all nations. Europeans, including Germans, bore a particular responsibility.

The Russian Federation had criminally invaded Ukraine and was responsible for murder, robbery, looting and rape. He asked his colleagues from the Russian Duma what they had done to oppose that breach of international law, how they had defended IPU values in their Parliament and whether they were affected by pictures of Ukrainian and Russian mothers mourning their children. Unfortunately, other conflicts persisted worldwide and Germany sometimes lost sight of them. The current Assembly would emphasize that parliamentarians had to uphold collective values and ensure peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies.

**Ms. M. Mularoni** (San Marino) said that her country embraced and protected individuals' fundamental rights, contributed to interreligious dialogue and had provided shelter to those in need, including Ukrainian refugees. She supported Ukraine and its people. San Marino had a history of rejecting war and encouraging dialogue and cooperation.

Understanding of the effects of domestic violence against women had improved and, in 2016, San Marino had ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. The San Marino authorities had protected victims by modifying the penal code, designed preventive actions and raised awareness through an interdisciplinary approach in schools. Integration, inclusion, solidarity and non-discrimination drove cultural change.

She appreciated the theme of the General Debate because building a better future required respect for all. It was more important than ever to reflect on that theme. To achieve inclusive societies, countries had to uphold the rights of vulnerable groups and minorities, protect the right to protest, and guarantee free speech. Relationships were fundamental to producing agreements and ensuring integration and inclusion. Dialogue between nations, cultures and religions could solve current challenges. The time to act was now, and actions should be carried out to unite people. Societies needed parliamentarians to safeguard the values of justice, solidarity and love.

**Ms. L. Quartapelle** (Italy) said that there were national and international challenges to ensuring peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies. At the international level, Italy was committed to promoting solidarity and cooperation. Unprovoked and unexpected Russian aggression against Ukraine was concerning and threatened the international order, which respected territorial integrity. The aggression jeopardized peace within and beyond Europe. She commended nations that had acted. At the national level, political leaders and parliamentarians had to work harder. To ensure coexistence and inclusivity, everyone had to listen, understand different opinions and manage dissent. Conflicts would persist, but in parliaments they would produce results without violence.

The ability to discuss, demonstrate and dissent had to be protected everywhere, even in countries where dissent was criminalized. Those living in freer societies should stand up for those dissenting elsewhere. Some 80 members of the Italian Parliament, together with the Bundestag and the Canadian Parliament, had decided to launch a campaign to support and sponsor Iranian political prisoners facing the death penalty for protesting after the death of Mahsa Amini. She invited other parliaments to do the same.

**Mr. M.A. Rakotomalala** (Madagascar) said that Cyclone Freddy had recently caused death and destruction in Madagascar.

Despite the efforts of international organizations, weapons continued to proliferate, particularly those using artificial intelligence. Terrorism, extremism, weapons flows and armed conflicts persisted and required peaceful responses. Everyone wanted a peaceful world in which major powers could not impose concessions on the poorest and in which there were no proxy wars for natural resources. In that world, crime, human trafficking and emigration would no longer plague poor countries. He was against all forms of discrimination and wanted a more equal world. To create that world, individuals, civil society, national governments, the United Nations and regional organizations had to collaborate, promote peaceful coexistence and combat violence, racism, xenophobia and radicalism. Education on peace had to be brought into the mainstream.

He called on governments and international organizations to limit weapons manufacturing and regulate their sale. Collective action should be taken against the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Ending conflicts through diplomacy and mediation was a priority. It was possible to create a more tolerant world. The United Nations should update its Charter to include intrastate conflicts in its sphere of competence.

**Ms. R. Kavakci Kan** (Türkiye), expressing her gratitude for the support Türkiye had received following the earthquake and the minute's silence held in honour of her colleague, Yakup Taş, said that tolerating one another sounded negative because it implied restraining oneself. Although it was not necessary to love, understand or agree with one another, respect was essential. Racism, xenophobia, intolerance and hate speech were increasing worldwide, which threatened peace and challenged parliaments at the international level. In Türkiye, tolerance and non-discrimination underpinned the human rights system. During Ottoman times, different cultures, religions and races had coexisted peacefully. Türkiye had welcomed Jews fleeing Nazism and it hosted Syrians and Ukrainians. It had an open-door policy to those seeking refuge and it would continue to fight for peace.

In the Grand National Assembly, the Ombudsman Institution ensured equality and a commission worked on different issues alongside the Human Rights and Equality Institution. The law protected foreigners and those who had fled to Türkiye were considered under special protection.

The burning of the Qur'an and attacks on the Prophet Muhammad in Norway and Sweden were unacceptable and disrespectful. Those acts were examples of intolerance, not freedom of expression. Women had the right to choose how they dressed but, in France, women who wore headscarves were not allowed in some public spaces. She hoped that we could resolve our differences and respect each other.

**Mr. T. Tayebwa** (Uganda) said that inclusive societies that upheld rights were more likely to be cohesive, peaceful and democratic. Failure to include minorities had caused tension and intolerance. In 1986, when Uganda had returned to democratic rule, it had introduced quotas in Parliament for women, youth, persons with disabilities, workers, the elderly and the army. It now had one of the youngest parliaments in the world, with a proportion of women exceeding the global average. Multiparty democracy was the best form of governance and parliaments had to ensure that societies and institutions were understanding and tolerant of different opinions, and that electoral bodies were beyond reproach.

Poverty drove intolerance and exclusion and the wealth gap was increasing. The developed world should remove non-tariff barriers that blocked goods from developing countries. Sometimes there were shortages in developed countries while produce rotted in developing countries. Uganda, the largest African coffee exporter, and other coffee-producing countries earned only a fraction of the revenue generated by the coffee industry. The haemorrhaging of Ugandan resources had kept it poor and reliant on Western aid and loans. Parliamentarians should ensure that that situation ended. Instead, Uganda needed partnerships and fair trade.

It was important for parliaments to review and strengthen laws and policies to protect minorities and prevent discrimination. In that regard, Uganda had an equal opportunities commission and a human rights commission. Parliaments should also oversee the executive and pass laws to ensure order, good governance and national development. However, parliaments represented their people and should therefore pass laws that reflected their societies. Global pressures should not usurp cultures and beliefs, and Uganda was wary of Western trends that did not align with its communities' beliefs. It strongly condemned the promotion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer activities targeting children, and was developing a law to protect children and families.

**Mr. A. Mbata Betukumesu Mangu** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that, since its independence, his country had been committed to promoting democracy and fighting intolerance. A truly inclusive society was democratic and protected human rights. Inclusivity and peace were enshrined in the Constitution, which protected women, religious groups, people with disabilities and indigenous people from discrimination. However, Africans outside of Africa continued to suffer intolerance.

Barbaric Rwandan aggression undermined Congolese efforts to promote inclusive societies and peaceful coexistence. Rwanda sought to pillage the vast natural resources in his country and that expansionist policy could not be tolerated. Rwandan rhetoric was outdated and demonstrated an unwillingness to take responsibility. Parliamentarians could not oppose aggression against Ukraine and promote human rights but close their eyes to the suffering of women and children in his country. Conditions there were worse than in Ukraine and some 10 million people had died. Parliamentarians, who had double standards, should look at the crisis and object to Rwandan aggression. Congolese people needed support against aggression, occupation and human rights violations. Financial and political interests could not prevail over human rights and democracy.

**Mr. D. McGuinty** (Canada) said that, despite being diverse and multicultural, Canada had not completely eradicated intolerance. Canada was putting words into action to promote diversity, inclusion and peaceful coexistence, which was a priority. It was parliamentarians' duty to reach out to citizens, lead by example and hold governments accountable for ratifying and respecting international human rights instruments. Parliamentarians had to adopt legislation and measures to combat intolerance and exclusion, and repeal discriminatory laws and policies. Metrics and data were necessary to measure progress and, in that regard, Canada drew on its census. Canada had appointed representatives to combat anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, adopted a feminist international assistance policy and an international assistance programme for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, two-spirit and intersex persons. Reconciliation efforts had been made with indigenous groups.

Intolerance was foolish whereas diversity was a source of strength. Inclusivity was in the collective self-interest. It would lead to peace and prosperity, and would ensure that we lived within the carrying capacity of the planet.

**Mr. T. Alzufairi** (Kuwait) said that the values of peaceful coexistence, inclusivity and tolerance were enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. All international treaties and conventions emphasized that everyone was equal before the law and that equality and social and economic justice were the cornerstones of peace and security. The safest and most stable societies were inclusive ones.

Islam continued to be accused of terrorizing others and accepting violence, particularly by the West. Muslims had been treated unacceptably for their religion. Palestine continued to suffer terrible aggression and violence at the hands of a Zionist regime that violated all international conventions. It was not possible to discuss stability and coexistence without tackling the intolerance that had destroyed human rights in the Middle East. Peace and stability could not be achieved while intolerance and anti-Muslim campaigns persisted. Everyone should enjoy human rights. Legal frameworks should be strengthened to tackle discrimination and ensure that a policy based on double standards was not adopted. Legislators should speak out against discrimination and everyone should fight intolerance.

**Ms. C. Badertscher** (Switzerland) said that the world was experiencing its lowest level of peace in 15 years, according to the Global Peace Index 2022, and parliamentarians should reflect on what they could do to fight intolerance and promote peace. Major challenges included increasing intolerance of political opinions, fake news and populism. Those phenomena prompted a disengagement from the democratic process, particularly among youth, and that disengagement had to be prevented. Discussions were becoming more hostile, particularly on social media and within parliaments, and it was essential for everyone, particularly politicians, to respect those with different political views. Tolerance and dialogue were small steps towards achieving peace and only collaboration would ensure a better and more inclusive world.

**Ms. S. Dinică** (Romania), expressing her sympathy to her Turkish and Syrian colleagues following the February 2023 earthquakes, said that promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies required constant attention and efforts to adapt mindsets, legislation and policies in the political, social, economic and security fields. Cases of racism, hate speech and discrimination had increased, particularly online, and had been exacerbated by economic and social crises, climate change, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Parliaments were vital to countering hatred and intolerance and promoting societies that embraced diversity and respected human dignity.

Romania was committed to tackling intolerance, and its Constitution guaranteed parliamentary representation of national minorities. In 2021, Romania had adopted a national strategy for preventing and combating anti-Semitism, xenophobia, radicalization and hate speech. Parliament had amended the penal code to strengthen penalties for public incitement to violence, hate or discrimination. Romania had contributed to drafting the European Union strategy on combating anti-Semitism and fostering Jewish life. In recognition of its engagement to uphold human rights, it had been elected for a third term at the United Nations Human Rights Council and it was preparing its fourth national report as part of the Universal Periodic Review.

Tolerance and inclusiveness were prerequisites for peace. The unprovoked, unjustified and illegal aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine had led to human rights violations. As a neighbouring State to Ukraine, Romania had provided humanitarian support to some 3.4 million Ukrainians who had crossed its border. Over 100,000 Ukrainians had settled in Romania, for whom protection, inclusion and social cohesion measures had been implemented. The war attacked the fundamental principles of international law and the democratic values underpinning the IPU. Parliamentarians should renew their call for solidarity and cooperation to defend the international legal order, freedom, democracy, and respect for diversity and human rights. Only human rights could ensure peace, security, humanity and democracy.

**Mr. T.M. Tran** (Viet Nam) said that the world was facing unpredictable changes with conflicts emerging in many regions. Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies was therefore urgent and required the global community and legislative bodies to collaborate to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and implement the IPU 2022–2026 Strategy.

Having endured many wars, Viet Nam was a peace-loving nation with a tradition of tolerance, humanity and harmony. It cherished stability and friendship, and recognized that national peace and development were closely associated with regional and global peace and prosperity. It was an active and responsible member of the international community whose foreign policy revolved around independence, self-reliance, peace, friendship, cooperation, development and the diversification of international relations. His country supported regional and global peace and stability initiatives and the peaceful settlement of conflicts in accordance with international law and the UN Charter.

The National Assembly of Viet Nam had a people-centred approach to adopting laws and national strategies, deciding budgets and ratifying international treaties. It had ensured inclusiveness and sustainability, protected historical values, traditions and the cultural identities of ethnic groups, and promoted national unity. At the 132nd IPU Assembly, Viet Nam had worked with the IPU to produce

the Hanoi Declaration. It had encouraged the development of a self-assessment toolkit for parliaments to assess the implementation of the SDGs and build inclusive societies that left no one behind. Later that year, it would host the Ninth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians.

Parliaments were responsible for upholding the rule of law, promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, solidarity and tolerance. The IPU and parliaments should collaborate to ensure compliance with international law – particularly the UN Charter – prevent wars, reduce inequality in international relations, promote cooperation and dialogue, enhance understanding, build trust and respect, and provide peaceful solutions to regional disputes and global challenges. Democracy, equality and non-discrimination should be ensured. Experiences in providing social security for the poor, vulnerable and those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic should be shared to strengthen solidarity, international cooperation and ensure cohesion. Infrastructure should be developed to narrow the development gap and promote green growth, energy and digital transformation, innovation, inclusive growth to strengthen partnerships in the public and private sectors, and coordination to achieve the SDGs. Cooperation on global issues, such as climate change, should be increased.

**Ms. M. Brawer** (Argentina) said that the world was in crisis, and it was necessary to fight intolerance and promote inclusive societies. Issues included an economic system that worsened inequality, the misuse of natural resources, indifference towards climate change, hate speech and the weakening of democracies.

The economy was inseparable from ordinary peoples' needs, which included work, decent housing, education, health and a clean environment, and many people were demanding change. A powerful minority of mostly unknown businesspeople had accumulated vast amounts of wealth and power. In Latin America, not only was wealth concentrated, but profits had tripled in recent years, which was a hallmark of 21st century capitalism. One example was Elon Musk who, in 2020, had backed the coup in Bolivia on Twitter after a user had claimed that it had been precipitated by commercial interests in lithium reserves. Lithium was, and would continue to be, essential to battery manufacturing. Internet companies that used data, spread information and refused to censure hate speech could influence behaviour. Cambridge Analytica and Mark Zuckerberg had used personal data to influence political campaigns. Those trends were related to the resurgence of fascism and the weakening of democracies. She questioned who would benefit from such a situation. Political parties were discredited and parliaments were losing power. If parliaments no longer mediated between the general public and economic powers, many would suffer. Perhaps it was time to consider a new social contract to combat intolerance and promote inclusive societies.

She condemned the attempted assassination of Vice-President Cristina Fernández Kirchner, which should be understood in the context of intolerance, hate speech and hidden economic powers. Building peaceful societies was only possible through parliamentarians' collective condemnation of such acts.

**Ms. E. Nyirasafari** (Rwanda) said that, at the 145th IPU Assembly, President Paul Kagame had recalled parliaments' role in fighting genocide ideology, which posed an increasing threat to peace and security, and she appreciated the ongoing attention to peaceful coexistence. Rwanda had a consensual and pluralistic democracy founded on power-sharing, national unity and reconciliation. In accordance with its Constitution, Rwanda had committed to preventing and punishing genocide, eradicating discrimination, ensuring equitable power-sharing and building a State that upheld the rule of law and sought solutions through dialogue and consensus. The National Consultative Forum of Political Organizations was a platform for politicians to exchange ideas, provide advice and strengthen unity. To promote social cohesion, Rwanda had introduced policies on unity and reconciliation, gender, social protection, and disability and inclusion. The Parliament represented men, women, youth, and people with disabilities and different political views. It had adopted laws to promote unity and inclusiveness and it participated in activities to promote peaceful coexistence, such as those of the Rwanda Women Parliamentary Forum and the Anti-Genocide Parliamentary Forum.

The causes of intolerance and exclusion included political instability, inequality, the concentration of power and hate speech. The situation in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo was a regional concern because of continuous Congolese support for the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, a rebel group composed of people who had committed genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda in 1994. That support did not align with the value of peaceful coexistence. The group had carried out attacks in Rwanda that had killed civilians. Instead of fixing the cause of the insecurity, the Democratic Republic of the Congo was shifting the blame. It should prioritize political solutions, as provided for in the Luanda and Nairobi processes. To eradicate the causes of intolerance, countries had to collaborate and promote peaceful coexistence, stop hate speech, build effective institutions and ensure good governance.

**Mr. J. Barreto** (Portugal) expressed his solidarity with Turkish and Syrian victims of the February 2023 earthquakes and wished the people of Ukraine strength, courage, resilience, hope and peace. There was also great suffering in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen and elsewhere. Suffering often originated from the intolerance of certain religions, ethnicities, generations or from a desire to obtain or remain in power. Societies consisted of diverse people with different life experiences, sensibilities, motivations, ambitions and goals. Some had been born in States without equal access to education, health care and social support.

Political extremes, dictatorships and supposedly democratic systems that undermined democratic values all contributed to intolerance, which manifested itself through a lack of respect for differences in culture, ethnicity, religion, gender and sexual orientation. It fuelled discrimination, prejudice, and physical and psychological violence, and threatened peaceful coexistence and inclusivity. Education was key to tackling that issue, and schools and universities should provide students with a positive understanding of differences. There should be social support and employment policies to promote equal opportunities in the labour market. Health policies should be inclusive, and health care, including mental health services, should be available to all. Housing policies should promote diversity and inclusion, avoid segregation and promote more integrated neighbourhoods and communities. Dialogue should be promoted to help citizens share experiences, learn from differences and develop empathy. Laws should protect rights and punish intolerance. Those who promoted hate speech on social networks, in the media or in politics should be held accountable. However, democratic systems had to be strengthened by increasing civic participation, promoting transparency, encouraging the political participation of underrepresented groups and fighting corruption. It was important to encourage States to adopt democratic systems by applying political pressure, strengthening civil society, disseminating information, cooperating internationally and promoting free and fair elections. The struggle to ensure human rights for all was ongoing and required constant attention. Civil society, awareness raising, political participation and international cooperation could help in that regard. Collective efforts were necessary to promote mutual respect, which was essential to building a more just and inclusive society and ensuring a peaceful future. No one should be left behind.

**Mr. F. Zon** (Indonesia) said that the world was severely marked by intolerance, racial discrimination, violence, discord and wars. Countries aspired for their citizens to live in peaceful States, free from intolerance, including religious intolerance as manifested through growing Islamophobia and recurrent burnings of the Qur'an.

In Indonesia, it was believed that diversity enriched life. The introduction of robust legal platforms promoted peaceful coexistence based on the acceptance of difference, mutual understanding and respect. Values of peace and tolerance were instilled in individuals and spread to families, schools, communities, nations and the global village. A culture of peace was maintained throughout life, including in conflict settlement, which promoted dialogue.

Warfare, hostility and intolerance persisted and were manifested through hate speech, blasphemy, apartheid and discrimination. The suffering and injustice that Palestinians experienced were most disturbing. The world had witnessed the occupation for over seven decades without taking action. It should end its hypocritical attitude. He asked how the world could allow land-grabbing, expulsions and death threats to continue. It bore responsibility for the deaths of over 200 people in the West Bank and East Jerusalem since the start of 2022. Amnesty International had recently published a report on the apartheid regime imposed on the people of East Jerusalem, Gaza and the West Bank. The plight of other Muslim minorities, such as in Rakhine province, Myanmar, should not be forgotten.

Inaction risked global stability and security. Parliamentarians had to urge the implementation of international legal instruments to fight intolerance. The United Nations should be strengthened to ensure peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies, and the Security Council in particular should act. Remnants of a colonial mentality should be eradicated. No country was above international law.

**Ms. S. Xayachack** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that the world was experiencing geopolitical competition, economic and energy crises, natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic, which had impacted economic development and efforts to maintain regional and global peace and security. He valued the work of the IPU and parliamentarians should continue fostering development partnerships and cooperation, strengthening parliamentary diplomacy, promoting multilateralism and ensuring peaceful solutions that upheld international law.

His country had continued to pursue its foreign policy of peace, independence and friendship, enhancing cooperation with all nations, fulfilling its regional and international obligations, and upholding commitments to cooperate with the international community to resolve disputes and address regional and global challenges. The National Assembly had strengthened its role by approving constitutional amendments and laws that aligned with international principles and by monitoring the implementation of laws, the Constitution and the national socioeconomic development plan. His country was committed to ratifying international treaties and conventions. He urged parliamentarians and IPU Members to continue promoting unity, multilateralism and dialogue.

**A representative of India**, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that it was unfortunate that the delegation of Pakistan had chosen to misuse the IPU platform by mentioning Jammu and Kashmir, which was unacceptable. The union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh had been and would always be an integral and inalienable part of India. No rhetoric and propaganda could override that fact and Pakistan had no right to comment on Indian affairs. India had repeatedly called on Pakistan to immediately vacate the Indian territories that it had illegally and forcibly occupied. It was ironic that a country that exported terrorists and was responsible for cross-border terrorist activities in Jammu and Kashmir claimed to champion human rights.

**A representative of Bahrain**, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that countries should not interfere in the affairs of friends and allies. Parliamentary forums should foster international relations and build bridges. The interference of other States, including Finland, in Bahraini affairs was unacceptable and Bahrain always refrained from interfering in their affairs. His country had freedom of expression, a free press and balanced representation of men and women. Although democracy in Bahrain was 93 years younger than in Finland, both countries had five women ministers. Therefore, Bahrain could not be accused of being less advanced, tolerant or open than other countries. He hoped that delegates would weigh their words, speak wisely and agree to meet with his delegation to share lessons learned and ask for explanations rather than rely on misinformation.

*The sitting rose at 18:05.*

## Sitting of Tuesday, 14 March 2023

### (morning)

*The sitting was called to order at 09:00 with Ms. S. D'Hose, President of the Senate of Belgium, in the Chair.*

#### Item 3 of the agenda (continued)

#### **General Debate on the theme *Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance*** (A/146/3-Inf.1)

**Mr. R. Fogiel** (Poland), acknowledging issues in many different regions and countries, said that he felt compelled to discuss unlawful Russian aggression against Ukraine, which was affecting his region, causing a food crisis in Africa, and creating a dangerous precedent for countries that were concerned about their sovereignty.

Discussions about peaceful coexistence had to be based on facts. There was no crisis or civil war in Ukraine, nor were there two points of view as Russian delegates claimed. The barbaric aggression of the Russian Federation had led to attacks on civilian infrastructure and the rape of women and children. Children had been kidnapped and sent to the Russian Federation, which amounted to genocide. Parliamentarians' goals should be to restore the rules-based order, uphold international law and bring those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity to justice. He encouraged those present to work towards those goals, which were essential for peaceful coexistence.

**Mr. V. Belski** (Belarus) said that the world was changing, and conflicts and crises were worsening. Interstate relations lacked dialogue and mutually respectful cooperation. President Lukashenko had called for a global process in the spirit of the San Francisco Conference which would result in clear and transparent agreements on a new world order, guaranteeing security.

Having lost one in three Belarussians during the Second World War, Belarus sought and valued peace through its foreign policy and had contributed to regional security. It had consistently called for the implementation of the Minsk Agreement to resolve the conflict in Ukraine, and President Lukashenko had initiated contact between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Negotiations had been held in Belarus, which was hosting more than 65,000 Ukrainian refugees, and diplomatic efforts to achieve peace should intensify.

Although Belarus ranked 34th in implementing the sustainable development goals (SDGs), the current state of international relations offset that work. Western States were unwilling to respect the choices of other nations or to have an honest discussion about regional security issues. The use of unilateral coercive measures that contradicted the Charter of the United Nations undermined rights. He urged the IPU and parliamentarians to stand in solidarity against policies of illegal sanctions.

Belarusian athletes had faced international, systemic and politically motivated discrimination, which violated the Olympic Charter and other international treaties. He urged the IPU to call for an end to that Western, discriminatory and isolationist policy.

Belarus had a system of measures to ensure equality and the participation of all citizens. It was taking steps to ensure gender parity and the Parliament focused on including children with disabilities in society. Issues with regard to autism diagnosis and children's assistance were being analysed. Belarus had a socially oriented economy, which guaranteed justice and protection for all, including the most vulnerable.

**Ms. V. Persaud** (Guyana) said that intolerance anywhere had a global impact and consistent commitment to its eradication would create a more peaceful world. Guyana was ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse and the Parliament was pivotal to celebrating that diversity, promoting unity and ensuring peace, understanding and mutual respect.

The Constitution of Guyana protected fundamental human rights and had been amended in 2003 to create commissions for ethnic relations, women and gender equality, the rights of the child, indigenous peoples and human rights. In 2007, the Parliament had adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ensuring that all legislation was gender-neutral and offered equal opportunity.

Guyana had ratified 11 human rights treaties, ensuring that education, the prevention of gender-based violence, child protection, employment, social security and labour were addressed in national legislation. Violence, particularly against women, stemmed from deeply rooted intolerance and Guyana was developing laws to improve protection.

The Parliament was ethnically and politically diverse and had a rotation of multiple small parties. There were legislated national holidays for major religious and ethnic groups. Women constituted 35% of the National Assembly. The Equal Rights Act and the Prevention of Discrimination Act ensured equality for women in the workplace, prohibited discrimination and promoted equal remuneration for men and women. The Speaker's National Youth Debating Competition enabled young people to discuss national issues. All sittings of the National Assembly were livestreamed and accessible to the public. A suggestion box allowed citizens to communicate concerns directly to the Speaker. When special select committees scrutinized bills, the public and specialists could submit statements. The Parliament remained a democratic space committed to reducing exclusion because intolerance continued to threaten peaceful coexistence. It was the collective responsibility of parliamentarians to create just legislative models promoting inclusivity.

**Mr. Y. Bolgert** (Kazakhstan) said that intolerance was persistent, particularly in a globalized and interdependent world, and had led to discrimination and violence. New approaches had to be developed nationally and globally to prevent it.

Kazakhstan had some 100 ethnic groups and 18 confessions and had developed a unique model to promote tolerance. In 1995, the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan had been established to improve cooperation on inter-ethnic relations between State institutions and civil society. Its status was set out in the Constitution and legislation. The Assembly represented all ethnic groups in the highest legislative body and had a quota of five seats in the Senate for members of ethnic groups.

Although laws effectively protected human rights, it was necessary to promote solidarity, tolerance, mutual respect and the celebration of diversity. Education was key and youth should be taught to be patriotic, open-minded, empathetic, respectful and curious about other cultures.

In 2003, the first Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions had been held in Kazakhstan to discuss interreligious cooperation. The United Nations and other international organizations had recognized its contribution to promoting dialogue between cultures and religions. The seventh Congress had focused on the role of religious leaders in the spiritual and social development of mankind in the post-pandemic world. Religious representatives and more than 100 delegations from 50 countries had attended. Parliamentarians should use the peace-making potential of religions to support spiritual authorities' efforts to achieve long-term stability. Dialogue and mutual support were essential to overcoming global challenges.

**Ms. S. Paunovic** (Serbia) said that promoting peaceful coexistence, tolerance and inclusive societies was a civilizational achievement. The principle of equality underpinned human rights and freedoms but intolerance and discrimination remained widespread. A tolerant society should be intolerant of intolerance. Dialogue, political will and especially education to promote inclusion and peaceful coexistence were necessary in that regard. States must create normative frameworks to guarantee equal treatment of citizens before the law and promote mutual understanding and respect for human rights.

Parliaments were the only State institution that represented an entire nation and parliamentarians were responsible for respecting the needs of all citizens. In Serbia, there were extensive reforms to harmonize the legal framework with relevant international and European standards. Serbia was a signatory to numerous conventions and had ratified eight of the most important human rights treaties created under the auspices of the United Nations (UN). It was the first UN member state to include the principle of leaving no one behind in its legal framework, the Serbian Government had adopted the Strategy for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination 2022-2030 and the National Assembly had adopted anti-discrimination laws on gender equality, labour, social protection, the Criminal Code and the rights of national minorities.

She had been born in Kosovo and Metohija but, for over two decades, she had been unable to return. Recently, a patriarch had been prevented from giving a liturgy at the seat of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Serbian children had been shot and those speaking Serbian had been beaten. It was parliamentarians' responsibility to uphold human rights, such as being permitted to live in one's birthplace.

**Ms. M. Mohammad Saleh** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that Syrians had been the victims of bloodshed and natural disasters. Her country was socially and culturally diverse and the Syrian regime was based on peaceful coexistence. However, there had been many attempts to hand her country to

extremist groups, who did not believe in peaceful coexistence and dialogue. Unilateral sanctions, which affected fuel, food and medicines and deprived Syrians of their dignity, ran counter to the UN Charter and international law, and inflicted a collective punishment. They weakened the ability of the local population to survive, as evidenced by the inability to provide humanitarian care following the Türkiye-Syria earthquake in February 2023. She thanked those who had provided support.

Her country suffered from Israeli aggression, which aimed to break the invincible will of Syrians. Airports and residential areas were repeatedly attacked. An American General's recent visit to the north of her country had also been a provocation. She urged parliamentarians to ensure that justice prevailed and sanctions were lifted so that her country could rebuild.

**Mr. A. João Da Luz** (Cabo Verde) said that he hoped for a more tolerant, inclusive and just world that advocated for peace, protected the environment, and valued human life and dignity over the geo-strategic interests of a small group. In that world, people respected each other despite their differences, promoted dialogue, cooperated to ensure complementarity between peoples and nations, and understood that individual happiness depended on the happiness of all. We would always need each other, and self-centredness led to intolerance, discrimination, conflicts and wars.

Peaceful coexistence could only be achieved through equality, the recognition that everyone had rights and the possibility for nations to benefit from their territory, culture and international cooperation. Multilateral spaces, such as those provided by the UN and the IPU, had to be strengthened to solve global problems. Although it was legitimate for nations to exert political, military, economic and referential leadership, they should do so peacefully, respectfully and tolerantly. Not everyone had the same capacity to resolve conflicts, but the consequences of conflicts were felt by all.

Peaceful coexistence and the building of inclusive societies required governments and citizens who promoted tolerance, demonstrated flexibility, respected freedom and human dignity, and promoted well-being and development. Coexistence, cooperation, regulation of multilateral relations and social awareness prevented intolerance and fostered dialogue, equality, responsible societies and the acceptance of differences. Parliamentarians understood their populations' aspirations and the responsibility of working towards common interests. The current IPU Assembly provided a space for dialogue, understanding, and global progress to ensure peaceful coexistence, develop inclusive societies and combat intolerance.

**Ms. M.d.C. Alva Prieto** (Peru) said that her suspicion, expressed at the 144th IPU Assembly, that former President Castillo wanted to establish a dictatorial regime had been proven right on 7 December 2022. However, his coup had failed due to lack of military support. A large majority of lawmakers had voted to impeach him, including his own supporters. Days later, some of those supporters had incomprehensibly encouraged the unrest that had led to vandalism and terrorism in Peruvian cities. In accordance with the Constitution, the Vice-President elected on the same ticket as Castillo, Dina Boluarte, had become President. Unfortunately, there had been calls for her resignation from some members of Congress in national and international forums.

As President of the Commission of External Relations, she rejected the destabilizing and undemocratic interference of the leaders of Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Chile, Colombia and Mexico. She was confident that their comments did not reflect the views of their populations.

It was important to note that Castillo's inner circle was accused of corruption and the coup was an attempt to cover up those allegations. Peru would not become a dictatorship and its democratic system would be defended against radical left-wing groups. Efforts should be made to uphold democracy and the rule of law in all countries. There was no democracy without parliaments.

**Ms. I. Foss** (Norway) said that freedom of expression was protected in Norway and was considered a human and fundamental right that promoted truth, democracy and independent thought. The Norwegian Constitution protected that freedom and regulated prior censorship.

Traditionally, there had been a lack of regulation on speech to ensure freedom of expression. However, the new digital public arena and social media, which provided an overload of information and spread disinformation and hate speech, presented challenges. Freedom of expression required tolerance to disagreeable views and restraint in one's reactions. Some legal boundaries were necessary to ensure that it was safe to express oneself and that everyone could enjoy that freedom.

In its report to Government, the Commission on Freedom of Expression had concluded that more sanctions were not the solution. A strong and diverse civil society and a sensibly regulated public sphere continued to be the best guarantee of genuine freedom of expression. A healthy culture of expression was just as important as safeguarding legal protection for freedom of expression.

**Mr. I. Čelić** (Croatia) said that intolerance was increasing because the rights of national minorities, languages and cultures were not recognized, leading to extremism and conflict. It was parliamentarians' duty to ensure that that could not be used as a pretext for external actors to defend minorities and create chaos in other countries.

The Croatian Parliament had established a Committee on Human and National Minority Rights to monitor the implementation of policies on national minorities, which had to be in accordance with the Constitution. Eight parliamentary seats were reserved for minorities, and members of parliament regularly consulted with bodies and experts and acted on signed international documents on subjects relating to minorities. They also cooperated with academic, professional, governmental and non-governmental organizations to protect and monitor minority rights.

The media and mistrust of democracy and democratic institutions were major challenges for parliaments, particularly in Europe. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights should be upheld, and parliaments should be guided by IPU initiatives on the subject such as the Quebec City Declaration on *Citizenship, identity and linguistic and cultural diversity in a globalized world*. The IPU had always promoted dialogue between States, which was the only path to overcoming current challenges.

**Mr. G. Ashyrov** (Turkmenistan) said that his country's domestic and foreign policies were guided by the principle of peacefulness. The UN had recognized the neutrality of Turkmenistan twice and Turkmenistan constantly promoted international initiatives at the UN level. It had authored 20 resolutions adopted at the UN General Assembly, including *The Role of the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia*. At the initiative of Turkmenistan, the UN had declared 2023 the International Year of Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace and 2025 the Year of Peace and Trust. Those initiatives encouraged parliamentarians to solve challenges in promoting peace.

Turkmenistan was implementing joint projects, such as the Trans-Afghanistan pipeline, the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Power Interconnection Project and the Lapis Lazuli Corridor, to develop the region and strengthen security.

Parliaments resisted violence and promoted peaceful coexistence and diversity. The State policy of Turkmenistan prioritized ensuring peace and security, and strengthening the foundations of a democratic, legal and secular State. The Parliament of Turkmenistan, alongside State institutions, used national, regional and international events to promote peace among different communities, counter threats and improve activities in that regard. Turkmenistan would assist in the regional, national and international implementation of decisions taken at the current IPU Assembly.

**Ms. G. Burokiene** (Lithuania) said that providing equal opportunities created inclusive societies and prevented intolerance. The principle of equality was enshrined in the Lithuanian Constitution and legislation, ensuring that Lithuanians had the same opportunities to study, work and participate in political and social life. However, gender equality had not been achieved. Although women had assumed leading roles in national politics, only 28% of parliamentarians were women.

National minorities were an integral part of Lithuanian society. They had contributed to the creation of Lithuania and defended its freedom and independence. When the Russian Federation had started the war in Ukraine, Lithuanians had warmly welcomed Ukrainian refugees fleeing atrocities. The Seimas had ensured that they could receive medical care, study in Ukrainian and find employment. We should not tolerate the Russian Federation's violation of human rights and freedom, which disregarded international order and democratic values.

**Mr. S. Gunnlaugsson** (Iceland) said that peace and tolerance were among the most pressing global issues. However, it seemed that the greater the issue, the greater the restraints on free speech. To truly harness the power of free debate, issues had to be discussed without fear to find the best solutions. Iceland and other Western countries which considered themselves the champions of democratic values, were increasingly curtailing freedom of speech and thought to prevent hate speech. Authoritarian regimes and extremist groups had always claimed that curtailing freedoms and the rule of law was for the greater good. Treating individuals equally, rather than separating them into groups, would build inclusive societies and fight intolerance. Similarly, education and the rule of law were far more effective at tackling hate speech and false information. Citizens should be trusted to consider information and make decisions. Parliamentarians had to believe in the importance of free speech, even if this entailed listening to disagreeable opinions. Similarly, they should remain open-minded and not become entrenched in their views. He called on the Bahraini authorities to release Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, who had been imprisoned since 2011 for using his freedom of expression.

**Ms. V. Walters** (New Zealand) said that everyone had experienced pivotal moments in their national history involving acts of intolerance and hate. In New Zealand, the tragic Christchurch mosque shooting had instilled the belief that inclusivity required a commitment to have ongoing, trusting and respectful conversations. It had led to the establishment of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the terrorist attack on Christchurch masjidain and the Christchurch Call.

New Zealand had an active civil society that advocated for issues. It had the most lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) members of Parliament in the world. Schools provided free period products and 50% of members of public sector boards were women. Te reo Māori was taught in school and the Pacific and Chinese communities had received apologies for historic discrimination. Laws had been passed to allow same-sex marriage, ban conversion practices, decriminalize abortion and create safe abortion areas. However, it was important to remember that those successes were recent.

Parliamentarians had a responsibility to address intolerance around the world. She had shared fellow parliamentarians' outrage at the illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine, the closure of Kabul airport, the death of Mahsa Amini, and the Tatmatdaw deposition of the elected Myanmar Government. The fight for human rights and inclusion would continue.

**Mr. A. Ntugu Nsa** (Equatorial Guinea) said that the theme of the General Debate should be analysed in terms of how insecurity, violence, discrimination, poverty, inequality, corruption and armed conflicts affected circumstances. The underlying cultural, economic and political causes of those issues should be assessed. Peaceful coexistence was a positive, dynamic and participatory process that entailed accepting differences and recognizing, respecting, appreciating and listening to others to promote dialogue and end conflicts.

Refugees, internally displaced people, asylum seekers, and repatriated and stateless people faced discrimination. For decades, Equatorial Guinea had welcomed people from across the world, combating all types of discrimination, ensuring peaceful coexistence and creating a cohesive and democratic society.

He condemned the European Parliament resolution against his country, which resulted from serious, malicious and baseless Spanish accusations of violence, persecution and human rights violations against political activists, including Spanish nationals and dual Spanish and Equatoguinean citizens. The resolution referred to their detention, trial and sentencing for acts of terrorism in the failed coup of December 2017, in which France and Spain had been involved. The resolution specifically referred to the case of Julio Obama Mofuman, who had suffered from health issues. The unacceptable resolution demonstrated a lack of neutrality and dubious aims that had been present for decades but were disguised as attempts to promote democracy. The European Parliament should not interfere in matters that did not concern its geopolitical space and the IPU should urge France and Spain to stop interfering in the sovereign internal affairs of Equatorial Guinea.

**Mr. G.A.R. Mendoza Leigue** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that all wars should be firmly rejected because they undermined the legitimacy of elected representatives and did not resolve conflicts. It would be hypocritical to tolerate some but not others. That meant rejecting the events taking place in Equatorial Guinea, Palestine and Ukraine. There were also low-intensity wars, which encouraged coups and invasions to appropriate natural resources, facilitated the colonialization of power through military forces and subjugated nature.

Peaceful coexistence was intended to maintain a balance of military power after the Second World War. However, it was possible that not enough was done to promote peace, encourage inclusivity and prevent intolerance. Democratic regimes could not support racism, coloniality, xenophobia and misogyny. Parliaments should be intolerant of intolerance. In addition to the IPU Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, a body specifically for peace should be established, consisting of a general section and one for each geopolitical area of the world.

Peace also involved protecting the rights of nature. In April 2024, a UN meeting, co-organized by the IPU, to guarantee the rights of the earth and discuss another system to achieve peace and inclusivity, uphold the rights of nature, and prevent intolerance should be held.

**Ms. A.N. Reynoso Sánchez** (Mexico) said that the Mexican Government's security strategy had failed, leading to an increase in organized crime and violence. Drug trafficking was a multidimensional issue and, as a transit country, Mexico needed other countries to tackle the sale of drugs and weapons. Hate speech also led to violence. The daily presidential conference was used to attack social groups, the middle class, and leaders and legislators of other countries for thinking differently, flagging risks to Mexican democracy or being aspirational. Those attacks sowed division within Mexican society.

Peace was built within homes, schools, workplaces, churches, communities and governments. In that regard, the Embassies for Peace (Embajadas de Paz) initiative would be launched in Guanajuato to create peace and security. Parliamentarians must respect differences, coexist peacefully and end hate speech, which created intolerance and endangered freedom.

**Mr. M.F. Balde** (Guinea) said that peaceful coexistence and tolerance underpinned peace and development but were jeopardized by the pursuit of interests in the political, economic and social spheres. In the political sphere, those interests included leaders' excessive ambition and desire to remain in power. There was also the tampering of constitutions, fraudulent elections, coups and Western support for illegitimate leaders in African States. In the economic sphere, there was chaotic and selfish Western exploitation of African wealth through imposed leaders and the deterioration of trading terms for African States. In the social sphere, communities were manipulated by politics, injustice, exclusion, instability, poor access to basic social services and the misuse of social networks.

It was not possible to ensure peaceful coexistence and tolerance without justice. He urged parliamentarians, some of whom would become Heads of State, to prioritize human dignity and renounce personal ambition and interests. In Tunisia, sub-Saharan Africans were enduring crime, violence and kidnappings following xenophobic speech from the authorities. Victims included students, tourists, residents and those seeking medical care. He urged Tunisian parliamentarians to put an end to that violence.

**Mr. D.D. Lompo** (Burkina Faso), speaking on behalf of the President of the Transitional Legislative Assembly, said that Burkina Faso had hosted the 106th IPU Assembly when the attacks on the World Trade Centre had occurred. Twenty-two years later, the aftermath of those attacks still seriously impacted African countries.

The President of the Transitional Legislative Assembly had met with Mr. M. Chungong to discuss sociopolitical developments in Burkina Faso and create a roadmap to provide IPU support, outline reforms and return to normality. In contrast to that courteous and respectful approach, other interparliamentary and international organizations and national parliaments had shunned his country. He urged representatives of those parliaments and organizations to encourage a change in attitude.

The theme of the debate was relevant to Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, which suffered from terrorist attacks that caused internal displacement and left children homeless. Other nations should help to combat all forms of terrorism to bring peace to all countries.

**Ms. P. Stienen** (Netherlands) said that all parliamentarians had different aspects to their identity, which contributed to their work. It was possible to learn from each other to achieve peaceful coexistence, create inclusive laws and have healthy disagreements. In real democracies, there would be different opinions about how to solve problems, end wars, create peace and provide good education, health care and access to liveable environments.

Parliamentarians had to be aware of when they were making mistakes. Two years earlier, the Dutch Senate had investigated the effectiveness of anti-discrimination legislation. A report had been produced, focusing on the labour market, education, social security and the police. It had found that insufficient consideration of citizens' vulnerability in legislation and policy had led to gaps between the law and its implementation. The report provided a framework for drafting and assessing laws, which emphasized the importance of ensuring trust, paying attention to citizens' needs, standardizing language, simplifying laws, taking responsibility and demonstrating leadership, and creating clear and effective procedures.

Democracies had to be open to criticism, which could be uncomfortable. Her delegation underlined the concerns raised in the letter from the Twelve Plus Group about the revocation of visas for the Human Rights Watch delegation two days before the start of the 146th IPU Assembly. The President of the IPU should make an official statement denouncing those events.

**Mr. T.R. Joshua** (Singapore) said that ethnic and religious harmony had been a fundamental objective of his Government since 1965. Although three quarters of the population was Chinese, Singapore emphasized that it was a multiracial, multicultural and multireligious society. The Constitution enshrined the principle of meritocracy and protected minorities.

The majority of Singaporeans lived in public housing and the Ethnic Integration Policy ensured that the ethnic ratio in each apartment block was the same as the national ratio, which prevented enclaves from forming. To build strong relations, it was important for people of different backgrounds to interact. Each neighbourhood had different places of worship and catered to various dietary requirements. Children attended schools in those neighbourhoods and interacted with people of different backgrounds from an early age.

Although the policy was intrusive and difficult to implement and maintain, the Government had modified it at significant effort and cost. Studies showed that it successfully promoted racial and religious harmony and fostered understanding. Polls indicated that the population strongly supported it. Although it may not be applicable to other countries, it demonstrated that governments and parliaments needed political will to enact laws and implement policies to promote inclusivity and peaceful coexistence, and fight intolerance.

Singapore had implemented laws and policies, which were altered, when necessary, to create a multiracial, egalitarian nation and it remained vigilant against divisive forces.

**Mr. W.M. Aye** (Myanmar) said that the military junta had seized power from the democratically elected civilian government and had imprisoned the President and Cabinet members. Unable to attend Parliament in person, parliamentarians had established a virtual parliament on Zoom. At its first meeting, the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) had been formed to represent the Parliament, which the people of Myanmar supported. The National Unity Government had also been formed in consultation with the revolutionary forces.

The military junta had increased human rights violations and crimes against humanity and disregarded the efforts of the international community, including the IPU. Democracy, peace, the rule of law and development had deteriorated. Efforts were under way to promote peaceful coexistence and there was a roadmap to build a federal democratic union.

He urged parliamentarians to pass resolutions to recognize the CRPH and the National Unity Government. They should work with the CRPH to protect democracy, uphold human rights and end the war. They should urge governments to provide emergency humanitarian assistance to displaced people. Parliamentarians should also ask the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to implement its five-point consensus to stop killings and restore democracy. Help was needed to hold military leaders and their accomplices to account for crimes against humanity, war crimes and human rights violations.

*Ms. D. Hastings-Williams (Guyana) took over as Chair.*

**Mr. J. Ntakirutimana** (East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)), said that the theme of the Assembly was timely because it reflected issues that the EALA was handling. The Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community recognized women's contribution towards socioeconomic transformation and aimed for gender parity, the inclusion of people with disabilities, and democracy. The EALA Elections Act encouraged the election of male and female EALA members with different opinions, and gender parity had been achieved. The East African Community had a gender policy that advocated for women's equal rights and ensured women's empowerment was integrated into work to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality.

The East African Community had deployed forces to the Democratic Republic of Congo and it hoped that peace would soon be restored. In conflicts, women and children were most vulnerable to death and rape. Women suffered from sexually transmitted diseases, stigmatization and unwanted pregnancies but still had to support their families. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons was a major cause of instability and insecurity, especially in developing countries, and illicit weapons flows had to be eradicated.

In East Africa, serious drought had affected agricultural productivity and hunger was increasing. He questioned whether the issues affecting his region were examples of exclusion and human rights infringements and he urged parliamentarians to solve issues affecting humanity and restore hope.

**Mr. E.M. Snowe** (Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)), said that various factors drove intolerance and exclusion in West Africa, including religious extremism, particularly from Boko Haram in Nigeria, and the traditional practice of social placement, which encouraged youth and female marginalization in governance and politics. Exclusion and alterations to national constitutions had prompted military takeovers in Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali, leading to violence and extremism. Weak State institutions led to poor governance, corruption and, in turn, socioeconomic exclusion. Hate speech, particularly on social media, led to violence.

ECOWAS had launched delocalized meetings to work with young people and women to foster peace. ECOWAS Female Parliamentarians brought all sectors of society together, including women and youth, to prevent exclusion. He congratulated Senegal and Sierra Leone for passing gender parity bills. Alongside the ECOWAS Commission, the ECOWAS Parliament had observed elections in Benin and Nigeria, and it would observe legislative and presidential elections in Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone later that year. The Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-Keeping and Security had fostered peace and averted conflict.

**Mr. M. Dlamini** (Eswatini) said that winning the fight against intolerance and achieving peaceful coexistence would create inclusive societies and ensure national peace and security. That process began in homes, spread to societies and was magnified through international cooperation. In his speech at the opening of the final session of the 11th Parliament, King Mswati III had highlighted the importance of unity and tolerance in nation-building. Each nation's identity provided it with unity and strength to overcome tests and conflicts. Tolerance and engagement were key in those situations and the customs and traditions of Eswatini promoted respect, peace and unity.

It was regrettable that severe conflicts persisted, destroying livelihoods and affecting nations that were not directly involved. Rejoicing in another's suffering was regrettable; causing that suffering was criminal. In that regard, States should not encourage suffering and it was unthinkable that some sponsored the suffering of others. The theme of the General Debate had to be taken seriously to ensure peace.

Eswatini was committed to implementing measures and working with relevant parties to achieve harmony, peace and stability, despite the natural disasters it had experienced and its economic situation.

**Mr. D. Laouhingamaye** (Chad), speaking on behalf of the President of the Transitional National Council, said that intolerance entailed a lack of respect for unfamiliar practices and beliefs and it therefore varied according to civilizations, cultures and social values. In Chad, there were different forms of intolerance and exclusion based on prejudices and sociocultural factors. Governmental and political systems, religious practices, conflicts within and among communities, ignorance, injustice, poverty, hate speech on social media and a lack of future prospects also contributed to intolerance.

For years, Chad had endured political turmoil, violence and extremism, which had resulted in rights violations and restrictions on freedom. However, the Chadian Constitution promoted tolerance and inclusion as fundamental principles for peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies, and Chad had ratified international texts to combat intolerance and promote respect. The criminal code had been updated to deal with intolerance and efforts had been made to increase interreligious and interfaith dialogue, raise awareness of different lifestyles and teach youth about tolerance and human rights. Religious platforms had been established, which involved religious leaders, and a decree had established 28 November as a national day for prayer to promote peace, prevent religious conflicts and encourage interreligious dialogue.

Chad wanted to contribute to promoting peaceful coexistence, building inclusive societies and creating a more tolerant and respectful world. However, the Sahel was experiencing a crisis that threatened those aims. He urged parliamentarians to show solidarity and provide greater support to implement the plan of action of the Call of the Sahel. A global response was needed to fight intolerance, promote peaceful coexistence and build more inclusive societies.

**Mr. G. Silberschmidt** (Director, Health and Multilateral Partnerships, WHO) said that, in the words of the Director-General of WHO, there could not be health without peace, and there could not be peace without health. Global crises were eroding human rights and increasing humanitarian needs, which made the long-standing collaboration between WHO and the IPU more critical than ever.

Health was a precondition and an outcome of inclusiveness. It challenged discrimination, delivered on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and demonstrated how successfully societies promoted peaceful coexistence. WHO supported national efforts to strengthen health policies, research sexual and reproductive health and rights, and provide leadership in global health security architecture.

WHO promoted diversity, addressed abuses and challenged unequal gender relations. It handled difficulties in accessing health services for women, men and people who were lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex or had other identities. It used science to produce the best evidence, innovation and digital solutions. However, prioritizing health was a political choice and progress should be made to stop preventable deaths during childbirth and pregnancy, meet contraception needs and reduce the number of people facing catastrophic or impoverishing health spending.

WHO was proud to strengthen its collaboration with the IPU because parliaments were critical to legislation, government accountability, budgeting and representing people's needs. The shared vision of health for all should be renewed ahead of the UN High-level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage.

**Mr. R. Leite** (President, UNITE Parliamentarians Network for Global Health) said that UNITE was committed to using its observer status to work with the IPU and bring health to all. It was present in almost 100 countries and partnered with WHO, working in a peer-to-peer manner to protect the health of citizens around the world.

The world was experiencing crises relating to intolerance, extremism, violence, human rights violations, misinformation and a lack of trust in democracies. Health, as a prerequisite for sustainable development and a building block for peace, could provide a solution. Having worked as a volunteer doctor in Ukraine, he had seen how health care workers treated Ukrainians and Russians equally. Politicians and policymakers should learn from them and embrace health as an instrument to ensure peace, overcome poverty and inequality, empower the vulnerable and improve quality of life, well-being and happiness.

It was parliamentarians' obligation to protect citizens and hold governments to account with regard to the negotiations to create a pandemic agreement. It was their duty to ensure that it was approved at the World Health Assembly and ratified by their governments and parliaments. It was only a matter of time before the next pandemic occurred and there would be no excuse for lack of preparation. It was within parliamentarians' power to make universal health coverage a reality.

**Mr. M.R. Majidi** (Secretary-General, Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA)), said that parliaments and parliamentarians were responsible for fighting racism, racial discrimination and other forms of intolerance by promoting diversity and tolerance. They should promote respect for world peace, security and the rule of law and should use all means available to support peaceful coexistence, encourage cooperation between communities and prevent ethnic, cultural or religious discrimination. In that regard, education, debate and better understanding of cultures and religions was necessary. Diversity should lead to dialogue and respect within and among civilizations, and the APA recognized its importance to creating strong, mutually respectful Asian communities. The APA encouraged further international dialogue and interreligious debate across Asia, promoted the benefits of diversity and good governance, and rejected all forms of discrimination.

**Mr. F. Zon** (Vice-Chair, Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC)) said that, several days earlier, GOPAC had held discussions on the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) to reassess progress and how parliaments could implement its provisions. Those discussions had highlighted the importance of measures for parliamentary openness and transparency to ensure parliaments were inclusive, participatory and representative. Corruption fuelled conflict and created divisions, political polarity and xenophobia. Examples included favouritism, the accidental or deliberate creation of discriminatory laws, and a corrupt status quo benefiting some groups and harming the vulnerable.

Citizens' equal access to public services and participation in all public decisions would bring divided communities together. Parliaments should enhance and assess their openness and transparency in accordance with UNCAC, particularly Article 13, and should agree on norms and guidance to ensure meaningful participation. Parliaments should also increase their involvement in the Conference of the State Parties to UNCAC and GOPAC would continue to engage with its diverse members.

**Mr. M. Lassouaoui** (Senior Manager, Outreach Europe, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)) said that UNRWA had tirelessly supported Palestine refugees. It provided education to over 545,000 children and 8,000 students and basic health support to 2 million refugees. It gave food and other assistance to some 1.7 million people and had the largest microfinance programme in the Middle East, creating jobs in an area with few employment prospects.

All UNRWA fields of operation were facing crises. For years, Gaza had suffered conflicts and an economic blockade. The West Bank was undergoing its highest levels of violence for 15 years and the war in the Syrian Arab Republic had devastated the lives of hundreds of thousands of Palestine refugees. In February 2023, the earthquake had affected over 50,000 Palestine refugees. Levels of poverty, unemployment and desperation were unprecedentedly high in Lebanon.

In December 2022, the majority of Member States of the UN General Assembly had voted to extend the mandate of UNRWA for another three years but Member States had not provided adequate funding, which jeopardized access to education, food and cash assistance. Parliaments should be proud of UNRWA achievements, to which they had contributed. Those included universal infant vaccination, reduced maternal mortality, gender parity in schools and job creation. UNRWA emergency and human development programmes contributed to economic development and stability in the Middle East. The UNRWA student parliament empowered students to enjoy and exercise their rights, uphold human rights values and contribute to their society and community.

As stated by world leaders and in UN resolutions, Palestine refugees needed support while a solution was sought to their plight.

**Mr. S. Boule** (Senior Specialist, Parliamentary Affairs, The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria) said that it was often the most vulnerable to disease who lacked access to health care because of criminalization, stigma and discrimination. Gay and bisexual men were 28 times more likely to contract HIV than other adult men but same-sex sexual activity was criminalized in 67 countries and punishments were often extremely harsh. Transgender women, sex workers and people who injected drugs were similarly vulnerable. In countries where those groups were criminalized and marginalized, safe access to HIV prevention, testing, care and treatment was often impossible and drove new infections. Those groups accounted for 70% of new HIV infections globally, 94% of new infections outside of sub-Saharan Africa and 51% of new infections within sub-Saharan Africa.

Data showed that intolerance was preventing the eradication of HIV. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS global target for 2021 to reduce new HIV infections to 500,000 had been missed by one million cases. In response, the Global Fund required all funding requests to include programmes to address barriers to health services caused by criminalization, stigma and discrimination. Sensitivity training for health care workers and law enforcement, legal literacy for those at risk, and funding for legal services to ensure marginalized people could exercise their rights had been successful. The 2023–2028 Global Fund Strategy committed to providing more community-based and community-led services to ensure outreach, prevention, care and treatment for those in need. Changing laws, policies and practices required political will; parliamentarians and the IPU had a major role to play in that regard.

**Mr. N. Trad Filho** (Delegate, Amazonian Parliament) said that he was grateful to the IPU for recognizing the reactivation of the Amazonian Parliament. It was important that Amazonian countries were aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

There were 20 million people in the Amazon. At least 20% of Brazilian forests had been destroyed but Brazil remained among the most biodiverse countries in the world. It was therefore essential for parliaments to implement public policies to develop the economy, ensure sustainable development and protect forests. Forest economies had to be developed, which was challenging. Climate change also posed threats and would affect everyone, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable. It was important to manage water and fish resources sustainably, and attract investments and different industries. The Amazonian Parliament was ready to receive IPU representatives in the Amazon.

**Ms. M. Kiener Nellen** (Council Member, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND)) said that we should never forget the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences of nuclear tests, bombings and accidents. The UN had been formed to end war and its first resolution had been to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction.

She highlighted the following resolutions, publications and organizations to help parliamentarians in their work: UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 2250 on the roles of women and youth in peace and security; *Assuring our Common Future*, which included examples of parliamentary action to implement UN resolutions; *Nuclear Disarmament for Religious Leaders and Communities*, which highlighted commonalities and cooperation between faiths; the UN Alliance for Civilizations, which explored the roots of polarization.

PNND and PeaceWomen Across the Globe would cooperate with the IPU. The ongoing arms race, which had to end, absorbed funds that were urgently needed for health, climate protection, humanitarian aid, peace promotion and the fulfilment of the SDGs by 2030. The UN Summit of the Future must recommend the global elimination of nuclear weapons no later than 2045.

**Mr. M. Bouden** (Algeria), expressing his condolences to the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye, said that promoting inclusive societies and peaceful coexistence should begin with tackling crises and setting aside differences. Unfavourable policies had been imposed on Algeria during its colonization. However, Algeria had returned to a path of peaceful coexistence, providing citizens with a sense of dignity and a need to participate in an increasingly progressive manner to achieve development goals. The International Day of Living Together in Peace, celebrated on 16 May, upheld the desire to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Sustainable development was impossible without international peaceful coexistence and Algeria was working globally and regionally, particularly within the UN and international bodies, to achieve its objectives. It would continue to support fair causes around the world and the President of Algeria was increasing work to end directly and indirectly colonial situations, particularly within his region. In that

regard, it was important to address the Palestinian suffering caused by Israeli occupation and increasingly aggressive Israeli attempts to annex Palestinian territories. Efforts to achieve peace between Palestinians and Israelis had been made a few years earlier. Parliamentarians should shoulder the responsibility to reduce tensions in conflicts and find solutions. The Parliament of Algeria supported the IPU's pivotal role in sharing experiences of adopting legislation in countries.

**Mr. Y. Miura** (Japan), commencing the segment of the debate reserved for second speakers from national delegations, said that the Prime Minister had delivered a speech at the 211th Session of the Diet in which he had stated that Japan would work to create a society that respected diversity and gave everyone a sense of purpose. In that regard, the talents of women and youth, and the strengths of local regions, had to be leveraged.

Having served as a member of the Oda city council, he was aware of the importance of representing local communities and conveying constituents' views on regional revitalization to the Government. Discussions on difficulties relating to digital human resources and the need to implement budgetary support had led to the establishment of the digital agency monitoring and managing the digital transformation of Japan. Information and communication technology and the creation of Society 5.0 would reduce the wealth gap, promote inclusivity and respond to municipalities' needs.

As Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications, he had been responsible for managing the Administrative Evaluation Bureau and he had discussed citizens' problems with consultants who worked with Government, thereby reassuring citizens that their problems were reflected in policies and helping them lead peaceful and healthy lives.

The Government was developing legislation to combat loneliness, an issue which had been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Globalization had created an interconnected world and Japan had to contribute proactively to the formation of inclusive societies that promoted global peace and happiness.

**Ms. S. Atallahjan** (Canada) said that inclusivity and peaceful coexistence required work by both governments and citizens. Although Canada was safe, welcoming and inclusive for those fleeing violence, she had proposed that the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights study Islamophobia after learning that more Muslims had been killed in targeted attacks in Canada than any other G7 country. Incidents targeting the Muslim population were more likely to target women. The Standing Committee had visited a mosque where a terrorist attack had taken place and had heard accounts of Muslims being told to go home, young women being harassed and physically assaulted for wearing the hijab, and Muslims feeling unsafe. However, there was greater understanding of the challenges that Muslims faced and a commitment from Canadians to overcome them. It was important to acknowledge problems and to speak out against bigotry and hatred. Parliamentarians should take a stand against hatred and ensure everyone felt safe.

**Ms. D. Bergamini** (Italy) said that increasing global complexity posed challenges for coexistence. Interconnection was a fact, but peaceful coexistence was a choice. Restoring faith in others by protecting them and their rights and beliefs would help to tackle inequality and threats to peace. Literacy was key in that regard.

It was easy to feel alone when faced with challenges. Migrants were making dangerous journeys across the Mediterranean to come to Italy and it was not always possible to save lives, which posed a challenge to all countries, not just Italy. It was important to cooperate to show that, despite the appearance of lengthy procedures, compromises and inefficiency, parliaments could respond to challenges. She urged parliamentarians to use the IPU to strengthen each other and promote peaceful coexistence.

**Ms. M. Guerra Castillo** (Mexico) said that, with regard to discussions about inclusive societies, tolerance and SDG 16, women had to be present in political, economic and social improvement processes. Parliamentarians' efforts to include women varied, but some had exceeded quotas to achieve gender parity, which had changed politics and led to agendas that took into account the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Women contributed to inclusive education, but men and women had to work together in that regard. There was a need for unity to eliminate the patriarchal vision and achieve equality, improve the world and protect the environment.

Women represented 50% of society and had the right to participate fully in its processes. Political and online violence posed a threat to them. Legal reforms had ensured gender parity in the Chamber of Deputies. Political and economic power had to be shared to create a truly inclusive society and eradicate intolerance.

**Ms. G. Mykjaland** (Norway) said that to ensure democracy for everyone, intolerance and discrimination had to be eradicated. It was concerning that a minority of the world's population lived in democracies and that the number of authoritarian regimes was growing. Freedom of expression was repressed, the free press was censored, non-governmental organizations were silenced, LGBT people were harassed and human rights activists were imprisoned.

The UN Women's Commission estimated that it would take 300 years before gender equality was achieved. In Afghanistan, people of various ethnic backgrounds had been killed for marching for women's rights. Depriving 50% of the population of the right to education was criminal. It violated human rights and destroyed the future of Afghanistan. In the United States, ending the constitutional right to abortion had changed the health care choices of millions of Americans. Women's bodies were more heavily regulated than guns. Some 22% of Norwegian women had been victims of rape, and half of those women had been minors when the abuse had occurred. Developments in women's rights were moving in the wrong direction. The full potential of men and women had to be leveraged to solve challenges.

She urged the release of Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, whose imprisonment contradicted the values of the IPU.

**Mr. K. Valentin** (Denmark) said that Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja, a Danish-Bahraini citizen, had built a good life in Denmark and had decided to fight for democracy, human rights, freedom of speech and freedom of the media in Bahrain, while respecting people's lives and traditions. According to the UN, he had been unjustly arrested in 2011 for a peaceful human rights protest. He remained in prison but was dying. He should be returned home to his family, which would be an important step towards improving dialogue between Bahrain and Denmark.

**Ms. B. Liso** (France) said that legislation had been passed to ensure the inclusion of people with disabilities in schools and businesses, and to widen social security to take into account an ageing population. The National Assembly would consider a draft law on the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games and would ensure that they drove inclusivity.

The Parliament had a women's delegation that combated all forms of sex-based discrimination. Sexist and sexual violence persisted globally and the term "femicide" should be legally recognized to prompt cultural change. Perpetrators of violence should be dealt with in the professional, psychological and even medical fields to prevent reoffence, which was common. Removing the violent party from the family home was an effective measure that was favoured in France because it allowed the violent party to reflect and break the cycle of violence. In 2020, it had reduced cases of reoffence by 6%.

A willingness to fight all forms of discrimination was necessary to achieve peaceful coexistence and create inclusive societies, which contributed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. National parliaments were more important than ever in a world of increasing tension and intolerance. They should become inclusive political institutions to take into account citizens' aspirations.

**Ms. G. Morawska-Stanecka** (Poland) said that it was crucial to consider what peaceful coexistence meant. Democratic and peaceful countries should be vigilant: maintaining freedom and peace required work and economic interests did not always align with tolerance, respect and peaceful coexistence.

Democratic and fair elections were important because stable States avoided confrontation and sought peaceful resolutions to conflicts. Voting should be transparent and political parties should have equal access to public media. It was difficult for elections to be fair when the ruling party monopolized media coverage and produced unobjective reporting.

Reducing inequalities, such as by ensuring equal opportunities for men and women, supporting social groups that faced exclusion, and involving young people in public discourse, contributed to State stability. Parliamentarians could combat intolerance by persistently fighting hate speech and misinformation and setting a good example to society. They should choose their words responsibly, avoid populist statements and use verified information in debates. In that regard, the IPU could adopt a resolution calling on parliamentarians around the world to combat hate speech and disinformation actively.

**Ms. R. Garvey** (Ireland) said that if politicians were serious about promoting peaceful coexistence and fighting intolerance, tackling the climate and biodiversity crises had to be their priority. In doing so, they would decrease the number of climate refugees and ensure there was sufficient food and clean air and water. Future generations would know that politicians had listened to scientists,

youth and people from small island States. If politicians did not take action, wars would be fought over resources, it would be difficult to grow food because pollinators would be extinct, and populations would become increasingly unhealthy. Developing countries would follow in the footsteps of the West and build cities and towns around cars, which caused air pollution and contributed to childhood obesity by reducing spaces for children to play outdoors.

She thanked Bahrain for signing the Paris Agreement and participating in the 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change but actions spoke louder than words. She noted the work of ESB International, an Irish company, on public transport. It was also collaborating with the Electricity and Water Authority of Bahrain on solar and wind energy projects. Climate solutions were already available but had to be implemented.

Achievements could not be made without equality for women, who were the planet's biggest asset. They were capable and willing to contribute.

**Mr. K. Ait Mik** (Morocco) said that religious diversity helped to establish inclusive societies. Human rights should underpin parliamentarians' work and collaborations to achieve the SDGs. Young people, many of whom lived in developing countries, were important to ensuring peaceful coexistence. They had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and would be affected by climate change and collapsing food and energy security. Hate speech, conflicts and wars were taking their toll on the Balkans, the Middle East, the Sahel and sub-Saharan Africa. In light of that, young people should promote a culture of dialogue to establish peaceful societies.

**Ms. E. Ernst-Dziedzic** (Austria), commencing the segment of the debate reserved for young parliamentarians, said that the challenges in creating inclusive societies differed between countries. The worsening of the climate crisis would prompt more people to leave their countries, creating conflicts and integration challenges. Politicians often discussed integration in terms of assimilation: refugees should be as invisible as possible. However, she believed that integration entailed communication, collaboration and meaningful social relationships. Austria and other European countries had to improve refugee access to the labour market, provide language courses, prevent discrimination and help refugees become members of society. Safe migration routes should be created to help refugees move out of large camps on European borders and move to places with better living conditions. Those significant challenges presented an opportunity to create more diverse, cooperative societies.

**Ms. H. Hakobyan** (Armenia) said that peaceful coexistence was based on mutual respect, non-aggression, equality and benefit. Since 12 December 2022, Azerbaijan had blocked the Lachin corridor, the only route connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia. Some 120,000 Armenians were under siege, creating a dire and worsening humanitarian situation. In periods of severe weather, they were deprived of vital medication, food and fuel. Azerbaijan also occasionally shut the gas pipeline and power outages were frequent.

The Azerbaijani Government wanted to break the will of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. Its plan was to increase psychological and economic pressure, open the corridor for short periods and prompt exoduses. That was a blatant policy of ethnic cleansing but the international community was only just beginning to pay attention. She thanked those countries that had responded objectively and impartially, upholding human rights and international obligations.

**Ms. F. Payman** (Australia) said that there were more than 3 million young people in Australia. Their diversity placed them in a unique position to inform Government on how to build inclusive societies and fight intolerance. Governments that worked with and for youth would be more effective because a fifth of the global population was aged 15–25. Young people worldwide were politically engaged and wanted to be involved in policy decisions affecting them. They were most affected by global warming, workforce changes, and housing instability and affordability. The Australian Government was committed to listening to their invaluable insights and would establish an Office for Youth, which would be accountable to the Australian Parliament. Alongside the Youth Steering Committee, that Office would design the Youth Engagement Model.

**Ms. Kim Yea Ji** (Republic of Korea) said that intolerance and discrimination were increasing. Hate speech and discriminatory remarks abounded online and the media's pursuit of attention-grabbing content fuelled such remarks. Instead of adopting a balanced stance, politicians criticized and stigmatized vulnerable groups.

Although economic and technological advancements had benefited society, they had increased discrimination and restricted rights, exacerbating social division and widening the wealth gap. Worldwide, people were enduring war, natural disasters and economic crises and it was increasingly difficult to show them generosity. In that context, parliamentarians were crucial as representatives of the public. It was essential not to misuse words or expressions, which could increase hatred, stigmatization or discrimination. It took time and effort to change one's attitudes, whereas it was easy to hate those who were different. It was normal to feel uncomfortable sharing limited resources with vulnerable groups but self-examination and education set humans apart from animals. The National Assembly, as an independent and constitutional body, played an important role in those situations.

**Ms. A. Larouche** (Canada) said that the theme of the debate was timely because ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities suffered discrimination and exclusion, the consequences of which were amplified by intergenerational injustice. According to a UN report, 20% of people worldwide had suffered discrimination. Youth had come together to promote peace and inclusion and fight injustice. However, intolerance, disruption to studies and poor job prospects hindered their participation in public life. All parliamentarians should help them by strengthening institutions, adopting inclusive and fair laws that protected fundamental rights and combated intolerance, and ensuring the representation of women and youth in decision-making processes.

She urged parliamentarians to counter the alarming increase in xenophobia, racism and fanaticism with inclusive societies and peaceful coexistence. Social media was used to promote intolerance, particularly against women and girls. Sexist violence was everywhere and cases had increased particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The situation of women and girls in refugee camps was particularly concerning. The effects of conflicts, extremism and climate change were also worsening and action should be taken to celebrate diversity.

**Mr. K.J. Skriver** (Denmark) said that, having taught students aged 13–15, he had discussed the importance of mutual understanding and the right to disagree with them. Communicating and expressing opinions were a basic and vital part of democracy. Parliamentarians had an obligation to show youth that they could express their opinions without risking punishment. He called for the release of Abdulhadi Al-Khawaja who, according to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, had been imprisoned arbitrarily for exercising his freedom of expression and right to peaceful assembly. That case was not isolated, which dimmed the hope and optimism of younger generations. Dialogue could be difficult but it was essential to peaceful coexistence.

**Ms. L. Clifford Lee** (Ireland) said that, with war raging in Ukraine and elsewhere, it was more important than ever to discuss the role of inclusive and tolerant societies in promoting peaceful coexistence. They were the route to peace and stability.

Access to reproductive health services and the right to decide when and how many children to have were key to ensuring women's equality. Children should not be forced to marry, and boys and girls should have equal access to education. Economic empowerment and a zero-tolerance approach to gender-based violence were necessary for equality. Parliamentarians should commit to meeting those needs.

Women and girls were particularly vulnerable in conflicts. Rape had been used as a weapon of war in Rwanda with devastating consequences. It was now being used in Ukraine and women in war zones needed access to emergency contraception and abortion services.

Diverse, inclusive and gender-balanced political bodies gave women a seat at the decision-making table. Women were key to peace talks. The Northern Ireland Women's Coalition had been crucial to post-conflict peacebuilding and, across Ireland, women continued to participate in decision-making.

**Mr. D. Carden** (United Kingdom), speaking in his capacity as President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, said that SDG 6 was to leave no one behind, which meant making young people stakeholders in political decisions. Young people faced exclusion, so it was unsurprising that they wanted to create a new society. That society responded to the climate catastrophe, the effects of which could already be felt in many countries. It rejected dictators' wars — such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine — that destroyed homes, livelihoods and lives, and allowed people to determine their own lives. He was committed to ensuring young peoples' voices were heard. Within the IPU, people in their 20s and 30s should count as young people.

Even though young people accounted for 52% of the world's population, only 2.6% of legislators and parliamentarians were under 30 years old. Parliaments should remove age limits that prevented young people from standing for election and legislators who were in their 20s or younger should be able to speak at IPU Assemblies. Young people everywhere were making their voices heard and he supported that work.

**Mr. L. Shuman** (Guyana) said that he and the Chair were members of the indigenous community and of opposition parties. He was also Deputy Speaker of the Parliament and represented two other political parties. That was a testament to the inclusive democracy and tolerant society in Guyana. The Constitution of Guyana, which was particularly progressive, encapsulated the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights. The Amerindian Act was an example of progressive legislation. Although it was a young democracy, Guyana was making progress. He congratulated New Zealand for its progressivism and he implored other States to ensure societies became more tolerant and inclusive.

**Mr. J. Fakhro** (Bahrain), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representatives of Denmark and Norway were deliberately mixing parliamentary and non-parliamentary business. When conducting parliamentary business, there should be no interference in the domestic affairs of another country. Efforts should be made to ensure mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and dialogue. He hoped that those representatives would stop disrupting parliamentary affairs because parliamentarians should stand together.

The representative of Denmark had referred to dialogue but that involved allowing both parties to speak and no meeting had been suggested. He hoped that such a meeting could take place at the current Assembly to explain the situation and stop discussions of the matter in the General Debate. Bahrain, Denmark and Norway were allowed to apply the law to their citizens. The representatives of Denmark and Norway did not understand non-interference and felt entitled to watch over and control Bahrain. There should be mutual respect for national sovereignty.

**Mr. J. Cepeda** (Spain), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he firmly rejected the serious accusations made against his country and France. Spain defended human rights, democracy and freedom. He asked for respect for Spain and the European Institutions. Over 500 members of the European Parliament had voted in favour of the resolution which had asked the Equatoguinean Government to respect human rights with regard to events that had occurred concerning a Spanish citizen. Spain therefore had every right to demand that Equatorial Guinea respect international law and human rights. A global revolution was needed to guarantee respect, which would create a better world. Spain would continue to work in that regard and in global institutions to guarantee human rights.

*The sitting rose at 13:00.*

## Sitting of Tuesday, 14 March 2023

(Afternoon)

*The sitting was called to order at 14:30 with Mr. A.B.S. Almusalam, Speaker of the Council of Representatives of Bahrain, in the Chair.*

### Item 3 of the agenda (continued)

#### **General Debate on the theme *Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance*** (A/146/3-Inf.1)

**Mr. G. Almeland** (Norway) said that, when he had first run for election at 25 years old, one of the core issues he had campaigned for was equality. However, the path to equality was not a straight one. One of the main barriers to equality was discrimination. It was the job of parliamentarians to combat all forms of discrimination.

Norway had a long way to go before it became a society that truly embodied equal rights and opportunities. Although some progress had been made, it must not serve as an excuse to put further action on hold. Between 2020 and 2021, reporting of hate crimes in Norway had gone up by 11%. There was one group in particular that was particularly affected, namely the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community. A horrid expression of hatred had been shown in the summer of 2022 during the brutal attacks that had taken place during the Oslo Pride celebrations. The level of hatred against the LGBTI community contributed to lower quality of life, higher prevalence of health problems and horrific levels of suicides. Accepting, tolerating or even legitimizing hatred towards marginalized groups corrupted all attempts to achieve truly inclusive societies for all.

**Mr. A. Karapet** (Sweden) said that the brave young women of Iran were risking their lives for their freedom and rights: freedom of choice, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, the right to wear a hijab and the right not to wear a hijab. Their fight was supported by many brave young men. Iranian society had shown the true meaning of coexistence between men and women. It was the duty of parliamentarians around the world to show solidarity.

**Mr. S. Patra** (India) said that India had been globally recognized for promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies. The concept of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* or “the whole world is one family” governed much of its activities. It was in the spirit of peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies that India had provided more than 291 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines to 99 countries and sent more than 253,000 people to participate in United Nations peacekeeping missions. In addition, it had never attacked any foreign country. India aimed to ensure that citizens not only had access to fundamental rights but had effective use of them. Various laws, policies, programmes and schemes had been introduced in that regard.

Young parliamentarians across the world had much to contribute towards global peace, sustainability and inclusiveness. They had a duty to redress the grievances of the people they represented, particularly of young people who looked to them as role models.

He called on the international community to work together towards building sustainable, inclusive, progressive, peaceful, healthy and happy societies guided by Mahatma Gandhi’s principles of truth and non-violence.

**Ms. S. Rafiei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) called on the representative of Sweden to address the human rights violations in his own country rather than interfering in the internal affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Islamic Republic of Iran was a country defined by peaceful coexistence and respect for diversity both in its words and in practice.

Young people were the architects of the world and the main actors pushing for peaceful coexistence. However, their efforts had been hampered by hegemonic countries imposing unilateral measures with the aim of taking over the world. The media played a particularly strong role in disseminating imperialist agendas thus undermining peace and kindness. It was therefore important to confront the media.

Young parliamentarians, particularly young women, made up a large proportion of the Iranian Parliament. There was a youth committee that held regular meetings with the young people of the country. The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran had also been striving for women's participation in government and in science and technology. The Islamic Republic of Iran should serve as a model for other IPU Members.

**Mr. S.A.M. Gilani** (Pakistan) said that certain facets of society that held it together were being eclipsed. People were no longer able to disagree but still coexist, mark territory but still share resources, or compete vigorously but still accept each other. In the quest for glory, humans continued to shrink spaces for others and assert their own hegemony. The trend had made societies far less inclusive and far more divided than ever before.

Parliamentarians were encouraged to ponder a path forward that defended the weak and the oppressed, united people from faraway lands and inspired societies to make space for all men and women regardless of nationality, skin colour, religion, political affiliation or income level. Everyone must have the same rights, privileges, protections and opportunities. A Muslim man in rural Maharashtra should be allowed to listen to the Azaan and pray freely in the mosque. A transgender person should feel safe walking the streets at night. A young boy from sub-Saharan Africa should be given the tools and opportunities to study in the Ivy League schools. Women should be encouraged to explore the deepest frontiers of space.

Parliamentarians must encourage their constituents to open their hearts and minds and allow divergent views to flow through society. It was paramount to envision a future that celebrated freedom for all.

**Ms. K. Elham Khalili** (Afghanistan) thanked delegates for adopting the emergency item resolution and raising the voices of the Afghan people. Afghanistan was facing multiple crises under the Taliban regime, including a humanitarian crises and a women's rights crisis. The Taliban must be held accountable for its crimes.

**Mr. W. Cervini** (Uruguay) said that Uruguay had been doing a great deal to implement the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign at home. The campaign had gained a great deal of support from legislators, ministers and even the President himself.

More than half of the global population was made up of young people below the age of 30. Parliaments, however, did not even come close to representing that reality. It was crucial to pave the way for a new generation of young people who could help build a peaceful society based on respect and equality.

**Mr. A.N. Leavasa** (New Zealand) said that his constituency in Southeast Auckland had a diverse population of people originating mostly from Asia (41.9%), Europe (31.9%) and the Pacific (21%). Many were also indigenous Māori people. The population was very young: over a third of people were under 24 and over two thirds were under 45. There were Christian churches, Hindu and Sikh temples as well as Islamic mosques located all throughout the constituency.

Peaceful coexistence and inclusivity began at home. It was important to share ideas, cultures, values and even differences amongst each other to improve understanding and tolerance. Engaging young people was an important avenue in promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies. New Zealand engaged young people through a national youth parliament. His own constituency also had a youth council.

He had asked the youth in his constituency what they wished to share at the IPU. They had responded that, as a global family, it was important to use our minds to understand each other, our ears to listen to each other, our eyes to see each person in their own context and our mouths to speak life into each other with a heart of respect.

**Ms. V. Braz** (Portugal) said that the topic of inclusive societies and peaceful coexistence could not be discussed without recognizing the role of young people. Young people had always been at the forefront of democratic struggles and were behind many social mobilizations. However, they continued to be among the most affected by violence and socioeconomic crises. More than 600 million young people lived in fragile environments affected by conflict, climate change, human trafficking, unemployment and social exclusion. They were also the victims of populism, hate speech and xenophobia and were therefore at risk of violent radicalization.

Young people should and wanted to be active players in peace and security efforts. It was fundamental to adopt policies that encouraged peaceful discourses in young people from an early age and provided them with opportunities to participate in democratic governance, conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

**Mr. W. Soto Palacios** (Peru) said that Peru was a multi-ethnic, multilingual and multicultural country where many different practices, customs and outlooks were present. Those differences had led to inequality and discrimination. In 2022, the former President of Peru had instituted a coup d'état which had further polarized the country and given rise to racial hatred and socioeconomic division. It was necessary to promote positive relationships and mutual respect as well as to develop the capabilities of citizens to rise above cultural and social differences. Countries must confront discrimination and exclusion for a fairer, more egalitarian and more pluralistic society.

**Mr. H. Aoyagi** (Japan) said that parliaments functioned by bringing together politicians with similar views and putting them together into parties. The party which held the majority took the legislative power. When only a single group held power, however, there was a natural loss of diversity and inclusiveness, sometimes leading to intolerance or discrimination. To prevent that from happening, parliaments must be thought of not as a collection of parties but as a collection of diverse politicians. They should not be the site of power struggles between political parties in which individual legislators were bound to tow the party line. Instead, they should serve as forums to which individual politicians could bring a diversity of views and ideas. In that context, the idea of “majority” and “minority” should not refer to the ruling party versus the opposition parties but to the views being expressed. It would be easier to build peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies through the said approach.

**Ms. A.A. Rodríguez Montero** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) drew attention to the suffering of indigenous peoples in the Plurinational State of Bolivia. On 13 March, the Vice-President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia had asked the United Nations to respect the legitimate right of the people of his country to use the coca leaf in its natural form for traditional, nutritional, therapeutic and ritualistic purposes. Those words had been said under the pretext of protecting indigenous populations. However, the reality was quite different. Indeed, the Government was not protecting indigenous populations but robbing them of their land for the purposes of coca cultivation. Its actions were sowing hatred and social exclusion and facilitating a lucrative drug trafficking business. The political regime in the Plurinational State of Bolivia was so intolerant that anyone who expressed a dissenting opinion was put in prison. She called on delegates to take into account the needs of indigenous populations.

**Ms. H.J. Talsma** (Netherlands) said that it was alarming but realistic to say that the world was becoming a more divided and less tolerant and peaceful place. The words of Cicero were painfully true: “In times of war, law falls silent”. His fellow countryman, Hugo de Groot, had emphasized the importance of making laws that enhanced freedom of belief and religion, freedom of speech and access to justice – laws that contributed to peaceful resolution of conflicts instead of warfare. Parliamentarians were urged to put de Groot's words into practice. They must become guardians of the rule of law, deliverers of justice and peace and defenders of human rights ensuring that, even in times of crisis, the laws were never silent.

**Ms. M.E. Ulenge** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that youth in the United Republic of Tanzania were a very heterogeneous group in terms of age, sex, marital status, education levels and residence. The total youth population in the United Republic of Tanzania stood at 17.7 million of whom 48% were male and 52% were female. As much as 80.3% of young people were ready and able to participate in the labour force.

The United Republic of Tanzania had always recognized the importance of youth in all aspects of its development. After independence, the Government had established a special unit at the ministry level to coordinate youth affairs, which had now expanded into a full department.

Peace could not be achieved without the participation of youth. The United Republic of Tanzania had enacted various laws, policies, regulations and guidelines to ensure productive participation of the whole community, especially youth, in matters of peace and security. They included the Prevention of Terrorism Act and national guidelines for the Office of Defence and Security. Efforts were also ongoing to provide training to empower women and youth economically and encourage the good use of social networks. The purpose was to encourage communities to live in peace.

**Ms. A. Shkrum** (Ukraine) said that Ukraine was facing the worst kind of intolerance at the hands of the Russian Federation: genocide. She thanked the international community for their support in condemning the invasion but regretted that the Russian Federation had not been deterred. Since

the 145th IPU Assembly in October 2022, the Russian Federation had launched more than 1,327 missiles and rockets on Ukrainian civilians and killed more than 41 children. The IPU must do more to stop the aggression and implement its previous resolutions.

**Mr. A.A. Paredes González** (Peru), taking the floor as the second speaker from his delegation, said that peaceful coexistence required countries to give up war as a way of resolving disputes. It called for understanding and mutual trust, non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries, and economic and cultural cooperation. Peace was not just the absence of conflict. It required the participation of all men, women and children. Respect and equal treatment of all people was also needed.

To achieve peaceful coexistence, it was paramount to protect and strengthen two factors in particular: family and education. He called on parliamentarians to enact laws in that regard.

An inclusive society was one where people had equal rights by virtue of being human. A society that failed to recognize the value of all its members undermined their dignity and fostered injustice. One of the greatest challenges of an inclusive society was creating an educational system that gave students the same educational opportunities.

Lastly, there was a vital need to eliminate intolerance. Intolerance was inhuman and often led to hate speech. Parliaments must penalize hate speech given its potential to develop into violence.

**Ms. B. Bennett Mathieson** (Deputy Chairwoman, King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence), special guest, said that the King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence had been created by His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa in 2018. The centre based its work on the inclusive and diverse society of Bahrain. Bahrain had always been an oasis of peace and love where all cultures, faiths and ethnicities were not simply tolerated but warmly embraced and respected. Bahrain had always recognized the importance of religious freedom, having established the first church, synagogue and Hindu temple in the region in 1904, 1935, and 1817 respectively. Today, Bahrain had many hundreds of mosques, churches and temples with religious services being delivered in over 10 languages. Bahrainis and expatriates alike had enjoyed their right to freedom of religion for over 150 years before the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights had come into being. The right was also enshrined in the Bahraini Constitution.

Today, terrorists and extremists used religion for evil intent. There was a global increase in religiously motivated hate crimes with the cyberspace being used to radicalize and sow the seeds of hate and violence. Statistics revealed that up to 80% of the world's population lived in areas where religious freedom was either denied or severely restricted. The King of Bahrain had been so moved by those statistics that he had authored the Kingdom of Bahrain Declaration in 2017 which called for religious freedom for all peoples of the world. It was important to be clear that peaceful coexistence was impossible without freedom of religion or belief. Without it, wars and conflicts would continue to devastate the world. In addition, research had shown that religious freedom improved the economic prosperity of a country. It therefore made sense, not just from a human rights perspective but also from an economic perspective, that governments paid more attention to promoting religious freedom.

As stated in the Kingdom of Bahrain Declaration, ignorance was the enemy of peace. As such, the focus of the King Hamad Global Centre was on youth educational programmes. They included: (1) the King Hamad Chair in Inter-faith Dialogue and Peaceful Co-existence which offered bachelor's, master's and doctorate programmes at the University of Sapienza; (2) the King Hamad Faith in Leadership fellowship programme run in conjunction with the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge with graduates having the option to become internationally certified trainers in the programme; and (3) a cyber peace academy utilizing real-life case studies of religiously motivated hate crimes, extremism, terrorism, radicalization, bullying and violence to educate children and adults.

Other measures taken by Bahrain included the King Hamad Medal for Peaceful Co-existence which was awarded to individuals or entities for their outstanding and sustainable contribution to peaceful coexistence globally. The country was also proud to have signed various memorandums of understanding with esteemed partners including the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the Office of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism (SEAS) in the United States of America and the Brazilian Ministry of Women, Family and Human rights.

The Kingdom of Bahrain Declaration was the foundational document for the work of the King Hamad Global Centre both inside Bahrain and globally. The document had been translated into several languages and used by educators, religious leaders and civil society organizations. It was a powerful and courageous document written in simple "no nonsense" language designed to touch the hearts of every man, woman and child on the planet. It had so touched the heart of Pope Francis who had warmly embraced and quoted it several times during his historic visit to Bahrain in

November 2022. Inspired by the visit of Pope Francis, the King Hamad Global Centre had hosted a two-day conference in Rome on the theme *Ignorance is the enemy of peace*. It had also celebrated the official European launch of the Kingdom of Bahrain Declaration followed by a visit to the European Parliament in Brussels for a youth seminar on peaceful coexistence and a two-day conference on combatting hate crimes in cyberspace.

Bahrain worked diligently and sensitively towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The King Hamad Global Centre focused mainly on SDG 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies and SDG 17 on strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. The Centre was actively looking for new partners and future collaborations.

She was pleased to announce the second annual joint EU-Bahrain conference on freedom of religion or belief in Bahrain in May 2023. The theme of the 2023 conference was twofold: (1) cyberspace as a means to decrease terrorism and increase the Peace Index through freedom of religion or belief; and (2) the impact of climate change on freedom of religion or belief.

She congratulated the IPU on the Assembly and thanked delegates for their hard work and heartfelt dedication in the pursuit of a more just and peaceful world for all. Parliamentarians around the world were encouraged to adopt the Kingdom of Bahrain Declaration as an IPU collective action to promote inclusion and peaceful coexistence and extinguish the flames of intolerance. The King Hamad Global Centre wished to clearly state its willingness to move forward together on the crucial path of peace.

*Mr. D. Pacheco, President of the IPU, took the Chair.*

Item 9 of the agenda  
(continued)

**Adoption of a draft resolution on the emergency item on the theme *Raising awareness and calling for action on the serious humanitarian crises affecting the peoples of Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and other countries, and on the particular vulnerability of women and children***

**Mr. J.M.R. Edwards Silva** (Chile), co-author of the emergency item proposal, said that the aim of the emergency item resolution was to raise awareness of the 340 million people who were suffering from humanitarian crises worldwide. Most of the crises mentioned in the resolution were underreported and long forgotten. The resolution expressed particular concern for Afghan women suffering under the oppressive Taliban regime and the seven million Ukrainian women scattered all over Europe. He called on the Assembly to adopt the resolution by consensus and with no abstentions. Doing so would send a clear message to those suffering, especially women and children, that the world still cared. It was not about charity but about justice.

*The emergency item resolution was adopted by consensus.*

**A representative of Yemen** wished to express a reservation. The resolution ignored one of the most significant humanitarian crises in the world, namely the Palestinian crisis. It was a protracted crisis that had been going on for more than 70 years. Many people were suffering. The IPU must condemn the practices of the oppressor and work for justice in Palestine.

**The Chair** said that preambular paragraph 27 already made a reference to Palestine.

**A representative of India** wished to abstain from the resolution.

**A representative of Chad** requested that Chad be added to the list of crises set out under preambular paragraph 27. There were over one million displaced people in Chad.

**A representative of Mali** requested that Mali be added to the list. Mali had been hosting large numbers of refugees for more than 15 years.

**The Chair** said that there was already a reference to Mali in preambular paragraph 27.

**A representative of Niger** requested that all the countries of the Sahel be added to the list, including Niger, as all of them were inundated with refugees.

**The Chair** said that he was very aware that the Sahel countries were suffering greatly as a result of terrorism which had in turn led to large numbers of refugees. It was important to address the situation in the Sahel.

**The Secretary General** said that the phrase “including but not limited to” had been incorporated into the text when listing the crises. The idea was to make the resolution as inclusive as possible. It might, however, be valuable to add Chad and Niger as requested.

**The Chair** said that the IPU was a global organization which made it difficult to draft a resolution that was ideal for all. However, the drafting committee had done a good job.

**The Secretary General** said that the delegation of Spain had informed the Secretariat that its vote on the topic of the emergency item had been recorded incorrectly due to a technical glitch. The discrepancy did not change the overall outcome of the vote but should be disclosed for reasons of transparency. The vote had now been corrected.

### Special accountability segment on the implementation of IPU resolutions and other decisions

**The Chair** said that the purpose of the special accountability segment was to give parliamentarians a platform to report on how they were implementing IPU declarations, decisions and resolutions nationally. To facilitate the process, a number of parliaments from each geopolitical group were chosen each year to report back to the Assembly. Not all parliaments were obliged to report back every year although they were welcome to do so if they so wished. Instead, a rotation took place that ensured that every parliament had a chance to report back at least every five years.

During the current segment, parliaments were invited to share the actions they had taken in follow-up to recent IPU resolutions, and in particular to advance the IPU’s climate-related agenda such as the Nusa Dua Declaration – *Getting to zero: Mobilizing parliaments to act on climate change* and the Outcome Document of the Parliamentary Meeting on the Occasion of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26). They were also welcome to share any difficulties they had encountered.

*A video was played about one of Canada’s climate-related actions.*

**Ms. R. Saint-Germain** (Canada) said that Canada faced a sizeable challenge with respect to climate change. It was one of the biggest exporters of fossil fuels in the world and was getting hotter twice as fast as the rest of the planet. The country must act to eliminate carbon from its buildings as well as its transport and agricultural sectors. There was a need to find effective means to capture and store carbon as well as to maintain forests and grasslands. In addition, Canada was working on transforming its economy with a view to ensuring no one will be left behind. Those efforts had proved to be a political, environmental, social and economic challenge.

Canada had set ambitious targets on all of the above. It aimed to reduce its carbon emissions by 45% below 2005 levels by 2030 and reach carbon neutrality by 2050. To ensure attainment of those targets, the Parliament had passed the Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act which set out a planning, monitoring and evaluation process. Two ministers were key to the implementation of the Act, namely the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the Minister of Finance. The former was responsible for environmental risks and was required to prepare implementation plans for every five-year period. The latter was responsible for managing economic risks and was required to prepare an annual public report on its activities. The two ministers were held accountable publicly in both chambers of Parliament and were provided with guidance by an advisory group on carbon neutrality. They must publish any advice received from the group and explain any follow-up actions taken. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change must take account of the following four factors in his or her work: (1) the best scientific data available; (2) international commitments made by Canada; (3) indigenous knowledge; and (4) observations made by the advisory group. Lastly, the two chambers of Parliament were required to rigorously examine government actions and report on their findings and recommendations.

**Mr. E. Aglae** (Seychelles) said that the Seychelles continued to implement climate-related programmes, such as the adoption of wetland mangrove sites in the vicinity of its Parliament. It was in the process of implementing a boardwalk to facilitate educational visits to the site and of financing a grant to the Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust. The country also celebrated World Wetlands Day.

Seychelles was a small island developing State that was very prone to climate shocks and natural disasters. To tackle the problem, the country had placed a strong emphasis on forest preservation and biodiversity. It was his hope that the global fund agreed during the 27th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) would be set up to support vulnerable countries. There was a vital need to address loss and damages arising from climate change.

*Mr. F.K. L. Fakafanua, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Tonga, took the Chair.*

**Ms. H. Jarvinen** (Finland) said that the fight against climate change was at the heart of Finnish political policy. Finland had set a target to be carbon neutral by 2035, the most ambitious target in the world, and had done a great deal towards achieving that target. For instance, the Government was supporting the development of electric vehicles and investing in renewable energies. It had provided subsidies to run heating systems using renewable energy instead of oil and set out rapid procedures for companies wishing to invest in renewable energy. Gas stations were also required to include renewable fuels in their oil mix.

Governments did not have enough money to reach their climate change targets alone and must do what they could to attract private investors. In that context, Finland had passed a climate law that obliged the government to comply with its climate change targets. External evaluators were enlisted to check compliance on an annual basis. Families and individuals should also be engaged in the fight against climate change. Governments should make it viable for ordinary people to make climate-friendly choices – on food and transport, for instance – by making them affordable and easily accessible.

Finland was happy to support other countries in many different areas, including recycling education, digitalization of health care and water purification systems. It was possible to meet climate targets through cooperation.

**Mr. R. Lozano** (Uruguay) said that climate change mitigation and adaptation was a national priority for Uruguay and a key component of its climate change plan. Uruguay contributed as little as 0.04% of global emissions but was, nevertheless, vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. To reduce greenhouse gases, it had established a set of objectives on the use of land, including on reforestation. The goal was to preserve all forest territories some of which were considered protected areas. In addition, the Parliament had established a day of natural environments celebrated on 11 November and was currently discussing a draft law on environmental crimes.

In terms of the national energy policy, around 98% of energy in Uruguay came from renewable sources, particularly solar and wind. Now, the country was moving towards a second energy transition by incorporating green hydrogen. Water security and sanitation plans were also in place. There was a law on waste management to promote the circular economy as well as a law prohibiting the use of nonrecyclable packaging.

In 2022, the Parliament had been working to reduce plastic pollution. It had also organized a regional seminar on climate change for parliaments of Latin America and the Caribbean in conjunction with the IPU. Currently, steps were being taken to reduce social and economic vulnerability to climate change. Overall, the vision on climate change must be ambitious but also realistic.

**Ms. M. Al Suwaidi** (United Arab Emirates) said that the United Arab Emirates had declared the year 2023 the year of sustainability. It had been the first country in the region to sign the Paris Agreement and to put into practice a strategy on carbon neutrality. A number of national laws were in place aiming to achieve balance between economic growth and environmental protection. Measures had also been taken to ensure access to the most relevant technologies for energy production as well as to make parliamentary activities completely paperless. The Government was investing in the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) which was itself based in Abu Dhabi.

Lastly, in November 2023, the United Arab Emirates would host the 28th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28) which would be an opportunity to review efforts towards implementing the Paris Agreement and find practical solutions on sustainability. It was important to reinforce parliamentary contributions at COP28. An IPU meeting would be held on the sidelines of the conference.

*A short video was played about COP28.*

**Mr. V.D. Ram** (India) said that India had contributed only about 4% of global cumulative greenhouse gas emissions between 1850 and 2019. That said, the country had done more than its fair share of work to combat climate change. In August 2022, the nationally determined contributions (NDCs) of India had been updated with even higher climate change targets than before. The objective now was to reduce the emissions intensity of GDP by 45% below 2005 levels by 2030 and achieve about 50% cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel based energy resources also by 2030. India had also submitted its long-term low carbon emission development strategy which laid down its vision and approach towards reaching net zero by 2070. Even though the country had high energy needs, it had an ambitious plan for promoting clean and non-fossil fuel based mobility, for instance, through the use of electric vehicles. Indian railways were also working on achieving net-zero carbon emission by 2030.

In addition to its domestic efforts, India was proactive on climate change internationally. It had launched several global coalitions, such as the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, and founded many other global initiatives, including the Infrastructure for Resilient Island States and the Green Grids Initiative.

The Parliament of India had adopted every possible measure to help it go green. It had moved its work to digital platforms instead of using paper, assigned electric vehicles to parliamentarians and reduced the use of plastic bottles. India was an example to follow under the *Parliaments for the Planet* campaign.

**Mr. V. Belski** (Belarus) said that a special panel on the international climate change agenda had been organized within the framework of the 9th Forum of Belarussian and Russian Regions. The main objective of the panel was to come up with proposals to scale up environmental protection and climate change action. Participants had adopted several recommendations and exchanged best practices. Among the measures proposed was the establishment of a greenhouse gas monitoring system. During the meeting, an exhibition had been set up presenting scientific achievements in the areas of low carbon development, emissions monitoring, green technologies and the circular economy. Many young people had participated in the conference.

He supported the efforts of the IPU on climate change but underlined that sanctions were a serious barrier to the implementation of international climate change commitments, including the Paris Agreement.

**Ms. F. Payman** (Australia) said that she wished to acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional custodians of Australian lands and waterways. Australia had a great deal to learn from First Nations peoples, especially from their stewardship of the natural environment.

After its election in May 2022, the Government had passed the Climate Change Act which outlined Australia's greenhouse gas emissions targets, including a 43% reduction in emissions from 2005 levels by 2030 and net zero by 2050. In addition, the following measures were set out in the October 2022 budget: (1) investment to provide transparency on Australia's progress; (2) increased transparency around climate-related spending; (3) support for First Nations people in the climate change response; and (4) empowerment of communities to influence and access the benefits of Australia's renewable energy transformation.

The above efforts were just the beginning. The Parliament hoped to introduce a safeguard mechanism requiring Australia's largest industrial facilities to reduce their emissions gradually and predictably in line with the national targets. The mechanism would also incentivize businesses with low-cost abatement opportunities so that they could reduce their emissions faster, thus putting Australia on a path to net zero while also helping businesses remain competitive. The idea behind the mechanism was to keep all parties accountable.

She encouraged parliaments to work together on climate change, which did not abide by national borders.

**Ms. S. Sobia** (Pakistan) said that Pakistan had recently gone through a terrible climate calamity in the form of unprecedented floods. The floods had resulted in the loss of thousands of lives, displacement of the millions of people, loss of critical infrastructure and economic losses amounting to billions of dollars.

The Parliament of Pakistan had been the first parliament in the world to go green by meeting all its energy requirements through solar means. It had set up task forces in national and provincial assemblies to closely oversee progress on the SDGs. There was also a new climate change policy

aiming to steer Pakistan towards climate resilience and low carbon development. The policy had been designed in accordance with the Paris Agreement, the SDGs and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Ambitious targets had also been set to further reduce carbon emissions. By 2030, Pakistan aimed to generate 60% of its energy from renewable sources, increase the market share of electric vehicles to 30%, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50%. Through the Ten Billion Trees Tsunami Programme and the Protected Area Initiative, massive efforts were ongoing in the area of afforestation and conservation of biodiversity. Lastly, using resources from the Green Climate Fund, Pakistan was working on transforming the Indus Basin through climate resilient agriculture and water management.

Climate change was a global challenge that could only be overcome through cooperative and combined efforts. Advanced economies were therefore urged to provide additional predictable climate finance, capacity building support and technology transfer to developing countries.

**Mr. M. Bouva** (Suriname) said that Suriname was considered the greenest country in the world with a forest coverage of at least 93%. It contributed massively to absorbing emissions, especially those made by industrialized countries. Suriname, however, received little support to protect its forests and did not know of any effective mechanism that could compensate the country for the carbon capacity of its forests. He called upon the international community, especially developed and industrialized countries to play their part. Suriname was one of very few carbon negative countries but also one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change. It remained committed to supporting climate action.

Parliaments had a crucial role and responsibility to fulfil the following objectives: (1) strengthen climate change legislation to reduce emissions and support a clean transition; (2) ensure appropriate budget for climate action together with the government but also with non-governmental organizations and the private sector; (3) hold governments accountable on the implementation of the Paris Agreement, including nationally determined contributions; (4) support marginalized and vulnerable populations; (5) promote inclusive adaptation measures; and (6) build green parliaments.

The Parliament of Suriname acknowledged the importance of climate action. The measures it had taken included running capacity building programmes and workshops in the National Assembly, introducing carbon pricing, and organizing national and international meetings on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Climate change required a sustainable development strategy. Countries must support each other. It was vital to address the fact that those who polluted the least would be affected the most. Everyone must take action.

**Ms. M.I. Delgado Rocha** (Cabo Verde) said that, according to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), there was a 20% chance that the global temperature rise would exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius as early as 2024 thus putting the world at a point of no return. That said, it was important to maintain the belief that the fight against climate change could be won.

Climate change was a global phenomenon. However, its devastating effects were felt particularly strongly in small island developing States with limited resources such as Cabo Verde. In six years, Cabo Verde had experienced three major crises: floods, drought and the COVID-19 pandemic. The floods had hit Cabo Verde in 2016 while the ongoing drought had begun in 2017. It was the worst drought in 40 years with some of Cabo Verde's islands not experiencing even a drop of rainfall for a whole year at a time. In addition, in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was estimated that economic activity in Cabo Verde had contracted by 14.8% – the largest contraction ever recorded.

Despite those crises, Cabo Verde had maintained its commitment to conservation, sustainable ocean management and climate action. One of its main objectives was to achieve economic development through the sustainable use of maritime and coastal resources. The country hoped to organize important international events related to ocean preservation and had already hosted the Ocean Race. The purpose of those events was to fight for a healthier ocean.

Small island developing States must have access to global funding to achieve effective climate governance and to implement their nationally determined contributions.

**Mr. N. Lalabalavu** (Fiji) said that the Pacific small island developing States were amongst the countries most vulnerable and worst affected by climate change. They were threatened by rising sea levels, ocean warming, acidification, increased frequency and intensity of cyclones, changing weather patterns, particularly rainfall that caused serious flooding, and devastating earthquakes.

Fiji had recently deployed humanitarian assistance to New Zealand and Vanuatu in response to cyclones Gabrielle, Judy and Kevin. Cyclones such as those were the new normal in the Pacific. Fiji had experienced 16 cyclones in the past decade which had caused an unnecessary loss of life, damaged livelihoods, undermined food and health security, destroyed infrastructure and led to huge economic losses. Cyclone Winston in 2016 had been the strongest superstorm to have ever made landfall on any country in the Asia-Pacific region. It had claimed 44 lives, wiped away a third of Fiji's GDP and caused extensive damage to infrastructure setting back years of human progress and development. In 2020, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Fiji had been hit by four cyclones.

Fiji had a strong commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In 2016, its Parliament had unanimously approved the Paris Agreement. It was also the only small island developing State to have presided over the Conference of Parties, in particular COP23. Fiji was equally committed to the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction as well as the SDGs. In 2017, considering the nexus between climate and oceans, Fiji had co-hosted the first ever United Nations Oceans Conference. National legislation had also been passed, including the Climate Change Act which institutionalized Fiji's obligations under the Paris Agreement.

**Mr. P.M. Santos** (Portugal) said that the Russian aggression against Ukraine had led to huge suffering and destruction. Since the start of the war, thousands of people had died and millions of women and children had been living in dire conditions without electricity, health care, food or education. There was no justification for the annihilation of an entire population.

Portugal had a large Ukrainian community, including many refugees, who had integrated into society and were now part of Portuguese culture, heritage and identity. Ukrainians worked together with Portuguese citizens and attended the same schools. Portugal had also sent tanks, military equipment, medical care and humanitarian aid to Ukraine. Ukrainians could always count on the support of Portugal. The Russian Federation must not win the war. It was vital to agree an immediate ceasefire.

**Mr. C. Pereira** (Portugal) said that the Parliament of Portugal had approved a new climate framework law in 2022 which set out objectives and measures to reduce greenhouse gases and increase climate resilience. The law called for a reduction in emissions of at least 55% by 2030, 65 to 75% by 2040, and at least 90% by 2050. It also laid out a requirement to establish a national strategy for green public procurement and a programme on resource efficiency in public administration. Climate-related rights and duties were enshrined in the law, including the right of citizens to intervene and participate in administrative procedures concerning climate policy. Lastly, the law established a climate action council, called for regional and local climate policies, and outlined procedures for monitoring and evaluation. Overall, the law set the groundwork for a consistent climate strategy with concrete objectives and supervision to ensure results were achieved.

Portugal was also on track to ending coal-fired power generation by 2023, gas-fuelled electricity generation by 2024 and production of passenger cars powered by fossil fuels by 2035.

**Mr. K. Tontisirin** (Thailand) said that, through its various committees, the Parliament of Thailand was exercising oversight over the Government's performance on climate-related issues such as carbon credits, community forestry, research and development, clean energy, and energy efficiency. Climate legislation would soon be reviewed to align all business activity with current climate targets. At a recent meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum, Thailand had advocated for the bio-circular-green economic model. The said Forum had passed two related resolutions – one on promoting biodiversity and clean economy for inclusive development and another on the use of renewable energy and clean energy technology to achieve carbon neutrality and net zero carbon emissions. He called for a multistakeholder, multi-strategic and multilevel approach to climate change.

**Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche** (Algeria) said that, given its geographical location, Algeria was very exposed to the negative impacts of climate change. It had therefore ratified a number of international climate change conventions, including the Rio Conventions and the Paris Agreement. In response to the Nusa Dua Declaration, her Parliament had established a national climate change committee consisting of 10 parliamentarians representing different political factions. The committee was responsible for such tasks as proposing draft laws and launching initiatives. Algerian parliamentarians had been very vocal at national and international climate change meetings, including at the parliamentary meeting organized at COP27. In line with its commitment to the circular economy, Algeria was currently drafting a law on the recycling of household waste. She supported the *Parliaments for the Planet* campaign.

**Mr. A. Gryffroy** (Belgium) said that climate change was a very important topic but regretted the lack of attention paid to the emergency item resolution passed at the 145th IPU Assembly entitled *Condemnation of the invasion of Ukraine and of the subsequent annexation of territories in defence of the territorial integrity of all States*. The Russian delegation should indicate what measures its Government and Parliament had taken to implement the said resolution. It should also clarify how their Government planned to fit reconstruction costs into their budget. The reconstruction costs were currently estimated to be between US\$ 7 billion and US\$ 1 trillion, for which the Russian Federation was entirely responsible. He called on the IPU and all parliaments to do more to implement the resolution.

**Mr. K.M.A. Salam** (Bangladesh) said that Bangladesh had steadily progressed in its efforts to address the climate fallout. It had introduced a climate prosperity plan with a vision of achieving energy independence, maximizing renewable energy and promoting energy efficient technologies. The overall idea of the plan was to set Bangladesh on a trajectory from climate vulnerability to resilience to prosperity as well as to ensure a just transition, for instance, by creating new green jobs. In addition, the Government had set up a climate change trust fund using its own funding and adopted the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100. The latter was a comprehensive 100-year strategic plan aimed at gradual sustainable development through an adaptive delta management process. In 2023, Bangladesh had also adopted its National Adaptation Plan 2023-2050. Lastly, the Parliament had amended the Constitution to include a reference on the need to protect the environment and preserve natural resources, biodiversity, wetlands, forest and wildlife.

He called on parliaments to join hands against the threat of climate change. Developed countries should fulfil their commitment to providing US\$ 100 billion dollars annually for adaptation and mitigation.

*Mr. D. Pacheco, President of the IPU, took the Chair.*

**Ms. C.I. López Castro** (Mexico) said that, as the newly elected President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, she would be working relentlessly to empower women all around the world in the context of climate change.

Mexico had developed a comprehensive national climate change strategy which aimed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase the use of clean energy and enhance resilience to the impacts of climate change. It had set a target to produce 35% of its energy from renewable sources by 2024 which was expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase energy security. The country had a federal water management system aiming to ensure the sustainable and equitable use of water resources, improve water security and reduce the impacts of water scarcity. The system included policies and regulations related to water allocation, water quality and water conservation. Programmes and incentives were also in place to encourage the use of water-saving technologies, such as drip irrigation and water efficient appliances. Lastly, plans were being made to set up a green parliamentary caucus which would work on sustainability laws.

**Mr. M.A. Rakotomalala** (Madagascar) said that Madagascar was one of the least polluting countries yet suffered greatly from climate change. It was particularly affected by food insecurity with many people experiencing chronic malnutrition.

The disastrous effects of climate change included rising sea levels and extreme weather events hugely impacted populations. People were forced to deal with damaged crops, destruction of farmlands, and reduced access to drinking water, amongst other things. No country was spared of those impacts. Developed countries were historically responsible for climate change and had greater financial and technological means. They must therefore contribute significantly to the climate change projects of other countries. Parliaments had a great deal of responsibility to respond to the needs of the people both nationally and internationally. They must use their vote accordingly and allocate financial resources towards climate change action.

The international community must work together to fight climate change. Solidarity and collaboration should be a central pillar of all climate change policies.

**Mr. H.K.S. Kamboni** (Zambia) said that the Speaker of the Zambian Parliament had launched a tree planting initiative encouraging members of parliament to plant trees in their constituencies and raise awareness of the importance of doing so among citizens. Three different parliamentary committees were involved in the budget process looking into how the budget could reduce carbon

emissions. There were also initiatives to reduce the use of charcoal for cooking thus helping to cut down on deforestation. Lastly, his Parliament had gone paperless having moved all activities, such as budgeting and reporting, online.

His constituency had experienced flash floods as a result of climate change. Parliaments must work together to address the challenge.

**Ms. L. Vasylenko** (Ukraine) said that, following many IPU recommendations, the Ukrainian Parliament had established a special subcommittee on climate change. Currently, almost all activities were done digitally. Even during such difficult times, the Parliament had been able to pass dozens of legislative acts dedicated to climate change. In fact, all laws were filtered through the lens of climate change.

She drew attention to the emergency item resolutions adopted at the 144th and 145th IPU Assemblies calling on the Russian Federation to stop its aggression against Ukraine. Unfortunately, the Russian Federation had not taken responsibility for its grave breaches of international law but instead continued to participate at the IPU as if nothing had happened. The work of the IPU must not merely be about condemning the aggression with words. Words must be followed up with actions. At the next Assembly, she urged delegates to report back on what they had done in their respective countries to bring an end to the Russian aggression against Ukraine. She wished to know how many countries had signed up to President Zelensky's 10-point peace plan, how many countries had introduced sanctions against the Russian Federation and how many countries had endorsed the setting up of a special tribunal.

She commended the President of the IPU for his leadership on promoting human rights, democracy and just societies and called on delegates to follow his example.

**Mr. G.A.R. Mendoza Leigue** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) called on the IPU to support the convocation of an Earth Assembly under the auspices of the United Nations, as outlined in the United Nation General Assembly report entitled *Sustainable Development: Harmony with nature*. The Earth Assembly would take place on 22 April 2024 on International Mother Earth Day and would consist of many interactive dialogues. Given the world was not on track to achieve the SDGs, there was a need to revitalize the Goals or even to redirect them so that they took on more of an Earth-centred approach. The Earth Assembly would be a space for countries to develop proposals in which the key concern was not economic growth but Mother Earth herself. The idea was to achieve balance and harmony between all living systems on Earth and restore the vital cycles of nature.

**The Chair** asked the representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to put his comments into a formal proposal for consideration by the Executive Committee.

*The sitting rose at 17:35.*

# Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

**SITTING OF SUNDAY, 12 MARCH 2023**

(Morning)

*The sitting was called to order at 09:00 with Mr. Al-Ahbab (Qatar), President of the Standing Committee, in the Chair.*

## **Adoption of the agenda** (C-I/146/A.1)

*The agenda was adopted.*

## **Approval of the summary record of the Committee's session held at the 145th IPU Assembly in Kigali (October 2022)**

*The summary record was approved.*

**The Chair** made several announcements. The IPU had just launched a new campaign, entitled *Parliaments for the Planet*, to mobilize action on the climate emergency. As climate action began at home, parliamentarians must lead by example. Parliaments would be encouraged to reduce their carbon footprint and to step up action to implement the Paris Agreement on climate change. Measures taken by parliaments to implement the resolution on *Parliamentary strategies to strengthen peace and security against threats and conflicts resulting from climate-related disasters and their consequences*, adopted at the 142nd IPU Assembly, were due to be communicated to the Committee secretariat.

The IPU also continued to promote its *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign, launched in 2022. He encouraged participants to sign up to the campaign, adding to the 500 parliamentarians and 45 Speakers of Parliament who had already done so.

The *Common Principles for Support to Parliaments* had already been endorsed by 146 national parliaments and he urged parliamentarians to take the necessary actions to ensure that the remaining parliaments would endorse those principles.

He invited parliamentarians to complete a short questionnaire that would assist the IPU in developing an inventory of tools for parliaments and parliamentarians for engaging in dialogue, legislation, oversight and prevention in the pursuit of peace, as it had been tasked to do by the resolution on *Rethinking and reframing the approach to peace processes with a view to fostering lasting peace*, adopted at the 144th IPU Assembly.

He invited the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Vienna to provide an update on the status of the international convention on countering the use of information communication technology (ICT) for criminal purposes, being developed by the United Nations and the IPU's contribution to that process.

**Ms. B. Brenner** (Head of the Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Vienna) said that the United Nations was preparing an international convention on countering the use of ICT for criminal purposes. The IPU had been invited to provide input to the United Nations at the very beginning of the process, including through a webinar held in December 2022 with the participation of the Chair of the negotiations, during which parliamentarians had identified elements to be addressed in the future convention. The participation, views and expertise of international and civil society organizations, the private sector and academia were key to the development of a successful, comprehensive convention, and she commended the strong statements of support made by the co-Rapporteurs of the IPU resolution.

The scope of the Standing Committee's resolution was broader than that of the UN convention on cybercrime. Should the IPU wish to refer to the negotiation of the aforementioned UN convention in the text, it would have to confine the resolution to the issue of cybercrime. The United Nations negotiations would be finalized in early 2024. The new convention would be open for signature and ratification by Member States following its adoption by the General Assembly.

The high number of amendments to the IPU resolution showed that the topic had touched on crucial concerns for parliaments, which were ready to address new global threats to peace and security.

### **Cyberattacks and cybercrimes: The new risks to global security**

#### **(a) Presentation of the draft resolution and the explanatory memorandum prepared by the co-Rapporteurs (C-I/146/DR and C-I/146/M)**

**The Chair** noted that 317 amendments to the draft resolution had been received within the statutory deadline and that 3 additional amendments had been submitted by the Forum of Women Parliamentarians.

**Mr. J. Cepeda** (Spain), co-Rapporteur, thanked the Bureau of the Standing Committee for its support. In developing the draft resolution over the previous year, he had visited several countries, some of which had been experiencing cyberattacks, and had consulted with governments and security agencies on the protocols to be followed. The draft resolution was more technical than political in nature, and he was grateful for the numerous amendments received, which would strengthen the text. The draft resolution did not seek to replace the work being done by national governments in debates on the issue in the United Nations and other forums, but to prompt a technical discussion of cybersecurity and to raise awareness in all countries, in particular those with the least cybersecurity resources and capacity.

Cybersecurity was a collective, global problem and could not be dealt with by countries in silos. Although countries obviously could not share secrets, they could share ideas on how to act to prevent criminal groups damaging critical infrastructure and the lives of millions of people. The increasing digitization of the world brought new risks, and governments must recognize the importance of cybersecurity as a key concept in new projects.

The draft resolution aimed to encourage discussion of a new global culture of cybersecurity for all countries. It also sought to highlight the importance of international cooperation, of confidence in the ability to fight groups that could attack at any time, of the resources required and of capacity-building through education. Parliaments should be seen as critical infrastructure and be given particular protection against cyberattacks. It was also essential to avoid attacks during electoral processes in order to protect human rights and democratic systems.

**Ms. S. Falaknaz** (United Arab Emirates), co-Rapporteur, said that an unprecedented number of amendments to the draft resolution had been proposed, and she thanked parliamentarians for their contributions. The draft resolution dealt with a critical subject that affected citizens throughout the world. It was unbiased and she urged parliamentarians not to politicize the text. It was for the United Nations to develop definitions of terms such as cybersecurity and cybercrime.

**The Chair** thanked the rapporteurs for their work on an important topic that had a huge impact on all in society as well as critical security implications.

#### **(b) Debate**

**Mr. Oh GiYoung** (Republic of Korea) said that, in addition to the UN convention on cybercrime, it was important for the IPU to discuss the issue of cyberattacks and cybercrimes with a view to building consensus. He reaffirmed the importance of a joint response and of information sharing. Cyberattacks constituted a serious crime and had affected the everyday life of citizens in the Republic of Korea. While freedom of expression was important in a democracy, misinformation, disinformation and fake news constituted a concern. Collaboration among cross-border service providers and the development of specific norms were required. He hoped that the draft resolution would call for joint and cooperative action by multinational companies.

**Mr. Z. Mojskerc** (Slovenia) said that countries were becoming targets of increasingly sophisticated cyberattacks, such as State-sponsored malicious cyberactivities targeting critical infrastructure. His country was strengthening its national cybersecurity system and recognized the importance of active cooperation within the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). It was also working towards an open, free, stable and secure cyberspace,

based on international law, which facilitated economic growth, ensured national security and promoted international stability. Slovenia strongly condemned the malicious use of ICTs, and any attempts to undermine international institutions and international law, the provisions of which should apply in cyberspace. With regard to the new UN convention on countering the use of ICT for criminal purposes, Slovenia was advocating an international convention that would bring added value to law enforcement and judicial authorities, was consistent with the relevant international instruments and ensured appropriate protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Parliamentarians had an important role to play in that process.

**Mr. V. Belski** (Belarus) welcomed the draft resolution, which covered all the key points. The development of national legislation and international regulatory frameworks to combat cybercrimes had become increasingly urgent. Highlighting the importance of respecting the principle of digital sovereignty, he supported efforts to strengthen international cooperation to respond to and combat cyberattacks, which had targeted medical and even nuclear infrastructure. Regional and international security was also threatened by the dissemination of falsified, misleading or incomplete information. Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, which were so realistic that they had even been used and accepted as evidence in the investigation of illegal acts, including at the international level, and the proliferation of cybercams, were also of concern. Belarus called on the international community and parliaments to pool their efforts to combat cyberattacks and cybercrimes and stood ready to share its national practices to create a safe information space.

**Mr. S. Yuhara** (Japan) said that cyberattacks had become a serious national security problem in Japan, and States must work together to protect their critical infrastructure from such attacks. Noting the importance of freedom of speech, he said that governments should be cautious about introducing regulations on the pretext of cybersecurity. Instead of imposing regulations, governments must ensure that their citizens were internet literate and able to protect themselves from cyberthreats. Such countermeasures were essential to prevent cyberattacks and cybercrimes while maintaining freedom in cyberspace.

**Mr. M. Moushouttas** (Cyprus) said that countries' increasing dependence on new technologies had led to a rise in cybercrimes and cyberattacks against individuals, institutions and governments. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic had led to greater digital exposure. Parliaments had a crucial role to play in ensuring the safety and security of their citizens in cyberspace. They should raise awareness of the need to address cyberattacks and cybercrime and develop legislation and a new international framework to prevent and combat them. Parliamentarians should therefore support the UN in establishing a comprehensive international convention on countering the use of ICT for criminal purposes, which could serve as a basis for strengthening existing national legislation. It could also help to increase international cooperation, which was essential to combat cybercrimes.

**Mr. O. Amutike** (Zambia) said that the Zambian Parliament was currently developing legislation to tackle cybercrimes, which constituted a new threat to peace and security. His Government recognized that parliament remained a unique platform to educate citizens on how to address and prevent such crimes, promote peace and security and the rule of law. Education was key in raising awareness of cybercrimes and of their threat to global security and his Government had recently introduced free primary and secondary education throughout the country.

**Mr. T. Hurter** (Switzerland) said that the issue under discussion was important as it affected the State, citizens and economies. However, three major issues still had to be addressed for Switzerland to support the draft resolution. First, although the definitions of cyberattacks and cybercrime were different, the terms had been used together in the text. Second, cyberspace was covered by international law and expressions appearing to question international law should be removed. Accordingly, the references to legal frameworks and instruments in preambular paragraphs 1, 9 and 12 should be deleted. Third, the proposed new global cybersecurity entity to which operative paragraphs 12 and 13 referred could lead to a loss of sovereignty and an alternative solution should be found.

**Mr. B. Mahtab** (India) said that a multifaceted approach was required to promote cyberhygiene and cybersecurity and recalled that his country had co-sponsored the United Nations General Assembly resolution establishing an ad hoc intergovernmental committee of experts, to elaborate an international convention on countering the use of information and communications

technologies for criminal purposes. Noting the lack of international law to address cybercrimes, he said that the draft resolution offered a unique opportunity to tackle cybercrime, and parliamentarians should encourage their governments to discuss and combat cybercrimes worldwide. Laws were necessary to prosecute and penalize criminals and protect the rights of citizens. Personal data in particular was at the core of the fast-growing digital economy and must be protected. The Indian Parliament's Digital Personal Data Protection Bill 2022 sought to identify the rights and duties of citizens on the one hand, and the obligations concerning the lawful use of the data collected on the other. The perpetrators of cybercrime operated with substantial impunity from virtually anywhere and were often very difficult to trace. Cybersecurity was therefore a global challenge. International cooperation was required to combat crimes committed using ICTs, cyberattacks, and misinformation and disinformation campaigns.

**Ms. J. Ramadan** (Kuwait) said that, while she welcomed the emphasis of the co-Rapporteurs on the technical nature of the draft resolution, a balance must be struck between preventing cyberattacks and safeguarding national security, while ensuring freedom of expression. Legislation, international decisions and resolutions must address trends, such as electronic interference in electoral processes and fake news, which posed a threat to national interests and should be considered as a cybercrime. International cooperation was also required to address such important issues.

**Mr. S. Ty** (Cambodia) said that the draft resolution highlighted shared concerns about the global threat of cybersecurity and the need for international solidarity in the fight against all forms of cybercrime. With the world becoming increasingly digitized, the risks of cyberattacks and cybercrime, which could be devastating for countries, were growing, and Cambodia was committed to join global prevention efforts. Recalling a number of international and regional initiatives in the area of cybercrime, he said that his Government had adopted a digital economy and social policy framework for 2021–2035, which sought to promote digital adaptation and transformation in all sectors to generate sustainable economic growth and social inclusion. A forward-looking draft cybersecurity law had also been developed in November 2022 and draft legislation on personal data protection was being prepared. The international community should enhance action to develop a coordinated solution. Cambodia would support a strengthened cybersecurity organization and the establishment of a robust platform for the public and private sectors to work together on cybersecurity.

**Mr. L.J. De Nicolay** (France) expressed some reservations about the draft resolution. Although cyberattacks and cybercrimes were closely related issues, they were addressed in different international processes, in particular within the framework of the United Nations, and the concept of cyberattacks should be removed from the text. It was a matter of concern that the ongoing initiative in the United Nations could be exploited by certain States that wished to strengthen State control of cyberspace, undermining fundamental freedoms. Existing legal cybersecurity instruments, such as the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime (Bucharest Convention) and the UN norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace should be implemented and extended. He had some doubts about the creation of a global security operations centre given the different approaches taken by States. Care should be taken not to adopt definitions that were too limiting in such a rapidly evolving domain.

**Ms. M. Kiener Nellen** (Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament) said that the parliamentary handbook on *Assuring our Common Future*, published by several organizations, including the IPU, included examples of national measures and parliamentary actions on implementing international law to prevent cyberattacks. It also provided links to detailed resources on addressing such attacks, including the Tallinn Manual on the international law applicable to cyber warfare and the ICRC Principles on Application of International Humanitarian Law. The IPU had followed up the publication of the handbook with an online parliamentary event, the report of which was available on the websites of the IPU and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament.

**Mr. I.M. Vela** (Romania) said that Romania's proposed amendments to the draft resolution sought to strengthen the text. Pending the adoption of the UN convention, parliamentarians should focus more on the existing international and regional framework. Romania hosted the Cybercrime Programme Office of the Council of Europe, which helped to monitor implementation of projects under the Budapest Convention. The model followed by Romania for ICT development and implementation was based on full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Romania was fully committed to promoting an international framework for responsible State behaviour in cyberspace based on international law.

**Ms. A. Anstrell** (Sweden) said that between war and peace there was a grey zone in which countries that wished for a different world order sought to undermine and destabilize by exerting political, psychological and economic pressure. Countries needed to strike a balance between defending important infrastructure and protecting human rights and freedom of speech. The consideration of cyberattacks and cybercrimes in the draft resolution risked legitimizing moves to control the internet rather than to fight against cybercrime itself. The term “cyberattacks” should therefore be deleted from the draft resolution. A glossary could also be developed explaining the different concepts.

**Ms. R. Saint-Germain** (Canada) thanked the co-Rapporteurs for their work and said that the subject under discussion was of global interest. All countries were dependent on digital technologies that were at risk and therefore had to act. International law must, however, be respected. International norms must be applicable to cyberspace and those who committed cybercrimes must be held accountable. Her delegation had proposed amendments to the draft resolution to ensure that the focus was on cybersecurity and that the United Nations could focus on cybercrimes. It therefore wished to delete the references to negotiation of an international convention on cybercrime and the references to controversial issues that remained under discussion at the United Nations. A paragraph should be added to promote adherence to existing international measures, including those to promote responsible State behaviour in cyberspace, while ensuring government autonomy. The importance of respecting the rights of the individual through the legislative efforts of parliamentarians should be highlighted, particularly in regard to cybersecurity, and there should be greater reference to vulnerable people, such as women and children and communities targeted by hate crimes.

**Mr. A. Suwanmongkol** (Thailand) said that the draft resolution was timely since the international community had faced widespread cyberattacks and cyberthreats during the COVID-19 pandemic. The strong linkage highlighted between international and national cooperation in developing an effective cybersecurity strategy, and the emphasis on parliamentary action in facilitating a safer digital space and more resilient cyberspace ecosystem were welcome. There was a need for an action-oriented cybersecurity policy, measures that could be strengthened by robust national law, and regulations that could help manage or detect cybersecurity risks before they emerged, particularly given the absence of a binding international agreement on the issue. Thailand had established a national cybersecurity agency and encouraged others to do likewise. The IPU should launch a parliamentary capacity-building project to foster a culture of cybersecurity and accountability to help protect citizens, in particular vulnerable groups, against the negative impacts of cyberattacks and cybercrimes. Up-to-date digital literacy and technological know-how should also be provided to achieve a secure online environment and sustainable cybersecurity.

**Mr. A.A. Andican** (Türkiye) expressed his country’s gratitude for the international community’s solidarity and contribution to the search, rescue and relief efforts following the powerful recent earthquakes.

The digitization of the world was leading to an increase in the number and severity of cyberthreats, which could have severe consequences for individuals, businesses and governments. A concerted effort by all stakeholders was required to counter cyberattacks and cybercrimes, which constituted serious threats to global security. Governments must work together to establish and enforce international laws and regulations to combat cybercrime, invest in the development of cybersecurity measures, encourage businesses to adopt best practices in cybersecurity and educate individuals on the risks of cyberthreats.

**Ms. D. Dlakude** (South Africa) said that the damage incurred by all forms of cybercrime was expected to reach US\$ 10.5 trillion annually by 2025. Cyberattacks and cybercrimes also posed a significant threat to citizens, businesses and State institutions, eroding trust among internet users and causing reputational damage to service providers. South Africa welcomed the call for international cooperation to address such problems through appropriate legislative instruments pending the finalization of the first legally binding convention on the matter. However, the fight against cybercrime must not be used to dismantle human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to privacy, and countries must strike an appropriate balance between security concerns and respect for human rights. The escalation of cybercrime in South Africa had led to the development of the Cybercrimes Act and the Protection of Personal Information Act, which brought national data protection and cybersecurity legislation into line with global standards. South Africa supported the draft resolution.

**Mr. S. Al-Kareem** (Arab Parliament) commended the efforts of the co-Rapporteurs in developing the draft resolution, which encouraged parliaments to cooperate with civil society organizations and academia and recommended the establishment of national cybersecurity centres. Parliamentarians had an important role to play in fostering the prompt development of a United Nations convention on the issue. A database should be developed to include all cyberattacks faced by countries, which could then be studied to ensure a timely response to future attacks. The Arab Parliament attached particular importance to electronic security and had encouraged national parliaments to draft a comprehensive cybercrime framework to protect infrastructure in Arab countries.

**Mr. C. Lacroix** (Belgium) said that the definitions used should not be too restrictive, which might prevent technological developments from being taken into account, or too broad, which could permit abuse and lack of respect for human rights and freedoms. Accordingly, the existing definitions, which were consistent with international law, should be used. In regard to cybercrime, reference to the Budapest Convention was also important. While new international mechanisms would be useful, existing mechanisms should be implemented first on the basis of mutual trust and in a manner that did not lead to politicization. Care should be taken to ensure that the draft resolution did not conflict with the Budapest Convention, and the creation of divergent international standards must be avoided. It was important to safeguard open and effective multilateralism, and gender equality. The draft resolution should seek to ensure that human rights and freedom of expression on the internet were properly respected.

**Mr. V. Vojtko** (Czech Republic) thanked the co-Rapporteurs for their efforts. While action must be taken to address the increase in cybercrimes perpetrated by criminal organizations, individuals and some States, freedoms and human rights must be preserved in a free and open cyberspace. The draft resolution should also include the elderly among its definition of the most vulnerable. Cybercrime was a broad term and should include cyberattacks.

**Mr. G. Craughwell** (Ireland), noting the very large number of proposals submitted, urged participants not to insist on their amendments and to bear in mind the common objective of adopting a resolution. The international community should work together to isolate cybercriminals and those nation States that supported them.

**Mr. J.K. Waweru** (Kenya) said that his country prided itself as a leader in the digital space. It was working on the digitization and automation of government services and was developing digital infrastructure, including in rural areas. It had also passed several laws in the previous five years relating to cyberspace and ICTs. The perpetuation of global economic inequalities, however, constituted a form of economic terrorism, and the need for equality promotion must be taken into account. Unless large technology companies equalized the digital taxation regime, the inequalities perpetuated by geomapping would persist and the digital divide would be exacerbated. When countries were denied economic benefits, they were also being denied the opportunity to take advantage of the digital space and could become disenfranchised. Equality should be a central principle in the development of relevant conventions.

**Mr. M. Alhelalat** (Jordan), thanking the co-Rapporteurs for the draft resolution, underscored the importance of international cooperation in combating cyberattacks and cybercrimes, which were often of a cross-border nature. His country had established a cybersecurity institute and legislation criminalizing the perpetrators of cybercrimes and called on countries to ensure that their national legislation was consistent with relevant international conventions and norms.

**Mr. M.A. Bouchouit** (Algeria) expressed his condolences to the peoples of the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye following the earthquakes in the region.

He thanked the co-Rapporteurs for developing the draft resolution on an important issue that was very difficult to combat. A comprehensive definition, acceptable to all States, was required since what was considered by some as freedom of expression could be considered by others as a crime. National laws and international conventions should be aligned in order to combat cyberattacks.

**Mr. F. Ollisco Barrero** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that it appeared from the draft resolution that all countries were at the same level. However, some countries were struggling with the rights to access and use technologies for their benefit while other individuals were using them for deleterious purposes. The education system in all countries, particularly in Latin America, should begin

to prepare children on the use of such technologies from primary school age, and non-governmental organizations could play an important role in that regard. States with more experience in ICTs should help and act in solidarity with those that had less experience. While he welcomed the draft resolution, the text should be more action-oriented.

**Ms. A. Shkrum** (Ukraine) thanked the co-Rapporteurs for their work on a very difficult issue. Most of her country's proposed amendments to the draft resolution concerned the indiscriminate use of cyberattacks against civilians, women, children, and critical civilian and national infrastructure. While the Geneva Conventions regulated the conduct of armed conflict, cyberweapons and cyberwarfare that could also cause destruction, chaos and panic were still not regulated.

During the past year of the Russian Federation's unprovoked aggression in Ukraine, there had been more than 5000 cybercrimes and cyberattacks against critical civilian, energy, government, financial and transport infrastructure in her country. The International Committee of the Red Cross and parliamentarians in Ukraine had also been subjected to cyberattacks. The authorities were transmitting the evidence to the International Criminal Court in The Hague since such actions constituted war crimes.

Cyberspace needed to be regulated to prevent cyberconflicts and cyberwarfare from being used against civilians.

**Mr. N. Ammar** (Syrian Arab Republic) thanked the co-Rapporteurs for their efforts. Freedom of expression and of the media were extremely important and had been given great impetus by the internet. His country recognized the threat that electronic crimes posed to individuals, institutions and security and had passed legislation concerning electronic communication. It supported the draft resolution and welcomed the legal measures taken to combat cybercrimes around the world. He expressed his country's gratitude for the international community's assistance and solidarity in the aftermath of the recent earthquakes.

**Mr. J. Tsundu Tsundu** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that development was not possible without peace and the factors causing cybercrime must be addressed. His parliament was developing legislation to combat cybercrimes and establishing a mechanism to prevent the misuse of minerals destined for electronic devices that facilitated cybercrime. Mineral exploitation was driving the war in his country and the draft resolution should set out sanctions against those countries that encouraged the illicit extraction of such blood minerals. Parliamentarians should also develop a resolution calling for an end to the war, which was not being waged for freedom, but being driven by conflict minerals.

**Mr. A. Amouei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that parliamentarians had a duty to bridge the digital divide and empower developing countries to reach the same level as developed countries. It was important to keep cyberinfrastructure safe and secure, and social platforms should not be allowed to be used to promote hate speech, insecurity or instability or to expand terrorism. Although freedom of speech should be respected, society must be kept safe and secure, and freedom of speech might have to be subject to certain restrictions, as provided for in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Although many social media platforms had been developed in Western countries, they were used all over the world. Accordingly, their use should not be governed by national rules and regulations alone, but also by international law, and an international convention should be developed to ensure accountability and responsibility. Lastly, the imposition of unilateral coercive measures would make it more difficult to bridge the digital divide.

**Ms. M. Gonzalez** (Spain) thanked the co-Rapporteurs for their efforts to address the issues of cybersecurity and cybercrimes, which constituted one of the main challenges for societies and democracies. She drew particular attention to operative paragraphs 20 and 21 of the draft resolution and underscored the need for parliaments worldwide to be protected, particularly during electoral processes when citizens exercised their democratic right to express their political opinion. A huge number of amendments had been submitted because of the significance of the subject. The co-Rapporteurs were trying to include as many nuances as possible, avoiding strict definitions while supporting the creation of a common structure for international cooperation that was acceptable to all. She endorsed the approach put forward by the representative of Ireland and urged parliamentarians to adopt the much-needed resolution.

**Ms. S. Amero** (Uganda), welcoming the draft resolution, said that the abuse of social media platforms through the dissemination of false, malicious and hurtful information had adversely impacted individuals' enjoyment of the right to privacy and even affected minors. The Parliament of Uganda had passed legislation to address challenges associated with the misuse of the internet, which prohibited the unlawful sharing of any information relating to children and of unsolicited or malicious information and hate speech. Any individual convicted under the computer misuse act was prevented from holding office for 10 years. She called on countries to make appropriate budgetary provision for such initiatives.

**Mr. A. Alharbi** (Saudi Arabia) commended the work of the co-Rapporteurs in developing the draft resolution. His Government supported the international efforts within the United Nations to develop an international convention on countering the use of ICTs for criminal purposes. It had ratified a law to combat data theft and called on countries to develop national legislation to protect the privacy of individuals, help combat cybercrime and ensure that the perpetrators were prosecuted. Virtual activities were a part of everyday life, and measures to identify cybercriminals were essential to ensure the safe use of technology. Acknowledging the large number of valuable amendments put forward, he said that the Committee should make every effort to adopt the draft resolution.

**Mr. G. Mohindra** (United Kingdom) said that the shift to an online world had brought new challenges. International cybercrime organizations used cyberoperations to target anyone from large civilian infrastructure to small businesses and children, and additional security was required. In 2022, cybercrime had caused US\$ 7 trillion of damage, and that figure was only projected to increase in future years. Furthermore, an estimated 2.7 billion hours had been lost in resolving cybercrime. Thanking the co-Rapporteurs for their excellent work, he said that it was important to be specific when talking about cybercrime. Only those crimes that required a computer or internet connection should be classified as cybercrime in any international agreements. His country continued to work with the international community to reduce crimes against international peace and security by promoting and implementing the existing norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace.

**Mr. C. Madrazo Limón** (Mexico) said that the draft resolution referred to cooperation, prevention, information sharing, regulation, governance and resilience. However, the internet was like the atmosphere, it went from one country to another and did not recognize sovereignties. It was therefore important to go further by creating an international agency with the cooperation of all countries. Highly technical standards, guidance and much more detailed investigations were necessary and there should be a central channel for gathering information. The work undertaken by States also needed to be standardized. Such an international agency should have a close relationship with INTERPOL and other international organizations engaged in combating cybercrime.

**Ms. S. Sobia** (Pakistan) said that, in the draft resolution, the term "cybercrime" should be replaced with "misuse of information and communication technologies for criminal purposes" to cover crimes that did not fall under the definition of "cybercrime", such as hate speech, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and other religious-related crimes. References in the text to conventions on cybercrime should, however, be retained.

**Ms. S. Falaknaz** (United Arab Emirates), co-Rapporteur, thanked participants for their interventions and understanding of the importance of the subject. The international community must cooperate on the issue and parliaments had an important role to play in raising awareness, developing legislation or establishing a framework. Human rights and freedom of speech were critical issues in regard to cyberspace.

**Mr. J. Cepeda** (Spain), co-Rapporteur, welcomed the interesting proposals concerning the duality of security and freedom, and the questions raised about definitions and various concepts. Noting the importance of respecting existing international frameworks, he said that it would not be possible for the IPU to replicate in two or three days the open and wide-ranging debate that had been ongoing in the United Nations for some time. In order to produce an acceptable text, participants would have to set aside their differences and come together around a subject that united all, namely the struggle against those trying to destroy their countries. He hoped that it would be possible to develop a final text that was acceptable to all.

**The Chair** announced that the Committee would begin consideration of the proposed amendments at its sitting that afternoon. He also informed participants that the deadline for the submission of proposals for the topic of the next resolution was later that day.

*The sitting rose at 11:40.*

### SITTING OF TUESDAY, 14 MARCH 2023

(Afternoon)

*The sitting was called to order at 14:30 with Mr. M. Al-Ahbab (Qatar), President of the Standing Committee, in the Chair.*

#### **c) Drafting and adoption of the draft resolution in plenary** (C-I/146/DR)

**The Chair**, noting that the delegations of India and the Russian Federation had expressed reservations on the text, proposed that the Committee adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

**Mr. A. Larem** (Germany) said that he could agree to that proposal.

*The resolution was adopted by consensus.*

**Mr. A. Denisov** (Russian Federation) said that, although he supported the text in general, he wished to express a reservation regarding the description of the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime in preambular paragraph 11 and operative paragraph 1.

**Mr. T. Hurter** (Switzerland), referring to operative paragraph 25, said that the tasks to be undertaken by a working group on cybercrime might be performed by the Working Group on Science and Technology.

**The Chair** proposed that, as President of the Committee, he would present the resolution to the Assembly for formal adoption.

*It was so agreed.*

### Preparations for future Assemblies

**The Chair** said that Morocco, and Argentina and Belgium, had submitted proposals for the topic of the next resolution. He noted that there had not been a quorum at the Bureau meeting in which the two proposals had been discussed. The Bureau had therefore decided to invite the Committee to choose between the proposals in its stead. He invited the delegations to present their proposals.

**Mr. A. Touizi** (Morocco) said that his delegation was proposing the title *The contribution of parliaments to international efforts to end child military recruitment* for the topic of the next resolution. Despite the international target of ending the enrolment of children in the military, millions of children around the world were recruited and enrolled by rebel, terrorist or separatist groups. Those children were forced to participate in armed conflict, and were often subjected to sexual abuse, exploitation and violence. Various actions, particularly by UNICEF and its partners, had led to the release and reintegration of some 100,000 child soldiers, yet much more remained to be done to end child military recruitment. National parliaments and parliamentarians must make untiring efforts to attain that goal. The IPU, in collaboration with UNICEF and other partners, must lead intense advocacy at the international level to encourage States that had not yet done so to approve the Paris Principles and align their national legislation with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and related optional protocols. He hoped that the selection of the topic would lead to the development of a resolution that would enable parliaments to contribute to the efforts of the international community to end the military recruitment of children and ensure that they were better protected during armed conflict.

**Ms. M. Stolbizer** (Argentina) said that her delegation, together with the delegation of Belgium, was proposing the title *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence* for the topic of the next resolution. While science, technology and artificial intelligence (AI) made a huge contribution to societies and development, there was a need for an ethical perspective. Autonomous weapon systems, which selected and applied force to targets without human intervention, were a serious and urgent concern, particularly given the rapid pace of AI development. There were three important areas to be addressed: the humanitarian impact, responsibility and accountability, and the ethical dimension. As the United Nations Secretary-General had said, machines with the power and discretion to take lives without human involvement were politically unacceptable, morally repugnant and should be prohibited by international law. The international community should negotiate an instrument regulating and banning the use of such weapons, and the IPU should show leadership in that regard through the development of recommendations.

**Mr. C. Lacroix** (Belgium) said that AI was a double-edged sword. It had great potential to do good, but if it was allowed to develop unchecked, it could lead to the destruction of civilization. In addition to issues associated with responsibility and accountability, there were ethical and moral matters to be addressed in giving a machine the power to target individuals without any human intervention and on the basis of a dehumanized algorithm. Parliamentarians were highly unlikely to let a machine undertake their vital legislative role and should not give machines the supreme power to take away life. He therefore called on the Committee to select the proposal for the topic of the next resolution.

**The Chair** proposed that the Committee proceed to a vote to decide which of the two proposals would be studied during the next cycle.

*A vote by show of hands was taken.*

*The proposal submitted by the delegation of Morocco obtained 10 votes and the proposal submitted by the delegations of Argentina and Belgium obtained 14 votes.*

**The Chair** took it that the Committee wished to approve as the topic of the next resolution *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence* and to appoint Ms. M. Stolbizer (Argentina) and Mr. C. Lacroix (Belgium) as co- Rapporteurs.

*It was so decided.*

**Mr. A. Touizi** (Morocco) said that he respected the democratic process. His delegation would, however, continue to submit the proposed topic at future Assemblies given the importance and consequences of child military recruitment. It would appreciate a commitment to its adoption.

**Mr. T. Hurter** (Switzerland) suggested that the delegation of Morocco might wish to submit the proposal to the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, which might be a more appropriate forum for discussing the issue of child military recruitment.

**Mr. A. Alharbi** (Saudi Arabia) said that while it was important to respect the democratic process, the proposal submitted by Morocco was very important and he hoped that it would be put forward at a future Assembly.

**Mr. J. Cepeda** (Spain) agreed that the important topic proposed by the delegation of Morocco might be better addressed in the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights.

**The Secretary** said that, under Rule 21 of the Rules of the Standing Committees, the Bureau of one Standing Committee might convey to the Bureau of another Standing Committee its suggestions for subject items to be discussed by that Standing Committee at future Assemblies. It was therefore possible for the Moroccan delegation, with the support of the Bureau, to present its proposal to the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights in October 2023.

**Mr. J.M. Castro** (Chile) said that he was grateful to the delegation of Morocco for raising the important issue and underscored the need for the topic to be addressed by the IPU Assembly, in another committee if necessary.

**Ms. A. Larouche** (Canada) said that the topic proposed by the Moroccan delegation was an important one and of relevance to the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security. There was no guarantee that it would be addressed by another committee, and she suggested that a panel discussion on child military recruitment be held at the next Assembly.

**Mr. A. Touizi** (Morocco) thanked parliamentarians for their support. He hoped that the Bureau would convey the topic as a subject item for discussion by another Standing Committee.

**The Chair** said that, as per usual practice, the Bureau had proposed that an expert hearing on the topic chosen for the next resolution would be organized in October 2023. Further consultations would be organized so that a full programme of topics to be discussed at the 147th Assembly could be established in the run up to that event.

### **Elections to the Bureau of the Standing Committee**

**The Chair** said that the African Group had nominated Mr. V. Musowa (Malawi) and Ms. S. Amero (Uganda). The Arab Group had nominated Ms. W. Fahad (Iraq). The Eurasia Group had nominated Mr. A. Albu (Moldova), and the Twelve Plus Group had nominated Ms. D. Bergamini (Italy) and Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland). He took it that the Committee wished to support the candidatures, as well as to approve a second term for Algeria, Argentina, Chile, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Morocco.

*It was so decided.*

*The sitting rose at 15:20.*

# Standing Committee on Sustainable Development

**SITTING OF SUNDAY, 12 MARCH 2023**

(Morning)

*The sitting was called to order at 09:30 with Ms. A. Mulder (Netherlands), President of the Standing Committee, in the Chair.*

**Adoption of the agenda**  
(C-II/146/A.1)

*The agenda was adopted.*

**Approval of the summary record of the Committee's session held at the 145th IPU Assembly in Kigali (October 2022)**

*The summary record was approved.*

***Parliamentary efforts in achieving negative carbon balances of forests***

**The President** drew attention to the *Parliaments for the Planet* campaign, which the IPU had just launched in Manama, Bahrain. It aimed to mobilize parliaments and parliamentarians to lead by example and act on the climate emergency before preaching to others. The campaign consisted of two parts: the first encouraged parliaments and parliamentarians to become greener and decarbonize; the second helped parliaments to step up action through legislation, budgets and scrutiny of government measures to implement the Paris Agreement. She encouraged those present to calculate their own carbon footprint, take a copy of the *10 actions for greener parliaments (and those who work in them)* and share what their parliaments were doing for the planet.

**(a) Presentation of the draft resolution and the explanatory memorandum prepared by the co-Rapporteurs**  
(C-II/146/DR and C-II/146/M)

**The President** said that the draft resolution entitled *Parliamentary efforts in achieving negative carbon balances of forests* had already been distributed to Members. A total of 150 amendments from 23 parliaments had been submitted.

**Mr. C. Hoffman** (Germany), co-Rapporteur, said that the balance of carbon dioxide stored in forests should be increased. The 2019 call by the United Nations Secretary-General to scale up action in order to “turn the tide on deforestation” should be seen not as a suggestion but as an obligation for the global community. The deforestation and forest degradation caused by human, development and economic pressures were threatening our future. Even with ambitious efforts to reduce emissions, it was unlikely that the goal of the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius could be achieved.

It was imperative to reduce emissions and capture carbon. In that regard, trees played an important role as they were solar-powered carbon-capture engines. They covered 31% of the global land surface but held almost half of all carbon stored on land. Planting and safeguarding forests was feasible, durable, relatively easy and cheap. They protected biodiversity, cultivated carbon-neutral natural resources and led to sustainable economic development, particularly in developing countries. Forests provided a subsistence livelihood, employment and an income to forest-dwelling communities, forest-dependent people and indigenous people. They also regulated regional climates, influenced rainfall patterns, cooled urban areas, provided drinking water and protected areas from erosion, avalanches and floods. In recent years, floods had occurred in areas that had previously been deforested, such as in the Mediterranean in Europe. Ethiopia had cut down many of its forests and was now experiencing drought.

Between 1990 and 2020, 420 million hectares of forests had been deforested and a further 10 to 15 million hectares were lost every year. Unless action was taken to prevent that destruction, an estimated 290 million hectares would be deforested between 2016 and 2050 in the tropics alone. Therefore, the draft resolution stated that deforestation and its impact on humanity was a common

struggle to be tackled by the international community as a whole. The natural foundations of life needed to be upheld to ensure that we could live well, which was essential in order to protect the planet and achieve peace, stability and prosperity.

**Ms. H.V. Gavit** (India), co-Rapporteur, said that climate change was one of the biggest threats that the world faced and drafting a resolution that focused on reforestation, agroforestry and climate change prevention was very important. Forests were essential to the global climate because they captured and stored carbon, retained and released moisture, and provided sustainable and renewable resources. In that regard, sustainably harvested products could substitute damaging alternatives and avoid additional emissions. Annual sequestration capacities per hectare amounted to 0.4–1.2 tonnes of carbon in boreal forests, 1.5–4.5 tonnes in temperate forests and 4–8 tonnes in tropical forests, which were particularly important to regulating regional water balance. They protected against soil erosion, preserved biodiversity, and prevented droughts, floods and desertification.

The active protection and sustainable management of forests contributed to economic development and the securing of livelihoods for rural populations. It was estimated that some 33 million people worked in the formal and informal forest sectors, representing 1% of global employment. Therefore, more than half of global gross domestic product depended on ecosystem services, including those provided by forests.

Deforestation had an increasingly severe impact on lives, security and development. It also compounded climate change, contributing to 15% of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and reduced biodiversity and genetic resources. Forests provided habitats for 80% of amphibians, 75% of birds and 68% of mammals; tropical forests were home to approximately 50% of all animal and plant species. Furthermore, deforestation threatened food security and agriculture, particularly in the Amazon and the African tropics, where it affected rainfall and rainfed agriculture.

According to the report by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), *The State of the World's Forests 2022*, 420 million hectares of forest had been lost between 1990 and 2020, which was concerning. The loss of those trees had led to local climate changes, droughts and desertification. The severe impact of deforestation on lives and development, and the compounding effect that deforestation had on existing crises, were also concerning.

## (b) Debate

**Ms. M. Tamura** (Japan), noting the anniversary of the Tohoku earthquake in March 2011, offered her condolences to all those who had been affected by the earthquake in Türkiye. She said that efforts to reforest areas in Japan had been made to prevent population outflow and promote the forestry industry. Those efforts were important for environmental protection and economic development. With the help of local residents, initiatives had been launched in the retail industry to plant trees near store premises and grow aesthetically pleasing forests in communities. The Government had appealed to companies to work towards achieving carbon neutrality. The use of carbon-recycling technology had been discussed, and its ability to transform decarbonization and local urbanization should be noted.

**Mr. Y. Zaki** (Egypt) said that unsustainable management had depleted global resources and that climate change had affected our ability to store carbon. Although many countries were combating climate change and there was the Paris Agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the world was on track to increase global temperatures by two or three degrees Celsius compared to the pre-industrial era. Policies were needed to mitigate the effects of climate change and Egypt had launched a multidimensional national climate change strategy. Although there were no forests in Egypt, afforestation campaigns would be launched. Diplomacy and the Parliament helped to enhance national and international programmes to pass legislation and ensure security and stability.

**Ms. S. Raskovic Ivic** (Serbia) said that the resolution was necessary to encourage national parliaments to act. In 2018, the Serbian Parliament had established a focus group on sustainable development and, over the coming months, would hold a series of public hearings on deforestation and its effect on the climate. There had been a decline in afforestation in Serbia. Forests covered approximately 30.7% of Serbian territory and half of them were privately owned. That percentage was lower than the European average but close to the global average and it was hoped that it would increase to 41% in Serbia by 2035. Small forests would be planted in urban areas. Women in the parliament were working with local women's and youth groups on those issues. It was important to raise awareness and pass legislation.

**Mr. P.G. Assirvaden** (Mauritius) said that flash flooding gradually eroded the landscape in Mauritius and, in that regard, his Government had intervened to prevent the destruction of an area of the Ferney Valley. A Japanese ship, the MV *Wakashio*, had run aground and spilled 1,000 tonnes of oil on Mauritian shores, causing an ecological disaster that had required the intervention of civil society and parliamentarians. Parliamentarians and legislators needed training and there should be a sustainable development conference or very clear documents on carbon balances that parliamentarians could submit to their governments. Those documents should emphasize the need for parliamentarians to exert pressure on their governments. The next debate should focus on climate change, energy security and energy transition because all three topics were linked.

**Mr. P. Baković** (Slovenia) said that achieving negative carbon balances in forests was key to accomplishing the goals of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Through the European Green Deal, the European Union had committed itself to increasing efforts to combat climate change, protect biodiversity and safeguard forests. In that regard, the European Union had to reduce the deforestation and forest degradation caused by timber consumption and agriculture. He supported efforts to change the role and value of forests, which covered nearly 60% of Slovenian territory, and was committed to ensuring forest stability and resilience so that they could continue to act as carbon sinks. Half of Slovenian forests had been included in the Natura 2000 network and clearcutting had been banned.

Technological progress had led to a global rise in the use of natural resources and energy and increases in populations and consumption intensified pressure on the environment. It was therefore our collective duty to work towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and parliamentarians played an important role in that process. He supported the adoption of the resolution.

**Ms. C. Erotokritou** (Cyprus), congratulating the co-Rapporteurs for their relevant and extensive resolution, said that climate change was already leading to extreme weather conditions around the world, rising sea levels, ocean acidification and loss of biodiversity. It was imperative to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 and to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Forests were vital to stabilizing the climate due to their ability to capture and store carbon, retain and release moisture, and provide sustainable and renewable resources. They also had the potential to preserve biodiversity, create carbon neutral resources and foster sustainable economic development. However, currently the world was experiencing the negative effects of deforestation, which included climate change, loss of biodiversity, threats to food security and agriculture, and the destruction of societies and economies. It was parliamentarians' responsibility to identify the need for national and international policies to respond to the climate risks caused by deforestation and implement the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They should also ensure that the United Nations system, states, and multilateral and regional institutions were prepared to address climate threats, food security and sustainable economic development. Legislation to halt deforestation and forest degradation should be promoted and efforts to protect landscapes, forests and agroforestry should be intensified. Time was running out and action had to be taken promptly to end deforestation and forest degradation, preserve the global climate, and sustain life on Earth.

**Ms. Yang Yi Wonyoung** (Republic of Korea) said that, in 2021, her Government had enacted the Carbon Neutral Green Growth Framework Act to Tackle the Climate Crisis, becoming the fourteenth country to enact such legislation. Her country had unprecedented experience in restoring forests following the Pacific War, the Japanese occupation and the Korean War. Subsequent economic development had led to excessive tree cutting because the vast majority of families used to cut wood for fuel. However, successful campaigns had led to reforestation and that experience had contributed to international reforestation projects.

**Ms. S.-M. Dinică** (Romania) said that the forest policy of Romania was based on a long-standing tradition of establishing and implementing sustainable forest management. A national forest strategy for 2030 had been adopted, which provided a framework for forest development, regeneration and sustainable exploitation. Romania aimed to enhance the productivity, stability and biodiversity of forests in line with the global goals and targets of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030 and it was committed to the ambitious climate, energy and environmental objectives of the European Union. The New EU Forest Strategy for 2030 recognized the central and multifunctional role of forests and the value of foresters in achieving European Union emission targets. The draft resolution invited Member Parliaments to introduce programmes on forests in school

curricula and, in early 2023, the Romanian Government had approved a national strategy on education and climate change education for the period 2023–2030. It would increase awareness among youth about the causes and impacts of the climate crisis and it would promote environmental responsibility and engagement. She fully supported that initiative.

**Mr. R. Motafakerazad** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that improving the carbon absorption of forests required national and international financial resources. Gaps in financing were increasingly frequent in developing countries and locally generated resources had diminished, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic recovery period. Therefore, international public financial resources should be provided to increase local capacities and overcome challenges.

His Government had always supported international efforts to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change and believed that countries had common but different responsibilities. Over the previous four decades, his Government had implemented sustainable development programmes, despite sanctions and the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War. It wished to move towards a low-carbon economy, but the current sanctions and the economic, technological and financial restrictions imposed on his country had to be lifted.

**Mr. K. Tontisirin** (Thailand) said that a national legal framework and systematic review of forest management should be established. A multilevel, multistakeholder strategy was also needed to engage the educational sector and local people in reforestation and afforestation to create inclusive development and a more people-centred green economy. In October 2022, his Parliament and a member of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum had worked on two resolutions: the first promoted biodiversity and the green economy for inclusive development; the second promoted the use of renewable energy, clean energy technologies and low-emission technologies to achieve carbon neutrality and net zero emissions. Those resolutions demonstrated commitment to improving cooperation for sustainable growth, climate action and biodiversity.

**Mr. A. Maiorov** (Russian Federation) said that his Government attached great importance to the climate agenda and the Russian Federation was one of the leading actors in global efforts to reduce emissions and promote universal action. Within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), a balance should be struck between the need to develop energy and manufacturing, and the need to protect the climate agenda. Although he supported the draft resolution, minor amendments had been submitted to the Secretariat, some of which were political. No amendment should change the substance of the original resolution.

**Mr. D. Naughten** (Ireland) said that forests had historically been viewed as a barrier to economic development, particularly in the agricultural sector. Unless that perception changed within local communities, it would be impossible to achieve negative carbon balances.

He had three suggestions. First, the research community should support innovative forest use and management to provide long-term employment in local communities. Farmers should have access to research. In Ireland, researchers had worked with individual farmers who had a responsibility to explain the research to 99 of their neighbours. Second, parliamentarians should ensure that public procurements prioritized the use of sustainable wood. Third, although there was funding available for developing nations to plant and replant trees, such as through the Great Green Wall Initiative, mechanisms were needed to create connections with local communities and deliver funding directly to them.

**The President**, inviting the speakers from Zambia and the Syrian Arab Republic to take the floor, said that she appreciated Ms. Tamura's acknowledgement of the earthquake that had affected Türkiye and the Syrian Arab Republic. Her thoughts were with those who had been impacted.

**Ms. J. Sabao** (Zambia) said that, although Zambia only contributed 0.19% to global greenhouse gas emissions and most of its land was forested, climate change was impacting her country. Over the previous decades, areas had been deforested to burn charcoal and the Government had undertaken measures to promote sustainable forest management as a pathway to a low-carbon economy. Zambia was a signatory to the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UNFCCC. With regard to the latter, her Government would honour its commitments by reducing emissions. It would do so by implementing three programmes driven by the climate response strategy and supported by national development policies on energy, forests, agriculture, water, sanitation, transport, and town and country planning. One of those programmes, the Zambia Integrated Forest Landscape

Project, aimed to reduce emissions and communities' vulnerability to climate change by combating unsustainable agricultural expansion and enhancing the benefits of forests. The creation of the Ministry of Green Economy and Environment, which included the department responsible for managing, protecting and conserving forests, demonstrated the Government's commitment to addressing climate change.

**Mr. M. Akkad** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that approximately 528,000 hectares of Syrian land were forests, 40% of which had grown naturally and 60% of which had been planted artificially. However, the Syrian civil war had led to the destruction of many of those forests over the previous 12 years. Efforts were underway to protect and replant them by amending laws that had existed since the 1950s. Measures included reforestation and the prohibition of selling or renting out forested land. Even forests that had been burned down had to be replanted. There were also measures to protect forests by engaging local populations. He supported the draft resolution and his Government would promulgate laws in line with it.

**Mr. K. Alamirah** (Kuwait) said that despite meetings that had taken place over the years to discuss carbon emissions and their negative impact on the planet, the world was not paying attention to the issue. Global temperatures and deforestation were increasing, which harmed the planet and humanity, and created unhealthy environments. In particular, climate change affected agriculture and threatened food and water security, which underscored the importance of implementing procedures that took forests into consideration. Greed was preventing the transition to a green economy and impeding the emergence of new sustainable green technologies. Parliamentarians had the responsibility to set out national and international policies that would protect forests and reduce emissions.

**Mr. O. Merezko** (Ukraine) said that one of the causes of forest destruction was war. The Russian aggression against Ukraine had led to the release of over 33 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere. More than 22 million hectares of Ukrainian forests had been partially destroyed, and 60,000 hectares had been burned down. Moreover, the Russian Federation had deliberately mined 7,000 hectares of forest. The Russian Federation was a terrorist state that was implementing a genocidal policy against Ukraine. Ecocide, a topic that should be addressed in the resolution, was part of that policy.

**Mr. A.B.H. Al-Hitmi** (Qatar), offering his condolences to the victims of the earthquake in the Syrian Arab Republic and Türkiye, said that Qatar had made efforts to ensure carbon neutrality at the FIFA World Cup 2022. Electric public transport had been provided and green spaces had been created around stadiums. A solar power station had been established and it currently met 10% of electricity demand in Qatar. It was hoped that output could be increased to meet 50% of demand. Green ammonia had been used to produce fertilizers and improve agriculture. Blue ammonia allowed for the transport of hydrogen, which could be used to produce electricity for countries seeking clean energy sources. Qatar had provided US\$ 100 million in aid and, in particular, had given US\$ 25 million to Pakistan.

**Mr. N. Şatiroglu** (Türkiye) said that he was grateful to all the countries that had provided support in the aftermath of the twin earthquakes. According to the latest statistics, 22.9 million hectares of Türkiye were forests and, in line with the draft resolution, the General Directorate of Forestry had some reforestation, rehabilitation and afforestation programmes. It was also participating in international reforestation programmes, such as the Bonn Challenge, which aimed to reforest 350 million hectares by 2030. Türkiye had pledged to reforest 2.3 million hectares by 2030 and it had already completed 2 million hectares. That pledge included post-fire restoration, and artificial and silvicultural restoration. Türkiye was one of the few countries that could increase its forest areas and, in that regard, reforestation, afforestation and soil conservation had been carried out at the district level to expand forests, prevent erosion and limit sediment transport. That had created new recreational and ecotourism areas, carbon sinks, and oxygen sources.

**Mr. H. Hasan** (Bahrain) said that climate change was a global challenge requiring joint international cooperation and the exchange of experiences to ensure climate security, reduce carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency. That would, in turn, help to achieve sustainable development, build the green economy and limit the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius. Measures had been taken in Bahrain to improve the climate and the King of Bahrain had

continuously supported achieving the SDGs and improving cooperation. Bahrain had introduced directives to quadruple mangrove coverage and double tree coverage. It had achieved 100% of its afforestation goals for 2022 by planting 110,000 mangrove seedlings with the help of the private sector and 140,000 trees across the country. Legislation had also been passed to protect the environment.

**Mr. K. Kandodo** (Malawi) said that unsustainable energy sources, poor agricultural and land use practices, and limited economic choices had led to a rapid decline in forest coverage and soil quality in Malawi. The loss of forest ecosystems was eroding access to vital resources and contributing to environmental degradation, which impacted the future of the local and regional economy. Through the Malawi Parliamentary Conservation Caucus, the Department of Forestry and the Parliament had been reviewing forest legislation since 2017. An amendment had been passed in 2020, demonstrating that Malawi was serious about protecting its natural resources. In line with SDG 15, the Government would operationalize the carbon credit trading market and it had already received inquiries from potential investors. Malawi had great potential for carbon sequestration and its carbon credits from its forests were estimated to represent 20 million metric tonnes of carbon per year. It had a million hectares of forest reserves and over a million hectares of land and wildlife conservation parks. The Government was encouraging the use of electric vehicles and had lifted import duties on electric motor vehicles and electric motor vehicle charging systems. Parliamentarians should ensure that governments prioritized issues relating to reforestation, sustainable forest management and land use legislation.

**Mr. S.A.M. Gilani** (Pakistan) said that rapid deforestation and urbanization had made the planet more vulnerable than ever. It was ironic that the major victims of climate change were not among the major contributors to the global carbon footprint. Pakistan produced 0.8% of global carbon emissions but was among the 10 most vulnerable countries, according to the Global Climate Risk Index. In 2021, Pakistan had experienced unprecedented flooding which had claimed thousands of lives, left millions homeless and destroyed critical infrastructure. The Government's climate action policies were in line with the Paris Agreement and it was rebuilding climate friendly infrastructure. Provincial governments were introducing electric buses to reduce gas emissions. Instead of fighting amongst ourselves, we should invest in nature and implement resolutions in our countries to save the next generation, who otherwise would not be able to enjoy the luxuries that we had enjoyed.

**Ms. A. Lotriet** (South Africa) said that South Africa was experiencing some of the worst impacts of global warming and action could not be delayed. The poorest and most vulnerable sectors of society were the most disadvantaged. Food insecurity and undernourishment were increasing everywhere, particularly in sub-Saharan African countries, where cases of malnutrition had increased due to rainfall deficits. In South Africa, heavy floods had increased, resulting in the loss of life, displacement and extensive damage to crops, livestock and critical infrastructure. It was imperative to grow economies sustainably, create jobs and boost well-being without destroying the environment. In that regard, forests were essential. As per the draft resolution, it was essential to implement policies and regulations to protect forests and biodiversity. That included strengthening legal frameworks, adopting measures to tackle illegal logging and creating economic incentives to protect forests. Developed countries must honour financial obligations to support the conservation of tropical forests and the restoration of degraded land. Parliamentarians from those countries must hold their governments accountable. She supported the adoption of the draft resolution.

**Mr. A. Alsalamah** (Saudi Arabia) said that his country had committed to being an environmentally responsible energy supplier and it hoped to achieve net zero emissions by 2060 through its circular carbon economy programme. Saudi Arabia had chaired the G20 meeting and a climate week would be held in Saudi Arabia later in the year. Saudi Arabia was one of the largest urea fertilizer producers and the Government was improving energy efficiency through the storage of 140 million tonnes of carbon and the production of four million tonnes of hydrogen every year. The circular carbon economy knowledge hub would facilitate the dissemination of technologies in Western Asia.

**Mr. V.D. Ram** (India) said that climate change posed a serious threat to the environment and the quality of human life all over the world. Parties to the UNFCCC had agreed to address climate change adaptation and mitigation. In that regard, forests played a crucial role because they stored more carbon than any other terrestrial ecosystem and slowed climate change. India was vulnerable to the impact of climate change and the Government had launched initiatives, such as the National

Mission for Green India, to create carbon sinks that could absorb up to three billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> by 2030. Parliaments were key to achieving negative carbon balances through legislation, advocacy and policymaking.

**Ms. H.V. Gavit** (India), co-Rapporteur, said that all those present agreed that forestation was important, and all countries were working and introducing policies in that regard. It was important to have a common agenda and to pass a resolution.

**Mr. C. Hoffman** (Germany), co-Rapporteur, said that he appreciated efforts in countries with almost no forests, such as Bahrain, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, to support forest initiatives because countries should work together. The world had different types of forests and support should be tailored to them. The forests in the Sahel were sparse but influenced the local climate and made agriculture possible, whereas tropical rainforests were the most important for carbon storage.

**(c) Drafting and adoption of the draft resolution in plenary**  
(C-II/146/DR)

*The drafting session was paused and would resume the following day. The President invited Mr. M. Al Mheiri (United Arab Emirates), who was unable to speak at the start of the session, to take the floor.*

**Mr. M. Al Mheri** (United Arab Emirates) said that, later that year, his country would host the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the UNFCCC, where the world would assess progress made in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. The United Arab Emirates would take the lead in achieving successful results and prompting global climate action. His country, alongside others, was vulnerable to the effects of climate change and serious efforts were needed to transition to greener energy and to diversify the economy.

Work should focus on two aspects: raising awareness of climate action and ensuring sustainable financing. With regard to the former, new and experienced parliamentarians played an important role in raising awareness and the IPU should bring parliamentarians together to organize awareness campaigns and workshops. That work could also be carried out on the sidelines of COP28. Including climate change in school curricula would help young people and future generations deal with climate change. With regard to ensuring sustainable financing, climate change required large investments in renewable energy sources. Developed and underdeveloped countries lacked technology that would reduce emissions and an infrastructure that could withstand climate change. COP28 would be an opportunity to raise funds, provide loans, find other financing options from the private sector and be creative with investment opportunities. His country had taken steps to support a US\$ 140 million investment in renewable energy projects.

Parliamentarians had to adopt legislation that reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and ensure parliaments became greener. The Emirati Parliament no longer produced hard copies of documents and had adopted smart systems to provide energy. It was hoped that significant progress could be made in the United Arab Emirates prior to COP28. The conference would gather like-minded people and would provide an opportunity for countries to show solidarity with each other.

*A promotional video for COP28 was played.*

*The sitting rose at 12:40.*

**SITTING OF TUESDAY, 14 MARCH 2023**

(Afternoon)

*The sitting was called to order at 17:00 with Ms. A. Mulder (Netherlands), President of the Standing Committee, in the chair.*

**The President** said that, since the discussion on amendments to the resolution had ended, she took it that Standing Committee wished to adopt the resolution.

*The resolution was adopted by acclamation.*

**A representative of the Russian Federation** said that his delegation had favoured adopting the original version of the resolution because it was highly relevant. However, the reference in preambular paragraph 19 to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine was unacceptable. It breached Rule 23 of the IPU Statutes and Rules because it distorted the scope and nature of the text and politicized the resolution. Although conflicts negatively impacted nature and the climate, his delegation opposed references to a particular State without considering others. The delegation of the Russian Federation requested the inclusion of its reservation in the final version of the resolution adopted by the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development and in the final document adopted by the 146th IPU Assembly. Following the defeat of Nazism, the United Nations would restore forests and remedy the environmental damage in Europe and Iraq.

**The President** said that his reservation would be noted.

### Preparations for future Assemblies

**The President** said that the workplans for the 147th and 148th Assemblies were to be set and the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development would submit a proposal for the theme of the next resolution at the final plenary of the Assembly. The Standing Committee had considered five proposals and the theme submitted for consideration – *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity* – was inspired by the proposal from the delegation of Ukraine and was a combination of the proposals submitted by the delegations of India and the United Arab Emirates.

*The topic of the resolution was approved.*

**The President** said that Mr. S. Patra (India) and Ms. M. Al Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates) had been nominated by their countries to be co-Rapporteurs. Mr. P. Julian (Canada) had also been proposed as a third co-Rapporteur.

**Mr. P. Julian** (Canada) said that, unfortunately, his delegation did not have enough resources to manage all its responsibilities and he could not act as co-Rapporteur. However, it was sensible to have three rapporteurs to govern the three parts of the motion and he suggested Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine) replace him.

*It was so decided.*

**The President** said that, regarding the workplan for the 147th IPU Assembly, the Bureau proposed dedicating one sitting of the debates to the theme of the upcoming resolution, one sitting to preparations for the Parliamentary Meeting at the upcoming 28th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28), and a third sitting to an expert hearing on food security.

*It was so decided.*

**The President** invited a representative of the United Arab Emirates to speak about the upcoming COP28.

**A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that she wanted to ensure representation of the COP28 team at the IPU. Over the summer, work would be carried out alongside that team and with the IPU to organize a parliamentary meeting at COP28. Usually, IPU meetings were on the sidelines. However, at COP28, she hoped that the Parliamentary Meeting would take place in the green zone with decision makers in attendance to ensure parliaments took action.

**A representative of the Seychelles** asked whether the Parliamentary Meeting would be held before or during COP28, how the outcome paper from that meeting would reach the purview of those in the executive meetings, and whether there would be sufficient time to consider the paper.

**A representative of the United Arab Emirates** said that she would act as Rapporteur during the Parliamentary Meeting at COP28. After the meeting, she hoped that the IPU President, perhaps in collaboration with the Speaker of the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates, would give a speech to decision makers to ensure that outcomes were highlighted and considered. Work would be carried out alongside the IPU team and updates would be provided.

### **Elections to the Bureau of the Standing Committee**

**The President** said that the following nominations had been received: from the Arab Group, Ms. M. Al Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates) and Mr. K. Alamirah (Kuwait)<sup>1</sup> to complete the first term of Kuwait; from the Asia Pacific Group, Mr. P.S. Rudana (Indonesia) and Ms. M.R. Arenas (Philippines); from GRULAC, Ms. E. Cuesta (Ecuador) for a second term; from the Twelve Plus Group, Ms. G. Burokiene (Lithuania). She took it that the Standing Committee wished to approve those nominations.

*It was so agreed.*

**A representative of Kenya** said that her country was eligible for re-election. She had spoken with Ms. T. Ackson from the United Republic of Tanzania, who would speak with the Secretariat in that regard.

**A representative of India** said that he had reservations about certain paragraphs of the resolution, which he would submit in writing by the following afternoon.

**The President** said that the vote had already taken place, but the representative of India could express his reservations at the Assembly the following afternoon.

*The sitting rose at 17:20.*

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<sup>1</sup> On 26 March 2023, the IPU received a formal communication from the Parliament of Kuwait specifying that the Constitutional Court had annulled the elections that had taken place in the country in 2022 and that Mr. K. Alamirah was no longer an MP. As a result, the previous member from Kuwait, Mr. H. Al Matar, retained his position on the Bureau.

## Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

**SITTING OF MONDAY, 13 MARCH 2023**

(Morning)

*The sitting was called to order at 09:15 with Ms. J. Mahmood (Maldives), member of the Bureau of the Committee, in the Chair.*

### **Adoption of the agenda** (C-III/146/A.1)

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Approval of the summary record of the Committee's session held at the 145th IPU Assembly in Kigali (October 2022)**

*The summary record was approved.*

**The Chair** recalled the successful workshop on climate change hosted by the Standing Committee in conjunction with the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development at the 145th IPU Assembly, and announced that the IPU was launching a new climate change campaign *#Parliaments4thePlanet*.

She also invited the geopolitical groups to nominate candidates for the vacant positions in the Bureau of the Standing Committee by the end of the day so that the Committee could elect the new members at its next meeting.

### **Preparatory debate on the next resolution of the Standing Committee: *Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm***

**The Chair** recalled that Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia) had been appointed during the 145th Assembly as co-Rapporteur for the resolution. The IPU President had carried out consultations to find a second co-Rapporteur and had nominated Mr. E. Bustamante (Peru) for that position. She took it that the Committee wished to support that nomination.

*It was so decided.*

**Ms. L. Reynolds** (Australia), co-Rapporteur, thanked parliamentarians for their interest in the very important topic of how parliaments could address the trafficking and enslavement of millions of children from vulnerable families into so-called orphanages. The sad fact was that the vast majority of those children were not orphans: up to 90% of them had at least one living parent and were recruited from their families and trafficked into group homes. They were given new paper identities, and those “paper orphans” were trained to provide an orphanage experience for volunteers, donors and tourists. Although a discussion about orphanages, tourism and trafficking was horrifying enough, it was even more shocking to understand how that new type of child trafficking and slavery had developed and was thriving, as yet unchecked. Very few donors stopped to consider whether they were supporting a valid and ethical charity that was actually doing good, not bad.

Action to address and prevent the trafficking of millions of children must begin with an understanding of how the problem arose. The desire of millions of people around the world to help those less fortunate than themselves had given rise to a combination of volunteering and tourism, “voluntourism”. However, many volunteers undertook no due diligence of the charities they were supporting. Criminals and traffickers had become very skilled in delivering the perfect orphanage experience for visitors and supplying children to meet a demand from visitors to help orphans. Donors thought they were supporting the orphanages but were unwittingly funding a criminal enterprise. Orphanage trafficking could be addressed by educating donors and volunteers to conduct more due diligence on the charities they wished to support and to consider how they would want their own children to be treated.

Partnerships constituted another element in dealing with trafficking and slavery, in addition to prevention, prosecution and protection. Following the debate, the co-Rapporteurs would prepare a draft resolution for consideration at the 147th IPU Assembly on how parliamentarians could work with citizens, governments and the United Nations to end orphanage trafficking — a 21st century form of child trafficking — and to ensure that children were provided with much better care, irrespective of where they lived or their circumstances.

**Mr. E. Bustamante** (Peru), co-Rapporteur, said that he was pleased to serve as a co-rapporteur to develop a draft resolution on orphanage trafficking and tourism, which constituted a modern form of slavery through which children could be groomed. Children should be protected and parliamentarians must encourage governments to take effective measures and legislative action to end the harmful practice of orphanage trafficking.

**The Chair** introduced the experts.

**Ms. K. Van Doore** (Deputy Head of School, Griffith Law School), expert, said that people donated to, volunteered at and visited orphanages in the belief that they were helping children who had lost their parents. Unfortunately, unscrupulous operators had set up orphanages to profit from such generosity and were recruiting children for the purpose of exploitation and profit. Families were offered inducements and promises of a better life and education for their children. Such orphanage trafficking occurred in times of crisis and in countries where gatekeeping standards were often poorly enforced, and orphanages were not registered. Orphanages involved in trafficking often claimed that children had been abandoned or orphaned rather than relinquished, and such claims were often supported by fraudulent documentation. Those children were known as paper orphans, namely orphans by virtue of their false documentation only. Food and medical care might also be withheld from children to elicit more sympathy and money from volunteers and visitors to orphanages. Other forms of exploitation included sexual abuse, and further trafficking.

Many people participated in orphanage tourism to provide funding and affection to children they believed were orphans. However, even when an orphanage appeared to provide properly for children, child development research had shown that orphanage care resulted in poorer outcomes. The risk of attachment disorders was greatly magnified by orphanage tourism and a continual rotation of volunteers moving in and out of very vulnerable children's lives.

In 2018, the United States Trafficking in Persons Report had included a special section on the link between child institutionalization and trafficking, identifying the critical role of orphanage tourism in creating demand for orphanage trafficking. In 2017, the Australian Government had examined the issue of orphanage trafficking. Promising practices that had been developed included discouraging citizens from volunteering or visiting orphanages overseas and special travel advisories for countries where orphanage trafficking occurred. The 2019 United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/74/133 on the rights of the child urged States to take appropriate measures to protect children who were victims of trafficking and deprived of parental care, enact and enforce legislation to prevent and combat the trafficking in and exploitation of children in care facilities, and take appropriate measures to prevent and address the harms related to volunteering programmes in orphanages, including in the context of tourism, which could lead to trafficking and exploitation.

Many countries had moved away from routinely institutionalizing children several decades ago. Up to 80% of the estimated 5.5 million children growing up in orphanages around the world had a parent who could raise them with support. It was critical for governments to take comprehensive action to address orphanage trafficking. Countries should consider how to discourage their citizens from participating in orphanage tourism and supporting orphanages, including by ensuring that funding was directed at supporting children and families rather than children in orphanages. Authorities in countries where orphanages were largely privately funded should enact, monitor and enforce strict gatekeeping requirements and prevent the trafficking of children into orphanages. They should also enforce visa requirements for volunteers and visitors.

It was disturbing to think that orphanages could be a site of child trafficking. Many volunteers believed that they were genuinely assisting orphaned children and it could be particularly difficult to challenge that mindset. Strong government action was required to end orphanage trafficking and ensure that children grew up in families where they belonged.

**Ms. R. Nhep** (Senior Technical Advisor, Better Care Network), expert, said that although orphanage trafficking was increasingly recognized as a form of child trafficking, there were systemic gaps and barriers in countries preventing the effective detection and prosecution of orphanage

trafficking crimes. There were gaps in criminal law, including with respect to domestic and transnational child traffic offences, child protection legislation and alternative care regulation. In countries where orphanage trafficking occurred, lax implementation and enforcement of legislation reduced safeguards for children in residential care and the likelihood of detection or of interventions to prevent such trafficking. Furthermore, a lack of awareness of orphanage trafficking and its indicators affected detection, particularly by frontline officials including law-enforcement and child protection authorities. As a result, child victims were being left in exploitative orphanages under the control of their traffickers who remained free to continue to prey upon vulnerable families.

Gaps in the regulation of volunteer and not-for-profit sector activities often resulted in the unintentional financing of orphanages involved in child trafficking and exploitation and incentivized the active recruitment of children into orphanages to solicit donations. Altruistic sentiments towards orphanages and a lack of scrutiny of residential care facilities made it easy for perpetrators to disguise trafficking as a child protection intervention.

In order to address such gaps and barriers and to support countries and governments, commitments had been made to combat orphanage trafficking and tourism. A global expert task force had been formed in 2022 to develop a thematic brief on orphanage tourism, voluntourism, volunteering and trafficking that contained a holistic suite of recommended policy statements, concrete actions and examples from different countries of legislative and regulatory measures, awareness raising and engagement strategies. It promoted a whole-of-government approach and recognized the need for international cooperation to combat orphanage trafficking. The thematic brief called for a global prohibition of orphanage tourism and urged countries to ensure that the perpetrators of orphanage trafficking crimes were prosecuted, including under extraterritorial jurisdiction. Governments were encouraged to issue travel advisories and ensure proper regulation of the not-for-profit sector and residential services, and compliance with international child rights. They should also address the unlawful operation of orphanages and removal of children from their families for entry into orphanages, and ban volunteering in such institutions.

Parliaments were urged to examine orphanage volunteering, unregulated voluntourism and orphanage trafficking from the point of view of children's rights and modern slavery in order to develop regulations tailored to the country context. Parliamentarians had already been successful in raising awareness and driving change to combat orphanage trafficking in several countries and the draft resolution could be instrumental in building the international cooperation necessary to end the crime of orphanage trafficking.

**Ms. M. Bon Klanjscek** (Slovenia) said that there were no orphanages or children's homes in Slovenia. Action was taken by the courts to protect the rights and interests of children when parents did not properly exercise their rights and obligations, and included foster care, adoption, the granting of child-rearing responsibilities to a relative, and guardianship for minors. Although Slovenia was a target country for victims of human trafficking exploited for prostitution, it did not have orphanage trafficking. However, it was well aware of the risks of insufficient control or protection and recognized the need to pay particular attention to adoptions, particularly from abroad. Slovenia had accepted 20 Ukrainian orphans, who would remain in the country until the end of hostilities. Slovenia had signed a letter of guarantee that did not allow for the adoption of those children.

Slovenia supported all measures to help prevent and eradicate orphanage trafficking and looked forward to the debate, which would provide an opportunity to make progress on the issue.

**Ms. A. Al Shaman** (Saudi Arabia) said that many children orphaned as a result of natural disasters, conflict and poverty were exposed to trafficking, sexual exploitation and forced labour. She called for the development of a definition of orphanage trafficking and international cooperation to implement mechanisms to prevent such trafficking. Governments should intensify monitoring and control mechanisms, financial measures and efforts to raise awareness of the phenomenon.

Saudi Arabia, which stood ready to share its experience with other countries, had various legal and other mechanisms in place to protect children. Many foreign social media sites were calling for fundraising to help children on humanitarian grounds. Such initiatives were not acceptable to her country. Only the institutions of King Salman were eligible to organize such fundraising.

**Ms. A. Ayyoub Awadallah** (Egypt) said that orphanage trafficking represented a cycle of criminal activities that included kidnapping, displacement and exploitation. Measures, including international humanitarian and judicial cooperation must be implemented to combat such activities. Egypt was party to numerous international agreements and protocols to fight child and female exploitation. Her Government was implementing relevant legislation as a priority and had launched several programmes and initiatives. There were more than 500 institutions taking care of orphans in her country and the President was expediting support for orphans.

International organizations, the IPU and national parliaments should take serious steps to address the issue and ensure that children were protected through appropriate legislation. Penalties should be imposed on organizations and other entities facilitating tourist visits to orphanages that did not comply with United Nations norms and values. Funds should also be made available for national campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of orphanages and stress the role of nongovernmental organizations in protecting children.

**Ms. A. Attalides** (Cyprus) said that orphanage trafficking, in which the orphan narrative and associated notion of vulnerability was used to prey on the sympathies of tourists, volunteers and others, was a multifaceted crime that deserved international concern. Although Cyprus had no orphanages, it had a comprehensive alternative State care system and recognized the crucial role of parliaments in addressing orphanage trafficking.

At the national level, the relevant legislation, including policies fighting poverty and supporting the family structure, was of vital importance. In cooperation with government agencies, parliaments could launch programmes to return children to their families with strong support and supervision and the resources required to ensure a healthier model of care. Funding should be invested in family and community-based services, better data collection and the development of new model laws. Efforts to educate tourists, donors and volunteers were also essential.

At the international level, a holistic approach was required and cooperation between parliaments and UN agencies, nongovernmental organizations and civil society was crucial. Orphanage trafficking should be included in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and recognized as another form of child trafficking. Concerted efforts were needed to prevent such child exploitation, prosecute the criminals and protect children.

**Mr. S. Ty** (Cambodia) said that children living in orphanages were at greater risk of trafficking. Governments, parliaments and civil society organizations should attach high priority to the issue. The most recent appraisal of the UN Global Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons had noted the need for invigorated global action against human trafficking, which was on the increase due to economic hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), had undertaken various initiatives to prevent human trafficking, including a plan of action against trafficking in persons, especially women and children, that sought to strengthen the rule of law and border control among ASEAN Member States, intensify efforts to prosecute trafficking cases, and strengthen regional cooperation based on a shared responsibility to address human trafficking. His country, for its part, had taken serious action against human trafficking, particularly of women and children. It had made great progress in strengthening a legal mechanism for prosecution, including by differentiating lawful child protection interventions and trafficking, with profit-making considered as a purpose of trafficking and sexual exploitation. It had also adopted child protection legislation and introduced monitoring, detection and prevention mechanisms.

Efforts should be made to review criminal law and child protection regulations to ensure that offences were properly prosecuted. Clear guidelines and training should be given to local actors. Programmes should be developed to raise awareness, return children to their families and ensure that parents had the skills and means to properly care for their children.

**Mr. M. De Maegd** (Belgium) said that he commended the Committee for putting the important issue on the political agenda and stressed that every effort must be made to protect the rights of children all over the world. There were two aspects to orphanage trafficking: first, children kept in orphanages so that the establishment could make a profit, notably through donations; and second, illegal international adoptions where children were sold to adoptive families abroad that did not know that the children had been trafficked. An increasing number of countries were becoming aware of the phenomenon and some had already taken measures to prevent such practices. Others, including his own, were looking into the matter. At its session in September 2022, the United Nations Committee on Enforced Disappearances had declared that such practices, which constituted a crime against humanity, should be eliminated and called on States to do so. The draft resolution would raise the awareness of parliaments about the phenomenon and urge them to promote and defend children's rights.

**Ms. A. Sarangi** (India) said that she welcomed the selection of the highly relevant topic and noted that all countries were duty bound to ensure that children lived in an environment that was safe and conducive to growth, health and education. In addition to the provisions in the Indian Constitution

to prevent child trafficking, her Government had formulated legislation providing for the protection of children in need of care and in conflict with the law. Every orphanage in India was registered under the Juvenile Justice Act, and strict norms had been laid down to ensure compliance with the relevant provisions.

With regard to the prevention of child trafficking at the international level, India had ratified the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking of Women and Children for Prostitution. Memoranda of understanding concerning bilateral cooperation to prevent child trafficking had also been signed with Bangladesh, Cambodia, Myanmar and the United Arab Emirates. Some 78 human trafficking units had been established in districts across India and a child helpline had also been set up.

Parliamentarians had a major role to play in ensuring that the benefits of legislation were realized and in raising awareness. She trusted that the discussions on the highly relevant topic would help in formulating policies and strategies to fight against human trafficking, in particular child trafficking.

**Ms. A. Mulder** (Netherlands) said that a business model that exploited children was unacceptable and expressed support for a draft resolution on orphanage trafficking. Governments should stand with the victims of such trafficking and ensure that children were able to seek help. It was incomprehensible in today's world that children were being taken from their families, and she drew attention to the situation in Ukraine where children were being taken to the Russian Federation for adoption. Those responsible for such actions must be brought to justice.

**Ms. D. Al Zayed** (Bahrain) said that orphanage trafficking was a clear violation of human and children's rights and expressed support for a draft resolution on the subject, which was of importance to governments and parliaments. Orphanage trafficking should be recognized as human trafficking and the perpetrators must be brought to justice with expedited prosecutions and the application of more stringent sanctions. Parents must also be punished. Relevant legislation must be promulgated and sufficient financial resources made available to meet the needs of all orphans, including through the provision of legal assistance. Efforts should be made to raise awareness of the issue among orphans and ensure that they had access to means of communication.

Outlining efforts to protect the approximately 15,800 orphans in Bahrain, she said that an institute and charity commission had been established under the auspices of the King. Education programmes for orphans financed from the general budget were also being provided.

**Mr. K. Sittheeamorn** (Thailand) said that he commended the co-rapporteur from Australia for bringing the subject of orphanage trafficking to the attention of the IPU. Although there was limited evidence about orphanage trafficking and voluntourism in Thailand, over 50,000 children were living in residential care facilities run by the Thai Government, civil society and religious organizations. Thailand had been working very closely with UNICEF and various stakeholders on the four-year National Plan of Action on Alternative Care for Children. In order to move towards family-based care and community-based services, there was a need to improve family support services and prevent the unnecessary separation of children from their families.

In addition to enacting laws on orphanage trafficking, parliaments could take action to protect children by encouraging governments to establish an orphanage oversight body, ensure stricter monitoring of children's homes and compliance with international guidelines, and proactively pursue those who facilitated or participated in trafficking. Parliaments should ensure that responsible agencies were allocated sufficient resources and recommend that governments worked closely with the private sector and civil society to support family-friendly policies and improve family-based care options, including through the provision of assistance and social protection schemes. Parliamentarians should also raise public awareness of the possible negative impacts of volunteering and tourism in orphanages and improve legislation to increase protection for children without parental care and promote family-based care where possible.

**Ms. S.E. Lucas** (South Africa) said that the exploitation and abuse of children had no place in society. Every child, particularly those who had lost both parents or were vulnerable to trafficking, had the right to a safe and secure childhood. Research had shown that the loss of parental support during childhood could have a long-lasting impact on mental and physical well-being. Parliamentarians must strengthen the capacity of family-based care and social protection systems to build resilience and to prevent the unnecessary placement of children in institutional care, by improving alternative provisions such as foster care. Effective accountability structures, including procedures for lodging and investigating complaints of abuse by caregivers, must be strengthened.

South Africa acknowledged that challenges relating to children's rights persisted. Two amendment bills applicable to all children in the country, including non-citizens, had been approved by Parliament in 2020 and 2022. They aimed to strengthen the protection of children in care or in need of safeguarding, prioritized the interests of children, emphasized the need for quality foster care and stability, and protected the rights of unmarried biological fathers. A cash benefit was provided to enable relatives caring for orphans to provide for basic needs and support, so that the child would not have to be removed from the extended family.

**Ms. M. Alameri** (United Arab Emirates) said that the draft resolution should acknowledge the fact that orphans were vulnerable to modern slavery and that trafficking in orphans was increasing as a result of factors including international conflicts. Parliaments and governments in particular, must develop and improve legislation to combat trafficking in orphans, including as part of efforts to fight trafficking in persons. The root causes must be addressed so as to put an end to such abuse.

**Mr. N. Ammar** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that it was essential to tackle the root causes of orphanage trafficking, particularly in a standing committee that focused on democracy and human rights. While children could lose their parents because of natural causes, many children had become orphans as a result of conflict, sanctions, poverty and natural disasters. The sanctions and embargoes to which his country had been subjected over the previous 12 years had caused many children to be orphaned, and he called on parliamentarians to put pressure on their governments to lift them. He also called for an end to the poor treatment and politicization of Syrian refugees and for their return to the Syrian Arab Republic.

Legislation had been passed in his country to tackle trafficking in persons, including children. Sustainable solutions were required to address orphanage trafficking and he would support a draft resolution on the issue.

He expressed the gratitude of the Syrian people for the support and solidarity of the international community in the wake of the recent earthquakes.

**Mr. V. Sánchez** (Spain) said that it was important to recognize that the growing practice of commercial surrogacy was fuelling orphanage trafficking. Those babies that were not adopted were often placed in orphanages used for trafficking.

**Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche** (Algeria) said that she welcomed the discussion of the important issue of human trafficking, in particular of orphans, which constituted a grave violation of human rights and had a negative impact, notably on women and children. The international community had developed legislation to address that transnational crime. Parliamentarians in her country had ratified legislation relating to trafficking in persons to provide legal, social, health and psychological protection to victims. A national implementation strategy had been developed in partnership with civil society organizations to identify various forms of trafficking in persons, provide care centres for the most vulnerable women and children and facilitate the repatriation of foreigners. Strengthened penalties were also imposed for the perpetrators of such crimes. Additional legislation that was in line with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime had also been developed to support human rights. A national strategy was being implemented to protect orphans and prevent them becoming victims of trafficking.

**Mr. C.C. Mlombwa** (Malawi) said that, internationally, four out of five children in orphanages were not orphans but from poor families coerced into giving up their children in exchange for money by unscrupulous institutions and transferred into orphanages for exploitation. Only recently had such action been recognized as a form of child trafficking. The role of parliamentarians in curbing orphanage trafficking could not be overemphasized. They could draft legislation and engage proactively with experts, stakeholders and civil society to raise public awareness of orphanage trafficking. They could also investigate alleged human rights violations, hold public hearings on orphanage trafficking or conduct site visits. Parliaments also had a key role to play in building legislative and policy frameworks, ensuring compliance with international and regional human rights norms and ratifying international and national human rights instruments. They also had an oversight role ensuring that the executive was held accountable and respected human rights.

Malawi was one of the worst affected countries in the Southern African orphan crisis. There were a number of instruments to guide the government in combating trafficking in children, including the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children; the Constitution, which provided that no person was to be held in slavery or servitude; the Trafficking

in Persons Act, which provided for a comprehensive human rights-centred approach and framework to prevent and combat trafficking in persons; and the Cyber Security Act. He hoped that the sharing of experiences on the issue at the IPU would increase the political will of parliamentarians to fight orphanage trafficking in their respective countries.

**Mr. S. O'Connor** (New Zealand) said that he supported discussion of the important issue, noting the importance of the right to life, particularly for children. As others had said, the modern world was dangerous for children, who were experiencing famines, natural disasters and conflicts and were being deliberately separated from families and put into internment camps to suppress their national identity. He also agreed that there was a darker side to surrogacy.

Parliaments had the authority and ability to discern between altruistic and exploitative forms of child trafficking, in particular orphanage trafficking, and they must seek more information from those running orphanages. Partnership was crucial for prevention, prosecution and protection against orphanage trafficking, which was an extraterritorial issue. New Zealand still had areas for improvement, including the need to implement modern slavery legislation, but supported the topic under discussion because it was the right thing to do and would also help the country to make further improvements.

**Mr. H. Alobaid** (Kuwait) said that the international community must take urgent action to address orphanage trafficking. It was a concern that some orphanages in developing countries were mistreating orphans and exploiting the generosity of donors. International momentum to tackle the transnational issue of orphanage trafficking was lacking, and the absence of stringent international legislation paved the way for criminal organizations to exploit the situation. Action should be taken to promulgate laws to ensure the care of orphans in the 21st century and protect children from being trafficked, by including text that banned tours and visits to orphanages in developing countries.

His country had enacted legislation to safeguard donors and prevent charitable donations falling into the hands of criminals. It had also ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Parliamentarians had an important role to play in addressing the multifaceted and transnational issue of orphanage trafficking and in protecting orphans, who were the most vulnerable of children.

**Ms. M.L. Carvajal Ambiado** (Chile) said that the rights of children must be protected. Voluntourism had a very negative effect on institutionalized minors and must be addressed. The draft resolution must be consistent, direct and specific. Action was required to ensure that institutionalized children were properly and systematically documented all over the world. Uniform definitions of community and family should be developed. The public and private sectors should be educated about good procedures and practice. Criteria developed by the United Nations and other international organizations should be disseminated and foster families should be better regulated. The providers of orphanage care should be trained and monitored and volunteers should be properly informed. Voluntourism should be discouraged. International cooperation was required to ensure that such actions were implemented urgently and efficiently.

Highlighting actions taken by her parliament, she called for the establishment of specific committees to defend the rights of children. Parliamentarians had to meet their responsibility to protect the rights of children.

**Mr. G.G.G. Acien** (South Sudan) said that human trafficking in general, and orphanage trafficking in particular, was increasing. That heinous crime was punishable by law in South Sudan, including under the Child Act of 2008, and convicted child traffickers would be imprisoned for a term of up to 10 years, fined or both. In 2019, the Minister of the Interior had formed a technical task force to conduct an in-depth study of human trafficking in the country. Children were particularly vulnerable to trafficking because of conflicts, political instability, displacement due to natural disasters and poverty. In some institutions, children might be deprived of their human rights and be exploited.

Parliaments should make further efforts to protect children in orphanages. They should urge governments to become party to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the protocols thereto and conduct awareness raising campaigns on the nature and danger of orphanage trafficking. They should draft legislation to counter and punish trafficking and strengthen the national legal framework to criminalize all forms of human trafficking. Parliaments should also share information about orphanage trafficking and build the capacity of law enforcement agents to screen for victims of trafficking and provide training on investigation methods and victim care.

**Ms. T. Atukorale** (Sri Lanka) said that UNICEF played an important role in protecting the rights of children and drew attention to some of the profound observations in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Orphanage trafficking was a growing concern. Parliaments were crucial in ensuring a legal and policy environment conducive to ending such issues as child labour, slavery, trafficking and violence against children. Parliamentarians had a collective responsibility to strengthen and enforce national legislation in that regard and ensure compliance with human rights standards. They must ensure that sufficient financial resources were allocated to prevent and mitigate the effects of child labour, slavery and trafficking, and demand accountability with respect to commitments made to address those phenomena.

Cases of child labour, trafficking and violence against children had been reported in orphanages in Sri Lanka. Such actions were, however, not identified as orphanage trafficking, which in any case was not recognized as an offence in her country. That said, the trafficking of children into orphanages to be exploited for profit was punishable under the Penal Code. Furthermore, the parliament of Sri Lanka had taken various steps to prevent the trafficking of children, including the 2019 National Child Protection Policy and the 1998 National Child Protection Authority Act. Relevant ministries, office and local government institutions liaised with UN agencies and civil society organizations to promote a better future for the children of Sri Lanka.

She concluded by highlighting the need for counselling and a child friendly court system. Tough legislation must be enacted without delay to eradicate child labour, trafficking, prostitution and violence against children. The term orphanage trafficking should be recognized in law as a specific offence.

**Mr. F.H. Naek** (Pakistan) said that child trafficking, which was taking place alongside irregular migration, had diverse consequences for different nations, communities and economies. Criminal elements, which were particularly active in resource-poor societies, enticed children from their parents with the promise of a better future. While some welfare programmes were well intended, others, such as the proliferation of orphanages in tourist areas, had hidden agendas and aimed to garner sympathy for children who were being exploited for profit. Developing countries were becoming countries of origin and transit, and international convergence was required to curb the growth in trafficking. The institutionalization of orphanages and international collaboration were essential in that regard.

The Government of Pakistan continued to collaborate with international partners and governments to prevent trafficking. Developing countries must be supported in improving the quality of life of the poor and in retaining the necessary human resources to discourage irregular and illegal child trafficking. The high cost and complex policies associated with regular migration were leading to an increase in irregular migration and opportunities for criminals to engage in child trafficking. Outlining some of the legislation passed by his parliament to prevent human trafficking and protect children, he said that it was essential for parliaments to pass laws to curb orphanage trafficking and highlighted the role of the IPU as a platform in that regard.

**Mr. A. Amouei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that children under 18 years of age constituted almost 30% of his country's population and he outlined some of the legislation adopted to protect those individuals. His Government had also passed legislation against human trafficking, including child trafficking, in 2004. It was seeking to align its domestic legislation with international commitments, and a supplementary bill was currently under consideration to close legal loopholes and tackle related issues, such as the trafficking of organs and immigrants. It had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and had adopted the optional protocol on the sale of children, child pornography and child prostitution in 2007. It had presented its first report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2020. A number of steps were being taken to prevent child trafficking, including the establishment of a helpline, special judicial authorities for children and adolescents, and legal clinics for children. Children's issues were being raised at the government level, kindergartens were being expanded, housing was being provided to protect vulnerable girls, particularly refugees, and a comprehensive social protection plan was being implemented to ensure the rights of the child.

**Ms. S. Nane** (Uruguay) said that orphanages were a clear example of the failure of the adult world to protect children and adolescents. Although studies by UNICEF in 2017 had shown the number of children in care institutions to be around 2.7 million, that number was expected to have increased to between 4 and 8 million in 2020, but there were no clear statistics. Such an estimate was likely to be just the tip of the iceberg after the pandemic. Furthermore, poverty, inequality, violence and conflicts exacerbated the situation for children in care and orphanages. She trusted that the draft resolution would open up a debate among parliaments on developing community care policies and avoiding the institutionalization of children, particularly as such children were six to eight times more likely to suffer abuse.

**Ms. W. Fahad** (Iraq) said the many conflicts in Iraq had resulted in homeless and orphaned children, and corruption was exacerbating their situation. There were some 5 million orphans in her country, yet only 20 orphanages. Despite government efforts and the legislation developed by Parliament, the number of orphans was increasing, and international support was required to tackle the issue. A number of foreign children had lost their parents in Iraq and were housed in prisons. The efforts of the authorities to contact the relevant embassies had met with no response, and her Government called on countries to repatriate their citizens. Her Government was developing legislation to protect children's rights in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which it had ratified in 1994.

**Ms. Krisdayanti** (Indonesia) said that parliamentarians had a critical role to play in developing strong legal instruments and oversight to ensure that children in orphanages were protected against all forms of violence, including exploitation for human trafficking. Orphanage managers, staff and donors must be well monitored, and orphanages must be accountable and transparent. The right of every child to survival, growth and development, and protection from violence and discrimination was enshrined in her country's Constitution and in national child protection legislation. In July 2022, the national strategy for the elimination of violence against children had been issued. The strategy sought to ensure the implementation of all relevant laws and policies, address sociocultural factors justifying the use of violence, establish safe environments for children, improve the quality of childcare, offer economic empowerment to vulnerable families, provide children at risk with access to integrated services, and ensure children could protect themselves from violence and be agents of change.

**Ms. C. Muge** (Kenya) said that her country had an extensive programme that aimed to provide a social protection system for children. In 2004, it had launched a cash transfer for orphans and children who were vulnerable because of poverty and HIV/AIDS. She outlined some of the legislation in place to protect children, criminalize all forms of trafficking in persons, and eradicate child labour. The absence of specific legislation in Kenya to define and criminalize orphanage trafficking had, however, impeded the focus on that issue. Parliaments globally had a responsibility to reinforce existing measures concerning orphanage trafficking, address potential gaps in child welfare and support family and community-based care to ensure that children remained with their families rather than being recruited to orphanages. Parliaments should criminalize orphanage trafficking and raise awareness of the potential impact of volunteering in orphanages. Tourists and volunteers should be encouraged not to provide financial support to orphanages.

A department on child trafficking had been set up in her country with a hotline for the public to report suspected incidents of orphanage trafficking. Noting that Australia was the first country to recognize orphanage trafficking as a form of slavery, she said that parliaments could share best practices to ensure that children of all countries could live in a safe environment.

**Mr. S. Al-Saadi** (Arab Parliament) said that he welcomed the selection of the subject under discussion, since human trafficking, in particular orphanage trafficking, was a very dangerous issue. Efforts to address orphanage trafficking should not be confined to law enforcement agencies and parliamentarians must assume their role. A comprehensive vision was required to deal with trafficking in all countries, particularly when addressing issues such as sexual exploitation, forced labour, malnutrition and a lack of basic education. All national parliaments should review the IPU resolution on the issue and update their national legislation accordingly. Joint programmes and projects involving civil society organizations, the private sector and other stakeholders should be developed to meet the needs of orphanages and orphans. Particular attention should be given to orphanages hosting refugee children and those affected by natural disasters and conflicts who were particularly vulnerable and being exploited by human traffickers. International cooperation was required to care for those individuals.

**Mr. R.A.M. Ershad** (Bangladesh) said that poor families were more likely to give their children to an orphanage, having fallen for false promises of better care and education. However, those children were frequently trafficked to other orphanages where they were exploited, abused, left hungry and forced to work. According to the nongovernmental organization Lumos, 5.4 million children around the world were living in institutions. Its report *Invisible children, visible harms* had used data from 84 organizations in 45 nations and was the first to identify global trends in institution-related trafficking. It also drew attention to indecent child labour, cases of sexual exploitation and forced performance to

elicit money from donors, visitors and volunteers. Many such children were given false documents attesting to abandonment and were trafficked out of the facilities and into other types of exploitation.

Wholesome family relationships, frequent parental communication and a strong education were necessary to reduce vulnerabilities to human trafficking. Parliamentarians should ensure that orphanages were monitored and that there was zero tolerance to such abuse.

**Ms. L. Reynolds** (Australia), co-Rapporteur, said that the very rich discussion had shown the will of parliamentarians to do more to protect vulnerable children globally and take action against those who trafficked and exploited children. It had also demonstrated the power of the IPU to bring parliamentarians together in support of a cause. She looked forward to developing a draft resolution that all parliaments could implement. It would contain examples of best practice and measures, including cooperation with UNICEF and the International Committee of the Red Cross, to better the lives of millions of children.

**The Chair** recalled that parliaments had until 3 April 2023 to submit written contributions to support the work of the co-rapporteurs. A draft text would be circulated to all IPU Members in July for consideration at the 147th Assembly in October 2023.

The Bureau had discussed ways in which the Standing Committee could contribute to the IPU Strategy 2022-2026, and in particular, by identifying focus areas that it would investigate in depth during the Strategy period. The Bureau recommended that the Standing Committee focus on three areas, namely: improvements to the functioning of parliaments; democracy and human rights in a digital era; and a more inclusive and fairer world. IPU Members would be encouraged to put forward potential agenda items within those themes when making proposals for resolutions and debates within the Committee.

*The sitting rose at 12:30.*

## SITTING OF TUESDAY, 14 MARCH 2023

(Morning)

*The sitting was called to order at 09:30 with Mr. A. Gajadien (Suriname), President of the Standing Committee of Democracy and Human Rights, in the Chair.*

### **Elections to the Bureau of the Standing Committee**

**The Chair** said that the following nominations had been received: from the African Group, Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche (Algeria) for a first term; from the Arab Group, Ms. T. Alriyati (Jordan) for a first term, Mr. S. Al Doosari (Qatar) for a second term, and Mr. H.A. Al-Ahmar (Yemen) for a first term; from the Asia-Pacific Group, Mr. F.H. Naek (Pakistan) for a first term; from the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, Ms. M.d.C. Alva Prieto (Peru) for a first term; and from the Twelve Plus Group, Mr. V. Sánchez del Real (Spain), Mr. C. Lohr (Switzerland) and Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine), all for a first term. A vacancy remained for a representative of the Eurasia Group. He took it that the Committee wished to approve those nominations.

*It was so decided.*

### **Debate on *Parliamentary impetus in favour of the fight against disinformation and hateful and discriminatory content in cyberspace***

**The Chair** introduced the expert panellist.

**Mr. G. Canela** (Chief, Section of Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists, UNESCO), expert panellist, speaking via video link, said that he was pleased that the UNESCO-IPU partnership was moving ahead with an exchange of ideas common to each organization's respective mandate. Together with climate change, the issue under discussion was one of the most challenging of the century. Discussions on countering negative externalities such as disinformation, hate speech, conspiracy theories and other potential problems in the digital ecosystem were absolutely vital. It was,

however, important to acknowledge that the internet perhaps constituted the biggest revolution for freedom of expression since Gutenberg. The greatest challenge was knowing how to develop policies to protect the opportunities offered by the internet, mitigate potential risks associated with its use and development, and prosecute potential harms in accordance with international human rights standards.

While the negative externalities associated with the internet tended to be discussed together, it was important to recognize that they were different issues, and that different measures were required to tackle them. Lies and hatred were not new, but the “3 Vs” namely volume, velocity and virality, were. The issue was complex and simple solutions would not be sufficient. There were three main drivers in terms of policy to be addressed: first, the need to empower the demand for accurate and reliable information through education, media and information literacy policies; second, the need to ensure the accuracy and reliability of information and content, through policies to protect and support journalists, scientists and information fact checkers; and third, the need to deal with the transmission chain while qualifying demand and supporting the supply of reliable information. The new legislation in that regard being developed by parliaments was, in most cases, not consistent with international human rights law.

UNESCO considered that it was possible to address such issues while protecting and even enhancing freedom of expression and access to information. To that end, it was essential for social media platforms to be more transparent and accountable. They should also undertake due diligence and risk assessments when developing new products or taking decisions that might affect the digital ecosystem and have an impact on human rights and freedom of expression. Rather than looking at specific pieces of content, the focus should be on processes, including content moderation, curation and data acquisition. UNESCO was suggesting a discussion on guidelines to regulate the digital space while protecting freedom of expression and had recently presented the first draft of such guidelines for discussion at a global conference entitled Internet for Trust. Comments and suggestions from all relevant stakeholders, including parliamentarians, were welcome.

**Ms. M. Bon Klanjscek** (Slovenia) said that the internet, which had originally been conceived as a space of freedom and emancipation, had evolved to become a medium of hateful, discriminatory and misleading content. Authorities around the world must fully respect freedom of expression and put in place solid regulatory frameworks to protect individuals and institutions, particularly against the increasing systematic dissemination of false information that aimed to create distrust in the rule of law, elected institutions and the media, threatened security and undermined democracy. Her country was implementing various projects to equip its citizens, particularly young people, to be able to identify hate speech, disinformation and fake news. She drew attention to the European Commission’s Digital Services Act, which introduced a comprehensive set of new rules for all digital services, contributing to a safer online environment and to the fight against illegal online content. In order to improve mechanisms for removing hateful and discriminatory online content, protect human rights and freedom of speech, online platforms must be regulated.

**Mr. V. Sánchez del Real** (Spain) said that regulations with respect to online content should be applicable to other media forms. A balance must be struck between freedom of expression and security and legislators must recognize that not all aspects of life could be regulated. There was also a difference between spontaneous misinformation, where a group of individuals happened to agree on an issue, and organized misinformation, where organizations, including supranational organizations, could be intentionally managing information in such a way as to modify circumstances, behaviour and decision-making. The imposition of stringent limits would restrict the right of civil society to analyse the situation in their country and express new opinions. Legislators must allow people to challenge the truth, question themselves, information and the current framework, and defend individual freedoms and the right to share opinions. People should have the right to make mistakes and should not be accused of disinformation when they were simply expressing their views and enjoying freedom of expression.

**Ms. S. Atallahjan** (Canada) asked where the line should be drawn in safeguarding freedom of expression while also protecting vulnerable people and communities from hate speech.

**Ms. D. Alzayed** (Bahrain) said that there was a thin line between freedom of expression and abuse of that right. Hate speech could cause instability and undermine the principle of peaceful coexistence, and social media and advertising companies did not abide by basic principles to prevent it. Legislation should be enacted to criminalize hate speech and impose appropriate sanctions. Studies had shown that misinformation was sometimes started by journalists, and journalism was a field that deserved particular attention to ensure that the correct information was disseminated.

**Ms. S.E. Lucas** (South Africa) said that there was a need for a uniform approach and guidelines among IPU Members to address fake news and misinformation. Although the South African Constitution provided for, among other things, protection from discrimination, harm or abuse, information was moving much more rapidly than before, and fake news could spread very easily. Specific legislation was required, and she drew attention to the South African Cybercrimes Act of 2020, which, although relatively new, was beginning to address the spread of false information.

**A representative of Pakistan** said that, although research had shown social media to be a highly effective platform for political and social debates, some people used it to spread hatred and discrimination, which was particularly challenging in countries where the literacy rate was low. There was a great need to educate people about media information literacy and to counter the spread of online hate speech using a multifaceted approach. Action should be taken to create awareness, discourage hate and intolerance and criminalize hate speech, while safeguarding the fundamental right to free speech. Multiple stakeholders should be involved, in particular to ensure that online hate speech was not used to further political agendas, increase censorship or target and discriminate against vulnerable immigrant groups. He outlined some elements of Pakistan's existing legal framework to address hate speech and target fake news on social media platforms, drawing attention to the 2020 Citizens Protection (Against Online Harm) Rules. Legislation concerning cyberdefence, cybersecurity and cybercrime should not violate any human rights, including freedom of speech.

**Mr. Jung Hun Cho** (Republic of Korea) said that, while freedom of speech was considered one of the most important values in his country, fake news and online media could be detrimental. He asked whether the same ethical media standards and regulations as those applied to television and radio should be applicable to individual social media users and organizers. He also asked whether the individual posting the fake news on social media or the company running the social media platform should be held responsible, noting that a debate was ongoing in his country as to whether to regulate social media companies or users. Some general guidelines in that regard would be welcome.

**Ms. A. Al Shaman** (Saudi Arabia) said that the false information, rumours and conspiracy theories on social media about the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccination had had a negative impact on some people. International efforts and effective government policies and legislation were required to tackle misinformation and hate speech. Governments and educational institutions should promote a culture of peaceful coexistence, tolerance and acceptance, recognizing that diversity was a driving force for prosperity. Research centres should also have a greater role in monitoring and detecting false information to prevent its spread, and she noted that a committee had recently been established in Saudi Arabia to that end.

**Ms. J. Simanovska** (Latvia) said that cyberattacks were used as a tool to silence opponents. She had personally been the victim of such attacks and trolling to stop her from sharing her opinions and frame her as a toxic person. Misinformation was used as a means of building a political agenda, even from outside the country, and was a threat to democracy. While Latvia highly valued freedom of speech, it lacked the tools to guarantee a safe cyberspace. Parliaments had a role in identifying legislative and administrative solutions to ensure freedom of speech and protect against the misuse of cyberspace.

**Mr. S. Patra** (India) said that India was committed to making the internet open, safe, trusted and accountable for all under the Digital India programme. The Indian Parliament had played a vital role in enacting legislation, including to prohibit and remove online hate and unlawful content and punish the dissemination of hateful and divisive material. It was committed to strengthening national policies and legislative measures in line with a robust plan of action to fight hateful and discriminatory content in cyberspace. India had co-sponsored United Nations General Assembly resolution 74/247 establishing an ad hoc committee to elaborate a comprehensive international convention on countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes. Parliamentarians had a huge opportunity to come together to encourage their respective governments to negotiate a comprehensive international convention providing a legal framework to prevent and combat cybercrimes worldwide. Although countries had their own legislation and agreements in place to commit to responsible freedom of expression, they should resolve to create an open digital society, which respected both democratic values and citizens.

**Mr. G. Almeland** (Norway) said that technology development was another of the many radical changes through which society had gone over time. A measured approach should be taken to ensure that regulations were not so tough as to remove the very rights and freedoms that countries were seeking to protect, and parliamentarians should strike a careful balance. One unique aspect of the challenge was its international nature. Many of the changes in society had been addressed by countries at the national level through their own legislation. However, disinformation and hate speech would have to be tackled at the international level, and a set of guidelines to regulate the digital space would be beneficial.

Although Norway had also experienced disinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic, the high level of press freedom in the country had helped.

**Mr. Y. Kameoka** (Japan) said that refugees from the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011 had been discriminated against and products made in the Fukushima area were still restricted despite rigorous safety testing. Disinformation and hate speech online spread rapidly and fuelled anxiety among people who had experienced crisis and disruption as a result of natural disasters. Trust and reputation were built over time but were lost in the blink of an eye. Action must be taken, including at the international level, to prevent the spread of hate speech, and discriminatory and false information, and to build a framework to recover from the damage caused by disinformation. Education for children around the world was also important.

**Mr. A. Amouei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the right to freedom of expression, which was provided for in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, carried with it special duties and responsibilities and might be subject to certain restrictions to respect the rights and reputations of others and protect national security. Cyberspace offered great potential for freedom of expression and dialogue. However, the spread of misinformation and hate speech was becoming a challenge, and he drew attention to the spread of fake news regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. To tackle the issue in his country, young people were being educated on how to use the media and legislation was being developed to ensure accountability among those spreading fake news. Cooperation from the social media platforms was also necessary.

**Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah** (Egypt) said that hate speech and misinformation affected cohesion and synergy in society and constituted the fourth and fifth generations of conflict. While advancements in science and technology were important for social progress and improved livelihoods, they could lead to social challenges that threatened basic human rights and freedoms. The international community should speak with one voice to promote acceptance of and respect for other cultures.

Egypt had developed legislation to penalize and criminalize those spreading misinformation. She drew attention to the Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030, which sought to promote social justice and integration, and called for the development of an equivalent international strategy.

**Ms. M. Alameri** (United Arab Emirates) said that parliaments undoubtedly had a role to play in putting an end to discrimination, hate speech and disinformation in cyberspace through the development of appropriate legislation. The United Arab Emirates had focused on building a legislative environment conducive to countering hate speech and discrimination and supporting coexistence among cultures. Laws had been enacted to prohibit and criminalize discrimination and racism and a national tolerance programme had been launched.

**Mr. G. Canela** (Chief, Section of Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists, UNESCO), expert panellist, speaking via video link, thanked participants for their comments and questions. UNESCO had produced a number of resources which might be of use to parliamentarians. The Internet for Trust global conference website contained much information relevant to the discussion, including the proposed draft guidelines for regulating digital platforms and working papers reviewing multiple published studies that provided interesting evidence on the way in which different jurisdictions were tackling the problem and on alignment of action with international human rights law. UNESCO had also launched a global toolkit for judicial actions on international legal standards on freedom of expression, access to information and safety of journalists. It also had online resources and videos on countering hate speech in accordance with international legislation.

Any regulations developed should address the complete definition of freedom of expression, which, as indicated in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, included the right to seek, receive and impart information. Articles 19 and 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights should be considered in conjunction with jurisprudence and tools developed by the UN Human Rights Committee, international human rights courts, and the Rabat Plan of Action.

When developing regulations, it was important to look at existing human rights standards over time and undertake a comprehensive overview of the different rights to be protected. Care should be taken to ensure appropriate safeguards to protect freedom of expression and a body of independent regulators that followed the logic of international human rights law should be established. Furthermore, the process of developing legislation should be transparent and accountable and involve multiple stakeholders, including tech companies, civil society and academia. Caution should be exercised to ensure that processes, rather than particular content, was regulated, because knowledge tended to evolve.

### Expert hearing

**The Chair** introduced the expert panellists.

**Ms. R. Vázquez Llorente** (Head of Law & Policy, Technology Threats & Opportunities, WITNESS), speaking via video link, said that in situations where human rights and democratic values were at stake, people turned to cameras as a way to fight injustice. The power of video to bring out the truth was undeniable and countries around the world tried to restrict the use of mobile phone cameras or the internet when the authorities were challenged. When such videos were shared on social media, much of the content was taken down by machine learning enabled algorithms, and some 32% to 36% of the content taken down by YouTube had not been viewed at all by a human before its removal. In parallel, around 48 countries had laws relating to intermediary liability, most of which required companies to take content down when notified. Even when content was removed for the right reasons, it was important to hold on to it. Parliamentarians were encouraged to consider how law could help to preserve and facilitate access to critical human rights content and to include safeguards for those who had taken the risk to film and fight for the truth.

With the field of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools exploding and an increasing amount of online content being created or manipulated by AI, current approaches to content moderation would fall short. However, AI struggled to understand context and would therefore have difficulty in moderating hateful and discriminatory content. Engagement regarding the authenticity and provenance of information would be useful. As the use of synthetic media tools increased, there would be a need for greater regulatory attention on the labelling of products and disclosure of AI use. Parliamentarians should encourage the inclusion of privacy and other human rights considerations in the development of technical approaches. Such action would help counter visual myths and disinformation, particularly when regulating generative AI, reflect the potential of AI technologies for creative expression, and prevent potential harm to at-risk communities.

**Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche** (Algeria) drew attention to the efforts of Algeria to uphold peaceful coexistence, tolerance and mutual respect, combat discrimination and promote reconciliation. Noting that peaceful coexistence was conducive to prosperity in civil society, she praised the actions of the Algerian authorities to protect human rights based on the new regulations being promulgated.

**Mr. A. Suwanmongkol** (Thailand) said that a careful balance had to be struck between protecting the fundamental right to freedom of expression while tackling the increase in hate speech and disinformation in the digital space. During the COVID-19 outbreak there had been an alarming trend of sweeping government powers to address fake news and misinformation without due regard to international human rights law and standards, on the pretext that national security was at risk. State propaganda and attempts to curtail digital rights and impose constraints on fundamental freedoms constituted a root cause of misinformation and disinformation. It was preferable to educate the public on digital literacy and on crosschecking information as part of open and critical analysis.

While legislation against the incitement of hatred online was needed, hate speech should not necessarily be countered by more laws, but by alternative non-legal approaches, including contractual obligations with internet service providers, self-regulation and clear guidelines. Measures to promote tolerance and enhance understanding of relevant international instruments were also necessary.

**Mr. Z. Amanullah** (Resident Senior Fellow, Networks & Outreach at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue), expert panellist, speaking via video link, said that in order to deal with the issue of hate speech, it was important to understand how it was produced, propagated and amplified, and its impact on communities. The online landscape for hate speech was evolving very rapidly. While social media platforms monitored content based on their terms of service, their application was inconsistent and insufficient. Regulations governing hate speech, although necessary, were in their infancy and issues such as free speech and censorship were being debated. Spikes in hate speech and disinformation during election periods were a concern, and regulations were required to protect democracy and the ability of people to engage in the electoral system without fear of being disrupted or targeted. The Institute's early warning software had been used around the world to identify the targeting of communities with hate speech. Resources were being shared so that communities could build resilience and obtain a better understanding of those responsible for the hate speech, and how to target and disrupt their networks.

Content moderation by social media platforms was the first defence against the propagation of hate speech. However, although the largest platforms were aligned on most issues, the level of moderation varied globally and was lower in developing countries and in languages other than English. It would be interesting to see how new legislation, including the European Commission's Digital Services Act, would impact the largest social media companies. Such legislation was, however, proving difficult to define, enact and enforce within countries and across borders given the differing views and legislation of countries concerning hate speech.

As communities were the ultimate target of hate speech, community empowerment was an important element. A multi-stakeholder approach was required to mitigate the negative impact of hate speech. His institute has been involved in training, helping to create local prevention networks and keeping all relevant stakeholders informed. The Strong Cities Network also facilitated the sharing of best practices.

**Ms. L. Zommer** (Co-founder of Factchequeado), expert panellist, speaking via video link, said that in April 2022, her organization, together with a Spanish fact-checking organization, had launched a pilot project to address disinformation in Spanish-speaking communities in the United States of America. Research had shown the importance of community members receiving information in their mother tongue. However, much of the content certain communities were receiving was from social networks, including WhatsApp and Telegram, and constituted disinformation. She highlighted the need for more in-depth research about information in languages other than English, particularly in countries with democracies that were facing challenges. It was also important to recognize that not all judicial systems had the same quality or legitimacy and that general regulations, which would not necessarily be applied in the same way in all countries, could be problematic.

**Mr. S. Ouedraogo** (Burkina Faso) said that cyberspace provided a forum to promote education, human rights and democracy among young people. However, the rise of terrorism had triggered an increase in hate speech and disinformation in cyberspace. His Government had adopted a criminal law on cyberspace use and had conducted awareness-raising campaigns in universities and schools. It was a matter of concern that terrorist groups were filming crime scenes and posting the footage on social media as a tool to undermine morale and encourage an uprising, and it was important to build capacity to prevent the sharing of such material. The use of media for terrorist propaganda was also a concern and must be prevented. Parliamentarians should take steps to prevent such media networks from being used for such purposes.

**Ms. S. Sapag** (Argentina) said that the disinformation and hate speech in cyberspace was a problem shared by all countries, and legislation was required at the global level to tackle it. Social media platforms were often located outside the countries being targeted. In some cases, hate speech had led to assassination attempts on public officials. Disinformation on issues such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic generated public anxiety, and the population responded by expressing itself through violence and the development of fascist groups. The international community must stand together to develop uniform and universal legislation to counteract disinformation and hate speech. She agreed that sometimes, the judiciary did not act as it should.

**Ms. W. Fahad** (Iraq) said that, in countries where Muslims were a minority, they were more often exposed to discrimination, deprived of services, education and employment opportunities, and found it harder to gain citizenship or nationality. Muslim women were also targeted. Governments should develop legislation to counteract Islamophobia, and stop hate speech against Muslims, including in election campaigns.

**Ms. M.d.C. Alva Prieto** (Peru) said that all countries were affected by hate speech, discrimination, disinformation and other injustices, and as a member of Congress, she had been a victim. Although tangible progress was required, it was difficult for parliaments to regulate and legislate on the issue as the line between freedom of expression and misinformation was blurred. She would appreciate concrete proposals from the experts but also noted that available budgets were often limited.

**Ms. J. Mahmood** (Maldives) said that legislating against disinformation, and discriminatory and dishonest content was challenging. In 2021, the Maldives had ratified an amendment to the penal code criminalizing hate speech, and there had been criticism of the restrictions imposed.

Social media was increasingly being used as a platform to harass women and children, intimidate female politicians and discredit successful women. Gender equity was being affected as women were increasingly reluctant to run for public office. She asked how such a situation could be addressed through legislation or even controls. Social media was also being used as a tool for the anti-vaccination movement, which was infringing upon the right to health of children. She asked how legislators could legislate without criminalizing actions and imposing restrictions on the right to freedom of speech, and while balancing the promotion and protection of the rights of vulnerable groups.

**Ms. S. Nane** (Uruguay) said that the definition of information should not be confused. A decision to disseminate hate speech and disinformation could not be compared with the sharing of real data which, when analysed, would generate further information.

The internet was just a network; the problems were caused by its users. The solution therefore lay with each individual. Noting that women and, in particular, feminists, were targets, she said that people should act in accordance with the rule of law and take responsibility for their actions.

**Mr. C. Madrazo Limón** (Mexico) said that the internet did not recognize frontiers or borders. He asked how people who posted hate speech on social media platforms could be stopped and if parliaments could legislate or regulate such behaviour. He also asked how social media companies could be held to account or if the international community had to wait for the companies themselves to decide to take action. He highlighted the discrimination facing the Uyghurs.

**Mr. V. Sánchez del Real** (Spain) said that he was seriously concerned about some interventions asking who would determine what constituted truth and would implement legal controls without consultation with parliaments, judges and the police. Some had said that networks should block certain content. However, a social media network should not be limiting anyone's freedom of expression and could not act in place of a State or parliamentary democracy. Fact checkers were part of civil society, but they had become self-declared judge, jury and executioner. Parliamentarians had been elected to legislate and it was strange that they were making it possible for third parties and external institutions, such as social media networks, to implement standards not approved by parliaments. Parliamentary democracy must prevail.

**Mr. K.K.P. Kouassi** (Côte d'Ivoire) said that, like others, his country was dealing with disinformation and hate speech in cyberspace and was seeking to develop appropriate legislation. Education was key in ensuring children knew how to use cyberspace properly and he highlighted the importance of being proactive. Some of those posting hate speech were not based in Africa but in other countries such as the United States of America, and global legislation regulating the use of cyberspace was therefore required.

**Ms. J. Simannovska** (Latvia) said that newspapers selected what to publish and a similar approach should be applied to social media networks, which needed to moderate traffic. Since most such networks were international, there was a large space for international cooperation to understand how to regulate the responsibility of social media networks.

**Ms. A. Al Shaman** (Saudi Arabia) said that strong action, not merely discourse, was required to address hate speech. She called for the development of an international law criminalizing any harmful action against religion.

**Ms. R. Vázquez Llorente** (Head of Law & Policy, Technology Threats & Opportunities, WITNESS), expert panellist, speaking via video link, said that an understanding of market incentives was important. On the one hand, there were the algorithms that platforms used for content moderation. On the other, there were algorithms that amplified content and obeyed market laws. Although such content might be hateful and discriminatory, it generated more views and therefore more income and profit. When talking about the regulation of social media platforms and accountability, it was important to understand how platforms were run, the algorithms necessary for running them, and to consider the need for regulating processes rather than content.

While there was not one single rapid solution, she highlighted the importance of ensuring data literacy among those who used social media networks, and of technical solutions such as detection algorithms to identify online misinformation and disinformation, and technologies to track the provenance of information and any edits. Such technologies were being developed mainly in the United States of America and did not take into account many of the communities most at risk. The technical solutions put in place to respond to legislative initiatives did not, however, address human rights considerations. If parliamentarians decided to put in place legislation aimed at countering hate speech, misinformation and disinformation, social media platforms would simply respond by developing other technical tools that would not be adequate. Human rights considerations and harms modelling must be embedded in solutions.

**Mr. Z. Amanullah** (Resident Senior Fellow, Networks & Outreach at the Institute for Strategic Dialogue), expert panellist, speaking via video link, said that the changing culture and a desire to influence were putting enormous pressure on social media companies, legislators and the public at large. Previous attempts to allow social media companies to self-regulate had not been successful and, although legislation was being developed, that was happening very slowly, even in countries with more resources, such as the United Kingdom and the European Union. While education and literacy were key in understanding what was happening and why, the independent research conducted by non-governmental organizations would offer valuable insight for the development of effective legislation.

With regard to addressing the use of social media for terrorist propaganda and the sharing of criminal activity in sub-Saharan Africa, he said that communities were best placed to reach vulnerable people and prevent recruitment by extremist groups. Work with communities was therefore essential and had proven particularly effective when conducted in partnership with social media companies. However, it was often overlooked because of concerns about resources. Social media companies allocated far fewer resources to developing countries and should be pressured to ensure that material was available in languages other than English.

As some speakers had said, hate speech and disinformation constituted a threat to democracy, including in the most powerful country in the world. Much more needed to be done to protect democracy and election integrity. Pressure should continue to be put on social media companies to ensure that disinformation was not geared towards the disruption of elections, the suppression of voting or the targeting of particular communities. Far more attention should be given to the gender dynamic of disinformation and hate speech, which often went unnoticed, since women were often disproportionately targeted.

**Ms. L. Zommer** (Co-founder of Factchequeado), expert panellist, speaking via video link, said that the issue was a complex global phenomenon encompassing the economy, society and politics, and an immediate simple solution was unlikely to be found. Although the information was of a cross-border and global nature, it had an important local component, which in some cases made the content go viral. Most of the solutions from the large tech companies were technical in nature and did not necessarily include the specific components that a human rights solution should address or contain.

In terms of a concrete call to action, she said that while parliaments could put pressure on large tech companies to be more transparent or adopt a human rights focus in moderation policies, legislation to encourage media literacy in schools was an immediate way to create greater awareness of issues such as non-transparent algorithms and bias. Principles that all countries could apply in their education systems should therefore be developed. More financial resources were required to conduct research related to disinformation and hate speech in languages other than English and in countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

With regard to the comments from the representative of Spain, she said that it was a common mistake to give fact checkers a role that they did not have. Fact checkers did not judge or prevent free speech. They aimed to ensure evidence-based information using a clear, transparent and open methodology with a view to ensuring that societies were better informed.

**Mr. S.B.H. Aldosari** (Qatar) said that Qatar had submitted a request for inclusion of an emergency item at the present Assembly on criminalizing contempt for religions and the spreading of hatred, and promoting coexistence, tolerance, peace and international security. The draft resolution had received support from the Asia-Pacific and Arab Groups, from some members of the African Group, and from the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC). It had not, however, received support from the Twelve Plus Group. Qatar might consider submitting such a text to the next IPU Assembly.

**Ms. W. Fahad** (Iraq) said that she would welcome adoption of a resolution on combating the spread of discriminatory and hate speech in a future assembly.

**The Chair** thanked all those, in particular the expert panellists, who had participated in the interesting debate on an important subject. Parliamentarians had a responsibility to ensure an ongoing dialogue with governments, the private sector and civil society on combating disinformation and hate speech. He noted that all interested parliamentarians would have an opportunity to continue the discussion in the Parliamentary Track at the Internet Governance Forum 2023, which would take place in Japan in October.

*The sitting rose at 12:10.*

# Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

**SITTING OF TUESDAY, 14 MARCH 2023**

(Morning)

*The sitting was called to order at 9:05 with Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland), Acting President of the Committee, in the Chair.*

**Adoption of the agenda**  
(C-I/146/A.1-rev)

*The agenda was adopted.*

**Approval of the summary record of the Committee's session held during the 145th IPU Assembly (October 2022)**

*The summary record was approved.*

**Proposed new modalities and methods of work for the Committee**

**The Chair**, introducing the item, recalled that the IPU's political project at the United Nations had been under discussion for some time and that the findings of an external expert review had been reported to the Executive Committee in June 2022, together with proposals for reform, including how the Committee could improve its working methods. In Kigali in October 2022, the Executive Committee had decided to mandate the Bureau to develop a final proposal on the matter for consideration by the Standing Committee, taking into account the expert findings and deliberations within the Executive Committee.

The Bureau had met virtually in January 2023 to consider a proposal developed by a small working group over the final quarter of 2022 and had gone on to approve unanimously at its previous day's meeting the proposal contained in the summary document now before the Committee. If also approved by the Committee, the proposal would be transmitted to the Executive Committee for endorsement, in which event the Committee would thereafter operate in line with the new modalities and methods of work as proposed.

In addition to describing the Committee's mandate, the summary document included working methods proposed on the basis of the pandemic experience. One example was the webinars held with representatives of IPU Members and of UN entities, which had been interesting and productive and were worth continuing. Priorities identified included the establishment of ties with UN bodies, such as the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly, which dealt with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), so as to coordinate activities and positions on common areas of focus in the interest of complementarity.

**Mr. H. Aoyagi** (Japan) said that, as a consequence of the year-long crisis in Ukraine, the global peace and security framework established at the end of the Second World War had been crumbling at its foundations, primarily thanks to a dysfunctional UN Security Council with an inherent problem in its structure. In short, there was no means of stopping acts that violated international law if committed by one of the five permanent Security Council members with power of veto. As long as the Security Council alone was qualified to pass binding resolutions, its structure would never change. Meanwhile, non-binding General Assembly resolutions relating to reform of the Security Council continued to be passed in the hope of galvanizing public opinion and uniting the international community towards encouraging change in the Security Council. His proposal was that the IPU should perform an advisory function aimed at further encouraging that outcome.

**The Chair** said that he had taken note of that proposal for future consideration as and when appropriate. For the moment, however, the proposal before the Committee related only to a reform of its own methods of work.

**Mr. D. Naughten** (Ireland) said that, for the proposed reform to succeed, it was vitally important to establish a level of engagement with the United Nations that accorded with the practical challenges and needs of parliamentarians. The contributions frequently heard at parliamentary gatherings, including IPU Assemblies, tended to be in the abstract as opposed to focused on practical measures that parliaments themselves could take. His strong recommendation, therefore, was to ensure that the modalities and methods of work as outlined in the summary document were applied so as to bring parliamentarians together with the United Nations in forums where they could engage with peers on practical mechanisms for the implementation of UN resolutions. If they could cite examples of successes achieved elsewhere, it would be easier for them to advocate in parliament for specific policy changes. At present, however, there was no such forum in place, whereas parliamentarians needed input from experts, from the United Nations and also from the scientific community, given the unique challenges posed by problems relating to, among others, climate change, energy, digital and green transition, and artificial intelligence.

**Ms. S. Attia** (Egypt) said that the initiative to change the Committee's working methods was welcome and necessary in the light of developments in the international sphere. Linkages between the Committee and UN entities should be increased to ensure more parliamentary involvement in UN activities. Currently, it was often difficult for parliamentarians to come together at UN events to discuss the topics covered unless parliamentary meetings were specifically organized to coincide. Greater coordination and communication between the IPU and the United Nations on a variety of issues was vital to the interests of constituents. The proposed new modalities and working methods would enable parliamentarians to respond more swiftly and effectively to the constantly evolving situations around the world so as to further promote democracy, justice and inclusivity. She hoped that the voice of parliamentarians would be heard loud and clear at the upcoming High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development in New York.

**Mr. M. Al Mheri** (United Arab Emirates) said that the Committee's priorities in terms of discussion topics should reflect key processes under way at the United Nations, the current examples being the international cybercrime treaty negotiations and action on climate change. The Committee should additionally be tasked with following up on UN activities and outcomes and on the implementation of UN conventions while also encouraging national parliaments to play their part. To that end, it should hold debates and adopt resolutions in the same way as the other Standing Committees. Lastly, to ensure the effective participation of parliamentarians in UN activities, which was key to putting across the parliamentary perspective, the Annual Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations should be held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in September of each year to discuss topics identified by the Committee from among those that featured on the General Assembly's agenda.

**Mr. A. Golroo** (Islamic Republic of Iran), after highlighting the Iranian Parliament's commitment to meticulously implementing the recommendations contained in the UN Secretary-General's *Our Common Agenda* report, said that any UN reform should be based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. With its current weaknesses, the Security Council was a tool in the hands of developed countries for putting pressure on others. The United Nations, including the Security Council, must operate on the basis of a rules-based and non-selective approach on behalf of and in line with the common interests of its Member States. The existing discrimination and lack of transparency in geographical representation at the United Nations was a matter of deep concern. Both must be eliminated in favour of the model of national parliaments, where there was equitable geographical representation and where all parliamentarians participated fully in standard-setting. A review of the veto power was the first priority.

**Mr. C. Frolick** (South Africa) said that the proposed new working methods before the Committee would help parliamentarians to keep abreast of developments and promote their engagement in the work of UN agencies around the world. Concerning reform of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council, South Africa was clear in its position. In terms of the IPU, parliamentarians should table for discussion within their respective parliaments the main issues to be addressed at any IPU meetings that they were due to attend so that they could arrive with a mandate on those issues, thereby adding momentum to the work at hand.

**The Chair**, noting the pertinence of many of the remarks made to the aim behind the reorganization of the Committee's working methods, said that the annual parliamentary hearings at the United Nations were well attended but that there was always room for more participants. The hearings

were the only time during the year that parliamentarians had the important opportunity to take the floor at the United Nations. Any new modalities and working methods agreed by the Committee should be consistent with those of the other Standing Committees and enhance the IPU's relevance – and hence that of parliamentarians – in the UN context. Comments and proposals on wider issues would be noted for use in possible future discussions.

**Mr. M.T. Bani Yassin** (Jordan) said that the Committee played a crucial part in the IPU's activities and was directly linked with the work of parliaments with international organizations. What took place in meetings such as those at the IPU differed, however, from what took place between national parliaments and UN agencies with an in-country presence. The relationship between the latter should be better defined to promote collaboration ensuring that theories espoused in meetings were turned into practice on the ground.

**The Chair**, noting that no amendments to the proposal set out in the summary document had been requested, invited the Committee to vote on the proposal by show of hands.

*The proposal was approved unanimously.*

**The Chair**, welcoming that outcome and thanking his fellow Bureau members and the IPU Secretariat for their work in preparing the summary document, said that the new modalities and work methods would enable the Committee, in conjunction with national parliaments and the IPU, to strengthen the parliamentary input to the work of the United Nations as well as their own follow-up of that work.

### **Bringing gender equality to the UN General Assembly**

**Ms. P. Torsney** (Head of the Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations in New York), introducing the item, said that the IPU had been consistently campaigning for over 30 years to increase the number of women parliamentarians everywhere. Currently, all functioning parliaments had at least one woman member. The IPU now wished to engage parliamentarians in effecting similar change within the United Nations. The Committee would first hear from Ms. S. Malcorra, former Chief of Staff to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and President of Global Women Leaders (GWL) Voices for Change and Inclusion.

**Ms. S. Malcorra** (President of GWL Voices for Change and Inclusion), speaking via video link, said that GWL Voices was working hard in the area of women's rights and empowerment in the multilateral system, with a particular emphasis on women's representation in leadership positions. With evidence revealing the low level of women's participation in UN institutional arrangements and governing bodies, parliamentarians should urge their governments to put more women forward as candidates for UN positions. It was only through women's fair representation in UN governing bodies that policy changes would be effected to bring women to the forefront in multilateral decision-making.

**Ms. P. Torsney** (Head of the Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations in New York), outlining the findings of an IPU survey on women in the UN General Assembly and accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that, as at 1 January 2023, just 46 of the 193 permanent representatives, or ambassadors, to the United Nations were women, many more of them from the global South than the global North. Only 157 permanent missions had deputy permanent representatives, some 34% of them women. For countries where women accounted for over 30% of parliamentarians, there was little correlation with the number of women that they appointed as permanent representatives. Only 28% of parliaments had oversight of the appointment of permanent representatives, while countries having appointed a woman to that position on one of the previous five occasions amounted to 42%. Of the 43 parliaments that had participated in the survey, 54% ran programmes for recruiting more women into the diplomatic corps and preparing them for the top position of ambassador. The IPU was keen to find ways of working with parliaments to advance women's representation at the UN General Assembly.

**The Chair**, noting that the Permanent Representative of his country, Switzerland, to the United Nations was a woman, said that all parliaments should endeavour to ensure that the diplomatic processes in their countries were such that as many women as possible were appointed to influential positions at the United Nations, in particular as ambassador to the Organization.

**Mr. M.M. Kapichila** (Malawi) said that women's and girls' empowerment must be accelerated to achieve the social transformation driven by women and needed for countries to realize the 2030 Agenda. Women must be assured of an integral role in the path towards gender equality, which the UN General Assembly should continue to pursue by promoting the profound changes required to ensure equal access to economic, political and social life. Despite its historic accomplishments with respect to women's representation and participation, the UN General Assembly had only ever elected four women to preside over it. Moreover, only 24 of the 193 Member States of the United Nations had a woman head of State or government, while the United Nations itself had never had a woman Secretary-General. Malawi's former woman President had attended the UN General Assembly but had yet to designate another female ambassador for gender equality at the United Nations. Parliaments should approve initiatives and strengthen measures for equality of treatment and opportunities so as to guarantee true substantive equality and social justice in the UN setting and should likewise advocate for the inclusive discussion of gender equality at the UN General Assembly.

**Ms. D. Kumari** (India) said that women belonged in all decision-making, which, along with women's empowerment, was the most effective means of ensuring equitable and sustainable development worldwide. Gender equality was far from a reality, however, in high-level bodies such as the UN General Assembly, the first woman President of which had been from India. The current Permanent Representative of India was also a woman. A change in attitudes, mindsets and institutional and legal frameworks was key to the achievement of gender equality. Parliamentarians must therefore encourage governments to develop a gender-balanced workforce and send more women ambassadors to the UN General Assembly and other multilateral meetings.

**Ms. S. Falaknaz** (United Arab Emirates), laying emphasis on collective efforts, said that the desired objectives could be achieved by investing in training to produce more women diplomats and increase women's representation at the United Nations. Greater trust must be placed in women's ability to participate in politics, especially given women's fundamental role in promoting peace and security. Through their legislative and oversight functions, parliaments must similarly endeavour to promote gender equality and equal opportunities as well as remove barriers to women's participation in elections and political life. Indicators and targets should be established to enable the IPU to track progress, in cooperation with the United Nations. Her country ranked first among Arab countries for gender equality and women's representation in parliament, where women currently accounted for 50% of members. The Emirati ambassador to the United Nations was a woman, with 12 other Emirati women serving as ambassadors elsewhere. Women furthermore comprised 41% of foreign ministry staff and 60% of graduates from the country's diplomatic training academy.

**Mr. M. Moushouttas** (Cyprus) said that his country had regrettably never appointed a woman as its Permanent Representative to the United Nations. The added value brought by women to the UN General Assembly stemmed from their empowerment, which must be enhanced to achieve the necessary transformation. For its part, the Assembly must encourage, facilitate and support profound social changes to that end, guided by *Our Common Agenda*, which set gender equality as a precondition for a rebalancing of power and resources. A potential gamechanger, women's participation in conflict resolution and peace processes enjoyed global support but needed to be substantive. Gender equality should therefore start with the UN General Assembly, which must reflect women's equal participation in all public life and in core political decision-making. Elimination of the existing structures of patriarchy and exclusion was an essential part of collective action on gender equality that would chart the course for the long haul.

**Mr. C. Frolick** (South Africa) said that, despite pioneering women's rights since 1948, the UN General Assembly had had few women presidents and no female Secretaries-General, while only 23 of the 190 speakers at its most recent gathering in September 2022 had been women – a dismal record that should be worrying to all. South Africa had appointed its first woman ambassador to the United Nations in 1994 and its current woman ambassador thereto had received her credentials in 2021. Countries with a female leadership were generally more focused on gender equality in their law- and policymaking and fared better in their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which should be an incentive for parliamentarians to campaign for the advancement of gender parity, above all in political parties, in their home countries. Bearing in mind that, in 2016, none of seven women in the running had been elected UN Secretary-General, the Committee should use its voice towards ensuring that the next incumbent was a woman. In short, efforts to increase women's leadership in all multilateral institutions, in particular the United Nations, must be redoubled.

**Mr. M.T. Bani Yassin** (Jordan) said that his country had amended its Constitution so as to promote gender equality and had set mandatory quotas for women's participation in parliamentary elections and political parties. Jordanian women were, furthermore, highly educated and held senior positions in all walks of life. One of the two who had formerly served as Permanent Representatives to the United Nations was now the Jordanian ambassador in Washington, D.C, and the other was the Executive Director of UN Women. Eight of the country's 10 newly appointed diplomats were women. Parliamentarians should reach out to their governments to ensure that parliaments played their rightful role in the important matter of bringing gender equality to the United Nations.

**Ms. P. Cayetano** (Philippines) said that more women were needed in decision-making bodies but faced challenges relating to their dual role in the home and workplace. Even developed countries at the frontline of women's empowerment struggled to provide the support needed for women to realize their full potential. Mothers were often forced to leave their jobs to care for their children full time, while others chose to forego the opportunity of a family life in favour of work. In her country, many mothers sacrificed that life by taking jobs abroad to address their family's economic needs. Policies and programmes should therefore be continually revisited to ensure that children could grow up with their mothers and that mothers could continue working. With more women at the forefront, those situations were more likely to be addressed to enable women to give of their best to their families while also pursuing a career.

**Ms. S. Attia** (Egypt), noting the good example set by the IPU in its efforts to increase women's representation in all spheres, said that the achievement of gender equality at the United Nations was doubtful in the absence of regulation to increase women's presence in that setting.

**Mr. A. Golroo** (Islamic Republic of Iran), emphasizing the remarkable achievements of Iranian women in all spheres, said that the unilateral decision of bullying States to remove his country from the Commission on the Status of Women, of which it was an official member, was indicative of the deeply regrettable trend towards the politicization of gender equality.

**The Chair** said, in conclusion, that the question of how to increase women's representation and presence in UN bodies would remain as a possible subject for future discussion within the Committee, pending the Executive Committee's endorsement of its new modalities and methods of work.

**Ms. P. Torsney** (Head of the Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations in New York), summing up, said that the discussion had reflected the clear and welcome commitment to making a difference and that bringing gender equality to the UN General Assembly was set to feature as a recurring item on the Committee's agenda in accordance with its mandate. The intention was to hold one or more virtual meetings on the subject before the 147th Assembly and to update the existing data. It was crucial to improve the rate of response to the survey and for parliamentarians to look into their country's process for the appointment of ambassadors to the United Nations. They should also push for the recruitment of more women into the diplomatic service, including as Permanent Representatives in New York and other UN hubs.

### **2023 Voluntary National Reviews for the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**

**The Chair**, introducing the item, recalled that the HLPF met annually in July to consider Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) presented by 40 or so countries on their implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Each year, the IPU surveyed the parliaments contributing to those VNRs in order to gauge the depth of their engagement in the process. Under the item, the Committee would be informed about the results of the IPU's 2022 survey and about its 2023 survey.

**Mr. A. Motter** (Senior Advisor, Economic and Social Affairs, Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations in New York), accompanying his remarks on the 2022 survey with a digital slide presentation, said that the survey was designed to keep track of the HLPF accountability process, in line with the Committee's mandate. VNRs were nationally owned, with parliaments among the stakeholders providing input to the assessment of progress towards the achievement of the SDGs.

With only 13 of 42 parliaments responding to the 2022 survey, the baseline for parliamentary engagement in the process was unfortunately very low, although most respondents were aware of the VNRs to some extent. Eight of the 13 had been notified in advance of the consultation plan for all

stakeholders, which was an important factor in aiding preparation, and 6 of the 8 had reported that the plan included direct engagement with parliament. While most of the 13 had provided input to the VNR consultation process, that amounted to only 19% of the 42 parliaments approached. An examination of the 42 VNRs subsequently presented had revealed that 38% of them referred to the parliamentary involvement in the process but only fleetingly so. The discrepancy sometimes occurring between what governments and parliaments reported was among the problems to be overcome in relation to the exercise.

Since the first IPU survey in 2020, parliamentary engagement in the VNR consultation process had trended slightly upwards. The fact that the HLPF had been meeting annually since 2016 meant that some countries had already presented more than one VNR, with the evidence pointing to more parliamentary inclusion in the process with each passing report. The survey had asked whether parliaments were involved before, during or after the drafting of the VNR – generally a six-month exercise overall – and found that only 2 of the 13 respondents had been involved from the outset. Governments appeared to believe that the most effective way of engaging parliaments was by way of workshops, whereas much more meaningful and deeper engagement would be achieved through parliamentary hearings, which had been arranged in only one instance. Some of the 13 had attended government-organized outside events, which made for less effective engagement as they shifted the process away from the institution of parliament. Seven of the 13 had relied on government reports to assess progress and none had consulted independent reports, thereby pointing to weak oversight. More parliaments than not had agreed with the government assessment and felt that their input was reflected in the VNR concerned. Again, however, the baseline was very low. The conclusion was that parliaments in general were not highly proactive or motivated to engage in the VNR consultation process, despite IPU efforts, and that the quality of any engagement that did occur was lacking.

To address that issue, the IPU had organized a virtual meeting in October 2022 with members of the IPU Secretariat and chairpersons of the geopolitical groups with the aim of promoting more active parliamentary engagement in the process. The 2023 survey questionnaire would be circulated in late May, for completion within one month, to parliaments of the 40 VNR presenters taking part in the upcoming HLPF. Those parliaments were urged to communicate well ahead of time with the ministers leading the process in their countries to ensure that they and their members were fully involved. More responses to the survey were critical and would indicate stronger engagement in the VNR exercise.

**The Chair**, endorsing those comments, said that it was vitally important for parliaments to complete the survey questionnaire as a matter of priority so that the responses could contribute towards improving the work of the United Nations, including in terms of its resolutions and decisions. A greater parliamentary presence at the United Nations began with those responses, from which a common position in the name of parliaments could be constructed and voiced.

**Mr. D. McGuinty** (Canada) said that it had been refreshing to hear a high-ranking UN official state with commendable honesty during the recent Annual Parliamentary Hearing in New York that there was a real need to revisit the SDGs, which the official had been tasked to rescue from the present course in order to avert failure. Given that the best way to deal with problems was first to admit to them, it was essential for the IPU to communicate to the United Nations that it was extremely difficult for parliaments to report fully on progress towards the achievement of 17 highly aspirational, inclusive and comprehensive SDGs with 169 related targets. The United Nations had acknowledged a problem on that score, which he saw as the ever-widening gap between promise and performance. Parliamentarians received extraordinarily ambitious targets to be sold to their parliaments and peoples. The IPU should therefore indicate to the United Nations that it must be more realistic and cognizant of the need to help parliaments in the increasingly tough challenge of developing implementable road maps. The greatest concern was the young people everywhere who felt hopeless and helpless in the face of targets so onerous as to be unimplementable. Parliaments could counter that situation by bringing it to the attention of the United Nations so that measurable progress could be made.

**Mr. M.T. Bani Yassin** (Jordan) said that the importance of engagement between the legislature and the executive was emphasized in his country and that parliamentary oversight of VNRs was to be strongly encouraged. In 2022, Jordan had presented what he considered to be a very satisfactory VNR, produced following an appropriate consultation process. He suggested, however, that the survey questionnaires should be accompanied by instructions for completion, that all IPU Members should be made aware of the survey, and that the survey itself should contain more detailed and specific questions.

**Ms. D. Kumari** (India) asked how overlap between the executive and the legislature could be avoided in the VNR submission process and also suggested that it would be helpful for parliaments to share best practices as guidance for others.

**Ms. G. Hooper** (United Kingdom), expressing disappointment that only 13 parliaments had responded to the survey, said that parliaments should be encouraged to respond by naming and shaming those that did not. In the United Kingdom, all-party parliamentary groups fulfilled a very useful purpose, receiving briefings and hearing speakers, including from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as part of their task of looking into areas of interest to politicians. Many parliamentarians were regularly contacted about SDG matters by constituents, with NGOs playing an important role in requesting their representatives to monitor the issue. She would ensure in future that her country's parliamentarians fulfilled their responsibility to react to requests from the United Nations in relation to what was a global issue to be dealt with globally.

**Ms. P. Torsney** (Head of the Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations in New York), responding to comments, said that the IPU had produced several documents available to all on how parliaments could promote the implementation of the SDGs. Information about access to related online and other training sessions could be obtained from the Chair of the IPU's Standing Committee on Sustainable Development. The survey itself was sent to the contact persons listed in the IPU repertoire of its 179 Members. Committee members should request that this contact person from their parliament involve them in any IPU survey received going forward.

**Mr. A. Motter** (Senior Advisor, Economic and Social Affairs, Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations in New York) said, in reply to the question about overlap, that none existed between the executive and the legislature; each simply supported the other in the VNR context.

**The Chair**, in thanking all participants for their contributions, said that the IPU looked forward to the completion of the surveys by all respondents so that it could work on the data collected.

### **Elections to the Bureau of the Standing Committee**

**The Chair** said that the candidates proposed to fill current vacancies on the Bureau were Mr. A. Talbi (Algeria) for the African Group; Mr. M. Alajmi (Kuwait)<sup>2</sup> for the Arab Group; Mr. H. Aoyagi (Japan) and Ms. P. Cayetano (Philippines) for the Asia-Pacific Group; and Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada) and Ms. A. Shkrum (Ukraine) for the Twelve Plus Group. He took it that the Committee wished to elect those candidates to the Bureau.

*It was so decided.*

**Mr. A. Gryffroy** (Belgium), thanking the Chair for his tremendous work over the past months, said that the Twelve Plus Group had proposed that, as the position remained vacant, he should act as Vice-President of the Bureau for the 147th Assembly.

**Mr. D. McGuinty** (Canada) suggested that, for the sake of continuity, Mr. Gryffroy should also act as President of the Bureau as from the present time until the end of the 147th Assembly, as he had the experience, institutional memory and background needed to carry the Committee's work forward.

**The Chair** said that the Bureau had in fact agreed that Mr. Gryffroy should act as President of the Bureau until the 147th Assembly in Angola, when a candidate from the Twelve Plus Group would be proposed for the position. He thanked all those who had worked with and supported him throughout his four-year term as Vice-President of the Bureau and, more recently, in his capacity as its Acting President.

### **Any other business**

**The Chair** invited all colleagues present to gather for the traditional photograph and, following an exchange of courtesies, declared the session closed.

*The sitting rose at 11:05.*

<sup>2</sup> On 26 March 2023, the IPU received a formal communication from the Parliament of Kuwait specifying that the constitutional court had annulled the elections that had taken place in the country in 2022 and that Mr. M. Alajmi was no longer an MP. As a result, the previous member from Kuwait, Mr. A. Almutairi, was reappointed for a second term on the Bureau.

# Forum of Women Parliamentarians

**SITTING OF SATURDAY, 11 MARCH 2023**

(Morning)

*The sitting was called to order at 10:30 with Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, in the Chair.*

## **Opening of the session**

**The President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians** welcomed participants to the 35th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians. The 146th IPU Assembly had brought together a record number of participants but a low proportion of women at only 33%. Nevertheless, she was confident that the work of the Forum would be fruitful and efficient.

During the session, women parliamentarians would provide a gender perspective on the draft resolution entitled *Cyberattacks and cybercrimes: The new risks to global security*. While technology had brought many benefits, it had also increased the means by which women and girls were harassed and abused. Online abuse often moved into the offline world, causing psychological trauma and sometimes physical harm. It also disincentivized women and girls from participating in society or pursuing leadership positions. It was her hope that the perspectives of the Forum would improve the draft resolution but also offer new ideas that participants could take back to their national parliaments. Next, there would be a debate on the following theme: *Parliamentary leadership in addressing insecurity and crises: Putting gender equality at the centre of water security, climate resilience and peace sustainability*. It was important to have a women-led discussion while also encouraging more men to participate.

She pointed out that a number of the proposed emergency items addressed the deterioration of women's rights. Women were suffering all over the globe. For instance, in Afghanistan, the Taliban had completely excluded women from society. In Ukraine, women were victims of sexual violence at the hands of the Russian army. It was vital to shine a light on those cases, deal with them at the highest political level and bring the perpetrators to justice. She urged parliamentarians to show solidarity with women and support those emergency items.

## **Election of the President of the 35th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians (FEM/35/1-Inf.1)**

*As recommended by the Vice-President of the Senate and Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. E. Nyirasafari (Rwanda) and by the President of the General Assembly and President of the Senate and Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. B. Argimón (Uruguay), Ms. H. Ramzy Fayez (Bahrain), First Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, was, by acclamation, elected President of the 35th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians.*

*Ms. H. Ramzy Fayez (Bahrain), President of the 35th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, took the Chair.*

**The Chair** said that it was an honour to be presiding over the Forum. She welcomed participants to Bahrain which was an oasis of peaceful coexistence and mutual respect.

Women were disproportionately affected by global challenges such as conflict and climate change and often bore the brunt of injustices such as sexual violence and inadequate healthcare provision. To address those challenges, women must be included in all policies and plans. It was also important to promote the participation of women in society, including in the workforce. Financial empowerment of women was key to their political empowerment. Male and female parliamentarians were encouraged to exchange good practices.

Bahrain was proud of its record on women's rights. Women were involved in all aspects of society, particularly politics, and received much support from Parliament. She attached great importance to the work of the Forum and looked forward to hearing more proposals to improve the lives of women.

**Mr. J. Fakhro** (First Deputy Chairperson of the Shura Council (Bahrain)), said that gender equality was a key pillar of peace, democracy and sustainable development. Bahrain played an important role in promoting gender equality through legislation, policy and budgeting. The women of Bahrain participated actively in society and took on important responsibilities and leadership roles. They represented 25% of the Shura Council and often took part in international forums. He welcomed participants to Bahrain and wished them every success during the 35th session of the Forum.

**Mr. D. Pacheco** (President of the IPU) said that the IPU's mission was to promote democracy for everyone, which was not possible without the complete and inclusive participation of women in politics and in parliament. The participation of women was important not only for women themselves but for the whole of humankind. Men and women had different but complementary approaches and, together, could produce more complete solutions to the world's problems. The IPU would always work to empower women in politics.

A few days previously, he had attended the parliamentary meeting organized jointly by the IPU and UN Women on the occasion of the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York. Participants had discussed how parliaments could harness technology to drive progress on gender equality and prevent technology from becoming a tool of oppression against women and girls. All technological developments must be gender sensitive and gender responsive.

Digital media companies had not invented gender inequality but had allowed their platforms to be used as tools to attack their users and undermine democracy. Although such platforms were private spaces, the State had the right to regulate them with a view to protecting its citizens. Indeed, the shift towards the digital during the COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated gender-based violence online, including sexual exploitation and trafficking. Women politicians, journalists and human rights activists were particular targets of online gender-based violence. He was pleased that the topic would be at the heart of the Forum's discussions.

He drew attention to a number of tragic situations around the world, such as the war in Ukraine and the historic drought in the Horn of Africa. Such tragedies had a disproportionate impact on women and girls who were often vulnerable to violence and other human rights violations. He looked forward to discussions on how to place gender equality at the heart of water resource management, climate protection and peacebuilding.

Sustainable development and peace would only be possible with the full participation and leadership of women. Yet, women represented only 26.5% of parliamentarians worldwide. The good news was that, for the first time in history, every parliament in the world had at least one woman parliamentarian. The bad news was that the global representation of women in parliament had grown by only 0.4% between 2021 and 2022. More work must therefore be done. He encouraged participants to take inspiration from those countries that had already achieved gender parity in parliament, such as Rwanda, Cuba and New Zealand.

The international community must not forget about the women and girls who had been deprived of their rights and freedoms, such as the right to education and the right to work. He condemned all forms of gender-based violence, which could never be justified. Parliaments must work together to empower women and girls, helping them contribute to a world that desperately needed them. The IPU would not give up until equal rights between men and women were achieved.

**Ms. Z. Hilal** (Secretary of the Forum, IPU) said that, with 68 delegations present, the quorum requirements for the session had been met. A total of 185 women and 43 men were in the room.

#### **Adoption of the agenda** (FEM/35/A.1-rev)

*The agenda was adopted.*

#### **Activities to advance gender equality**

##### **(a) The work of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and its deliberations at the sessions held in Kigali on 11 October 2022 and in Manama on 11 March 2023**

**Ms. C. Muyeka Mumma** (Kenya), member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, said that the Bureau remained concerned about the barriers facing women in politics, particularly young women. One of its priorities was taking action to eradicate violence against women in politics. Through IPU's engagement and leadership in the Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership of

the Generation Equality Forum, the Bureau was also actively working towards ensuring that the voices of the new generations were not only heard but substantially reflected in policymaking. Promoting civic and political leadership in young women and girls created more inclusive democratic institutions and advanced democracy. To that end, it was vital to ensure that the internet ceased to be a weapon for silencing women.

Concern had also been raised about the multiple forms of discrimination experienced by older women. The Bureau had therefore decided to make it the topic of a future discussion.

### **(b) The work and recommendations of the Gender Partnership Group**

**Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté** (Senegal), Vice-President of the IPU Executive Committee and member of the Gender Partnership Group, said that the Gender Partnership Group had met the previous day to examine the composition of delegations present at the 146th Assembly based on information received on 9 March. A number of records had been broken which was both positive and negative. A total of 239 women parliamentarians were expected to attend – the highest number ever achieved at an in-person Assembly. However, as many as 25 delegations with two or more members did not consist of both genders – a number that had never before been reached. A total of 35 delegations were gender-balanced with women representing between 40 and 60% of members. The figure was slightly less than the previous Assembly and represented 26% of all delegations. She encouraged parliaments to continue improving gender equality at Assemblies.

Lastly, the Gender Partnership Group had obtained approval to develop a policy to prevent harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and other IPU events based on the Code of Conduct of the United Nations. The text was expected to be finalized by the following Assembly.

### **(c) IPU activities for the promotion of gender equality**

**Ms. V. Riotton** (France), member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, reporting on the meeting organized jointly by the IPU and UN Women on the occasion of the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women held on 7 March in New York, said that a total of 75 parliamentarians from 23 countries had been present along with other stakeholders. The theme of the meeting had been the role of parliaments in advancing gender equality through technology and three key points had been highlighted. First, technological innovation must be women-led and must facilitate women's empowerment. Positive measures should be taken in that direction, for instance, by allocating sufficient financing and encouraging women to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM subjects). Second, more must be done to combat violence against women and girls perpetrated through the use of technology. It was important to introduce effective laws and implementation mechanisms that addressed all forms of gender-based violence online, including sexual exploitation, sextortion and revenge pornography. Tackling online violence against women parliamentarians required specific legal provisions and parliamentary procedures. Third, parliamentarians must improve their understanding and use of technology. Working with technology could bring them closer to the population and help create a better work-life balance.

**Ms. C. Mix** (Chile), following up the adoption of the Kigali Declaration at the 145th Assembly that called on parliaments to step up action to be gender-sensitive institutions, said that her Parliament had put together a book summarizing its experience of becoming more gender sensitive. The book titled *Parlamentos sensibles al género – El caso de Chile* covered 10 years of progress and was divided into two key parts: (1) the overall progress made in Latin America with a special focus on Chile; and (2) legislative initiatives undertaken by the Parliament of Chile. It included details regarding advances made in the level of representation. Currently, women represented 35% of the Chamber of Deputies of Chile and 24% of the Senate with work ongoing to further increase those numbers. The book was available for delegates to read. It was good to share experiences so that parliaments could learn from each other.

**Ms. Z. Hilal** (Secretary of the Forum, IPU) drew attention to two of the most recent IPU publications. The first was the *Women in parliament 2022* report which analysed the progress made on women's participation in national parliaments. The second was the IPU-UN Women map entitled *Women in Politics: 2023* which showed where each country stood on women's political participation.

The publications showed that, in 2022, women represented only 26.5% of parliamentarians globally while the rate of progress had been lower than in previous years at 0.4%. In addition, less than a third of lower or single houses had achieved the minimum target of 30% women. Equality was

therefore very far away. It would take another 80 years to achieve gender parity at the current rate. Some advancements, however, had also been observed. For instance, all parliaments in the world now had at least one woman parliamentarian and six parliaments had achieved 50% women or more (Cuba, Mexico, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Rwanda and the United Arab Emirates). The diversity of women entering parliament was also growing.

The highest rate of progress had occurred in the Americas where the proportion of women parliamentarians had increased by 1.1% compared to 2021. Europe and Asia had seen a stagnation while Sub-Saharan Africa had the same average as in 2021. The situation in the Pacific was improving but the Middle East and North Africa had fallen back.

In the top parliamentary leadership, women represented 22.7% of Speakers of Parliament, 65.9% of gender equality committee chairs but only 12.5% of defence committee chairs. In addition, the number of women in the position of Head of State or Government was low at 11.3% and 9.8% respectively.

One of the lessons learned in 2022 was that quotas remained critical. Research had once again shown that quotas allowed more women to enter parliament. Elections had been held in 47 countries in which 25.8% of the parliamentary seats had been taken by women. Countries with quotas had elected 30.9% of women while those without quotas had elected 21%. Quotas must, however, be clear, well-designed and ambitious to work.

As many as 8 out of 10 women parliamentarians faced psychological violence in parliament. Reaching gender parity in politics would help to eliminate that. Some good responses had been observed in 2022, for instance, in Senegal, where two parliamentarians had received six-month jail terms for attacking a pregnant woman parliamentarian.

To achieve gender parity, it was vital to open politics up to a more diverse range of women and create a more enabling space for women to participate. There was also a need to develop national plans, introduce quotas, revoke discriminatory laws and address violence against women in politics and in society.

### **Contribution to the work of the 146th Assembly from a gender perspective**

**The Chair** drew attention to the draft resolution entitled *Cyberattacks and cybercrimes: The new risks to global security* as proposed by the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and invited participants to provide inputs from a gender perspective. A list of amendments would then be put together to make the draft resolution more gender-focused, responsive and inclusive to the needs and interests of women. The Bureau had nominated Ms. R. Kavakci Kan (Türkiye) to chair the discussion and Ms. M. Al Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates) to be the rapporteur.

*The nominations were approved.*

**The Chair** invited the co-Rapporteurs to introduce the draft resolution.

**Ms. S. Falaknaz** (United Arab Emirates), co-Rapporteur, said that the purpose of the draft resolution was to examine the challenges involved in combating cyberattacks and cybercrimes, as well as to offer recommendations. Challenges included the rapidly changing nature of cybercrimes driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. It was vital to strengthen international cooperation and revise outdated national legislation. The text did not provide definitions of cyberattacks and cybercrimes. Cybercrimes would, however, be defined in the new United Nations convention on cybercrime to be approved in 2024. Some international efforts had already been made to combat cybercrime, including the adoption of the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime (2001), the Global Programme on Cybercrime, and the IPU resolution entitled *Cyber warfare: A serious threat to peace and global security* (2015).

She wished to highlight that preambular paragraphs 15 and 17, as well as operative paragraph 19 of the draft resolution, already referred to vulnerable groups including women.

**Mr. J. Cepeda** (Spain), co-Rapporteur, said that the number of cyberattacks, such as phishing and password theft, had increased by more than 100% since the pandemic. The draft resolution aimed to protect people from such attacks. He pointed out that cybersecurity was not a technical issue but a political one. It must be central to all parliamentary work.

The draft resolution must include a gender perspective given that marginalized groups, such as women, were most affected by cyberattacks. There was a need to include more women in cybersecurity efforts, including by putting in place inclusive educational plans. Women must be encouraged to train in STEM subjects. Equal number of women and men should lead the work on cybersecurity.

He drew attention to three objectives contained within the draft resolution. First, it was important to build trust among the international community as cyber attackers operated across borders targeting critical infrastructure, such health and energy systems. Countries would be in a better position to stop such attacks if they shared information and good practices in protection against cyberattacks. Second, international cooperation was needed. He emphasized the need to work together in the interests of security and for the wellbeing of future generations. Third, there was a need for more resources, including technological resources and qualified staff.

He called on the Forum to help make the resolution useful for everybody regardless of political divides. Security efforts were not about restricting the rights of citizens but about defending them. It was his hope that the resolution would complement the work of the United Nations and bring together all voices within the IPU in the hope of achieving world peace.

*Ms. R. Kavakci Kan (Türkiye) took the Chair.*

**The Chair** invited delegates to offer their views on the draft resolution with the aim of putting together a set of gender-related amendments. They were encouraged to consider the following: (1) how cyberattacks and cybercrimes affected women, girls, men and boys differently; (2) how laws and policies could better address cyberattacks and cybercrimes against women and girls; (3) what good practices existed to prevent cybercrimes against women and girls; and (4) how parliaments and parliamentarians could promote the role of women in the fight against cyberattacks and cybercrimes, including the role of female researchers working on cyber defence systems.

The Parliament of Türkiye had recently established a committee on digital platforms which was responsible for discussing cybercrime and which showed that it affected women more, in particular women in politics.

**Ms. P.Krairiksh** (Thailand) strongly agreed that women and girls were disproportionately affected by technology-assisted violence such as romance scams and fraud. Her Parliament had adopted its Cybersecurity Act (2019) which oversaw the fast-growing digital economy and set out actions to combat cyberthreats. The Act defined cyberthreats as “unlawful activities carried out through the use of technology with the intent of causing harm to a computer system.”

The Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF) had recently passed a resolution on cybersecurity and the right to privacy. The resolution called on parliaments to exchange best practices with a view to developing a regional legislative framework on cybersecurity. It also helped raise awareness among parliaments about the need to harness information and communication technology (ICT) to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Ms. A. Al Shaman** (Saudi Arabia) said that cybercrimes were a violation of people’s rights and dignity with women disproportionately affected. They were, unfortunately, on the rise and expected to be worth US\$ 10.5 trillion by 2025. Examples of cybercrimes included stealing of personal data, such as bank details, and use of social media to enable the trafficking of women. Women did not always speak up about their experiences which meant that perpetrators went unpunished. International, regional and local efforts and an exchange of information were needed to solve the problem. Parliaments were encouraged to ratify international legislation on cybercrimes as well as to pass local laws. Women must be involved in raising awareness of cybercrimes.

The Parliament of Saudi Arabia had introduced a number of cybersecurity laws as well as a system to combat financial fraud. All websites involved in illegal activities were also taken down.

**Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah** (Egypt) said that cybercrimes threatened economic stability and human rights and were eclipsing efforts to promote development, sustainability and democracy.

Egypt had been one of the first countries to introduce cybersecurity controls. It had enacted laws to protect national networks, intellectual property and e-signatures as well as to combat the illegal use of cyberspace.

Governments and parliaments should promote international cooperation with a view to developing a comprehensive global strategy on cybersecurity. It was necessary to expand the protection of women and girls in cyberspace, including the protection of women candidates during elections. Cyberattacks and cybercrimes must be defined by the United Nations. Women parliamentarians could play a key role in combatting cybercrimes given their innovative perspectives and ability to bridge gaps between parliament and society. They were encouraged to hold conferences and forums on the topic.

**Ms. E. Azad** (Islamic Republic of Iran) emphasized the importance of protecting women from harm in cyberspace. Due to insufficient regulation, technology had become a breeding ground for criminals who often targeted women. Parliaments must raise awareness among women about cyberthreats and improve their media literacy. It would thus be possible to create a culture that protected women's rights online. There was a need to punish cybercriminals appropriately, develop national networks to monitor cyberspace and introduce legal provisions that tackled online violence against women. The Islamic Republic of Iran had been very successful in addressing cyberattacks and cybercrimes, especially those committed against women.

**Ms. M. Tamura** (Japan) said that the world had seen an increase in cyberattacks committed by criminal groups. It was not uncommon for such groups to steal company data and demand a ransom in return for its non-disclosure. It was important to help companies take measures against cybercrimes. Women and young people were most likely to be victims of such attacks. Gender perspectives must therefore be taken into account. Not only was it important to address national and international security but also to monitor online platforms.

She drew attention to a number of cyber incidents that had occurred in Japan. First, the names and faces of many retail staff had been posted online thus putting them at risk of harassment and stalking. The Government was reviewing all regulations and customs that had contributed to the incident although difficulties had arisen due to certain constitutional rights and freedoms. Second, a female wrestler had recently committed suicide after experiencing cyberbullying. In response, tougher penalties had been introduced for cyberbullying behaviour. She pointed out that online communications could easily escalate due to the anonymity enjoyed by users and the ease with which posts could spread.

Global efforts were needed given the cross-border nature of cybercrimes. Parliaments were encouraged to continue sharing insights.

**Ms. F. Masiko** (South Africa) said that women and girls around the world were often subjected to online violence that impeded their equal and meaningful participation in public life. Research conducted by UN Women showed that digital violence could result in women and girls restricting their online activity which in turn prevented their access to the internet and increased the digital gender divide. The research also revealed that, in 2022, 51% of women had experienced online abuse in a professional context.

It had become clear that some States did not criminalize the non-consensual dissemination of intimate and sexually explicit images online. As such, her Parliament wished to amend operative paragraph 6 as follows: "*Encourages* Parliaments to make full use of their oversight function to ensure that governments have the tools, including comprehensive support to victims in the form of technological support for digital content deletion, to control the rapid increase in cybercrime and cyberattacks and to protect the digital security, identity, privacy and data of citizens, especially the most vulnerable."

**Ms. A. Polat Düzgün** (Türkiye) said that women tended to be the primary victims of cyberviolence. It was estimated that 1 in every 10 women worldwide had experienced cyberbullying before the age of 15. Similarly, a total of 51% of women aged 15 to 24 avoided online discussions for fear of being subjected to hate speech. Digital spaces needed to be safer for women.

According to a recent report, 1 in 5 people in Türkiye had experienced digital violence with women being more at risk due to their gender. For instance, 51% of Turkish women had been harassed via text, voice or video message while 46% had been persistently followed. Cyberviolence in Türkiye was regulated by the Turkish Penal Code. She pointed out that cyberviolence was evolving alongside technology and could easily be transferred into offline violence.

**Ms. W.P. Andrade Muñoz** (Ecuador) said that her Parliament was currently considering two cybersecurity laws but had not yet discussed them from a gender perspective. The IPU resolution would help to guide those efforts. In the first months of 2022, Latin America had seen a 24% increase in cyberattacks. Ecuador was one of the most vulnerable countries in the region with 13.3% of users having been affected.

She drew attention to a cyberattack of which she had been a victim. In June 2022, the President of Ecuador had been facing an impeachment vote in Parliament during which the electronic votes of four parliamentarians, including her own, had been manipulated. Instead of showing up as against the impeachment, the votes had shown up as in favour. Democracy had been put at risk as a result of the attack.

Approximately 4 in 10 women had access to the internet in Ecuador many of whom faced gender-based violence online. Those most affected were women active on social media, such as journalists and politicians.

**Ms. E.J. Jolobala** (Malawi) said that one of the sectors most targeted by cybercriminals in Malawi was the financial sector. There were reports of email scams, illegal image distribution, hacking and attacks on computer systems. Women were greatly affected by those crimes.

The Parliament of Malawi had passed the Electronic Transactions and Cybersecurity Act (2016) which recognized various different cybercrimes and was also working to harmonize cybersecurity strategies across the region.

Parliaments were encouraged to pass appropriate legislation to combat cybercrimes, raise awareness among the population and offer opportunities for training and upskilling. There was a need for international cooperation, particularly among law enforcement agencies, given that cybercrimes often involved data transfer across more than one country. It was important to introduce sanctions against cybercriminals.

**Ms. R. Saint-Germain** (Canada) said that women were underrepresented in cybersecurity professions. According to the World Bank, only 2 of every 10 cybersecurity professionals were women. Not only was it important to increase the number of women working in cybersecurity but also to expand their influence in decision-making processes. Women had a great deal to say about cybercrime given they were the primary victims, particularly of online violence and harassment. Gender perspectives must be integrated into cybersecurity policies.

There was a need to ensure that cyberspace was safe, particularly for women. Online hatred had the potential to exacerbate violence against women. The problem was largely linked to gender inequality and intolerance.

It was her hope that the draft resolution would address the underrepresentation of women in decision-making processes in fields such as cybersecurity, technological development and peacebuilding generally. Parliaments must work together to implement the resolution once adopted.

**Ms. M. Mohammad Saleh** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that her Parliament had passed several cybersecurity and data protection laws, established a department specifically dedicated to cybercrime and trained judges to handle cases. There was, however, a lack of trained cybersecurity professionals in the Syrian Arab Republic.

**Ms. V. Braz** (Portugal) said that women were underrepresented in the cybersecurity sector which remained largely male-dominated. For example, in Europe, women made up just 11% of the industry. Parliamentarians must encourage and support the participation of women in cybersecurity, above all, through education. There was a need to change the culture and mentality in schools so that girls and boys were given the same professional opportunities. The time had come to break down gender barriers, deconstruct stereotypes and promote equal access to the sector. It was not just a question of social justice but about creating a more productive society. By including women, countries would be in a better position to develop dynamic and sustainable structures to combat cyberattacks and cybercrimes.

**Ms. C. Kafantari** (Greece) said that including women in the technology sector would help tackle the problem of online violence given that 38% of women had experienced it. Violence against women and children, especially girls, was a global pandemic and an issue of fundamental human rights. The World Health Organization had reported a 60% increase in domestic violence across Europe in recent years with victims being mostly women and children. Perpetrators were usually people close to the victims. Indeed, 56% of the women murdered worldwide in 2022 had been killed by family members. She urged every country to open up a public debate on gender inequality and work to eliminate all forms of gender-based violence, including femicide.

**Ms. R.S. Al Manthari** (Oman) encouraged parliaments to pass cybersecurity legislation, as had been done in Oman, raise awareness of cybercrimes and keep up with technological developments. She supported the adoption of the draft resolution but noted that the establishment of a global security operations centre under the auspice of the United Nations, as described in operative paragraphs 12 and 13, was not realistic. Such a centre would create even greater polarization among major powers and cause problems due to uneven access to technology across countries. The said paragraphs should be removed or amended. It would be more productive to strive for regional cooperation.

**Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche** (Algeria) expressed her satisfaction that women were now present in every parliament of the world. More efforts were, however, needed to increase their representation.

The use of technology was becoming more and more widespread leading to an increase in cyberthreats. Wars were not only being fought with physical weapons but also with cyberweapons. Examples of cybercrimes included cyberbullying, online hate speech and the spread of disinformation. Combatting cybercrime must be a priority for the international community.

In 2020 and 2021, Algeria had recorded more than 10,000 victims of cybercrimes with women being the most affected. In response, the authorities had passed a law and resolution on combatting cybercrimes and established a national cybercrime committee. The committee was an independent entity responsible for collecting information to identify perpetrators.

**Ms. P. Komarudin** (Indonesia) said that the draft resolution should take a more victim-centred approach. It was not enough to highlight preventive actions.

She drew attention to the large numbers of women falling victim to cyberviolence. It was estimated that 1 in 10 women worldwide experienced some form of cyberviolence by the age of 15. In Indonesia, cases of cyberviolence against women and girls had recently increased by 80% although the figure could be higher since many cases went unreported. The steady spike in cases showed that many more forms of cybercrimes were now recognized under Indonesian law but also that prevention and response efforts had been slow. Cybersecurity laws must be comprehensive, encompassing the whole cycle of a case, from prevention to support and recovery of the victim, and sanction of the perpetrator.

In 2022, the Parliament of Indonesia had passed a new law on sexual violence which covered acts committed with technology. The law took a victim-centred approach. For instance, it contained a bridging article linking it to other laws regulating sexual violence, such as the Criminal Code and the law on domestic violence. Under the said article, crimes not mentioned in the law could still be punishable under it thus providing more comprehensive protection and legal remedies for victims. In addition, the law gave the Government the authority to delete or terminate access to any disputed sexual content. The idea was to stop the content from spreading and thus protect the victims.

**Ms. K. Slassi** (Morocco) said that cyberviolence was threatening progress made towards gender equality, for instance, by isolating women from virtual spaces. Women did not always report the violence they experienced which meant that the statistics published might not reflect the true numbers.

The Parliament of Morocco had passed a law criminalizing all forms of violence against women, including digital violence. However, more needed to be done. Male and female parliamentarians should work together to combat cyberviolence against women. It was important to update legislation, renew sanctions against perpetrators and define cyberviolence in law. Safe and secure reporting platforms should also be put in place. Overall, parliaments must ensure that cyberspace was used to combat violence against women rather than to perpetuate it.

**Ms. V. Persaud** (Guyana) said that digital technology could be an equalizer but had also opened the door to violence against women and girls. It was imperative to develop comprehensive national frameworks and harmonize legislation regionally with a view to eradicating cyberviolence.

Gender equality in economic, political and social life was enshrined in the Constitution of Guyana and reflected in national legislation. Currently, her Parliament was in the process of aligning its cybersecurity legislation with the model law of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and working on new legislation to combat violence and harassment, including digital violence. Women in Guyana had access to an application containing resources on gender-based violence, including a panic button. Efforts were also ongoing to develop a national identity card that consolidated data on each person in the country. The card would reduce the chances of anonymity online thus helping to bring down online violence against women and girls.

The draft resolution must place an emphasis on education. Her Government had set up the Guyanese Girls Code programme which gave girls the skills to enter the cybersecurity sector.

**Ms. F. Cham** (the Gambia) said that women were greatly affected by cybercrimes such as cyberbullying, hate speech and sexual harassment but were slow to get justice. It was vital to engage in advocacy work to end cybercrimes, particularly online violence against women and girls. Women parliamentarians must take the lead in that regard. It was her hope that the draft resolution would be implemented by all IPU Member Parliaments. The Parliament of the Gambia was currently considering a cybercrime bill.

**Ms. J.M. Ramadan** (Kuwait) said that her Parliament had established a national centre for cybersecurity in 2022 responsible for developing a national cybersecurity strategy and addressing all related risks and threats. It was very important to support girls and boys alike in their ICT education. An international convention on cybercrime was needed to foster cooperation between countries, including the sharing of scientific expertise. The absence of such a convention created a vacuum which undermined security systems worldwide.

**Ms. M. Al-Khalili** (Arab Parliament) called on the IPU to develop a comprehensive plan to promote the participation of women in the fight against cybercrimes. The Arab Parliament was responsible for drafting and revising laws that mitigated the risk of cyberattacks, particularly those targeting women. Governments in the region were then expected to harmonize national legislation with the regional legislation. It was important to define the meaning of cybersecurity in a unified manner and raise awareness of cybersecurity among women.

**Ms. H. Fogstad** (Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)) said that women were 26% more likely than men to become victims of fraud and represented 53% of victims of identity theft. They also comprised the majority of cyberbullying victims, which was a severe public health issue. Indeed, 60% of girls and adolescents with access to internet had experienced virtual violence at least once.

Online gender-based violence increased the digital gender divide forcing women and girls to censor themselves or to keep a low profile for fear of their privacy or security being violated. Parliaments must ensure that cybercrime laws were more gender sensitive. The laws must be based on gender analyses which examined the conditions under which women and girls accessed the internet. Gender inequality must also be addressed in relation to cyber infrastructure. There was a need to expand existing laws on gender-based violence to include online violence.

Parliaments must become more responsive to the needs of adolescent girls. An adolescent wellbeing framework should be put in place with the aim of fostering positive values, such as connectedness and healthy relationships, and creating a safe and supportive environment that promoted agency and resilience. Such frameworks had been shown to shield young people from cyberbullying. Lastly, it was important to amend legal systems to better protect the rights of adolescent girls. She called on parliamentarians to support the *1.8 Billion Young People for Change* campaign and consider drafting a resolution specifically addressing the needs of adolescents.

*The sitting rose at 13:20.*

### **SITTING OF SATURDAY, 11 MARCH 2023** (Afternoon)

*The sitting was called to order at 14:30 with Ms. H. Ramzy Fayeze (Bahrain), President of the 35th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, in the Chair.*

#### **Panel debate on parliamentary leadership addressing insecurity and crises: Putting gender equality at the centre of water security, climate resilience and peace sustainability**

**The Chair** welcomed delegates to the panel debate. The debate would cover the role of parliaments and their male and female members in ensuring that water resource management, climate protection and peacebuilding met the rights, needs and interests of women and girls; took their experiences into consideration; and ensured their participation and leadership. The aim of the debate was to share good practices and solutions – advanced through legislation and policymaking – to mainstream gender equality into water security, climate, and peace and security efforts. She introduced the panellists.

Ms. N. Haidar, member of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee), had led the drafting of CEDAW General Recommendation 37 on the gender dimensions of disaster risk reduction and climate change. Ms. Haidar should clarify how the recommendation could guide parliamentarians in their efforts to prevent, mitigate and address the effects of water insecurity, climate change and conflict on women.

**Ms. N. Haidar** (CEDAW Committee), panellist, said that gender equality was essential to combatting pandemics, conflicts, economic recession and climate change. Yet, women and girls continued to be excluded from decision-making processes. They accounted for less than 3 to 4% of country negotiating teams and had comprised only 7 out of 110 Heads of State present at the 27th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27).

In addition, women and girls were more likely to face unequal access to resources, suffer the negative impacts of climate disasters and see their rights undermined as a result of climate-induced losses and damages. It was predominantly women and girls in the Global South who would face water shortages due to climate change and be displaced by climate-related events. Disasters also exacerbated gender-based violence.

Although women and girls constituted the largest proportion of the population affected by climate change, they were not inherently vulnerable. The problem was that they had been attributed vulnerabilities. Vulnerability was constructed socially, economically and culturally through the distribution of power, wealth and resources. The attributed vulnerability of women took away their status as rights-holders, positioned them as incapable of contributing to society, and excluded them from climate change discussions. However, the lack of participation of women in politics added to the disadvantages faced by women during crises and vice versa. Yet, women had a great deal of knowledge that was key to handling crises.

State parties to the CEDAW Convention were obliged to take steps to address the gender-related dimension of disasters and climate change through the adoption of targeted country-specific legislation. Parliamentarians could play an important role in that regard as well as in developing policies, strategy and budgets.

The IPU and the CEDAW Committee had jointly embarked on the development of a new general recommendation on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems. The recommendation would mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CEDAW Committee.

In conclusion, it was vital to place gender inequality and women's empowerment at the centre of climate change analysis and actions, in particular, through the full representation of women and girls at all levels of decision-making. The Paris Agreement, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly SDGs 1, 2, 5, 6, 13 and 16 provided an opportunity to make a positive difference in the lives of the next generations. The role of parliamentarians would be key to that process.

**The Chair** invited Ms. G. Triggs, UN-Assistant Secretary-General and Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to share the perspectives of UNHCR. She should clarify how UNHCR ensured that measures taken to prevent, mitigate and address the effects of crises were gender responsive and helped to preserve the rights of women and girls, including those who were displaced.

**Ms. G. Triggs** (UNHCR), panellist, said that the influence of parliamentarians was key to achieving the legislative and policy changes needed to protect women seriously affected by climate change.

She drew attention to the interaction between gender equality, climate, and peace and security. UNHCR had reported unprecedented levels of displacement globally with 103 million people displaced either within their own country or across national boundaries. The main driver of displacement was conflict. However, climate change, given its huge impact on access to water and arable land, was often driving conflict itself. The recent conflict in Cameroon, for instance, had begun because grasslands for herds had declined thus forcing herds people to move into traditional agricultural or fishing areas where they clashed with the local communities. In the space of one week, 30,000 people had fled the conflict into neighbouring Chad. Among the shocking facts of displacement was that 40% of the world's refugees were hosted in countries that were climate vulnerable. In addition, 80% of displaced people were women and children.

Women were disproportionately affected by crisis and were 14 times more likely than men to be killed by climate-fuelled disasters or conflict. They were therefore key agents of change. One of the greatest wastes of human resources was not listening to women's voices. Women needed economic empowerment and engagement at the table in order to reduce risks, cultivate self-reliance and respond in the face of climate change and water scarcity.

A number of international legal instruments had been adopted to manage displacement, including the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees and the Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. The Global Compact on Refugees was

an example of an aspirational, non-legal document that asked for the equitable sharing of responsibilities to assist countries – often low- and middle-income countries – that were supporting refugee women and children. The challenge now was to give effect to those instruments. Indeed, the international community had proved to be very good at describing the problem but not so good at finding solutions. One of those solutions, however, was climate finance. The idea behind climate finance was to use the financial resources available globally to support host countries that were particularly climate vulnerable, as well as to help women gain better access to financing and thus become more influential. Currently, funding was rarely available to poorer women at the local level. New approaches were needed to scale up climate financing and ensure that it was available on a non-discriminatory basis.

In conclusion, parliamentarians must implement concrete measures to support the mounting numbers of people displaced because of conflict and climate-related issues, including through laws and policy. They should not keep doing the same things but should instead look for new initiatives to deal with displacement. Women must be properly represented and able to use their own agency.

**The Chair** invited Ms. J.N. Kumba, Speaker of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly of South Sudan, to inform the Forum on the historic droughts occurring in the Horn of Africa where millions of people had been left in a situation of food and water insecurity. She asked how the disaster could be addressed in a way that built sustainable peace, water governance and climate action with a strong gender perspective.

**Ms. J.N. Kumba** (South Sudan), panellist, said that the Horn of Africa was in the grip of a devastating drought as it faced its sixth consecutive rainy season with no rain. In Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya, drought conditions, exacerbated by existing instability and conflict, had left 11 million people food-insecure and caused the deaths of over 250,000 people, including 130,000 children. The situation had resulted in increased humanitarian needs, severe water scarcity, dying livestock, inflation and disease outbreaks. She praised the response to the 2017 famine in Somalia. The national and international community, including local communities, civil society and international organizations, had demonstrated a strong commitment to never again let such a famine unfold thus leading to a massive scale up of life-saving assistance.

In contrast to other countries in the Horn of Africa, South Sudan was facing record-breaking rains and floods for the fourth consecutive year. Over one million people had been directly affected as water had swept away their homes and livestock, exacerbated the existing food emergency and forced them to flee.

Climate change impacts, such as displacement, food insecurity and loss of livelihood, continued to disproportionately affect women and girls, especially those living in protracted conflict areas. A symptom of those impacts was heightened gender-based violence and child marriage. Indeed, many families married off their girl children as a coping strategy for survival.

The nexus between climate change and gender equality was high on the agenda of the recent International Women's Conference held in Juba, South Sudan. One of the key messages of the conference was the need for governments to prioritize social protection systems and access to basic services such as water and sanitation, health care, education and renewable energy resources as a foundation to building women's resilience to crisis. To save lives and stop communities from collapsing, the system must consider the diverse and special needs of women and girls with disabilities, internally displaced and migrant women, as well as women living in rural areas. The international community must show leadership by acting immediately.

She recognized the tragic crises in Ukraine, Türkiye, Syrian Arab Republic and Afghanistan but underscored the vital need to direct greater attention to the unfolding crisis in the Horn of Africa. The Kampala Ministerial Declaration on Migration, Environment and Climate Change signed by 15 African States in July 2022 demonstrated the informed and proactive outlook of governments in the region. However, a more coordinated regional response was required, particularly because of the cross-border movement involved.

The current sitting of the Forum was an opportunity to propose concrete actions and measures to assist and protect drought and flood affected communities at all levels. Excellent lessons could be learnt from countries such as India, which had shown great initiative by diverting flood waters towards rice irrigation.

South Sudan had been proactive in developing its national water policy and national environment policy although its ability to assess vulnerabilities was limited. It remained committed to all the SDGs, including SDG 13 on climate action and was particularly keen to eliminate violence against women and girls resulting from climate change impacts. The country had recently backed a

number of international conventions, such as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The time had come not for debate but for action. Response no longer brought value for money. Instead, parliaments should focus on mitigation which was more sustainable. It was important to have programmes in place that prioritized harvesting and retention of water through community-based watershed management with a focus on maintaining the quality and quantity of water.

Women and girls must be put at the centre of decision-making on climate, environmental and disaster risk issues. There should be mechanisms in place to ensure that women had appropriate information on disaster preparedness, thus enabling them to find alternative means of livelihood if necessary. In addition, parliaments must exercise zero tolerance for sexual and gender-based violence. With collective commitment and a strong political will, it was possible to change the lives of people in the Horn of Africa and beyond, particularly women and girls.

**The Chair** gave the floor to Mr. P. Supadma Rudana, member of the House of Representatives of Indonesia, who was currently working on mitigation of climate impacts in conjunction with the people affected.

**Mr. P. Supadma Rudana** (Indonesia), panellist, said that water and sanitation were essential to human life and had the potential to drive economic development. However, ineffective resource management often stood in the way. Engaging and empowering women's and girls' participation was key to ensuring resilience and sustainability in the water and sanitation sector.

He wished to share the local wisdom and experience of Indonesia and Bali. Since 2017, Indonesia had been implementing water safety plans to improve the quality of drinking water and to protect communities from contamination. The goal was to implement water safety plans in 190 districts and municipalities as early as 2024. Measures to address gender discrimination and inequalities in water and sanitation would also be implemented.

A number of challenges had arisen in curbing the water security gap between rural and urban areas. As of 2020, only 82% of households in rural Indonesia had access to basic water services in contrast to 95% of urban households. To tackle the problem, Indonesia had launched a community based rural water supply and sanitary programme called PAMSIMAS. It was a bottom-up, participatory programme which ensured that all members of the community had equal access to drinking water. As of 2022, almost 22 million people in 32,000 villages throughout Indonesia were able to make use of PAMSIMAS. Gender equality was a key feature of the programme as it provided equal opportunities for women and men to participate, make decisions and be responsible for the management of water supply facilities.

The commitment of the Indonesian Government to gender equality could also be seen in its efforts to promote gender responsive climate budgeting. Those efforts were supported with regulations on the synchronization of budget planning through the Work Plan Collaboration and Budget Performance Information (the KRISNA application) and the establishment of a reward system for implementing gender responsive planning and budgeting known as the Anugerah Parahita Ekapraya.

In Bali, people held nature in high esteem and lived by the philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana* which called for harmony between humans, nature and God. Government policy in Bali was designed according to that philosophy. Water, in particular, was considered holy with both men and women obliged to protect and preserve water. Water sources were especially sacred. It was where many temples had been built and where many spiritual ceremonies took place. Bali had also been blessed with a great deal of natural water supplies, including lakes and rivers, but had trouble managing its resources. The water system, nevertheless, was very sustainable as water flowed from the mountains naturally without the need for power. He was delighted to announce that Bali would host the 10th World Water Forum in May 2024.

Women's inclusion and empowerment would strengthen resilience and sustainability of water resource management and climate protection. As such, parliaments were encouraged to engage with women's groups and civil society organizations who were at the frontline of the work. It was his hope that the international community would work hand in hand to solve the problems of water insecurity and climate change.

**The Chair** invited Ms. M. Kiener Nellen, former member of the National Council of Switzerland and member of the International Board of PeaceWomen Across the Globe, to speak about local and national initiatives that engaged grassroots women's groups on peacebuilding.

**Ms. M. Kiener Nellen** (International Board of PeaceWomen Across the Globe), panellist, said that, in 2005, her organization had published a book entitled *1000 PeaceWomen Across the Globe* which depicted 1,000 women who had been nominated for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize. She urged parliamentarians to launch similar initiatives documenting the work of peace women in their own countries or regions. Parliamentarians were also encouraged to implement United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. Those efforts were part of SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions for all.

She drew attention to a recent publication of PeaceWomen Across the Globe entitled *From Transition to Transformation* which illustrated the importance of including women and youth in peace processes. The publication was based on insights from programmes carried out in Colombia, Nepal and the Philippines. It was a useful guide for conflict prevention and resolution as well as for post-conflict reconstruction.

The 2016 Colombian peace agreement was the first peace agreement in the world to include a gender focus. It referred explicitly to women's right to own land which was a big milestone for water security since land ownership was often the only way to access water. In addition, the agreement offered no amnesty for crimes of sexual violence paving the way for the establishment of a working group on gender within the Colombian Truth Commission.

The experiences of women and people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) community had been included in peace negotiations in Colombia and their inputs had led to a separate chapter in the final report of the Commission.

The Government of Colombia had promised to implement the Commission's recommendations and was holding consultations with representatives of the women's movement to create a national action plan to implement United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

**Ms. A. Attalides** (Cyprus) said that crises were never gender neutral. Yet women were underrepresented in crisis response and resilience building. There was a vital need to increase women's participation and leadership in decision-making processes.

Climate change was intensifying water scarcity. Rainfall and temperature changes had affected water supply, thus damaging agriculture, harvests and livelihoods and exacerbating global hunger. In addition, water scarcity and other climate threats undermined national and regional peace and security and led to forced migration. Although women and girls were disproportionately affected, gender perspectives were rarely included in national policies and strategies. Mechanisms were needed for women's equal participation and leadership in good governance, climate response and peace processes. Women parliamentarians must be involved in evaluating the gender footprint on water insecurity, climate change and conflict as well as in making laws and policies in those areas. It was important to ensure that measures to prevent, mitigate and address the effects of water insecurity, climate change and conflict were gender responsive.

**Ms. R. Mirza** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that Syrian women played a very important role in society, including on the economic, social and political levels. In recent years, the Syrian Arab Republic had suffered many crises, including a war, an embargo and an earthquake. It was time for Syrian people, including women and children, to get their lives back. She called on the international community to remove sanctions against the Syrian Arab Republic.

**Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah** (Egypt) said that the world was facing many interconnected crises which particularly affected women and children. However, it was important to see women not only as victims but as agents of change with a great deal of power. Gender equality was key to crisis response and sustainable development. Parliaments in which women took a strong leadership role tended to invest more in social justice. Peace negotiations that included women tended to end in more social justice and sustainable agreements. It was vital to empower women to respond in times of crisis.

**Mr. O. Zhmerenetskyi** (Ukraine) said that, in times of crisis, parliamentarians were required to go above and beyond their regular functions regardless of gender, age, position or professional specialization. Since the start of the Russian aggression, Ukrainian parliamentarians, both men and women, had taken on many new roles, including those of diplomats, volunteers, psychologists and drivers. His male colleagues were taking care of the children of refugees. His female colleagues were helping in the reconstruction of houses. Both were fighting directly with weapons. It was therefore clear that men and women parliamentarians were performing their duties equally and risking their lives in the process. His Parliament was a good role model for other countries.

**Ms. M. Al Amri** (United Arab Emirates) said that parliaments needed to empower women to participate in society and to play a bigger role in peace negotiations. It was particularly important to pass legislation in that regard.

The United Arab Emirates assigned utmost importance to the empowerment of women and had gained first place for gender equality in the region in 2020. Among the initiatives taken was a nine-week programme to train women for military and peacekeeping operations in line with United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). The role of women must be included on the international peace and security agenda.

**Ms. S. Mikayilova** (Azerbaijan) said that, following the 30-year conflict with Armenia which had ended in 2020, presently the goal was to leave behind hatred and build peace. However, the post-conflict period had brought many problems, including landmines and reintegration difficulties. The best way forward was through dialogue within populations and a strong participation of women in peace dialogues in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

**Ms. V. Riotton** (France) said that gender equality was key to peace sustainability. As such, her Parliament was advocating for feminist diplomacy in international forums. The rights of women as well as their participation in decision-making processes were essential to preventing conflict and building a culture of peace. According to UN Women, peace agreements were 20 to 25% more likely to last with the participation of women. The IPU was encouraged to prepare a resolution on the role of women in diplomacy and in the army. It was not just about ticking boxes but about ensuring that women could participate effectively. As tensions were growing, particularly in Europe and Africa, there was an urgent need to increase the participation of women in decision-making processes. She called on parliamentarians to consider gender equality in climate change efforts as set out in the Paris Agreement.

**Ms. G. Karelova** (Russian Federation) said that her country had been facing restrictions designed to undermine its sovereignty which were having a negative effect on the implementation of the SDGs. Major losses had been suffered by women in Donbass and in neighbouring regions of the Russian Federation who needed the support of the international community. She called on women parliamentarians to promote dialogue in times of instability.

**Ms. P. Cayetano** (Philippines) underlined that the inclusion of women in decision-making processes as well as women's local voices and perspectives were key. By law, the Government of the Philippines was required to set aside 5% of its budget for gender and development activities. It was, however, important to consider how the budget would be used, particularly in times of crisis. In addition, a committee on the SDGs, innovations and future thinking had been set up within the Senate. The committee was responsible for reviewing laws and policies through a future-thinking lens, including from the perspective of gender. There was also a future thinking budget for public universities which funded research on topics affecting women, such as food security, access to clean water and climate change. The importance of studying those issues from a gender perspective could not be overlooked.

**Ms. A. Lotriet** (South Africa) said that more women must be at the table to build more inclusive and equitable societies. Research showed that societies prospered when women participated as community leaders, workers, policymakers and implementers. During the pandemic, female leaders had outperformed their male counterparts in crisis response. In addition, the COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker showed that parliaments with higher women's representation adopted a higher number of gender sensitive policy measures in response to the pandemic. Overall, the presence of more women in parliament and government could lead to more balanced, gender sensitive and environmentally considerate policies.

It was important to break the cycles of underrepresentation, hunger, abuse, exploitation and negligence by investing in and prioritizing the rights of women and girls. It started by empowering and educating them. Research by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) showed that, for every year of primary and secondary school that a girl completed, her wages in life went up by 20 and 25% respectively. There was also a need to provide school meals to ensure that no child went hungry. Under its national school programme, South Africa provided over nine million learners with nutritious meals every day at school.

The lack of legal protection for women worldwide continued to enable gender-based violence and discrimination. Parliamentarians must put in place comprehensive legislative frameworks accompanied by appropriate resources and awareness-raising programmes to not only end impunity

but also to send a strong message that violence against women was not acceptable. South Africa was committed to eliminating gender-based violence and femicide which remained pervasive in her country.

**Ms. P. Krairiksh** (Thailand) said that there was a need to learn from the experience of women who were responsible for collecting everyday resources, such as fresh water, firewood and food. That also meant learning about the negative health and sanitation impacts of those responsibilities. For instance, women were often forced to carry heavy jerrycans of water for several miles and were at risk of contracting disease from contaminated water.

In 2018, the Parliament of Thailand had passed the Water Resources Act which was the first ever law to integrate all aspects of water management. The Office of National Water Resources served as a national focal point on water resources management and planning in case of droughts and floods. In addition, a new department dedicated to climate change was being established under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

**Ms. C. López Castro** (Mexico) drew attention to several discouraging statistics. Currently, women were paid 20% less than men globally; represented only 25% of parliamentarians worldwide and continued to experience physical and sexual violence. A great deal of work therefore remained to be done. That said, positive developments could also be observed, including Australia's Workplace Gender Equality Act, Ireland's Gender Recognition Act, the United Kingdom's Domestic Abuse Act and New Zealand's Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act. The IPU should create a platform to showcase successful gender equality practices around the world. The platform would give parliamentarians the necessary know-how to take gender equality work forward.

**Ms. P. Stienen** (Netherlands) said that her country was situated below sea level which, with climate change, put people at risk. Parliamentarians must include the voices of all people and all genders in their policies. During COP27, only 30% of speaking time had been taken up by women representatives. Yet, research had shown that having more women at the table led to more inclusive climate policies.

The Netherlands had established a feminist foreign policy and called on other countries to do the same. Feminist foreign policy enabled parliamentarians to be more inclusive. Politics, especially climate justice, was too important to be left only to men and needed to be addressed by men and women equally.

**Ms. S. Atullahjan** (Canada) said that the nexus of climate change and water scarcity was devastating livelihoods, driving displacement, widening economic and gender inequality and undermining sustainable development. Of the 28 million people who had been displaced in 2021, 23.7 million had been displaced due to climate-related disasters. Most of those people were women and children.

Climate change had significant impacts on the availability of fresh water which affected women's health. It also impacted agricultural production, care of livestock and labour. Girls' education was another area affected by climate change as girls were the first to drop out of school to help with chores at home. The gendered implication of water scarcity was a global challenge.

Despite being unduly affected by climate change, women's full participation in crisis response and resilience building remained limited. Women must be included at the decision-making table because women's perspectives broadened understandings of conflict and could strengthen the legitimacy of peace processes. Evidence also suggested the involvement of women in crisis response and resilience building contributed to sustainable peace.

Interparliamentary cooperation was key to improving women's representation and participation in policy and decision-making, especially on climate change. Parliamentarians should identify gender sensitive strategies to respond to the environmental and humanitarian crisis caused by climate change.

**Ms. S. Dinică** (Romania) said that there were many examples of women's leadership in conflict and post-conflict societies, during economic crisis, and in communities severely impacted by climate change. In Romania, the task of strategically coordinating the national response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis had been entrusted to a woman holding the position of State Councillor in the Romanian Government. It was important to showcase the stories, successes and hardships of women leaders. The ongoing war in Ukraine had demonstrated again and again that women were not only victims but active participants at the helm of the political, military and humanitarian responses. She expressed full solidarity with Ukrainian women and with all women in conflict situations around the world.

**Ms. E. Bias** (Mozambique) said that climate change mostly affected women. Parliamentarians must find sustainable and holistic solutions to the problems in order to achieve gender equality and social justice.

The Parliament of Mozambique had approved laws that guaranteed respect for women, including laws on eliminating forced and child marriages. However, the majority of the population lived in rural areas where women and girls spent their time travelling long distances in search of water and wood for domestic consumption. As a result, women and girls rarely had access to formal education. Mozambique was working on improving access to water and energy in order to provide women and girls with better opportunities to become educated and empowered.

**Ms. R. Garvey** (Ireland) said that having more women in power was the only hope for the planet but would not happen without the support of men. The men in the room should ask themselves whether they were happy to see their own daughters, sisters and nieces treated as second class citizens. If not, they must call out discriminatory behaviour and oppression, step aside and allow more women to take a seat at the table. She was convinced that gender equality would help restore biodiversity and reverse the climate emergency.

She had introduced a bill that encouraged solar panel installation. A solar panel revolution was now underway in her country with free solar panels being installed in every school.

She did not usually fly given the impact on the environment but had decided to attend the Assembly to give voice to women. It was important for women with freedom of speech to take every opportunity to speak for all those women who could not.

**Ms. K. Slassi** (Morocco) said that women were disproportionately affected by crises, including wars, pandemics and climate catastrophes. Parliamentarians must work together to help women move on from being victims to being active participants in decision-making processes. It was impossible to achieve peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies without having gender equality in legislation and in practice. Gender equality was not just an issue for women but also one for men given its potential to foster peace and economic development.

**Ms. A.D.Gomashie** (Ghana) said that climate change and its effect on women was a major concern. As a member of Parliament representing a coastal community, she saw the devastation caused by tidal waves and other climate impacts. Women's livelihoods were particularly at risk which in turn affected their children's attendance at school. The income of women in her country was also affected by nomadic pastoralists who often migrated to farming communities in times of drought. Their presence in those areas meant greater competition for land, which in turn caused conflict. Women parliamentarians in the region must come together to effect policy change on the matter.

**Ms. E. Azad** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that it was not possible to achieve environmental security without the participation of women in decision-making processes. The Islamic Republic of Iran had increased women's engagement in politics, including on environmental issues. For instance, the Deputy President of the Department of the Environment was a woman. A quarter of the country's environmental management positions had also been allocated to women.

The economic sanctions directed at the Islamic Republic of Iran were a major obstacle to sustainable development, peace and climate resilience with significant impacts on the lives of women and girls. They constrained the Islamic Republic of Iran's access to environmental technologies and led to a shrinking economy thus intensifying poverty, inequality and human rights violations.

**Ms. C. Muyeka Mumma** (Kenya) said that her country was currently experiencing a drought within its arid and semi-arid areas which had caused livestock deaths, malnutrition and starvation. As usual, women and children were bearing the greatest brunt of the drought.

The Government of Kenya had put in place numerous climate change laws, including the Climate Change Act (2016) and the Forest Conservation and Management Act (2016), and adopted a national climate change action plan. A ban on single use plastic bags had come into effect in 2017. Kenya was also implementing its National Adaptation Plan 2015–2030 to enhance synergies between adaptation and mitigation actions and promote a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy.

Nevertheless, Kenya continued to face many challenges, including limited funding, public awareness and access to assistive technology. Insufficient data and research were also a problem. There was a particular lack of data regarding the impact of climate change on the lives of women and

the consequent impacts on livelihoods as a whole. All that created yet another obstacle that prevented women from being placed at the centre of climate change strategies.

Kenyan parliamentarians had recently formed a climate change caucus. The caucus would initiate policies and legislative actions to improve the quality of climate change programmes.

**Ms. J. Sabao** (Zambia) said that, as a result of water scarcity, women and girls in her country were forced to walk long distances to fetch water. In so doing, they were vulnerable to being attacked, raped or even killed.

The Parliament of Zambia had applied its legislative, oversight, budgetary and representative functions to addressing climate change. One major concern was the cutting down of trees for energy which took place in communities without access to the main grid. The practice had caused internal displacement of local populations and refugees. To address the problem, a tree planting initiative was being rolled out in all 156 constituencies of Zambia. The initiatives had emanated from the Nusa Dua Declaration *Getting to zero: Mobilizing parliaments to act on climate change* adopted at the 144th IPU Assembly. In addition, her Parliament continued to support innovative actions aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions within the institution and beyond. Those actions included the implementation of an e-parliament system which encouraged the use of ICT in parliamentary operations. The idea was to transmit documents electronically instead of printing them. There were also paper mills to collect wastepaper for recycling.

**Ms. W.N. Makwinja** (Botswana) said that, in 2019, her country had carried out a study to assess the impact of climate change, particularly drought, on women and men. Among the factors assessed were their roles within the household, their ability to access and control resources and their ability to make decisions at home and in the community.

The study had revealed that women were more vulnerable to climate change than men due to their role of looking after children and their dependence on subsistence agriculture to meet family needs. Women relied more heavily than men on government social safety net programmes in times of drought-induced food insecurity. They were often left to deal with climate change impacts alone when loss of livelihoods forced men to go away in search of jobs. Some women also migrated for work while others fell into sex work. Overall, the patriarchal nature of Botswana's society restricted women's ability to influence decisions, limited their ability to own and control land and assets, and exposed them to gender-based violence. In response to the findings of the study, all sectors were being encouraged to review their policies and programmes.

**Ms. E.D. Anyakun** (Uganda) said that her country was hosting over 1.5 million refugees but struggling to support them due to climate-related challenges, such as water insecurity. There was a need for more inclusive climate policies as well as climate financing, especially for refugee-hosting communities. A great deal of the financing available had been diverted to the war in Ukraine, leaving the rest of the world with less support. It was difficult to promote peaceful coexistence in a situation of reduced social service delivery, food insecurity and environmental degradation. She reminded delegates that the refugee crisis was an international burden rather than the sole responsibility of host countries.

**Ms. M. Al-Khalili** (Arab Parliament) said that although the situation of women had improved, many challenges remained, particularly in the area of crisis response. Indeed, crisis response plans were not always gender sensitive. There was a need to acknowledge that women were disproportionately affected by challenges such as climate change, water insecurity and war. They also represented 80% of climate refugees.

**Mr. M. Pramanik** (Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)) said that climate change was not gender neutral. It was already exacerbating the vulnerabilities of women and girls across the world, specifically in relation to health and well-being issues. Nevertheless, the health issues of women, children and adolescents were rarely integrated into climate policies. For example, out of 50 climate plans or nationally determined contributions analysed by the United Nations Population Fund, only six made direct references to sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Women parliamentarians should do the following to prioritize the health and well-being of women, children and adolescents in climate responses: (1) prioritize climate financing targeted to the health and well-being of women, children and adolescents; (2) increase investments in climate change and other sectors concerned with the social and environmental determinants of health and economic well-being; (3) reduce the vulnerability faced by women, children and adolescents as a result of

climate-related risks, including by developing gender and youth sensitive commitments and investments in multiple sectors; (4) adopt intersectional approaches that recognize multiple forms of discrimination against women, children and adolescents, including in relation to gender and sexuality; (5) conduct vulnerability and adaptation assessments at the population level, specifically with respect to the needs of women, children, newborn babies and adolescents; and (6) define targets to build climate resilient health systems and infrastructure, including integrated monitoring systems for targeted public health messaging.

**Ms. V. Govender** (World Health Organization (WHO)) said that progress on women's health and rights had been slow because of a lack of political will and action, insufficient funding, restrictive laws and policies, harmful gender norms, and health system constraints, including insufficient integration of comprehensive sexual and reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health in national health systems. Conflict and nationalistic policies tended to breed patriarchy while gender stereotypes exposed women to health risks and impacted their ability to access health services.

Women and girls were disproportionately affected by water scarcity, climate change and conflicts. In such situations, they faced barriers in access to health services and inadequate hygiene and sanitation facilities. Those issues were compounded by harmful gender norms and practices surrounding menstruation, increased risk of gender-based violence as well as increased vulnerability to ill-health and death during pregnancy and childbirth, amongst other things.

WHO recognized the power of partnership with parliamentarians in its efforts to advance the health rights of every human being, including women. It stood ready to support parliamentarians with the best science and evidence available as they developed new legislation and policy.

**Mr. O. Zhmerenetskyi** (Ukraine), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, called on parliaments to respect the two emergency item resolutions adopted at previous Assemblies which condemned the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

**Ms. M. Kiener Nellen** (International Board of PeaceWomen Across the Globe) said that the next important step for peace and climate protection was to increase the number of female Heads of State who did not engage in wars but in fact resolved them through gender sensitive agreements and climate actions. She supported the proposal made by France to develop an IPU resolution on feminist diplomacy.

She deplored that no woman had taken part in the 2022 peace negotiations between the Russian Federation and Ukraine in Istanbul. She also agreed on the need to eliminate femicide and other forms of violence against women. A strong campaign against femicide had been run in Switzerland. Spain had a good “only yes means yes” law on sexual consent. Women must be included in decision-making and encouraged to become agents of change. The Philippines was leading by example with Miriam Coronel-Ferrer having been the first woman chief negotiator in the world to sign a major peace agreement in 2014.

**Ms. N. Haidar** (CEDAW Committee) said that a country would never obtain sustainable peace if it chose amnesia. It must continue working on the past or it would keep relapsing into conflict. It was important that women were not portrayed as victims. Women were not inherently vulnerable but in fact carried a great deal of potential and power. The international community must not give up but instead continue building solidarity and sharing good practices.

She saw the complementarity between the work of the IPU Forum of Women Parliamentarians and that of the CEDAW Committee. The role of parliamentarians in exercising oversight over the implementation of the CEDAW Convention was very important. It was not just about translating it into national law but also about monitoring its implementation. In addition to United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), there were other equally important resolutions on women, peace and security that could serve as useful tools.

**Mr. P. Supadma Rudana** (Indonesia) said that men and women should work together to achieve gender equality. It was an issue for all human beings, not just women. As a man, he thanked women parliamentarians for putting their trust in him to serve on the panel.

He drew attention to the philosophy of *Tri Hita Karana* and the importance of respect, namely respect for humans, respect for nature and respect for God. Nature should be treated not as a possession but as a living being with a soul.

It was by working together and living in harmony that men and women could create sustainable peace, preserve food and water, and mitigate climate change. There was a need to cultivate unity in diversity for a better future.

**Ms. J.N. Kumba** (South Sudan) said that parliaments around the world had introduced many policies and laws on climate change management and gender equality but were struggling with implementation. A lack of funding was part of the problem. She agreed with the representative of the Netherlands that politics was too important to be left to men alone. Both men and women must participate in politics to ensure fair distribution of resources.

She congratulated those countries that had reached gender parity in parliament but pointed out that most countries were far behind. The goal of gender parity would be achieved if parliaments remained consistent and committed to the work. It was important to continue working together in solidarity and sharing experiences and good practices.

**Ms. G. Triggs** (Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, UNHCR) praised the amount of energy in the room and the goodwill to find solutions. It was now important to come up with an action plan that would put that energy into practice and help achieve some concrete outcomes.

Parliamentarians were in a position of power and influence and could therefore be very effective in developing laws and policies. The more women were in those positions, the better the outcome would be. In many cases the laws and policies were already in place. The time now was for implementation.

Financial mechanisms must be established to help women to earn a livelihood, engage more meaningfully in society and become self-sufficient. It was concerning that some women had been unable to access funding. The international community should come together to correct the situation.

#### **Report on the discussion on a draft resolution on the agenda of the 146th Assembly**

**Ms. M. Al Suwaidi** (United Arab Emirates) said that, that morning, the Forum had held a discussion on the draft resolution entitled *Cyberattacks and cybercrimes: The new risks to global security*. Ms. R. Kavakci Kan (Türkiye) had chaired the discussion and 22 delegates had taken the floor. The discussions highlighted how women and girls were likely to fall victim to certain types of cybercrimes, including technology-facilitated gender-based violence. For instance, they were vulnerable to sexual harassment, threats, stalking, bullying, sexist hate speech as well as human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Adolescent girls and women active in the digital space, particularly, women in politics, were at heightened risk of such violence. Women were also targets of identity fraud and personal data theft.

Delegates had discussed the need to put in place gender responsive prevention measures, including to raise awareness among women and girls. Parliamentarians were encouraged to prevent and address technology-facilitated attacks and crimes against women and girls with robust and well-implemented legislation. The legislation should be gender sensitive and comprehensive covering prevention, legal protection, provision of adequate support and remedies for victims as well as strict punishments for perpetrators. Overall, legislation and policies must take a victim-centred approach. It was urgent to hold digital platforms to account making sure they set up safeguards to protect women from online violence, including safe and secure reporting platforms.

In addition, delegates had expressed concern about the underrepresentation of women in the cybersecurity sector as well as in policymaking. It was important to prioritize equal access to the sector for women and men alike. The work began in schools where girls and women should be encouraged to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. There was also a need to allocate sufficient resources and funding to achieve those goals. Lastly, parliaments must work together to promote regional and international cooperation on cybersecurity and should continue sharing good practices.

The Forum would submit a list of gender-related amendments to the draft resolution based on the abovementioned points.

*The report was adopted.*

#### **Venue and date of the 36th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians**

**The Chair** said that the 36th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians would take place in Luanda, Angola in October 2023.

**Ms. C. Cerqueira** (Speaker of Parliament of Angola) invited women parliamentarians to Angola for the 36th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians which would take place in October 2023 during the 147th IPU Assembly. Angola had a large community of politically engaged women and vibrant youth. She looked forward to further discussions in Angola on the topic of peacebuilding, dialogue and democracy.

*The sitting rose at 17:05.*

**SITTING OF TUESDAY, 14 MARCH 2023**  
(Morning and Afternoon)

*The sitting was called to order at 11:30 with Ms. H. Ramzy Fayez (Bahrain), President of the 35th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, in the Chair.*

**Elections to the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians**

**The Chair** said that the Forum was requested to renew the membership of half of the members of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians whose terms were coming to an end. It equated to two regional representatives from each of the six geopolitical groups. The Forum must also approve one member from the Twelve Plus Group and one member from the African Group to complete the terms of two regional representatives who were no longer members of the Bureau. According to the rules, representatives were elected for a four-year term. Retiring members were not eligible for re-election for another two years.

Following the election of the new members, the Forum would be suspended to allow the newly constituted Bureau of Women Parliamentarians to meet in camera to approve nominations for the position of President, First Vice-President and Second Vice-President of the Bureau whose mandate would span two years. The Forum would then reconvene to confirm the nominations.

**Ms. Z. Hilal** (Secretary of the Forum) said that 38 delegations were present in the room which meant that the necessary quorum of 35 delegations had been reached to proceed with elections.

The African Group had submitted the following nominations for a four-year term ending in March 2027: Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche (Algeria) and Ms. J. Kavira Mapera (Democratic Republic of the Congo). Ms. J.A.A. Taban (South Sudan) had been nominated to complete the term of a previous member of the Bureau ending in March 2025.

*The nominations were approved.*

**Ms. Z. Hilal** (Secretary of the Forum) said that the Arab Group had submitted the following nominations for a four-year term ending in March 2027: Ms. S. Hammood (Iraq) and Ms. J.M. Ramadan (Kuwait).

*The nominations were approved.*

**Ms. Z. Hilal** (Secretary of the Forum) said that the Asia-Pacific Group had submitted the following nominations for a four-year term ending in March 2027: Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia) and Ms. S. Sirivejchapun (Thailand).

*The nominations were approved.*

**Ms. Z. Hilal** (Secretary of the Forum) said that the IPU had not received any nominations from the Eurasia Group. Those positions would therefore remain vacant until the 147th IPU Assembly.

*It was so decided.*

**Ms. Z. Hilal** (Secretary of the Forum) said that the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean had submitted the following nominations for a four-year term ending in March 2027: Ms. V. Persaud (Guyana) and Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico).

*The nominations were approved.*

**Ms. Z. Hilal** (Secretary of the Forum) said that the Twelve Plus Group had submitted the following nominations for a four-year term ending in March 2027: Ms. M. Rempel Garner (Canada) and Ms. D. Bergamini (Italy). Ms. S. Paunovic (Serbia) had been nominated to complete the term of a previous member of the Bureau ending in March 2025.

*The nominations were approved.*

**The Chair** congratulated the new members and invited them to introduce themselves.

**Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche** (Algeria) said that she was a university professor and general surgeon as well as a parliamentarian. Throughout her career, she had worked closely with several medical associations, was a member of the National Liberation Front and was involved with the African Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption. She had been elected to the Parliament of Algeria for the first time in 2002 and was also a member of the Pan-African Parliament. One of her achievements had been setting up a network of African women parliamentarians of which she had been the President for two years.

**Ms. J. Kavira Mapera** (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that she was an economist by profession and was currently in her second term in Parliament. As part of her work, she was a member of the parliamentary committee on the environment, tourism, natural resources and sustainable development as well as a member of the Network of Parliamentarians for the Sustainable Management of Central African Forest Ecosystems. Her previous positions included Minister for Culture, Arts and Heritage, Minister for Gender, Children and Family, General Director of the national hydrocarbon company, and Head of Cabinet. Currently, she was serving as Director of the Department of Taxes and was also a member of the African Network of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians as well as the Permanent Consultative Framework for Congolese Women (CAFCO). Some of her other expertise lay within conflict management and peaceful coexistence.

The Forum could count on her for support. It was her hope that great progress on women's rights and gender equality would be made by the end of her term.

**Ms. J.A.A. Taban** (South Sudan) said that she had been a parliamentarian since 2010. Over the course of her career, she had been Deputy Chairperson of the parliamentary committee on foreign affairs and Secretary General of the women's parliamentary caucus. Prior to being elected, she had worked as a humanitarian and women's rights activist. She looked forward to cooperating with the Forum.

**Ms. M. Rempel Garner** (Canada) said that she was an economist by training and had been a parliamentarian for 12 years. During that time, she had served as a cabinet minister as well as on six different parliamentary committees in Vice-Chair position.

It was her strong belief that greater representation of women in parliament was needed to address gender equity. As such, much of her work had been about helping to get women elected. She had been particularly involved with women from indigenous and other marginalized communities who faced extra barriers to political participation.

It had been remarkable to watch the Forum's progress on gender equality over the years. She was honoured to have the opportunity to serve on the Bureau.

**Ms. S. Paunovic** (Serbia) thanked delegates for their support and assured them that she would give her best to the role.

**Ms. S. Hammood** (Iraq) said that she had graduated with a bachelor's degree in agricultural sciences and a master's degree in agricultural management. She had first been elected to the local councils and then to the Parliament winning elections in 2014, 2018 and 2021 without quotas. Much of her work involved working with international and local organizations. She was also a member of the women's parliamentary committee.

**Ms. J.M. Ramadan** (Kuwait) thanked the Forum for electing her to the Bureau. She was an engineer by profession but currently worked as a parliamentarian. She had once served as a government minister.

The Bureau was encouraged to work in a comprehensive and inclusive way. Women around the world were suffering from many socioeconomic problems. It was important to include women's perspective in all fields.

**Ms. V. Persaud** (Guyana) said that she was a physician by profession and the current Vice-Chair of the social services committee in her Parliament. She also served on the committee of appointments and previously on the committee of privileges.

It would be a pleasure to share the experiences of Guyana with the Forum on issues related to women's participation in the labour force and gender-based violence. She hoped to shine a light on critical areas affecting other vulnerable populations such as children and persons with disabilities.

**Ms. C. López Castro** (Mexico) said that she had a PhD in public administration and three diplomas in leadership from Harvard University. It was currently her fourth term as a Member of the Mexican Congress. During her time there, she had been a real advocate for gender parity in parliament which Mexico had now achieved in both the upper and lower chambers. She had also been a member of the gender equality committee and was currently working on getting digital violence recognized as a crime.

Her involvement with the IPU spanned many years. She had previously been the Vice-President of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians and had received the Cremer-Passy Award the previous year for her work on youth quotas.

**Ms. L. Reynolds** (Australia) said that she admired the work of the Forum and was honoured to join the Bureau. Her background was in the Australian army where she had served for 25 years before becoming a Senator. During her political career, she had been on many different committees and had worked extensively with women overseas empowering them to get elected. Although currently an opposition Senator, she had previously been a cabinet minister working on many issues from defence to government services and welfare.

**The Chair** said that the sitting would now be suspended to allow the newly elected Bureau of Women Parliamentarians to meet in camera and decide on the nominations for the President and Vice-Presidents.

*The sitting was suspended at 12:00 and resumed at 14:30.*

#### **Elections to the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians (continued): Presiding Officers of the Bureau**

**The Chair** said that, after meeting in camera, the Bureau had decided to nominate Ms. C. López-Castro (Mexico), Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche (Algeria) and Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah (Egypt) as President, First Vice-President and Second Vice-President of the Bureau respectively.

*Ms. C. López-Castro (Mexico), Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche (Algeria) and Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah (Egypt) were, by acclamation, elected as President, First Vice-President and Second Vice-President of the Bureau respectively.*

**The Chair** wished to recognize the outgoing President of the Bureau, Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine), whose presidency had been carried out in particularly sad circumstances. Ms. Vasylenko had never failed to carry out her duties showing great courage and resolve in the fight for women's protection and empowerment.

**Ms. L. Vasylenko** (Ukraine), outgoing President of the Bureau, said that she had stepped into her role as President of the Bureau during the turbulent times of the COVID-19 pandemic and later during the Russian aggression against her own country. Despite those difficulties, the Bureau had continued to raise the voice of women and girls across the world and fight for the cause of gender equality. She thanked the members of the Bureau, particularly her First and Second Vice-Presidents, for their ongoing confidence and support, and extended her own confidence and support to the incoming President and Vice-Presidents. The new Bureau must continue to speak up for women and girls, including the women of Ukraine.

**The Chair** thanked the outgoing members of the Bureau who had been tireless in their efforts to defend women's rights and wished the new members well in their new role.

**Ms. C. López Castro** (Mexico), President of the Bureau, said that she was honoured to have been elected as the President of the Bureau and thanked everyone who had placed their trust in her and her vision. She would work tirelessly to make a difference for women in parliament and to be a voice for those who were not represented. It was vital to close the gender pay gap, ensure equal access to quality health care, eliminate gender-based violence and improve women's political representation. It was possible to make a difference for women everywhere and create a more equitable and just world.

**Ms. W. Andrade Muñoz** (Ecuador), outgoing Second Vice-President of the Bureau, wished to recognize the outgoing President who had demonstrated great commitment to the Forum even in such difficult times and wished great success to the incoming President and Vice-Presidents. She had been honoured to serve on the Bureau.

*The sitting rose at 14:50.*

## Forum of Young Parliamentarians

**SITTING OF SUNDAY, 12 MARCH 2023**

(Afternoon)

*The sitting was called to order at 14:00 with Ms. S. Albazar (Egypt), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, in the Chair.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

FYP/146/A.1 rev

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Opening remarks**

**The Chair** said that, since her election to the post, she had found the IPU to be a home for the causes and issues of young parliamentarians. She was pleased to note the achievements of the Forum's Board members who had been elected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their desire to make change and serve young Parliamentarians had enabled them to overcome many challenges, and she thanked them for their work. Those achievements included the Eighth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, which had promoted the voices of young parliamentarians prior to the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27), and the online Empowerment Series for young parliamentarians, which held webinars every three months with experts to tackle pressing global issues.

### **Updates on youth participation**

**Ms. F. Masiko** (South Africa) said that the National Assembly had passed the Electoral Amendments Bill and had adopted the Report of the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs along with the amendments proposed by the National Council of Provinces. That bill allowed independent candidates, including young people, to stand for election at national and provincial levels and it set out the requirements for doing so. It was too early to tell whether the bill would encourage young people to become involved in politics. There should be campaigns to help young people stand as independent candidates. Currently, only 5% of parliamentarians at national level and within both houses of Parliament were under 30 years old. Thirty per cent of parliamentarians were aged between 31 and 45 years, and only four parliamentary committees were chaired by people under the age of 45. There were more male parliamentarians in every age group. It was the responsibility of political parties to nominate young people because there were no constitutional or legislative youth quotas. Any person who was qualified to vote in national elections could become a member of parliament. Following the request of the IPU, Parliament was establishing a young parliamentarians' caucus and a concept document was being circulated to political parties.

**The Chair** congratulated the representative of South Africa because the establishment of youth caucuses was one of the pledges of the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign.

**A representative of Burkina Faso** said that his country's Transitional Legislative Assembly had 71 members, 30% of whom were young people, and that there were two ministers under the age of 40 in the Government. There was a national youth policy that gave young people more responsibility. Young people were involved in, and committed to, making change. They made up 52% of the population of Burkina Faso, were also represented through the National Youth Council and were present at every level, including local level. They were involved in politics and civil society to contribute to development efforts. The Ministry of Youth and the Promotion of Youth Entrepreneurship influenced public policy on local development through youth organizations.

*The updates on youth participation were paused for the intervention of the IPU President.*

**Mr. D. Pacheco** (President of the IPU), thanking the Board and its President for their work, said that young people would decide the future, including the future of the IPU. The issues that mattered to older generations may not be as important to young people. Young parliamentarians should therefore

identify the issues that mattered to youth around the world so that the IPU could include those issues in its agenda. Their contribution would ensure the future of the IPU. The involvement of young people in politics would increase youth representation in parliaments.

**The Chair**, offering her personal thanks to the President, said that his genuine support for young people's causes would drive change. She thanked him for enabling young people to use the IPU to raise their voices.

*The updates on youth participation resumed.*

**Mr. K. Ait Mik** (Morocco) said that, in 2005, his Government had launched an electoral list especially for young people and women. However, after several terms, it had become clear that young people did not have the necessary experience. During the 2021 elections, Parliament had decided to approach political parties for their endorsement to work on the ground, speak to people and gain experience to be able to work as parliamentarians. A meeting at the House of Councillors had been organized with young people from regional councils, parliamentary bodies and various associations, during which participants expressed the need to be involved in politics and to have confidence in the political processes of their country. It was therefore important for young people to trust their politicians and to believe that they could bring about change.

**The Chair** recalled a conversation she had had with Mr. M. Chungong, the IPU Secretary General, in which he had said that it was more important for young parliamentarians to participate than to just be represented and, in order to participate, young people had to be empowered.

**Mr. E. Aglae** (Seychelles) said that the Media, Youth, Sports and Culture Committee had been launched in the National Assembly. Two weeks earlier, the National Youth Assembly had been elected and it was the first time that youth within secondary, post-secondary and private schools could elect their own representatives. The Parliament of the Seychelles was focusing on empowering young people, ensuring that young people understood economics and how to manage their own finances from an early age, and was working on access to contraception and the age of consent, particularly for young girls. In that regard, amendments had been made so that young people could influence their own health agenda. In May 2023, the Media, Youth, Sports and Culture Committee would host a roadshow across different levels and regions of the Seychelles to encourage young people to review the youth policy, which needed to be amended. The roadshow was expected to last for six months, after which a report would be submitted to the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Family and the law would be amended if necessary.

**The Chair** appreciated the work that had been carried out, particularly with regard to women's and girls' health.

**Mr. W. Soto Palacios** (Peru) said that democracy and his Government were under constant attack. The political party to which he belonged had carried out activities that had allowed parliamentarians to interact with others and learn about different points of view in a globalized world. Parliaments around the world should have youth quotas to enable young people to enter politics and act on their desire and enthusiasm to serve. During the 10 months that he had worked as a legislator, he had overseen 43 legislative initiatives resulting in 10 laws that were helping Peruvians. In particular, he had promoted the water law.

**Mr. V. Tsvangiri** (Zimbabwe) said that Zimbabwean forests were under pressure because of the demand for agricultural land and fuel in urban and rural areas. In 2021, the Forestry Act had been amended to acknowledge that climate change affected people differently, with young people and women most at risk. The amendment protected state forests, private forests, forest produce and timber resources and made the afforestation of private land and the prevention of fires compulsory. There were also community-based rules to manage forests, which required anyone wishing to cut wood to obtain permission from traditional leaders. Each community identified the boundaries of its community forests and wetlands and only branches and dead wood could be collected for fuel. Young people, especially in schools, had been particularly active with regard to National Tree Planting Day, which took place on the first Saturday of December. It coincided with the rainy season when saplings could take root most successfully. It motivated young people to plant and conserve trees to ensure sustainability and manage forest resources. Young people were not only the leaders of tomorrow but the leaders of today.

**Ms. N.O. Acora** (Uganda) said that there were approximately 160 young people working in politics in Uganda and the National Youth Council met every year to discuss issues pertaining to young parliamentarians and Ugandans. The Ugandan Government had introduced the Youth Livelihood Programme, which empowered young people and created equal access to jobs, as well as the Emyooga project and the Parish Development Model. Those initiatives particularly focused on young people, who represented 75% of the population, and access to leadership positions in districts, sub-counties, parishes and villages to ensure youth representation across all 146 Ugandan districts. There was also the Minister of State for Youth and Children Affairs who was in charge of youth issues.

The COVID-19 and Ebola pandemics had posed challenges in Uganda, and the Government was working to raise awareness and change mindsets. Even the most disadvantaged would not be left behind and the Government was working to help young people. She commended President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni for the number of young men and women appointed as State and cabinet ministers. Young parliamentarians should do a benchmarking tour of Uganda.

**Ms. H.V. Gavit** (India) said that the population of India was one of the youngest in the world, with 27.5% aged between 15 and 29 years. The Government had made efforts to provide education, skills, medical facilities and sports infrastructure to young people to empower them to contribute to the Indian economy and nation-building process. In that regard, 99.6 million children aged between 12 and 18 years had received their first COVID-19 vaccination and 7.9 million had received their second by July 2022.

The Government was aligning its national youth policy with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to unlock young people's potential. Action would be taken in five areas: youth development; education, jobs and entrepreneurship; young leadership and development; health, fitness and sports; and social inclusion. There had been an increase in youth-led initiatives and campaigns on climate change, gender equality and education reform.

There were national youth parliaments in India that strengthened democracy, instilled a healthy sense of discipline, ensured tolerance of the views of others, taught young people about parliamentary procedures, promoted leadership qualities, helped young people to realize their full potential and contributed to nation building. The Department of Youth Affairs organized National Youth Parliament Festivals, which promoted national integration, a spirit of communal harmony, brotherhood and courage, and a sense of adventure among young people. During the festival, young people could demonstrate their cultural talents and take part in activities, which reflected the spirit of friendship, peace and development. India was commemorating 75 years of independence and focusing on youth would remain a key component to achieving national progress.

**Mr. D.L. Keorapetse** (Botswana) said that Botswana had 65 members of parliament, five of whom were under the age of 45. Only one of those five members of parliament was female. All political parties had youth leagues, the presidents of which sat on the executive or central committees of the political parties. However, youth remained underrepresented in key decision-making bodies because of the first-past-the-post voting system and a lack of funding for political parties.

The Court of Appeal had passed a judgment decriminalizing same-sex relationships but youth still faced issues with regard to unemployment and underemployment, lack of access to economic and business opportunities, and sexual and reproductive health. Abortion remained illegal except when there was a danger to life.

**Ms. A. Larouche** (Canada) said that Canadian engagement and the political engagement of young people contributed to their positive development. Recent studies had shown that many young people considered it important to be active members of society and they already participated in many ways. Although electoral participation among young people was low compared to previous generations, 67% of young people had carried out research on political topics, 48% had signed an online petition and 37% had bought a product for ethical reasons. They participated in sporting, recreational, cultural, school and community group activities. It was concerning that many were part of a generation caught between their parents and children and that one in five young Canadians carried out invisible labour, so it was important to consider how that labour could be recognized. The issue of funding would need to be explored further. Many political parties had youth councils, which could help raise awareness of issues that young people faced. Equal Voice, an organization that helped women launch political careers, had launched the *Daughters of the Vote* initiative. It held events in December to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and in March to mark International Women's Day. She had benefited from this organization by receiving mentoring to launch her political career.

**Mr. W. Cervini** (Uruguay) said that legislators and members of the executive, including the president and vice president, had been promoting IPU's *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign to incentivize youth participation in politics, which had received multi-party support. That was important because it would help to generate interest in politics among young people, and it would prompt political parties to welcome young people and increase their representation. The large proportion of young people in the world was not reflected in parliaments. Work on the campaign would continue, which was essential because many legislators had also joined the campaign. From 11 to 14 October 2023, Uruguay would host the Second World Summit of the Committees of the Future, during which it would host activities for young people to promote the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign.

**Mr. A. Abderamane Koko** (Chad) said that, in the Transitional National Council, a mechanism had been introduced to ensure the direct representation of young people through a quota of almost 10%. Young people were present in other bodies, raising the level of representation to almost 30%, and the President of Chad was aware of issues affecting young people because he was under 40 years old. A delegation of young parliamentarians had been formed, which was in charge of handling parliamentary diplomacy and informing the Transitional National Council about youth issues. It was important to raise awareness of legislative procedures among youth leaders in parties and organizations. The challenge was to follow the example of Chad by introducing youth bodies in all political parties and a national youth council to enable exchanges in the political field and in organizations. Generational barriers had to be broken down and mutual acceptance was necessary to transition to new parliaments, ensure that legislation did not discriminate against young people and implement the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign.

**Ms. P.A. Komarudin** (Indonesia) said that the Indonesian House of Representatives had been working continuously to bolster youth participation. The Indonesian youth caucus had been formed three years earlier and it connected 72 members of parliament aged between 21 and 40 from 8 political parties and 11 house commissions. It fully supported efforts to increase youth engagement and, since its inception, it had fostered the aspirations of young people by holding hearings, discussions and public events alongside youth organizations to train young people on policy making. The 2024 presidential and legislative elections would be an opportunity to increase youth participation in decision making. Young people represented more than half of all voters in Indonesia and political parties had started to target them by leveraging social media, creating associations with young public figures and carrying out actions on relevant issues. However, it was unfortunate that they did not create opportunities for young people to enter politics. There was a lack of policy support and there was no youth quota to increase youth representation in politics and public offices, despite the introduction of a quota for women 15 years earlier. At the Y20 summit, she had introduced the statutory youth quota in public offices, which had been adopted as part of the Y20 communiqué, and in Indonesia efforts had continued to introduce a national youth quota.

### Contribution to the work of the 146th Assembly

**The Chair** invited the Forum to consider the theme of the General Debate, *Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance*, and the draft resolutions under consideration: *Cyberattacks and cybercrimes: The new risks to global security* and *Parliamentary efforts in achieving negative carbon balances of forests*. Before opening the floor, she acknowledged the work of Mr. U. Lechte (Germany), the Rapporteur for the draft resolution on cyberattacks and cybercrimes who was absent, and invited the Rapporteur for the draft resolution on achieving negative carbon emissions balances of forests to provide an overview of his report.

**Mr. M.A. Rakotomalala** (Madagascar), Rapporteur for the draft resolution on achieving negative carbon emission balances of forests, said that the effects of climate change were worsening and it was the youth of today and tomorrow that would bear the consequences. They were taking action to tackle climate change, the main cause of which was deforestation in certain parts of the world. Although some forests acted as carbon sinks, others produced CO<sub>2</sub>. Net CO<sub>2</sub> flow depended on natural factors. Human activities, such as deforestation and forest degradation, released CO<sub>2</sub>. However, humans could increase carbon storage in the tropics through forest protection and expansion. The CO<sub>2</sub> released through human activities could contribute to the fertilization effect. The resolution should help parliaments to focus on reducing the emissions caused by deforestation and forest degradation. A legal framework should outline general measures to tackle the causes of

deforestation. It should set out the action to be taken against specific actors, the mechanisms to be implemented and the activities to be carried out. It should reflect the aim to reduce carbon emissions within a specific timeframe through specific programmes.

Parliaments should identify the national, regional and local bodies to set up in order to coordinate action. National and regional platforms could facilitate consultations with, and strategic orientation from, stakeholder representatives from the local community, private sector, and technical and financial partners. Such consultations would help capitalize on the available resources through an inclusive and participatory process.

Parliaments should ensure that there were effective laboratories to monitor forests as well as reductions in carbon levels in all countries. A secure information technology programme should also be launched to monitor carbon reduction initiatives, and safeguard information relating to the management, monitoring and development of activities.

Parliaments should promote educating young people about the environment, wildfires and human activities that harmed the environment. Water was becoming scarcer, which was causing a food production crisis, and young people should be aware of the role that forests played in absorbing water. The financing associated with the implementation of the resolution should be inclusive.

**Ms. A.A. Rodríguez Montero** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that Bolivia was experiencing one of the worst periods in its democracy. The same political party had been in power for over 15 years and there were no spaces to change the status quo for young people. That party had started to promote a totalitarian regime and those who opposed it, particularly young people and those with different political views, faced imprisonment. There were approximately 200 political prisoners in Bolivia and efforts were underway to remove those with opposition views from public roles. Efforts to ideologize public activity at the international and national levels were concerning. Bolivians had become polarized and strikes were taking place across the country. Young people were afraid of what could happen and had been warning that there were violent groups working for the Government, which curtailed the right to freedom of expression and the right to protest. Various groups, such as indigenous people, young people and women, were demanding substantial democratic reform and were concerned about corruption, particularly within the upper levels of Bolivian society.

**Mr. M. Khumalo** (Eswatini) said that the foreign policy of his country was to foster good relations with everyone. The culture of Eswatini promoted youth participation, peaceful coexistence and tolerance. Issues were addressed from a social and economic perspective, and political inclusion was maximized. Education was the cornerstone of social coexistence and efforts had been made to introduce free primary and secondary education for all, regardless of religion, culture or gender, and to provide scholarships for university students. Economic divisions could cause conflicts and the Government of Eswatini had tried to expand regional development funds and introduce programmes within and outside of schools. The chiefdom structure was inclusive and predominately consisted of young people. The COVID-19 pandemic, cyclones and slow economic growth had been the greatest sources of instability and national problems.

**Mr. T. Ganzorig** (Mongolia) said that national policies were key to Mongolian success. The law on youth development, a national long-term strategy to resolve issues such as youth unemployment, development, health and empowerment, had been enacted in 2017. In terms of youth empowerment, the law had ensured that young people under the age of 35 represented 10% of those working in Parliament and Government. The law had also increased the political participation of young people from 10% to 40%. The relevant bodies, including political parties and the Government, should allocate sufficient resources to ensure effective implementation, accountability and commitment. At the regional and sub-national levels, action had to be taken with regard to the collective duty to achieve goals, uphold policy commitments to make changes, and push nations and political institutions to say yes to youth.

**Mr. M. Al Mheri** (United Arab Emirates) said that the world continued to witness attacks on places of worship, the spread of online hate speech and violence against minorities. Work was underway to introduce laws to prohibit any type of discrimination. Parliaments should discuss the mechanisms and legislation needed to prevent hate speech and played a crucial role in promulgating legislation, ensuring its implementation and promoting peaceful coexistence and tolerance. In that regard, the United Arab Emirates had created the Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence and the national tolerance programme. The opening of the Abrahamic Family House, an interreligious centre, highlighted the importance of coexistence, regardless of religion or nationality. In terms of regional cooperation, an agreement had been signed with Israel to promote peace, security and stability in the Middle East.

**Mr. M. Bouva** (Suriname) said that he endorsed the work of the President and the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians. Young parliamentarians and leaders needed to promote peace and tolerance within the Forum of Young Parliamentarians and on national and parliamentary agendas. Young people should be involved in handling issues that concerned them and efforts had been made in Suriname to promote youth participation. In that regard, young people's use of social media could be a double-edged sword and it was important to explore ways to engage young people further.

Parliamentarians should ensure that the youth agenda remained a priority as governments focused on the economy, climate change, disasters, wars and terror attacks. Legislation and policies that went beyond ensuring youth participation and had a tangible effect on young people should be introduced. Youth employment should increase so that young people could count on a safe, healthy and bright future.

**The Chair** said that it was the role of parliamentarians to ensure that young people enjoyed the peaceful future that they deserved.

**Mr. K.U. Ritter Ocampo** (Mexico) said that addressing issues as young legislators in an international assembly was an opportunity to carry out parliamentary work collaboratively. Those types of spaces facilitated international collaboration and the sharing of knowledge on global issues, such as climate change, and the implementation of internal policies to overcome local challenges. Mexico remained committed to improving lives and making the Assembly as fruitful as possible.

**Ms. T. Jutton** (Mauritius) said that young people spent considerable time on social media, which was concerning because it was the home of disinformation, misinformation, fake news, hate speech and online abuse. Those issues could lead to societal problems and statistics showed that one young person contemplated suicide every 30 seconds. Young parliamentarians, particularly women, were often victims of attacks, harassment, crime and violence in the cyber sphere and it was important to consider whether those attacks were limiting their freedom of expression. Young people who witnessed those attacks, particularly in countries where there was a lack of support, could be discouraged from entering politics. The IPU should promote the adoption of laws to prevent harassment and violence against women parliamentarians, as was the case in Bolivia, Mexico and Tunisia. International organizations, including the European Union, the IPU, the United Nations and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), should collectively increase pressure in that regard because social media platform owners did not take responsibility and some countries did not even have Facebook moderators, which presented a national threat.

**Ms. S. Rafiei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the carbon imbalance presented one of the biggest challenges to mankind and it affected lives, harmed health and caused deaths. Human interventions as well as expansionist and capitalist mentalities had distorted the balance of nature, destroyed the environment and natural resources, polluted rivers and oceans, and decreased biodiversity. The push towards consumption was leading to further destruction, higher levels of pollution and the production of more carbons. The internet encouraged young people to waste natural resources.

**Ms. H.V. Gavit** (India) said that the internet was one of the most important mediums for citizens, civil society, businesses and governments to communicate and disseminate information. The COVID-19 pandemic had accelerated the digitalization of activities. India had the largest adolescent population in the world and over 850 million internet users, most of whom belonged to younger generations.

Cyberspace had presented opportunities but also security challenges to young users and it was important that they understood how to protect themselves from cybercrime. In that regard, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology had launched the Information Security Education and Awareness Project to increase awareness of cyber hygiene and the Ministry of Home Affairs had released a handbook on cyber safety for adolescents. The Central Board of Secondary Education and the CyberPeace Foundation had also developed a cyber safety manual for secondary school students.

Young people could also strengthen cybersecurity systems and the All India Council for Technical Education, the Ministry of Education and the CyberPeace Foundation had launched the eSaksham project to address the shortage of cybersecurity professionals and to help young people create a cybersecurity ecosystem. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology had launched the Cyber Surakshit Bharat to strengthen that ecosystem in India. The Government had also

created the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre in the Ministry of Home Affairs and had launched a national cybercrime reporting portal with a toll-free number to help report cybercrime. Police stations, financial institutions and telecom companies were part of a platform that responded swiftly to cybercrime and shared information.

The Government allocated resources to support youth development and, by raising awareness of cybersecurity among younger generations, it would prevent future cybercrime.

**Ms. P.A. Komarudin** (Indonesia) said that the theme of the general debate was timely because cases of discrimination and intolerance were increasing. In 2020, an Indonesian non-governmental organization had recorded some 180 violations of the right to freedom of religion, such as the destruction of places of worship. However, in 2022, the same organization had found that there was greater freedom of religion due to a policy of religious moderation that had been promoted by local and central governments. Work to promote freedom of religion should continue.

Young people were key to promoting tolerance worldwide. They led innovation that built and sustained peace. In Indonesian schools, surveys suggested that 70% of students supported the introduction of places of worship for minority religions, 80% were interested in learning about different religions and 99% supported the promotion of diversity. The education system should ensure that schools and teachers promoted tolerance, empathy, unity, diversity and dialogues between people of different races, ethnic groups, genders and religions. Parliamentarians should ensure that intolerance, discrimination, violence and injustice did not continue into the future through young people. There should be institutional support to nurture a peaceful, inclusive and tolerant society and youth leadership should be facilitated to ensure that young people participated in decision-making processes and negotiations.

**Ms. F. Masiko** (South Africa) said that despite the peaceful and negotiated transition from apartheid to democracy and the repealing of apartheid laws and acts, racism, racial discrimination and prejudice persisted. In 2018, the Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill had been tabled and remained under consideration. The bill made hate crime and hate speech a crime, allowed for the prosecution of those who committed those offences, and set out sentences. In line with the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the Government had adopted a national action plan to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. It committed all sectors of society to promoting and protecting human rights, and to raising awareness of equality and anti-racism and anti-discrimination issues. Young parliamentarians must remain committed to upholding the human rights of all, particularly women because they were more vulnerable to inequality, discrimination and violence. Young parliamentarians should urge their countries to accede to or ratify the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination if they had not already done so. Those parliamentarians should also ensure that their governments had implementation plans and follow-up mechanisms for the Durban Declaration and Plan of Action and all other relevant human rights commitments.

**Ms. H. Fogstad** (Executive Director, Partnership for Maternal Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)) said that although 52% of the world's population was under the age of 30, only 2.6% of parliamentarians belonged to that age group. It was imperative that young people and adolescents were empowered and that cyberbullying did not hamper engagement. The PMNCH had launched a campaign demonstrating that data and intersectoral interventions could empower young people.

*A short video was shown promoting the 1.8 billion young people for change campaign in the context of the Global Forum for Adolescents.*

**Ms. P. Aguirre** (Ecuador) said that she supported youth in parliaments and in all positions of power in cities, regions and governments. The 10-year anniversary of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians was an opportunity for young people to reflect on how they could change society. They could contribute to the 146th Assembly by promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies.

The Ecuadorian Constitution protected the rights of nature and other parliaments should follow suit. Her generation would witness the devastation of climate change and it was the responsibility of those present at the 146th IPU Assembly to mitigate that damage. Developing countries had greater natural resources but higher levels of poverty and Latin American countries in particular needed help to protect the Amazon rainforest. She questioned how there could be courts to protect investments and collect financial debts, but none to collect environmental debts.

Inequality led to violence, hunger, malnutrition and poverty. According to the World Economic Forum, eight people had the same amount of wealth as the poorest 3.6 billion people and 7.6 trillion US dollars were hidden in tax havens. Measures were needed to eradicate those tax havens, combat poverty and ensure free access to healthcare and education at all levels of society.

### **Elections to the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians**

**The Chair** recalled that the term of office of the current members of the Board would expire at the end of the current Assembly and that new members, consisting of one woman and one man from each geopolitical group, were therefore to be elected to serve for a two-year term. She drew attention to the presentation of the work that the current Board had carried out over the previous two years and thanked the outgoing Board and Secretariat for their work and support.

**Ms. Z. Hilal** (Secretary of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians) said that the candidates nominated by their respective geopolitical groups for election as members of the Board were, for the African Group, Ms. E.T. Muteka (Namibia) and Mr. M.A. Bouchouit (Algeria); for the Arab Group, Ms. S. Falaknaz (United Arab Emirates) and Mr. K. Ait Mik (Morocco); for the Asia-Pacific Group, Ms. D.R. Esti (Indonesia) and Mr. F.K.L. Fakafanua (Tonga); for the Eurasia Group, there was only a nomination for Ms. H. Hakobyan (Armenia), and the remaining position would stay vacant; for the Latin America and the Caribbean Group, Ms. P. Aguirre (Ecuador) and Mr. W. Soto Palacios (Peru); and for the Twelve Plus Group, Ms. O. Rudenko (Ukraine) and Mr. D. Carden (United Kingdom).

**The Chair** took it that the Forum wished to elect those candidates to serve as members of the Board for the period 2023-2025 and invited candidates to introduce themselves briefly, including their main areas of interest.

*It was so decided.*

**Mr. M.A. Bouchouit** (Morocco) highlighted that the election of the outgoing Board had taken place during the COVID-19 pandemic but that its work demonstrated that young people could make achievements in difficult circumstances.

**Ms. H. Hakobyan** (Armenia) said that 72% of deputies in the National Assembly of Armenia were young people.

**Ms. P. Aguirre** (Ecuador) said that the Amazon rainforest should be protected and that she defended the rights of nature. The right to justice, equality, and free, universal and high-quality education and healthcare should be upheld. Nobody should die without access to medical care. Young people had the right to participate in politics and to live with dignity in Latin America. She looked forward to defending their rights and making achievements in that regard.

**Mr. D. Carden** (United Kingdom) said that he was passionate about making a difference. Parliamentarians had a responsibility to use their voices for those who did not have a voice in other countries.

**Ms. O. Rudenko** (Ukraine) said that she was embarking on her second term on the Board and she hoped to be a link between the work of the outgoing and incoming Boards. The average age within the Ukrainian Parliament was under 41 years, which was one of the youngest in the world.

*The Board met in camera, where Mr. D. Carden was elected President.*

### **Presentation of the new President of the Board of Young Parliamentarians**

*The meeting resumed and Mr. D. Carden took the Chair.*

**The Chair** said that he was grateful to have been elected President of the Board and that he looked forward to carrying out his duties. He supported human rights, the rights of minorities and lesbian, gay, bisexual transgender (LGBT) people, and the fight against racism. He hoped that all members of the Forum would protect and maintain the reputation of the IPU and put the issues that mattered to young people on national political agendas. Those issues included the environment, climate change, the cost of living and conflict. He would offer support and listen to guidance.

### **Preparations for the 147th Assembly (October 2023)**

**The Chair**, based on the proposal made by the Board of the Forum, proposed the nomination of Ms. O. Rudenko (Ukraine) to be Rapporteur for the youth overview report on the resolution to be discussed by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights at the upcoming IPU Assembly. The nomination was confirmed by the Forum.

### **Any other business**

**Ms. Z. Hilal** (Secretary of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians) said that the ninth edition of the IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians would take place in Hanoi, Viet Nam from 15 to 17 September 2023. Other coming activities included support for parliaments in implementing the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign and their continued implementation of the empowerment series for young parliamentarians.

*The sitting rose at 17:15.*

## Panel discussion: *Parliamentary action on biodiversity: Translating global commitments into national action*

**MONDAY, 13 MARCH 2023**

(Morning)

*The event was called to order at 09:30 by Ms. A. Blagojevic, IPU Programme Manager for International Development, who moderated the panel discussion.*

**The Moderator** said that, over the years, the IPU had been carrying out work on climate change more generally. Environmental degradation was exacerbating the biodiversity crisis, which would worsen if urgent action was not taken.

The *Parliaments for the Planet* campaign, which the IPU was launching at the 146th IPU Assembly, aimed to mobilize parliamentary action and was based on the simple concept that climate action began at home and that parliaments and parliamentarians should lead by example. The first part of the campaign, *My Parliament*, encouraged parliaments to become greener. The second part, *My Planet*, helped parliaments to step up action through legislation, budgets and scrutiny of government measures to implement the Paris Agreement.

*A promotional video for the Parliaments for the Planet campaign was shown.*

**Mr. B. Pisupati** (Head of the Biodiversity, Land and Governance Programme at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)), panellist, speaking via video link and accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that it was rare for people working in the environmental field to have the opportunity to speak to parliamentarians, who shaped public policy and decision-making processes nationally and globally. The greatest challenges were connecting with people, explaining climate change, biodiversity and pollution challenges, and social proofing. Parliamentarians were experts in that regard and he was pleased to have joined the discussion, particularly because it was the first discussion about biodiversity to be held at an IPU Assembly.

In October 2021, the first part of the Fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15) had taken place in Kunming, China. In December 2022, the second part had been held in Montreal, Canada, where the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) had been agreed. The GBF was in line with the sustainable development agenda. It set actions, priorities and commitments to protect life on earth until 2030 and beyond. The overarching theme of COP15 had been *Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth* and it was important to note that “life” included microscopic organisms, earthworms and bees, which were essential to human life and livelihoods.

There were five key outcomes of COP15. First, the GBF, which had been agreed after four years of negotiations and which ensured the protection, sustainable use and equitable sharing of the benefits of biodiversity. Second, the 23 global biodiversity targets, which were part of the GBF. Third, the implementation plan, which included financing options. Fourth, the long-term capacity development plan that recognized the differences in the ways that countries could respond to challenges nationally and locally. Fifth, the gender action plan. The third and fourth outcomes were particularly important because they focused on national implementation. The core of the GBF was to live in harmony with nature by protecting ecosystems, species and diversity at the genetic level, tackle consumption, recognize the contributions of nature, and identify ways to implement the GBF and share the benefits of biodiversity.

There were four goals within the GBF. Goal A involved sustainably protecting biodiversity on land and in oceans, which was in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 14 and 15. It involved increasing natural ecosystems, reducing the risk of extinction and biodiversity loss, and maintaining genetic diversity to reduce threats to global food security. Goal B focused on nature’s contributions to people and how people responded, valued, maintained and enhanced that diversity. Biodiversity was free and so ubiquitous that we took it for granted, yet we were dependent on it. Goal C was to share the benefits of nature and to use the ancient traditional knowledge of women, local communities and indigenous peoples to secure, preserve and maintain biodiversity. Goal D was to look at the means available for countries, stakeholders, governments and the general public to implement the GBF.

Of the 23 global biodiversity targets, 8 focused on reducing threats to biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, ensuring sustainable biodiversity management, dealing with the wildlife trade, reducing pollution and dealing with climate change. Five focused on valuing, recognizing, preserving and protecting biodiversity. The remaining 10 focused on implementing and mainstreaming the GBF, including by reducing subsidies that harmed the environment, increasing financial flows, dealing with traditional knowledge and ensuring effective stakeholder participation.

The GBF also introduced some enabling conditions, which included having an integrated governance framework that enabled whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches. Parliamentarians were the most important stakeholders and supporters of both of those approaches because they were connected to local communities and governmental decision-making. A holistic approach to the environment must be applied because it was impossible to achieve climate change goals without protecting biodiversity, sharing its benefits, preventing land degradation and controlling pollution. The GBF also referred to gender equality, human rights-based approaches and conditions that would ensure accountability, transparent decision-making and implementation, and progress monitoring and reporting.

Additional elements to the outcomes of COP15 included: the enhanced multidimensional approach to planning, monitoring, reporting and reviewing; a plan of action on subnational governments, cities and local authorities for biodiversity; and a strategy for resource mobilization. The outcomes indicated that, on average, there needed to be a US\$ 500 billion reduction in incentives that harmed biodiversity and an annual increase of US\$ 200 billion to protect biodiversity. In comparison, average global ice cream consumption for 2022 was worth US\$ 73.6 billion and, five years earlier, the United States of America had been spending US\$ 193 billion to deal with obesity. Although unconnected, those figures illustrated that raising US\$ 200 billion to protect life on Earth was realistic with political support. The GBF also supported nationally determined priorities through national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and it had a communications strategy to support those actions.

A quarter of members of parliament were women and a third were young people. Those groups would play a significant role in protecting the future of the planet. In particular, young people had increasing influence. Consistent parliamentary engagement with those demographics would be extremely valuable. Parliamentarians should help to integrate climate change and biodiversity action locally, nationally and globally. They should also promote the whole-of-society and whole-of-government approaches to support those activities and suggest innovations for financing actions. Raising US\$ 200 billion was a global and incremental requirement that countries would have to meet.

**The Moderator**, thanking Mr. B. Pisupati for his presentation, said that the previous day, during the drafting session of a resolution on parliamentary efforts in achieving negative carbon balances of forests, two amendments had been adopted that referred to the GBF.

**Mr. Wang Yi**, (Member of the Environmental Protection and Resources Conservation Committee of the National People's Congress of China), guest speaker, said in a pre-recorded video message that biodiversity was an important element of human survival and development. The World Economic Forum had reported that over half of global gross domestic product, equivalent to US\$ 44 trillion, was dependent on nature and its services. Over three billion people relied on oceans and biodiversity for their livelihoods, while over 1.6 billion relied on forests. Some 70% of people living in poverty depended on agriculture, fishery and forestry. Those figures demonstrated that humankind and nature shared a common future. Biodiversity loss threatened human well-being, access to food, health care and energy, and safety. It had also affected the achievement of the SDGs.

China had endeavoured to make COP15 a success. It had hosted the Leaders' Summit in Kunming and had promoted the adoption of the Kunming Declaration, which guided consultations on the GBF. President Xi Jinping had announced that the Chinese Government would provide 1.5 billion yuan to set up the Kunming Biodiversity Fund and had established the first group of five national parks that would create the world's largest national park system in China. Efforts should be made to reach a consensus and, at COP15, China had coordinated with other parties and facilitated the adoption of the GBF. It would help other parties to implement the GBF while remaining impartial, neutral, pragmatic, cooperative and open, in order to play a bigger role in building a fairer and more responsible global biodiversity governance system in which each member contributed.

As one of the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, China would incorporate biodiversity conservation into the mid- and long-term plans of all regions. It would update its National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan (2011–2030) to include conservation projects that would translate the GBF into real action. It had introduced measures to promote ecological restoration

and biodiversity conservation, which were already proving effective: a herd of wild elephants had been spotted in Yunnan Province and it was once again possible to see tens of thousands of Tibetan antelope galloping across the Qinghai-Tibet plateau.

Over the past decade, the National People's Congress had promoted and revised over 20 laws and regulations on forestry, grasslands, wetlands and the protection of wild animals and it stood ready to strengthen cooperation with other parliaments. That legislation provided legal safeguards for biodiversity conservation and the sustainable use of bioresources. In particular, the Yangtze River Protection Law ensured strict and effective implementation of ecological conservation and environmental protection laws. We should live according to the philosophy of ecological civilization, shoulder our responsibility for future generations and cooperate to build a community for all life.

**Mr. P. Julian** (Canada), panellist, said that he represented a particularly multicultural area of Greater Vancouver that was in the traditional territory of the Qayqayt First Nation and the Coastal Salish peoples. Biodiversity issues, which were particularly important to indigenous peoples, affected everyone everywhere. According to *Making Peace With Nature: A scientific blueprint to tackle the climate, biodiversity and pollution emergencies*, one million of the world's estimated eight million species of plants and animals were threatened with extinction and many of the ecosystem services essential to human well-being were deteriorating. The *Living Planet Report 2022* indicated that, between 1970 and 2018, there had been an average 69% decline in the relative abundance of monitored wildlife populations globally and, in British Columbia, starfish and Arbutus trees were under threat. That biodiversity loss, alongside climate change and air pollution, formed the triple planetary crisis.

Parliamentarians were crucial to addressing that crisis and creating a more sustainable future. Montreal had hosted the second part of COP15, during which the GBF and its four targets had been adopted. Immediate action should be taken. The GBF included 23 targets, the third of which was to designate 30% of the planet's land and oceans as protected areas by 2030. That commitment was particularly important and parliamentarians should hold governments to account.

It was estimated that Canada had 80,000 species of animals, plants and insects, 300 of which could not be found elsewhere. However, some 1,200 were considered at risk and that figure was set to increase. There was no overarching statute to protect biodiversity but, over the years, the Parliament had enacted statutes to maintain and enhance biodiversity, such as the Species at Risk Act, the Canada Wildlife Act and the Fisheries Act. Responsibility had to be taken for the environment and natural resources at the province and territory levels. The federal parliament and government should work with those levels to protect biodiversity.

**The Moderator** invited those present to share their experiences, ask questions and discuss how parliaments could support activities and actions on biodiversity to support the implementation of the GBF.

**A representative of India** said that his country was among 17 recognized megadiverse countries. It had four biodiversity hotspots and it provided habitats to 7.8% of recorded species. Vital steps had been taken to protect that biodiversity and its resources, such as establishing protected areas, national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and conservation and community reserves. Floral and faunal threat assessments had been carried out, as well as forest coverage assessments and programmes for specific species, such as Project Tiger. In terms of average annual net gain in forest area between 2010 and 2020, India ranked third globally owing to its committed actions, involvement with local communities, and interventions such as the National Mission for a Green India. Efforts were equally concentrated on ecological restoration and development, particularly in degraded and fragile areas. Mangroves and marine habitats were protected holistically and there were 75 Ramsar wetland sites in India, the highest number in South Asia. The Government was tackling plastic pollution and had banned single use plastic items, had extended producer responsibility, had introduced a portal for plastic packaging and had launched the National Dashboard on Elimination of Single Use Plastic and Plastic Waste Management. In 2022, the Parliament had passed the Biological Diversity Bill to preserve biological diversity, ensure that biodiversity was used sustainably, and share the benefits arising from the use of biological resources equitably. The Forest Rights Act had been significant because it had created a balance between the rights of indigenous communities and conservation. In 2022, the Parliament had passed the Wildlife Protection Amendment Act to protect more species by law and implement the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. The tiger population had doubled by 2018, which was four years ahead of target, and cheetahs had been reintroduced into the wild as part of the first intercontinental large wild carnivore

translocation project. The population of Asiatic lions was also increasing. India was committed to implementing the GBF. National biodiversity actions should take into consideration national circumstances, priorities and capabilities. The principles of equity, respect for capabilities and common but differentiated responsibilities must apply to biodiversity. Conservation and restoration required a holistic and integrated approach that considered climate change and sustainable growth. In that regard, the Prime Minister of India had launched the *Lifestyle for the Environment* initiative to encourage sustainable consumption choices. India had assumed the presidency of the G20, the theme of which would be *One Earth, One Family, One Future*.

Parliamentarians needed to share best practices in biodiversity conservation and hold governments to account by asking questions, calling for discussions and scrutinizing budgets. It was important to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity and its impact on lives and livelihoods. Biodiversity loss could only be tackled and halted through collective efforts and the inclusion of different stakeholders.

**Mr. R. Mancienne** (Seychelles) said that the eco-school programme, which had introduced environment education to the school curriculum, had been the most beneficial measure for protecting biodiversity. Young people fell in love with the environment at a very young age and championed its causes. They often moderated their parents' behaviour, for example by encouraging their parents to consider alternatives to traditional dishes that used dolphin or turtle meat.

The Seychelles had ensured that 30% of its maritime area would be protected for conservation, which had not posed any challenges and had benefited fishing. However, land use was an issue because it was difficult to build on mountainous terrain, leading to the intensive use of narrow strips of land. Lack of development on the mountains ensured they were protected and remained unchanged.

**The Moderator** recognized that the Seychelles had specific challenges and invited representatives of mountainous countries to provide their perspectives.

**Mr. A. Ramdhany** (Mauritius) said that, without biodiversity, the support system for animal and human life would collapse. Conservation was important for our future and, in that regard, educating children was imperative. Climate change was impacting the 150 kilometres of coral reef around Mauritius and, in response, a coral transplantation initiative had been launched with the help of fishers. A wetland bill was set to be presented in Parliament. Mauritius had implemented a zero plastic policy for years and it also pledged to reduce carbon emissions. He invited the Committee to give special attention to the preservation of coral reefs and wetlands for the sake of our biodiversity, children and future.

**Mr. R. Nowrouzi** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that biodiversity was essential to life and could not be recovered if lost. Given the importance of biodiversity to the culture, employment and lives of Iranians, attempts had been made to help local communities contribute to biodiversity and to encourage private sector investments in ecotourism. His country was among 20 with the most biological resources and it was culturally and ethnically diverse, all of which indicated the potential for a flourishing ecotourism industry. It was important to ensure proper scientific planning and management, and to recognize the compatibility of biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

Over the previous four decades, challenges had been overcome to establish a network of areas to protect threatened species. There were 19 national parks, 93 protected areas, 34 wildlife sanctuaries, nine biosphere reserves listed in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere programme, and 22 internationally important wetlands.

In 1996, the Islamic Consultative Assembly and the Guardian Council had enacted a law for the Islamic Republic of Iran to accede to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The Islamic Consultative Assembly had also ratified the Protocol for the Conservation of Biological Diversity to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea because many livelihoods depended on that natural resource. The Research Centre of the Islamic Consultative Assembly had examined the law on the protection and sustainable exploitation of wildlife and had supported it. Efforts had been made to facilitate the entry and exit of biological samples, promote the legal basis for ecotourism, carry out a wildlife census and adopt over 80 management plans for protected areas under the supervision of the Department of Environment.

The cruel and unilateral sanctions imposed on the Islamic Republic of Iran impeded access to modern technologies and affected the environment. In developed countries, satellite trackers were used to monitor wildlife and they would be particularly helpful for monitoring Asiatic cheetahs, which

were unique to his country. Similarly, developed countries used technologies that limited destruction when exploring areas for metals, oil and gas, whereas the Islamic Republic of Iran had to develop by excavating land and building roads. There were no helicopters to extinguish fires, whereas other countries used them for that purpose and to study wildlife.

**The Moderator** encouraged women parliamentarians to take the floor and invited the Vice-President of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Mr. W. William, to share his perspective.

**Mr. W. William** (Seychelles) said that the Standing Committee was currently drafting a resolution on parliamentary efforts in achieving negative carbon balances of forests, which coincided with the theme of the discussion. He agreed that education was key to raising awareness, particularly among children. Parliamentarians should oversee the actions taken by their governments with regard to national development plans and community action groups could be set up to monitor developments. Risk reduction was key to minimizing the effects of climate change and disaster risk management agencies should have sufficient resources.

Mangroves and sea grasses would soon be totally protected in the Seychelles.

**Ms. A. Larouche** (Canada) said that she had worked alongside Mr. P. Julian in the Canadian Parliament, despite their different political views. Non-partisan cooperation was crucial to protecting the environment. A third of parliamentarians were young people and a quarter were women, which was insufficient given that women were the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and biodiversity loss. The issue of sustainable forestry was pressing, particularly in Canada, and directly linked to biodiversity conservation. In her constituency, there was the additional issue of private and public forestry. Collective efforts had to be made to improve forestry because wood could be a sustainable and durable material, including in construction.

It was important for federal, provincial and territorial governments to work together but municipal governments also launched local initiatives that should not be overlooked. In her constituency, the Government of Quebec was working with the municipal government to prevent riverbank erosion, which affected water quality and biodiversity. There had been a campaign to raise awareness of that issue but it was possible that the Government would need to pass legislation to strengthen protection. There were also organizations that protected humid areas and peatlands, which were very biodiverse. The Government supported local initiatives, while recognizing that different levels of government intervened at different times. Protecting biodiversity and tackling climate change were inseparable.

**Ms. P. Appiagyei** (Ghana) said that Ghana had a developing economy and the majority of Ghanaians depended on biological resources and diversity for their livelihoods. It was the responsibility of her generation to protect and manage those resources to ensure that future generations could also benefit from them. It was important to build the capacities of parliamentarians so that they could explain to constituents, particularly small-scale farmers, how certain practices harmed biodiversity. That increase in awareness would also prompt parliamentarians to allocate funds to tackle climate issues.

It was important to collect data on biodiversity, which would lead to collaborations with academia, think tanks and civil society organizations. They would, in turn, increase awareness among the general public. Parliamentarians could contribute by speaking in parliament, questioning ministers, starting debates and publishing statements. In terms of concrete action, a committee could be established to create legislation. It would be subject to review and annual progress reports could be published. Financing would need to be secured.

**Ms. A.D. Gomashie** (Ghana) said that during her time as Deputy Minister for Tourism, Arts and Culture, she had worked with local communities, and she had witnessed how communities that practised traditional indigenous religions left natural areas pristine. By contrast, the State often led initiatives to mine gold and capitalize on farmland. It made her wonder whether the environment was being sacrificed for the sake of development, and at what point we would stop and preserve the environment for future generations. Although she wanted development for the benefit of her constituents, she was against building on wetlands and destroying the environment. She also had to consider whether she should represent unborn generations. Countries that had signed declarations should determine which parts truly supported their people. She asked the panellists for advice on balancing development and conservation.

**Ms. D. Bühler-Nigsch** (Liechtenstein) said that efforts were made in Liechtenstein to protect the environment, conserve biodiversity and reduce emissions. However, Liechtenstein was small, which limited their impact, and the Government had therefore decided to invest in environmental projects abroad. The country used renewable energy and environmental heating systems but traffic was an issue because 20,000 people travelled to Liechtenstein every day to work. It was important to protect forests in mountainous countries and it was imperative to educate children.

**The Moderator** invited the panellists to share their final reflections.

**Mr. B. Pisupati** (Head of the Biodiversity, Land and Governance Programme at UNEP), panellist, said that political support for the ideas that had been discussed would be important. It was expected that India would receive extra support through its G20 presidency. However, it was important to treat climate change and biodiversity issues equally because they were all interconnected.

Mr. R. Mancienne had raised an important point about environmental education. Few realized the professional and economic opportunities that biodiversity presented to young people. The International Union for Conservation of Nature had released a publication that detailed how biodiversity contributed to different educational areas. Biomimicry had become a multibillion-dollar industry and it was important that those working in conservation realized that it contributed to their well-being.

Mangroves, coral reefs, wetlands and sea grasses mitigated climate change and captured carbon. The High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People had helped to set the target in the Convention on Biological Diversity to ensure that at least 30% of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems were under effective restoration by 2030.

He agreed with Ms. P. Appiagyei about the need to raise awareness. Occasional discussions or presentations were not enough; instead, biodiversity conservation should be a core feature of parliamentary business. He appreciated Ms. A. Larouche's comment regarding the whole-of-government approach in Canada because support was needed from all levels to tackle biodiversity, climate change and environmental issues. It would ensure that decision-making was smooth, timely, predictable and transparent.

Addressing Ms. A.D. Gomashie's intervention, UNEP had launched the Faith for Earth Initiative because faith-based organizations provided opportunities for action and religious leaders could influence their congregations. Environmental protection and development should be considered as complementary aims rather than opposing forces. There were opportunities to grow sustainably, such as through biodiversity offsets, and we should be open to them. The issue of intergenerational equity had first been raised at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972. We had been entrusted with natural resources and it was our duty to maintain them and bequeath them to the next generation. That principle should guide our actions.

**Mr. P. Julian** (Canada), panellist, said that the exchanges that had taken place were important and valuable. They were essential to improving protection for biodiversity. He noted the interventions from the representatives of Ghana and the Seychelles, which emphasized our responsibility to protect the planet for the next generation. The challenge was to ensure that one million of the world's eight million species did not remain at risk of extinction. He recalled the words of Marc Garneau, the first Canadian to go to space, and his description of how looking down on Earth had changed his perspective. The current discussion had similarly changed his own perspective on the work of the IPU and its importance in facilitating exchanges and motivating its Members to protect the environment and ensure that the next generation inherited it in good condition.

*The event ended at 11:00.*

## Panel discussion on climate oversight action

MONDAY, 13 MARCH 2023

(Morning)

*The event was called to order at 11:40 by Ms. R. Garvey, Member of the Parliament of Ireland, who moderated the panel discussion.*

**The Moderator** said that climate change presented a global existential threat to humanity, prosperity and development, and poor and vulnerable populations were already experiencing the impacts. Proactivity was economically sensible because reparations were more costly, and many governments were investing in national and international measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The first part of the discussion would focus on national performance oversight and the second on expenditure oversight. She invited the panellists to take the floor.

**Mr. H. Aoyagi** (Japan), panellist, said that oversight of governmental climate change action had three levels: (1) policy and expenditure oversight; (2) government action oversight; and (3) oversight of the ecosystem promoting climate change action.

Regarding the first level, the Japanese Parliament, particularly the Standing Committees on the Environment and on the Economy, Trade and Industry, and the Board of Audit oversaw policy and expenditure. However, the Board of auditors did not regularly oversee climate expenditure because there were no special accounts for climate change so it scrutinized climate-related expenditure from every ministry and government agency. Regarding the second level, local government oversaw government action, and Tokyo and Saitama had introduced emissions trading systems. Regarding the third level, more work was needed. In 2015, there had been a global consensus that government efforts were not enough to tackle the issues related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including climate change. An ecosystem or market mechanism must be created to incentivize private sector participation in tackling climate change.

**Mr. H. Niyazy** (Auditor General of the Maldives), panellist, said that the Auditor General's Office was an independent body. The Maldives were vulnerable to rising sea levels and climate change, and focused on resilience and mitigation projects. The Parliament had requested expenditure and performance audits, and the Auditor General's Office had produced reports for the Public Accounts Committee. A Committee on Environment and Climate Change had been established. The relationship of the Auditor General's Office with the Parliament should hopefully lead to greater oversight and accountability. The Auditor General's Office worked with the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) and the INTOSAI Development Initiative. It also conducted financial audits of special accounts, such as those receiving funds from the Green Climate Fund. He hoped that more performance audits would be performed.

**Mr. S. Simpson** (New Zealand), panellist, said that, as an island in the Pacific, his country was vulnerable to rising sea levels and climate change. In 2017, the Parliament had passed legislation committing to reach net zero emissions by 2050 and initiatives to achieve that goal were being implemented. The independently appointed Climate Change Commission oversaw initiatives, prepared five annual budgets and ensured that the 2050 goals could be achieved, while the Auditor General's Office oversaw government financial investments. The national data agency and the Ministry for the Environment gathered information, prepared reports and monitored the effectiveness of those initiatives.

Climate policy discussions often covered actions that had superficial appeal but were relatively ineffective. In 2022, the Government had published the Emissions reduction plan, which included more than 300 initiatives. Independent and credible agencies had to oversee the worthiness of those initiatives and, in some cases, initiatives that were less attractive to voters could be more effective.

**The Moderator** said that, in Ireland, a legally binding climate action plan had been introduced, establishing annual emission reduction targets for every government department. The Government provided funding for climate experts to help each department meet those targets. Although there were cases of greenwashing in the private sector, some companies had reduced emissions because there were financial incentives to save energy and reduce transport. She opened the floor to discussion.

**Mr. R.M. Das Agrawal** (India) said that scrutinizing government performance was the foundation of parliamentary democracy. In the Indian Parliament, the Public Accounts Committee oversaw the use of public funds and examined the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. In December 2022, it had submitted a report entitled *Preparedness for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals*. The Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests oversaw parliamentary action and spending on climate issues, and scrutinized grant requests from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. It had examined issues including the status of forests, air pollution, genetically modified crops, forest fires, biodiversity, wildlife, and remedial and preventative measures. An ethics committee oversaw action relating to India's nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement. The National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change supported activities in the state and union territories vulnerable to climate change. In the Climate Change Performance Index 2023, India was among the ten best-performing countries. Despite its small contribution to climate change, India was working to combat it based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. It had updated its NDCs and declared that it would achieve net zero emissions by 2070 but developed countries should provide additional funding and technology to implement climate measures.

**Mr. S. Simpson** (New Zealand), panellist, said that every country would follow a different trajectory to achieve climate objectives. Parliamentarians should keep open minds and be understanding, patient and accepting of the fact that jurisdictions functioned differently. It was important to remember that emissions were decreasing quickly and cost-effectively.

**The Moderator** said that it was easy to assign responsibility for climate change.

**A representative from Chile** said that if carbon emissions were not reduced, it would be impossible to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius. Sea levels were rising at their fastest rate in 3,000 years and more than one million animal and plant species were at risk of extinction.

In response, it was necessary to promote affordable, sustainable and renewable energy and the circular economy. Chile had signed the Kyoto Protocol, as well as the Paris Agreement before the passing of the resolution at the 141st IPU Assembly urging all parties to implement it. In 2020, a legal framework had been established to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. At the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) and in line with the Nusa Dua Agreement, Chile had updated its NDCs and it would ensure the protection of one million hectares of land and marine ecosystems by 2030. Oceans should be recognized as essential to dealing with climate change and Chile had a national marine protection policy. It protected the largest marine area in the region, which included 43% of its exclusive economic zone. The oversight system was being modernized. Alongside Canada, Chile would propose the creation of protected blue corridors in the Pacific Ocean to protect marine organisms and uphold national borders. The Senate was debating a law to protect glaciers and peatlands.

The National Congress had passed laws to establish the Ministry of the Environment, create the right to environmental protection and ban plastic bags across the country. Chile hoped to be a global leader in the use of green hydrogen, promoting its use in mining and cargo transport, and the National Congress was considering a bill to encourage its production. Those efforts required collaboration from the public and private sectors and civil society. In its offices, the National Congress had banned single-use plastics, used digital copies of documents and produced its own solar energy.

**Ms. E.J. Jolobala** (Malawi) said that the Parliament of Malawi would assume its responsibility to allocate resources to address climate change. Officials from ministries and government departments were invited to appear before parliamentary committees to explain their progress in addressing climate change. The Malawi Parliamentary Conservation Caucus had been formed and received funding from the International Conservation Caucus Foundation. The Caucus could ensure that ministries and departments were held accountable for their climate actions.

The Forestry Act and the Water Resources Act had been amended to ensure that Parliament oversaw the actions of the executive. There were no specific accounts for funds to tackle climate change and she wanted to learn how other parliaments had dealt with that issue.

**Mr. H. Aoyagi** (Japan), panellist, said that it was important for parliamentary committees to use independent supreme audit institutions (SAIs) to check accounts, give recommendations and provide oversight.

It was necessary for boards of audit to examine dedicated accounts and for parliaments to have relevant committees. It was also important to consider the degree to which boards of audit could intervene in parliaments. For example, the price of emission rights had been increased in Canada following oversight activities. The Office of the Auditor General of Canada reported to Parliament, which could alter the climate change expenditure policy.

**The Moderator** said that reporting to parliaments was good, but they had to take climate change seriously.

**A representative of the Syrian Arab Republic** said that his country had continental, coastal and forest climates. They all required protection, especially forests, which were an important resource covering 35,000 hectares. Half of that area had been dedicated to industry and parts had been burned during the civil war. The law on forests was set to be amended to protect and develop them.

Within the Syrian People's Assembly, the Agriculture and Water Resources Committee and the General Budget Committee carried out oversight activities. The latter determined the financial prerogatives of public entities, adopted the general budget and oversaw governmental activities, including those related to climate.

**The Moderator** said that the impetus to produce a legally binding climate action plan in Ireland had originated from the Citizens' Assembly for Climate, which was apolitical and consisted of a randomly selected group of people from across Ireland. Another citizens' assembly had been established for biodiversity and it was hoped that it would result in nature restoration laws. Politicians must be answerable to the people.

**Mr. W. William** (Seychelles) said that his Parliament had four committees that overlapped with regard to climate change: the Finance and Public Accounts Committee, which oversaw the budget; the International Affairs Committee, which oversaw agreements; the Committee on Government Assurances, which oversaw project implementation; and the recently established Food Security and Sustainable Development Committee, which was intersectoral and would examine climate change issues. Ministers and senior government officers were summoned to answer questions before the committees in publicly broadcast sessions. Resolutions had been passed to improve reforestation and forest management.

At COP27, discussions had focused on a loss and damage fund, and a transitional committee had been established to operationalize that fund by COP28, but it was not clear where the funds would be sourced. He asked the panellists whether they thought the fund was realistic, especially after the proposal to include an emergency item on a loss and damage fund in the agenda of the current Assembly had been rejected. Funding homegrown climate projects was a serious concern for small island States.

**Ms. A. Larouche** (Canada) said that Quebec had a budget officer who reported to the Parliament, which was important for monitoring developments and setting targets for events such as Conferences of the Parties. Quebec had worked with California to create a carbon market and was leading efforts to power emissions-free electric transport through hydroelectricity.

Sustainable development in the forestry sector was possible and it was important to monitor work, set objectives and keep track of government investments. Sustainable forestry accounted for CAD 34.8 billion in gross domestic product and it had employed over 200,000 Canadians in 2020. The Government of Quebec should therefore invest in that industry and use sustainable wood to build government buildings. Solar, wind and geothermal energy should also be used in those buildings. Farmers wanted to be part of the solution and were seeking compensation for their efforts to decrease carbon emissions.

**The Moderator**, steering the discussion towards expenditure oversight, said that in Ireland, there was a Minister for Circular Economy and a Minister for Land Use and Biodiversity and each department had clear targets, which ensured proper oversight. Campaigns such as Origin Green appeared environmentally friendly but were less effective.

**Mr. S. Simpson** (New Zealand), panellist, said that emissions reductions were proof of effective government expenditure. There had to be oversight of how those reductions were calculated and a consensus on the definition of emissions reductions. The Emissions Reduction Plan of New Zealand ensured a whole-of-government approach. Chief executives from portfolio policy areas had to report

their activities, initiatives and results to ministries. The Climate Change Chief Executives Board reported to the whole of Government. That approach ensured accountability, which was important for voters who wanted effective use of taxpayer revenue to mitigate climate change.

**Mr. H. Niyazy** (Auditor General of the Maldives), panellist, accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that the Maldives were 1% land and 99% sea. Rises in sea levels therefore posed an existential threat as 80% of the 1,200 islands were only 1.5 metres above sea level. The Maldives only produced 0.003% of global emissions but climate change was causing an economic crisis because the economy revolved around tourism and the islands' natural assets.

Performance audits had been carried out on initiatives to tackle the shortage of drinking water. It was no longer possible to draw potable water from the land and the islands relied on rainwater harvesting. During the dry season, that water had to be distributed, which was expensive. The drought was worst on northern islands but most of the performance audits had been carried out on southern islands, which had distorted the data. Parliamentarians should therefore scrutinize data supporting mitigation projects.

Coral bleaching meant that reefs no longer provided a barrier against rising sea levels and mitigation projects had to be implemented. From 2013 to 2017, the Maldives had performed a coastal protection audit. The Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology had ranked the islands according to the severity of coastal erosion but the worst-affected islands had not been prioritized for the projects. Parliamentarians should ensure that technical considerations were taken into account because budgets were limited and vulnerable areas had to be prioritized. The INTOSAI working group on environmental auditing had produced a survey revealing that, of the 69 participating countries, most had started to conduct performance audits. Parliamentarians could use those surveys to contribute to oversight activities. Climate change had become one of the priority areas for many SAIs, particularly to address SDGs 6 and 13.

The Maldives had some 70 protected areas, only five of which had proper management plans. When passing budgets, it was important to ensure that ministries had the resources to ensure adherence to legislation and regulations. Local councils had to be engaged to ensure sufficient resources, proper governance and monitoring across all islands.

To highlight the effects of global warming, an underwater Cabinet meeting had been held in 2009, and at COP27 the President had announced that a rise in global temperatures above 1.5 degrees Celsius would be a death sentence for the Maldives. Although the announcement of the loss and damage fund was welcomed, it was unclear where the funds would be sourced. The Maldives had to work with authorities to ensure that it received those funds and it had to introduce mechanisms to audit them.

**Mr. H. Aoyagi** (Japan), panellist, said that the Japanese Cabinet Office would create strategies, based on which the ministries and government agencies would create individual plans. Those ministries and agencies would request funds from the Ministry of Finance and the Board of Audit would oversee the use of those funds. The Parliament promoted that system and oversaw the use of funds through the Standing Committee on Budget.

He proposed two improvements. First, there should be an increase in the degree of intervention and the Board of Audit should report to Parliament and Government. Second, there should be an increase in expenditure oversight. At Rio+20, discussions had focused on aid and expenditure efficiency for development and most leaders had agreed that government expenditure was insufficient to achieve climate goals. The private sector had to contribute but regulation was lacking. A mechanism or standards that ensured good market practice and included emission rights would support good companies. Tax or regulation incentives were also important. Governments should limit intervention and could introduce policy actions to enhance private sector activities. Parliamentary and governmental actions should focus on enhancing such a mechanism.

**The Moderator** said that market mechanisms should play a bigger role in climate mitigation because private industry was particularly harmful to the environment.

**Mr. S. Simpson** (New Zealand), panellist, said that it was not the responsibility of the auditor general to audit the use of public funds within the private sector. In New Zealand, it was a legal requirement for financial sector organizations with revenues of over NZD 1 billion to report their initiatives, the effectiveness of those initiatives, and how they were monitored and audited. That regime lay the groundwork for other private sectors. Legislators should acknowledge that taxpayer money did not always have to fund climate initiatives. In some countries, the private sector led initiatives, created real change and was ahead of politicians in terms of its results.

**The Moderator** said that, in Ireland, Coca Cola sponsored a green schools programme and Meta sponsored a tree planting initiative but it was important to consider what those companies wanted in return and how effective their actions would be.

**Mr. F.K.L. Fakafanua** (Tonga) said that water distribution should be based on science, not politics. Tonga had updated two of its NDCs. The first was to produce 70% of its energy from renewable sources by 2025 to cut the emissions it was producing in 2006 by 13%. That audacious plan would be driven by private sector development, the Government and the Green Climate Fund. The second was to plant one million trees by 2023.

The Parliament of Tonga had a Finance and Public Accounts Committee, which oversaw government expenditure, and the Auditor General was an ex officio member. The public finance management reform was exploring how to identify sub-programmes based on different factors, one of which should be climate change adaptation and mitigation.

COP27 had made it clear that Government had to be held accountable for its NDCs. The Environment and Climate Change Committee would assess all legislation relating to climate change and adaptation, and would make recommendations to Parliament on improving climate change action. It was hoped that it could track progress on the NDCs and create capacity-building and awareness programmes for parliamentarians, for example on governance structures around the Green Climate Fund, the functioning of the Paris Agreement, the crucial role of the Conferences of the Parties and how Parliament could hold Government to account to deliver programmes on time.

**Ms. S. Sobia** (Pakistan) said that climate change threatened humanity but the poorest and least prepared bore the brunt of its effects. According to the Climate Risk Index, Pakistan was among the 10 most affected countries, even though it produced less than 1% of global greenhouse gas emissions. The 2022 floods had damaged and destroyed homes and infrastructure, affecting some 33 million people. Over one million livestock had been killed and 9.4 million acres of crops had been destroyed, demonstrating the food security and economic risks of climate change. The damage and economic loss amounted to US\$ 30 billion, and Pakistan would require over US\$ 16 billion to rebuild resiliently. In 2021, Pakistan had revised its NDC to achieve a 50% reduction in its projected emissions by 2030, despite a lack of international funding.

Stakeholders were urged to make international climate change agreements effective and legally enforceable. The Green Climate Fund and the loss and damage fund were crucial to mitigating climate change impacts. Developed countries had to honour their commitments to support developing countries.

Since 1990, Pakistan had restored mangrove forests, making it the only country in the region with expanding mangrove cover. However, the Ministry of Climate Change could not implement climate projects without funding.

**Mr. J.M. Castro** (Chile) said that the Chilean climate change auditing and oversight system was robust and included the Ministry of the Environment, climate change tribunals, the Environmental Superintendence, a system to oversee the environmental impacts of projects in different sectors and a specialized police force. Civil society and non-governmental organizations were also present in those structures.

In 2022, Chile had passed the Climate Change Framework Law, which each ministry had to implement. It aimed to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, which was ambitious but possible since Chile was a pioneer in renewable energies. The law defined mitigation, resilience, equity and climate justice, and set budgets for each ministry. Therefore, legislators were always auditing and monitoring those plans through the annual budget law.

**Ms. S. Rafiei** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Iranian Parliament had two duties: legislating and monitoring the execution of the law but funding was an issue. Although there was a Clean Air Law, the inability to import specific equipment posed challenges. Independent rapporteurs to the United Nations had highlighted that sanctions worsened pollution. It was necessary to discuss how political stances affected national climate responses because climate change did not respect borders and there was only one planet.

**Mr. H. Niyazy** (Auditor General of the Maldives), panellist, said that parliaments and SAIs should collaborate. Although SAIs needed capacity-building, they could provide statistics and parliamentarians should use audit reports to fight climate change. He highlighted the issue of stakeholder engagement.

**Mr. H. Aoyagi** (Japan), panellist, said that such discussions were important to promote climate actions, share experiences and achieve a degree of global consensus. Each country could perform more climate expenditure and performance oversight.

**Mr. S. Simpson** (New Zealand), panellist, said that the current discussion was useful for future forums, panels and conversations. The investment of public money should always be accountable and auditable, even for green initiatives.

New Zealand had a similar economy to Ireland and a large percentage of its emissions were from agriculture. Solving the biogenic methane issue was important to both countries, and research and development investments would be made. Solutions may include changing animal feed, breeding animals that produced less methane, and creating a methane vaccine and methane-reducing supplements.

**The Moderator**, in conclusion, said that the IPU should hold more climate panels because climate change was the biggest global issue and everyone had to work together. Trees were free to plant and they effectively mitigated climate change by stopping flooding, absorbing carbon and halting desertification.

*A video for the "My Parliament, My Planet" campaign was shown.*

*The event ended at 13:10.*

## Workshop in preparation for the United Nations Summit of the Future

MONDAY, 13 MARCH 2023

(Afternoon)

*The event was called to order at 14:30 with Ms. P. Torsney (Head of the Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations in New York) as the Moderator.*

**The Moderator** said that the United Nations would hold the Summit of the Future in September 2024, with the aim of strengthening multilateralism as a way of responding to an ever-growing list of old and new global challenges. The present workshop was designed to provide participants with an introduction to the preparatory process for the Summit.

**Ms. M.F. Espinosa** (President of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly), speaking remotely via video link, said that parliaments and parliamentarians were crucial for the efficiency and legitimacy of the multilateral system. They were the brokers, translators and voices of the people they represented. The support and oversight provided by parliaments were vital for the machinery of the international system to operate.

The world was facing multiple crises, such as climate change, food insecurity, poverty, nationalism, conflict and inequality. The multilateral system was ill-equipped to respond decisively and effectively to address such issues. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the founding principles of the Charter of the United Nations were far from being achieved. However, times of crisis around the world presented opportunities to retool, rejuvenate and modernize the United Nations and the international architecture. To celebrate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, Member States adopted an ambitious political declaration that mandated the Secretary-General to produce a report on the future of the United Nations. The report entitled *Our Common Agenda* served as a blueprint to reimagine, reshape and rebuild the United Nations. The report also envisioned a series of subsequent summits, including the SDG Summit in 2023, the Summit of the Future in 2024 and the World Social Summit in 2025.

Reforming the United Nations required the mobilization of all sectors and regions, including parliaments, civil society, local governments and academia to ensure meaningful transformation. It could not be left solely to the responsibility of governments. There was a need to redefine and reconcile the intersection between national interests and the need to work together on common issues. Despite great polarization, there was momentum and political will for such action. The current momentum for reform needed to be harnessed to bring together all voices and the collective power of parliaments. Political systems needed to better represent the needs and aspirations of people to revitalize democracy. It was essential to translate the *Our Common Agenda* report and the reform agenda into national realities to ensure that any reform was relevant to the diverse situations that required attention from the multilateral system. Parliaments had a particular role in brokering meaningful and lasting reform that had social ownership.

The Summit of the Future would provide a much-needed opportunity to address and better respond to the crisis of multilateralism and to consider several broader issues. First, parliaments, local governments and civil society organizations needed to be actively engaged to strengthen the representation and legitimacy of the multilateral system. Second, implementation and accountability were essential in ensuring effective compliance with any decisions taken internationally. Parliaments had a critical role to play in addressing the current deficit in implementation and accountability. Third, it was important to consider the issue of intergenerational responsibility and to address the key determinants of a collective future. The Summit of the Future was an opportunity to shape the path of the future and forge a new global contract to address old and new challenges and to create societies that were more equal, environmentally sustainable and peaceful.

**Mr. R.M. Das Agrawala** (India) said that the current structures of the United Nations, and in particular the Security Council, were no longer adequate to address contemporary changes. Such structures needed to be re-evaluated to adapt to a changing world and its problems. It was disappointing that the same five countries continued to be the only States to exercise a veto power. The time had come to incorporate other countries in such a process. Negotiations on changing the structures of the United Nations should be transparent and adequately recorded. The reform process was urgent. A specific time frame for reform needed to be defined.

**Mr. N. Ammar** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the United Nations played a significant role internationally, despite its current structures, which had been in place since the Second World War. However, its role in certain countries, such as the Syrian Arab Republic, was weak. The voices of many countries were often weakened and side-lined due to the influence of other UN Member States. The aim of the present workshop should focus on the betterment of humanity. Millions of people worldwide struggled to survive in very difficult conditions. While climate change was a pressing concern, there were numerous other significant challenges to overcome, such as war, terrorism and sanctions. For over 12 years, the refugee crisis had become a heavily politicized issue at international forums. It was challenging to envision a hopeful future in light of such circumstances. He asked what actions could be taken to focus on humanity's collective future.

**Mr. J. Kandie** (Kenya) asked if it was feasible to bring about UN reform or to transform the Organization, given that many countries could withdraw funding if their interests were not met.

**Mr. V. Belski** (Belarus) drew attention to the aims of the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations, which were twofold. First, to oppose the use of unilateral and coercive measures against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and so protect participating countries in accordance with the principles of international law. Second, to promote joint initiatives aimed at protecting and strengthening the authority of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. The Group also worked to promote the voices and perspectives of developing nations to create a renewed global architecture that was built on the principles of trust, dialogue, mutual understanding and non-intervention in internal matters.

Several Member States had subjected Belarus to unilateral sanctions. He questioned the compatibility of unilateral action with the Charter of the United Nations.

**Ms. M.F. Espinosa** (President of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly) agreed that the design of the UN architecture and of the multilateral system responded to the specific geopolitical reality of 1945. There was a need to rethink the system in a more structural way. The reform process of the UN Security Council was an unresolved and particularly contentious issue that relied on the political will of UN Member States. It was understood that the structure of the Security Council did not provide for swift responses in situations of crisis and led to paralysis on critical issues affecting world peace and security. Many aspects needed to be readdressed, such as the use of the veto power and overall working methods. Preparations for the Summit of the Future could provide a framework for such conversations. In contrast, the General Assembly had been able to act on peace and security issues, such as the adoption of the resolution proposed by Liechtenstein requiring countries that exercised their veto power to justify its use.

The deployment of humanitarian aid in conflict and crisis situations needed to be redesigned. The response of the United Nations, which predominately stemmed from the Security Council as opposed to the General Assembly, had not been able to deliver the required level of response required for certain situations.

The use of sanctions needed to be reassessed to determine their effectiveness and to ensure that they did not harm vulnerable communities. She recognized the establishment of the Group of Friends in Defense of the Charter of the United Nations. There was a global and shared responsibility to defend the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Parliaments and parliamentarians needed to be fully engaged in the design and shape of the Pact for the Future.

There was room for improvement in regard to the annual budget of the United Nations, which was approximately US\$ 3.4 billion. The issue stemmed from the division between assessed contributions and voluntary contributions. The ratio between the two contributions needed to change. It was essential that the UN system was well financed and fully supported to ensure it could deliver on its operations and its budget in a predictable manner. Parliaments had a critical role to play in approving contributions to the United Nations and ensuring that the Organization was not reliant on volatile voluntary funds or taken from funds earmarked for specific issues that were of interest to individual countries. There was a significant need to evaluate contributions and to ensure predictable budgeting to enable the United Nations to operate and deploy its capacities on the ground.

**Mr. A. Motter** (Senior Advisor for Economic and Social Affairs, Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations) said that an informal electronic vote would take place designed to familiarize participants with topic areas that Members would soon encounter on the agenda for the Summit of the Future.

To refine the scope of the Summit and the issues to be discussed, the negotiators of the Summit of the Future would ultimately need to select certain issues for discussion. He asked participants if the focus of such discussions should be on new or ongoing issues.

*The result of the vote was:*

*Yes to new issues: 10*

*No to new issues: 14*

*Don't know: 1*

**Ms. A. Al Shaman** (Saudi Arabia), speaking in explanation of her country's "Yes" vote, said that new issues and challenges to be addressed arose on an almost daily basis. It was important not to focus solely on ideas that had been deliberated for many years. The UN Human Rights Committee had recently highlighted the issue of child orphan trafficking, which was a new issue for certain States, since many did not have their own specific laws in that regard.

**Ms. H. Ramzy Fayed** (Bahrain), speaking in explanation of her country's "No" vote, said that there were numerous issues that still needed to be addressed before attention could move to other areas.

**Mr. A. Motter** (IPU) said that there was a wide range of issues within the multilateral framework that could be discussed at the Summit. He asked participants to choose two issues that they would prioritize as the focus of the Summit.

*The result of the vote was:*

*New threats to peace and security: 18*

*Internet governance/digital divide: 6*

*Governance of global commons (e.g. outer space, the Arctic): 1*

*Less growth-centric economics: 5*

*Networked multilateralism (UN reforms): 8*

*Other: 0*

**Mr. J. Kandie** (Kenya), speaking in explanation of his country's "New threats to peace and security" vote, said that most ongoing problems primarily stemmed from peace and security related issues. If peace were to be achieved, it would be easier to tackle other issues and to accomplish certain goals.

**Mr. W.A. Nikiema** (Burkina Faso), speaking in explanation of his country's "Internet governance/digital divide" vote, said that the prevalence of social media was causing significant issues in the fight against terrorism in Burkina Faso. Internet governance was essential in combating cybercrime and cyberattacks.

**Ms. S.E. Lucas** (South Africa), speaking in explanation of her country's "Less growth-centric economics" vote, said that the issue of economic growth was crucial for less-developed countries due to the poverty, inequality and underdevelopment that stemmed from less growth-centric economics. Solutions needed to be developed to ensure that there was growth in stagnant economies. All of the topics presented in the questions were important, but for those suffering due to low growth in their economies, economic growth was a priority issue.

**Ms. L. Marzal** (Programme Officer, IPU) said that there were various threats to collective security in the future, such as nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, uncontrollable escalations in conflicts, the emergence of biohazards, the militarization of space, cyberwarfare, small and light weapons, drones and transnational crimes. The risks and challenges associated with such threats were difficult to anticipate and contain. She asked participants to choose their three most significant threats to collective security in the future.

*The result of the vote was:*

*Nuclear, biological and chemical arms: 13*  
*Misuse of artificial intelligence: 10*  
*Emergence of biohazards: 5*  
*Militarization of space: 2*  
*Cyberwarfare attacks: 11*  
*Small arms and light weapons: 5*  
*Drones/unmanned combat aerial vehicles: 2*  
*Transnational crimes: 6*  
*Other: 1*

**Ms. J.A.A. Taban** (South Sudan), speaking in explanation of her country's "Nuclear, biological and chemical arms" vote, said that nuclear warfare posed the greatest threat to humanity. International-level discussions were needed. "Cyberwarfare attacks" and "Small arms and light weapons" were her other two choices.

**Ms. M. Kiener Nellen** (Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND)), speaking in explanation of her network's "Nuclear, biological and chemical arms" vote, said that the vote clearly indicated that nuclear weapons posed the greatest threat to collective security. Whether used intentionally or accidentally, nuclear weapons could be used to annihilate entire parts of the world. She recalled that the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons was agreed upon by consensus in the first resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1946: a historic fact that should not be forgotten. Her other votes were for "Militarization of space" and "Cyberwarfare attacks". The latter in particular could be used against nuclear facilities at civil or military installations.

**Ms. H. Ramzy Fayeze** (Bahrain) said that her country had chosen, in descending order of significance, "Nuclear, biological and chemical arms", "Misuse of artificial intelligence" and "Transnational crimes". Nuclear weapons were a means of mass destruction. It was imperative for all States to consider the issue. Human trafficking and related issues were significant matters that also required further work.

**Mr. A. Motter** (IPU) said that economic models for the future would likely be part of the Summit's agenda. According to many economists, current models of assessing progress were not sustainable. In many countries, the only means for development to occur was through a worldwide readjustment, where affluent nations decreased their consumption and production to provide a larger ecological footprint for developing countries to use. Suggestions had been put forward that progress should not solely be based on gross domestic product (GDP). He asked participants to choose what the two most important indicators of sustainable development should be.

*The result of the vote was:*

*GDP: 6*  
*Ecological footprint: 11*  
*Happiness indicator: 2*  
*Inequality index: 11*  
*Multidimensional poverty index: 11*  
*Other: 1*

**Mr. R. Leite** (UNITE Parliamentarians Network for Global Health) said that GDP was often used as the base indicator for funding mechanisms of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund; however, it did not necessarily translate into equality, access to services or inclusive growth. Countries with the highest GDP often had the greatest levels of inequality. Globally, there was no consensus on alternative indicators. It was important to harness the Summit of the Future to create a new indicator that could respond accurately to issues such as inclusive growth, poverty, equality and sustainability, which could come to define the next 100 years of humanity.

**Ms. P. Cayetano** (Philippines) said that happiness was not a suitable indicator to measure sustainable development. The Philippines typically performed well in happiness indicators; however, many Filipinos had learned to suppress or turn a blind eye to their problems and choose to be happy whenever possible.

**Mr. A. Duforest** (IPU) said that, within the framework of the Summit, a Global Digital Compact had been proposed, which would outline a shared principle for an open, free and secure digital future for all. He asked participants to choose three digital issues that they would prioritize as the focus of the proposed Global Digital Compact.

*The result of the vote was:*

*Digital inclusion and connectivity: 14*

*Internet governance: 7*

*Data protection: 15*

*Human rights online: 9*

*Digital trust and security: 11*

*Artificial intelligence: 9*

*Other: 1*

**Ms. E.M. Ulenge** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the focus of the Global Digital Compact should be on digital infrastructure to defend against cyberattacks and cybercrimes. No progress could be made on a secure digital future for all if users could not be informed about cyberthreats. It was essential to ensure that technology could not become a threat against humanity. There was a responsibility on companies that sold servers to ensure the safety of users' data.

**Mr. A. Motter** (IPU) said that there were several additional topic areas that could be put on the agenda at the Summit. First, the role of multinationals in global governance. Every business sector in the world had one of more global conglomerates that exercised economic and political influence over governments. Second, the influence of the military and the industry. Over US\$ 2 trillion was spent on military activities every year around the world; money that was taken away from potential development work. There was an active complicity between military and industrial players and political powers, which meant that it was difficult for governments to reduce their military spending. Lastly, the issue of land grabbing. Typically, the phenomenon occurred when multinational agribusinesses owned by sovereign funds purchased land in developing countries. Such land was subsequently used for agriculture, and the resulting products were often exported to developed countries. He asked participants to choose if such issues should be added to the agenda of the Summit of the Future.

*The result of the vote was:*

*Multinational powers: 3*

*Influence of the military and industry: 2*

*Land grabbing: 2*

*Other: 2*

**Mr. R. Leite** (UNITE Parliamentarians Network for Global Health) said that the geopolitical challenges put forward in the question related to the idea of an economic model based on well-being and the need for transformation and reform in governance. A post-capitalism world would require a redesign of education, health and social security systems. An overarching theme of how to reshape governance models would be critical in the coming decades.

**Ms. M. Stolbizer** (Argentina) said that it was essential to consider ethical issues on artificial intelligence. While technological advances, science and innovation were important, there was a need to ensure that adequate legal and ethical limits were put in place. The power of economic and military groups, as well as a militarization of artificial intelligence, were also worrying developments. There was a need for States to discuss a new tool to limit the use of autonomous weapons.

**Mr. J. Kandie** (Kenya), speaking in explanation of his country's "Multinational powers" vote, said that almost every problem around the world was instigated or exacerbated by multinational powers. Change was needed in this regard.

**Mr. V. Tsvangirai** (Zimbabwe) said that multiple African countries had pushed to be included in the veto powers of the UN Security Council. Such action was necessary to divide the powers of bigger countries, especially in regard to artificial intelligence and the future of warfare. Checks and balances were needed with smaller countries acting as a barrier to prevent the negative consequences of artificial intelligence being used as the next frontier in terms of warfare.

**Ms. S. Nane** (Uruguay) said that the second World Summit of the Committees of the Future would take place in Uruguay in October 2023. She invited participants to attend the event as an opportunity for further discussions on specific topics in view of the Summit of the Future taking place in 2024.

**The Moderator** said that many conversations would be taking place in the lead-up to the Summit of the Future on the various issues raised during the present workshop. She encouraged participants to engage with colleagues in their respective parliaments and government departments to ensure that they could contribute as productively as possible at the Summit. She thanked all participants for their contributions.

*The event ended at 16:00.*

## Panel discussion on parliamentary solidarity with MPs at risk

TUESDAY, 14 MARCH 2023

(Afternoon)

*The event was called to order at 15:45 with Mr. S. Cogolati (Belgium), President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, as the Moderator.*

**The Moderator** said that every year, many parliamentarians around the world faced abuse and mistreatment, with some having lost their lives for carrying their democratic duties. The IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians was the only international mechanism with a mandate to protect and defend parliamentarians. The Committee had demonstrated its ability to offer practical support and assistance to lawmakers who were under attack.

In 2022, the Committee received a record number of cases, involving 739 parliamentarians from 44 countries. The most common violations reported to the Committee remained violations of freedom of expression, undue suspension and loss of parliamentary mandate, threats and acts of intimidation, and lack of a fair trial and other unfair proceedings. Since 2014, the number of cases had increased year by year with an alarming four-fold increase in the number of cases involving women parliamentarians. During its present session, the Committee had dealt with cases involving 401 members of parliaments from 19 countries, including 106 women parliamentarians.

Despite such record numbers, many noteworthy accomplishments had occurred thanks to the support of committed parliamentarians. The success of the Committee was mainly attributed to the principle of parliamentary solidarity, which was founded on the belief that both parliaments and parliamentarians could have an impact by providing tangible assistance to fellow colleagues. The Committee aimed to ensure the cooperation of Members in resolving the cases that had been brought to its attention and to encourage parliamentary action in finding solutions.

The present panel discussion would provide an opportunity to learn about the latest initiatives taken by colleagues and to exchange examples of successful strategies, thereby promoting future actions aimed at protecting the rights of colleagues who were at risk.

**Ms. C. Padilla Solíz** (Plurinational State of Bolivia), speaking in a video message recorded in advance of the panel discussion, said that Bolivian parliamentarians who opposed the Government faced significant violations of human rights. She had personally experienced several instances of intimidation and physical assault.

In December 2022, she and several colleagues attempted to visit Mr. Luis Fernando Camacho, the Governor of Santa Cruz and the head of the opposition *Creemos* party, who had been kidnapped by State officials. The group was prevented from visiting Mr. Camacho, and she was physically assaulted; an event witnessed by police officers.

In January 2023, while walking with her husband in the vicinity of La Ramada market in the city of Santa Cruz, she was the victim of another physical attack. She had observed several police officers arresting an individual. In exercising her duties as a parliamentarian and identifying herself as such, she approached the officers to ask for an explanation as to why the individual had been detained. When confronted with her questions, the police officer refused to provide any explanation and asked her about her political party affiliation. Upon answering the officer's question, she was physically assaulted. She was able to escape with the help of several market stallholders.

She called on all authorities and parliamentarians around the world to show their solidarity and support for women parliamentarians in the Plurinational State of Bolivia who were living under constant fear of attack due to their differing views from the Government.

**Mr. I.M. Ahmed**, speaking in a video message, said that his parents, Ms. A. Fissehatsion and Mr. M.A. Sheriffo, were parliamentarians in Eritrea and were detained incommunicado since September 2001. He called on the IPU to continue fighting for the release of his parents.

**Mr. A.S.J. Al-Alwani**, speaking in a video message recorded in advance of the panel discussion, said that he was the brother of Mr. A.J.S. Al-Alwani, an Iraqi parliamentarian who was imprisoned in 2014 and sentenced to death in 2016. As a parliamentarian, his brother enjoyed parliamentary immunity, which the Iraqi authorities had continued to ignore. He called on the IPU to intervene in his brother's case and to work with the relevant authorities in Iraq to secure his release.

*The Moderator read a letter received from Ms. L. De Lima, a former parliamentarian from the Philippines, in which she expressed her gratitude for the decision of the Committee to express concern over her unjust detention for the previous six years, to call for her immediate release and to deploy a trial observer to her hearings. She thanked the Organization for its continued support of her situation and for its unwavering solidarity.*

**Ms. L. Crexell** (Argentina), panellist, recalled that in August 2021, the Taliban took control of the city of Kabul and of Afghanistan, establishing an authoritarian government. Decades of progress made towards achieving democracy was quickly reversed, including the participation of women in politics. The Taliban's control of Afghanistan led to hundreds of thousands of Afghans becoming internally displaced. Over 1.3 million people seeking refuge around the world, including in neighbouring countries like Pakistan. In 2022, the Taliban set up an intelligence service, with a view to identifying and persecuting former parliamentarians, government officials, judges, human rights defenders, members of civil society organizations and journalists. The role of such individuals was to represent and to protect the people of Afghanistan. It was imperative that a special protection status was granted to protect them from harm.

Thanks to the expertise and assistance provided by numerous parliamentary colleagues in Argentina and around the world, it had been possible to provide refuge, asylum and visas to people in Afghanistan, especially those at particular risk. While many positive actions had taken place to date, more could be done. She called on the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliaments to consider all measures to support Afghan parliamentarians and supporting staff members who wished to leave Afghanistan. Pursuing further diplomatic activities could help to protect the lives and physical integrity of parliamentary colleagues. Faced with such stark realities, international cooperation was the only option to fully restore democracy in Afghanistan.

Against the backdrop of the emergency item on the serious humanitarian crises affecting the peoples of Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and other countries, and on the particular vulnerability of women and children, she appealed to parliamentarians around the world to denounce and put pressure on those responsible and to provide concrete solutions on the ground to help those affected. Interregional cooperation was needed to establish corridors for people in vulnerable situations to provide access for humanitarian relief. She called on governments to take measures against international crimes and to establish more effective coordination with UN agencies.

Afghanistan was the worst country in the world to raise a child. She encouraged the IPU Member Parliaments to never give up hope and to raise their voices to protect the rights of Afghans, in particular Afghan women. It was imperative that international organizations and parliamentarians spoke up for those in need and to uphold fundamental human rights.

**Ms. L. Quartapelle** (Italy), panellist, said that being a parliamentarian in certain countries around the world was particularly dangerous. It was in everyone's interest for parliaments to operate as a space where debates could take place, diverse viewpoints could be heard and different positions could be represented. In this regard, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians was particularly important. Every country could play a part in protecting parliamentarians at risk.

Italy had worked on behalf of parliamentarians who were at risk in Uganda. Following the Ugandan presidential elections of January 2021, numerous allegations of electoral fraud had emerged, as well as cases of opposition parliamentarians being subjected to intimidation and constraints on their freedom of speech and voting rights. In January 2022, the legal representatives of several Ugandan opposition parliamentarians appeared before the Foreign Affairs Committee of Italy and described the situations faced by their clients. It was suggested that a complaint could be submitted to the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. Since then, the IPU Committee had opened a formal case and proposed a Committee mission to Uganda.

Expressing support and applying pressure were crucial for those parliamentarians who were in prison or facing challenging circumstances for exercising their demonstrate mandates. Such action gave parliamentarians hope that there was someone who would advocate for them and pursue justice, even in the face of an unjust system.

**Mr. Win Myat Aye** (Myanmar) said that, in a democratic system, parliaments represented the sovereignty and will of the people they represented. The attempted overthrow of the Parliament of Myanmar by the military junta was not only a crime against the people of Myanmar, but also an affront to all those who were committed to democracy and human rights.

Since the Myanmar military overthrew Parliament and seized State power by force, over 20,000 people had been unlawfully arrested, with many subjected to acts of torture or sexual violence. Over 3,000 civilians had been killed. More than 1.5 million people had been displaced to border areas or neighbouring countries, such as Thailand and India. The military junta had arrested and arbitrarily detained many parliamentarians. They had suffered ill-treatment, torture and sexual violence, and been provided limited or no medical care or legal counsel. Many parliamentarians faced criminal charges for inviting civil disobedience or other charges that carried significant penalties. Relatives and friends of such parliamentarians had also been forced to flee due to threats received.

Enforced disappearances, imprisonment, torture, sexual assault, violence and starvation were being used as tactics of war. The military junta was committing war crimes and crimes against humanity throughout Myanmar. He called on participants to apply pressure on the military junta to allow parliamentarians who were in prison to see family members, lawyers and representatives of international organizations.

He called on the international community to express its support for the National Unity Government (NUG) of Myanmar and the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH), which were the only legitimate bodies representing the legislative and representative functions of the people of Myanmar. It was imperative for UN Member States to work with the NUG and CRPH in securing the cross-border delivery of humanitarian aid and to ban all representatives of the military junta from attending or participating in international-level meetings or conferences.

**The Moderator** expressed the full solidarity of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians with all victims of the military junta.

**Ms. E. Cuesta** (Ecuador) said that it was important to discuss the vulnerabilities of parliamentarians, especially in Ecuador, where the legal system was being used to delegitimize and silence opposition members. Many women from the opposition had been targeted, with some having been forced into exile. Without justice, there could be no democracy. The democratic institutions and judicial system in Ecuador were particularly fragile. She hoped that such discussions on parliamentary solidarity would help young parliamentarians learn about such issues early in their careers.

**Mr. H.A. Al-Ahmar** (Yemen) said that parliamentarians in Yemen were enduring exceptional hardship as a result of the Houthi-led coup. At least 50 parliamentarians had been killed, while many others had been forced to flee to other areas of the country. In liberated areas, parliamentarians had been granted special protection. It was well known that many countries were supporting the Houthi rebels. He hoped that the international community would take the opportunity to encourage the Islamic Republic of Iran to withdraw its support for the rebels. His delegation looked forward to continued dialogue with the IPU to provide further assistance to parliamentarians at risk.

**Mr. M. Hussain** (Pakistan) said that, as a neighbour of Afghanistan, Pakistan had hosted the largest number of refugees from the country over the last 40 years. Following the sudden departure of US forces from Afghanistan in August 2021, 700,000 more refugees had arrived in Pakistan. Some had gone on to other countries, but most remained in Pakistan. The situation in Afghanistan was not only a humanitarian crisis, but also a human rights catastrophe, especially in regard to the freedom of women. Pakistan fully supported the aspirations of freedom of the women of Afghanistan.

**Mr. M. Ali Sera** (Indonesia) expressed his country's solidarity and support to the people of Myanmar and the CRPH. He hoped that democracy would be fully restored in the country in the near future. It was crucial that future action was taken to implement the Five-Point Consensus agreed at the Summit of the Association of Southeast Asian States held in Jakarta, Indonesia, in April 2021 and to fully implement United Nations Security Council resolution 2669 (2022) on the situation in Myanmar.

Parliamentarians had a fundamental role in strengthening and consolidating democracy. He encouraged all Members to express their solidarity with those parliamentarians who faced violence. He called on all stakeholders to step up their collective efforts to protect parliamentarians at risk across the region.

**Ms. P. Aguirre** (Ecuador) said that a key component of solidarity was empathizing with parliamentary colleagues. A parliamentarian's role was to legislate and to provide oversight. Many multinational companies were strong opponents to new items of legislation, with some parliamentarians having faced significant harassment or violence as a result. Lawmakers in Latin America had been killed due to their support for legislation aimed at protecting the environment and

preventing further growth in the petrol and oil sector. Government authorities also frequently harassed parliamentarians, preventing them from performing their legislative duties effectively. There was no genuine independence between the executive, legislative and judicial branches of certain States, which posed a significant threat to the lives of both lawmakers and the people they represented. Women parliamentarians were at particular risk. They were not only the targets of sexual assault and violence but were also attacked on social media or mass media with the aim of ruining their reputation. Women also faced violence within the parliamentary system due to a lack of maternity and breastfeeding leave. Support and solidarity were needed to protect parliamentarians and to ensure future generations did not have to endure similar experiences. She called for strengthened actions of parliamentary solidarity within the IPU Assembly.

**Mr. S. Soendergaard** (Denmark) said that the defence of fundamental rights of parliamentarians was the starting point of any discussion on parliamentary solidarity. The paramount concern should be safeguarding of fundamental rights, regardless of the country involved, rather than becoming overly entangled in foreign political situations.

Offering solidarity to colleagues should always be accompanied by tangible actions. Parliamentarians could consider organizing actions regionally so as to engage more countries. Such regional activities could be discussed at future events.

**Ms. L. Crexell** (Argentina), panellist, said that the cases discussed during the present panel discussion were extreme examples. There was an urgent need to develop actions that could help all parliamentarians who were at risk. She drew attention to a number of possible solutions. First, regional, inter-parliamentary and geopolitical working groups could be set up to tackle the problems faced by parliamentarians who had been deprived of exercising their political rights. Second, it was important to raise awareness of potential actions and to share experiences so as to foster collaboration. Third, UN agencies should provide greater commitment in designing regional plans. Fourth, direct dialogue with victims should be established to ensure their voices could be heard.

**Ms. L. Quartapelle** (Italy), panellist, said that exerting pressure made a significant difference in supporting parliamentarians who were at risk. Regional groupings were important, but action taken through embassies and governments could prove to be more effective. It was crucial not only to exert pressure, but also to ensure that everyone contributed equally to assisting parliamentarians in need. The work carried out by colleagues during the present discussion in supporting Afghan parliamentarians was remarkable. All countries should emulate such action and provide assistance to parliamentarians and parliamentarian staff members who remained in Afghanistan.

**The Moderator** thanked all participants for their contributions and actions to protect parliamentarians at risk.

*The event ended at 17:15.*

## Workshop on sexual and reproductive health Preparing young people for a safe, healthy, fulfilling life: Parliamentarians advancing comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) with and for their communities

TUESDAY, 14 MARCH 2023

(Afternoon)

*The event was called to order at 17:00 by Ms. L. Clifford-Lee (Ireland), who acted as Moderator.*

**Mr. I. Čelić** (Croatia), member of the IPU Advisory Group on Health, delivering welcoming remarks on behalf of the Secretary General of the IPU in his absence, said that the aim of the workshop, co-organized with the World Health Organization (WHO), was to explain more about CSE, its importance to young people's health and well-being, and the key need for political will to ensure its provision. Through imparting specific knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, CSE was aimed at empowering young people to realize their health, well-being and dignity, develop respectful social and sexual relationships, and consider how their choices affected their own well-being and that of others. The IPU was proud to create opportunities for parliaments to exchange experiences, good practices and lessons learned about legislative challenges in the way of access to health. He looked forward to open, constructive and successful deliberations.

**The Moderator**, also welcoming participants, said that the workshop was intended as a safe space for an interesting and free-flowing interactive debate providing a learning experience for all on an important topic. She invited WHO Technical Lead Dr. Chandra-Mouli, who would be the first of several presenters, to speak about his work in the area of adolescent sexual reproductive health.

**Dr. V. Chandra-Mouli** (Scientist, Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research, WHO), presenter, accompanying his remarks with a number of digital slides, said that he would first address what adolescents in the 10-19 age group needed, in the broader sense, to grow and develop in good health; defined in the WHO Constitution of 1946 as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Globally, road injuries were a main cause of death for an estimated 1.5 million adolescents, tens of millions of adolescents suffered from conditions such as anaemia and anxiety disorder, and hundreds of millions embarked on behaviours that could eventually lead to death and disability. A package of actions had been developed in 1995 to prevent and respond to adolescent health problems through providing necessary information and skills, a safe and supportive environment, and health and counselling services. Being problem-free did not equate, however, with being fully prepared. A healthy, productive and engaged youth required assets such as academic achievement, along with agency, the ability to complete tasks well and contribute to family and community well-being, and an enabling environment. They also required a social safety net to prevent and reverse school dropout.

The specific aim of CSE was as described in the earlier welcoming remarks and sought to prepare adolescents for a healthy, happy and indeed pleasurable sexual and reproductive life. Adolescents needed CSE for a variety of reasons, including menstrual health, an important issue requiring a particular approach and more attention, especially with so many girls misinformed and unprepared for menstruation. Another reason was to equip adolescents – and girls above all as the main victims – to resist violence and sexual abuse and to seek help as needed. CSE could also support the contribution of adolescents to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 3, 4 and 5 concerning, respectively, good health and well-being, quality education, and gender equality, with an emphasis in the latter on respect, tolerance and inclusion, including in respect of those with alternative genders and sexual orientations.

Often wrongly perceived as teaching young people how to have sex, CSE was based on key concepts and learning objectives set out in the *International technical guidance on sexuality education* developed by five UN agencies, including the WHO, and covering such matters as decision-making, family life, and physical development. In 2021, those agencies had carried out a global stocktake of CSE, which countries termed differently in line with their social and cultural contexts. Overall, 85% of countries had CSE policies and strategies in place, with many incorporating CSE into formal national

curricula and working to improve CSE teaching capacities, engage parents and link up with health services. CSE was equally important for children out of school, many of them girls of secondary school age. Another factor to be taken on board was the explosion in online sexuality education prompted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In closing, he cited, in the context of no one being left behind, the example of a Jamaican non-governmental organization established some 40 years previously to support pregnant girls back to school by way of an award-winning programme that included education on sexuality and contraception. The positive outcomes of that initiative highlighted the importance of CSE as a tool for helping children and adolescents take charge of their lives. He himself proudly embraced CSE for his own children and promoted it enthusiastically in his public health role.

**The Moderator**, thanking Dr. Chandra-Mouli for his interesting overview, said that her country, Ireland, was set to update its CSE programme for 12-15-year-olds so as to equip them for navigating the modern world. Young children with smartphones were able to access pornography and age-inappropriate content, which was a dangerous introduction to sex and sexuality education, especially given the clear link between pornography, dysfunction and gender-based violence. Ireland's action on CSE was not without controversy or challenges, but Irish parliamentarians could help to promote its success by engaging on CSE with families and schools.

**Mr. F.E. Ndugulile** (United Republic of Tanzania), presenter and member of the IPU Advisory Group on Health, said that, with over 60% of its population aged under 24, his country was grappling with problems such as teenage pregnancy and HIV among young people, especially girls. Under-18s were protected by law from sexual abuse, with stringent penalties in place for offenders. The sexuality education provided from primary school to university was generally taught as part of life skills or other subjects on the curriculum and was not termed comprehensive as such. It was age-specific and tended to focus on HIV/AIDS prevention, including in pregnancy, and on discouraging young people from engaging in sexual activity early on. The introduction of CSE was a challenge, as many parents and religious and traditional leaders viewed it as an attempt to teach young people about sexual activity itself, while in some communities sexual rights were an additional delicate issue. The young generation turned for information to the digital space, where the content was uncoordinated, unregulated and unspecific, giving rise to misconceptions. Nonetheless, many young people used that content among themselves.

**The Moderator** said that the challenges facing young Tanzanians, such as access to inappropriate online content and pushback from parents and community leaders, were strikingly similar to those in Ireland, if not also elsewhere.

**Ms. M. Brawer** (Argentina), presenter, said that her country's law on sexuality education had required a strong political decision in the face of conservative opposition. Past sexuality education in schools had promoted gender stereotypes and avoided real issues around sexuality, which sent a dangerous message and had justified the need for such a law. Under the law, sexuality education was a right that the State was obliged to provide as from kindergarten. Families had the right to teach their children beliefs and values. The State, however, was required to educate children on issues such as contraception, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and unwanted pregnancy. With sexuality education now cutting across all school subjects, teachers educated under the former system were faced with an immense amount of work and also brought their own ingrained prejudices to bear. As required by the new law, the content of the sexuality education curriculum was explained to parents to alleviate any fears of theirs on that score. Countless sexuality education materials supplied to families with the aim of promoting conversations around the subject had been primarily used by the adults to educate themselves. As a huge country with many ideologies at play, Argentina faced challenges in implementing the new law. CSE was not only about sexual and reproductive health; it played a role in changing attitudes to gender equality and diversity.

**The Moderator** said that she was again struck by the similarities in challenges across the globe, as reflected in the important point made about teachers needing to be taught themselves about CSE, which some no doubt resisted because they felt uncomfortable after being let down by the past system.

**Ms. G. Katuta Mwelwa** (Zambia), presenter and member of the IPU Advisory Group on Health, said that CSE was a sensitive and controversial topic, including notably, in Africa where parliamentarians felt it had been thrust upon them and had had difficulty grasping the concept owing to lack of information. In the past, CSE in Zambia had been more about sanitary towel use, whereas it should now address such issues as STDs and HIV infections, which were rising among youth. When very young children were being taught sex via social media, the challenge was to dispel the common notion that CSE did the same as opposed to teaching children, particularly girls, to protect themselves from HIV and teenage pregnancy. Zambia had recently made it a criminal offence for parents to marry off teenage girls and was set to follow suit in matters of teenage pregnancy. CSE must also teach children their rights and be harmonized with the social environment so as to end the controversies surrounding it. To raise awareness of CSE and its benefits, parliamentarians should campaign hard in rural areas above all, using direct means and not radio and television, which, even if accessible, did not broadcast in local languages. Nor should leafleting be used, as not all young people were literate. In urban areas, substance abuse among children was an additional problem, as it led to school dropout, which was a hindrance to sexuality education.

**The Moderator** said that Zambia was to be commended for its positive step of outlawing child marriage, which would surely reap benefits for the country in the coming years.

**Ms. P. Stienen** (Netherlands), presenter, said that much pain in society would be avoided if all individuals were able to make well-informed choices about their sexuality, about with whom to have children or not and how many, and to enjoy and have pleasure with their own body. It was a myth that such personal issues were irrelevant to the current Assembly's theme of fighting intolerance through promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies. To be seen as a pioneer of sexual liberties, as in the Netherlands' case, was not as ideal as imagined. On the one hand, CSE in the Netherlands' schools had led young people to refrain from sex until later than their peers elsewhere. On the other, 50% of women in the country had experienced some form of sexual violence. Parliamentarians would do well to ask one another about their sexuality education to find out what it had entailed.

With CSE in the Netherlands delivered only to those studying biology, young people turned for information to the internet, which gave rise to other problems, such as the potential exposure to pornography, as already mentioned. Having invariably received their sexual education decades earlier, parliamentarians should educate themselves about innovative approaches to sexual and reproductive health and about new technological developments. All parliaments needed a safe space in which to discuss sexual and reproductive health and rights and ensure that legal systems provided for CSE before there was any further backlash from proponents of the gender role ideology. Making well-informed choices about sexuality was a human right for which all parliamentarians must fight.

**The Moderator**, expressing thanks for that food for thought, invited the presenters to share their responses to the discussion.

**Dr. V. Chandra-Mouli** (Scientist, Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research, WHO), presenter, said that some countries appeared to have progressed further along their CSE journey than others but that all shared the desire for their children to grow up as healthy, happy, prosocial and productive individuals. Although the routes to that end differed slightly, there was much more in common than not. Sex should be talked about as any other normal part of life so as to prepare young people for it when the time came. To hear about the moves in that direction and the breadth of experiences was very satisfying.

**Mr. F.E. Ndugulile** (United Republic of Tanzania), presenter and member of the IPU Advisory Group on Health, said that there was clearly much still to be done in the area of CSE in most countries and that dialogue to build consensus should continue. CSE was not a case of one glove fits all, however, and must be customized in line with the values, norms, traditions and religious beliefs in the area or region concerned. For their part, parliamentarians must advocate for youth-friendly sexual and reproductive services, which were unfortunately unavailable in many countries, including his, despite the demand. The use of technology to advance sexuality education should also be further explored, as was being done in his country, especially with a view to reaching out to out-of-school youth and others with access to mobile telephones and other devices.

**Ms. P. Stienen** (Netherlands), presenter, said that she was glad to see men attending the workshop, as CSE often became focused on protecting girls and women, which was quite right, but it was also necessary to address patriarchal norms hurtful to young boys and indeed men. Horrible expectations were placed on men thanks to pornographic images or popular stereotypes that did no justice to their rights as sexual human beings capable of making their own decisions. Men and boys must therefore be included in all CSE programmes. Some series available on streaming services, such as *Sex Education*, were worth watching with children, as they opened up the discussion on the diverse challenges faced by young people and also provoked curiosity about how to enjoy one's own sexual life.

**Ms. M. Brawer** (Argentina), presenter, said that the rise in intolerance, hate speech and restrictions of rights and freedoms must be countered not only through appropriate legislation but also through dialogue, including with those opposed to debating certain issues. The absence of such a debate in democratic institutions would lead to further intolerance and end in dystopia.

**Ms. G. Katuta Mwelwa** (Zambia), presenter and member of the IPU Advisory Group on Health, said that the overriding focus on girls was unfair on boys, who could also be sexually abused and in need of support but whose social conditioning made them too ashamed to open up, prompting some to take their own lives. Discussions around CSE should therefore recognize situations that could be faced by boys as well as girls. Girls in particular, however, must be taught to own their bodies so as to avoid teenage pregnancy and the risks – sometimes fatal – of illegal abortion, while boys must be taught to respect girls and not treat them as sex objects. Parliamentarians must work to address those issues, among others, and catch up in areas where they were lagging behind.

**The Moderator**, after drawing attention to the role of civil society in CSE development, invited the Executive Director of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) to give her reflections on what she had heard.

**Ms. H. Fogstad** (Executive Director, PMNCH) said that it was important to continue demystifying CSE by making it explicitly clear that it was intended to educate children, not about the act of sex but about taking charge of their own lives. "My body, my decision, my choice" was a concept to be taught as from kindergarten and to be taken on board by parliamentarians as part of enhancing their understanding of CSE so as to strengthen related laws and create an enabling environment for better delivery of CSE curricula. The challenge lay in how to partner with constituencies, including traditional and religious leaders, parents, teachers and health care professionals, so as to develop a whole-of-community approach. Along with dialogue, positive capacity-building to that end was key to driving CSE forward.

**The Moderator** welcomed the Secretary General of the IPU to the discussion and invited him to contribute.

**Mr. M. Chungong** (Secretary General of the IPU) said that the topic of sexual and reproductive health was very close to his heart and that he had been especially keen, as a member of the PMNCH Board and of the High-Level Commission on the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25 Follow-up, to ensure that the workshop took place. At the recent launch of the Commission's second report, emphasis had been laid on the need to promote CSE in the context of access to sexual and reproductive health justice, which was a human right and was linked with universal health coverage. He had therefore been pleased to inform his fellow Commissioners that the IPU was to hold the current workshop. As the subject was not without controversy, such a forthright discussion within a conservative institution like the IPU was laudable. The IPU would follow up on the discussion as a priority, in line with his promise to bring issues crucial to the well-being of marginalized groups, including young girls, to the table. Equitable access to health and CSE was an essential part of ensuring justice for all.

**The Moderator** thanked the Secretary General for his generous remarks and invited comments from the floor, including with an eye to what parliamentarians could do to ensure that children and adolescents got the information and education needed for them to grow and develop in good health.

**A representative of Morocco** said that the topic of discussion was indeed difficult, with the responsibility of schools, families and the wider world at play. No tangible progress would be achieved, however, unless it was recognized that daily lives were controlled by digital technology, which was a reality to be factored into any conversation about CSE. As observed by the Moderator, the same issues were being experienced across the globe, and consequently, countries were sharing the same priorities. In the light of new phenomena such as online violence against women and children, a fresh approach was needed. Children not receiving CSE from an early age would rely instead on information gleaned from social media and other sources, something that parents were unable to prevent in a world that could no longer function without smartphones and computers. Not all children were raised in the same tradition and with the same values, however, and there was therefore no one-size-fits-all solution. That aside, the world had changed and its inhabitants had to change with it.

**A representative of Norway**, noting that many of the challenges mentioned were present in his country, said that he had as a former education minister made use of the *International technical guidance on sexuality education* to include CSE as an overarching theme in the reform of the entire Norwegian school curriculum. It was nonetheless challenging to put CSE into practice. It looked good on paper, but students found it irrelevant or inappropriate and believed teachers to be oblivious to how they currently lived their lives. He would be interested to learn from others about measures taken to adapt sexuality education to the times and keep it relevant, as Norway relied heavily on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide CSE, which was not entirely their responsibility to do. His tip for parliamentarians was to establish an informal cross-party parliamentary group on sexuality education, as the Norwegian Parliament had done. The group annually organized a sexuality education class for all Norwegian parliamentarians, which was informative and fun.

**Ms. A. Larouche** (Canada) said that one of her country's parliamentary committees had recently shone the spotlight on women's sexual and reproductive rights, an area of activity to which Canada had contributed much around the world, including through the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and NGOs such as Oxfam International. Investment in that area should be increased, along with efforts to work with local organizations on the ground, to improve women's access to their right to health – both physical and mental – in countries where, for example, potentially life-threatening illegal abortions were rife and where women and girls in forced marriages were at risk of AIDS. The consequences for women and girls in those circumstances were enormous. In Quebec, the toxic masculinity permeating the hockey culture was being countered through education, which was an example of initiatives that could, and should, continue to be replicated.

**A representative of India** said that his country had been among the first to develop a legal and policy framework for guaranteeing access to abortion and contraception. As to the male image in society, he had been criticized for speaking in parliament in favour of lifting the tax on sanitary towels. The worrying message to men was, therefore, that they should not address women's issues, whereas he believed that it was the real men who did so. With regard to CSE, it was clearly not aimed at teaching sex but at addressing the important question of deciding when to have sexual relations and with whom, which was as relevant to boys as to girls. CSE in schools would help to protect girls from sexual exploitation but it was first of all vital to ban child marriage outright, as his country had done, which would go some way towards reducing other problems with which those marriages were associated.

**Ms. U.F.N. Begum** (Bangladesh) said that children should receive sexuality education from an early age in the home setting. Boys as well as girls could be sexually harassed or encounter other difficulties relating to sexuality, but those were taboo subjects that caused boys to miss out on necessary support, putting them at risk of becoming sexual offenders themselves. Girls also needed support and education to help them avoid unwanted pregnancies and child marriage with its related health issues, including miscarriage. The importance of contraception, including for health reasons, should also be impressed upon young people.

**Mr. S. Ouedraogo** (Burkina Faso) said that parliaments must enact appropriate high-quality laws imposing strict penalties for violations of women's rights in general. As Burkina Faso lacked resources, it was important for partners to mobilize in support of its efforts to promote and raise awareness of sexual and reproductive health. The country's young women and girls were victims of terrorist attacks on villages from where they were kidnapped and in which they were systematically

raped, a prospect that caused some of them to contemplate suicide. The insecurity was also creating internal displacement, which made girls vulnerable to sexual abuse, a further problem about which the public should be made aware. He called on the international community and partners to devote special attention to all those issues.

**Dr. V. Chandra-Mouli** (Scientist, Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Research, WHO), presenter, said in his concluding remarks that the interest generated among parliamentarians by the workshop had been overwhelming. The discussion had underscored the need to educate across the life course, but much more remained to be done and further considered. Although, as acknowledged, there were sensitivities, it was necessary to move forward for the sake of public health, human rights and humanity itself. To that end, the WHO was committed to working with the PMNCH, UNAIDS and IPU Members on finding ways of engaging with parliamentarians on the issue over the coming decade, as it entailed not a campaign, but a long-term commitment.

**The Moderator** said that all participants must now take the discussion back home with them and engage on it with their fellow parliamentarians, even if the conversations were not entirely comfortable. To do so was essential to delivering the best for young people.

*The event ended at 18:40.*

# The Call of the Sahel: A global response

## Meeting series on counter-terrorism

### *Mitigating the impact of security threats by building resilience in the Sahel*

**SATURDAY, 11 MARCH 2023**

(Afternoon)

*The event was called to order at 14:45 by Ms. A Vadai (Hungary), as the Moderator.*

**The Moderator** welcomed participants to the third thematic meeting in the global response counter-terrorism series on the Sahel region that would address mitigating the impact of security threats by building resilience.

**Mr. M.S. Maki** (Chad), panellist, said that since the First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism held in September 2021 in Vienna, concerted efforts were being made by governments, parliaments and other partners to counter the dangerous phenomenon of terrorism, and parliamentarians were discussing the issue only 10 days after the second thematic meeting held in Algeria. Despite an overall downward trend in terrorism elsewhere in the world, the Sahel region was experiencing an increase in violence. It had been at the heart of environmental and economic challenges for more than a decade and was experiencing security threats in the form of illegal immigration, drug trafficking, trade in weapons, violent extremism and unemployment. Greater solidarity and the pooling of efforts were required to eradicate those phenomena or at least curb their impact on society. It was important not to lose sight of the pivotal role that parliaments could play in the fight against terrorism and in economic, cultural and social development, including through the approval of legislation, and programme and project financing.

The Interparliamentary Committee of the G5 Sahel (CIP G5 Sahel) had begun considering the issue of terrorism and violent extremism very early on and had developed a three-year plan, including a number of projects and strategies that aimed to eliminate the main causes of terrorism, with a particular focus on the Sahel region. The CIP G5 Sahel supported efforts to overcome geographical hurdles and ensure safety and security, and had interacted with experts and partners to ensure that terrorism was viewed as a global phenomenon.

In order to respond to the scourge of terrorism, cooperation and solidarity among States must prevail over micronationalism and individual actions by States. The international community must pool its efforts and ensure synergies between subregional communities, and actions must be global in scope. Significant financial resources had to be mobilized to ensure progress in combating terrorism and violent extremism. Parliamentarians and parliamentary advisors had the institutional clout to influence action at the strategic level to change the situation. He hoped that the work with different countries and with technical and financial partners would be strengthened further, leading to the success of efforts to achieve stability and security in the Sahel region.

**The Moderator** agreed that the international community had a responsibility to find a solution to ensure the safety and security of the people of the Sahel region.

*A short video was shown of highlights from the second thematic meeting of the Call of the Sahel entitled “Engaging communities in the prevention of violent extremism and addressing the conditions conducive to terrorism”, held in Algiers, Algeria, on 26 and 27 February 2023.*

**The Secretary General** said that the subject under discussion was of critical importance to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The *Call of the Sahel* initiative was one of the most important — if not the most important — component of the IPU’s counter-terrorism programme, and he was pleased that a dedicated group of parliamentarians was spearheading the work to overcome the scourge of violent extremism and terrorism.

The Sahel region had become the global capital of terrorism and, consisting of mostly desert, provided an environment conducive to the deployment of terrorist groups. As the countries of the G5 Sahel covered approximately 5 million km<sup>2</sup>, which equated to around 50% of the area of Europe or of the United States of America, the task of fighting terrorism in the Sahel region was a formidable one. Over the previous decade, the region had experienced the largest increase in terrorist-related fatalities in the world. According to the Global Terrorism Index 2022, the number of deaths from terrorism had doubled in Niger, and similar growth had been experienced in neighbouring countries, such as Burkina Faso and Mali. Terrorism was not an abstract phenomenon; it posed a serious threat to peace, stability and development in the Sahel region, as emphasized by the authorities of the G5 Sahel countries.

It would not be possible to prevent and fight terrorism effectively without addressing the root causes. Most of those who engaged in terrorism did so out of frustration about their limited opportunities. Accordingly, a way must be found to give economic opportunities to those most in need and hope to those without it. The *Call of the Sahel* must not simply be another set of endless meetings but should have a positive and tangible impact on the populations concerned through stronger, more coherent and appropriate actions in the fight against terrorism.

Parliamentarians were on the front line in creating the conditions for peace since they held the levers of budgetary allocations and were at the centre of oversight of the executive arm of government. They were duty-bound to send a strong signal to the international community through concrete action and measures on the ground, and he assured parliamentarians of the IPU's full support for strong actions to combat terrorism. However, fighting terrorism was a community endeavour and parliamentarians needed to work with a variety of stakeholders, including religious leaders and civil society.

In closing, he called in particular on parliamentarians from the Sahel region to actively promote the *Call of the Sahel* initiative and guide the work of the IPU in supporting the efforts to fight terrorism in the region. They should share their concerns and expectations of the global parliamentary community so that the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG) could integrate those expectations into programmes of actions.

**Mr. M. Bouden** (Algeria), panellist, said that the second thematic meeting of the *Call of the Sahel* held in Algiers had focused on engaging local communities. Numerous stakeholders, including tribal elders and representatives, locally elected leaders, religious scientists and parliamentarians from the Sahel region had attended the event. All participants had had an opportunity to express their views at the meeting, which had culminated in the preparation of an outcome document. He thanked HLAG for its contribution and the IPU for supporting the meeting.

A new vision was required to address the challenges in the Sahel region where terrorism had led to a number of sub-crises. It had also resulted in the equally dangerous scourge of illegal migration with hundreds of citizens from the region seeking greater security and opportunities in Europe. In order to combat the scourge of terrorism, the international community had a responsibility to ensure that citizens were safe and secure in their own countries. The IPU must exert more efforts in that regard and should be supported in that endeavour by all parliaments. The international community must act quickly to combat terrorism in the Sahel region and prevent it from finding space to flourish in other areas of the world.

**Mr. M. Omar** (Senior Adviser to the IPU Secretary General), panellist, recalling that more than 735 meetings and 125 conferences on the Sahel region had been held, said that it was high time to stop talking and move to the action phase. Efforts must be made to harmonize and coordinate all relevant international initiatives to ensure better use of resources. Any solution to the challenges of the Sahel region must not be imposed by other countries but led by the African people. The IPU must work to rebuild trust between Africa and Europe, regional partners and international organizations. Private security companies had been present in the Sahel region to counter terrorism but were no longer able to fulfil their work because of the conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Another issue was how the future of the Sahel region should be envisaged given the proliferation of terrorist ideologies. Security should be ensured not by armies but built through development, education and trust. The situation in the Sahel region should be a greater priority for parliamentarians.

**The Moderator** said that parliamentarians on all continents did care about the people of the Sahel region and underscored the role of parliaments in ensuring safe and secure environments for citizens.

**Mr. S. Stroobants** (Director, Europe and MENA, Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)), panellist, said that of the five thematic meetings under the *Call of the Sahel* initiative, those on the environment and security measured impact and the other three on community, education and development dealt with improving resilience. Strong and resilient communities were able to tackle the root causes of violent extremism, terrorism and destabilization. However, the Sahel region was a hotspot for environmental insecurity. Some 89% of food insecure people lived in sub-Saharan Africa where the population was expected to increase by 95% over the next 30 years. Furthermore, the region was home to 6 of the 10 least peaceful countries in the world and to 7 of the 8 countries with the greatest ecological risk.

The impact of terrorism in the Sahel region had been increasing steadily for the previous 15 years. According to the Global Terrorism Index 2023, the impact of terrorism globally had increased by 4% although the Taliban had become a State actor and was no longer included in the Index. The Islamic State and its affiliates remained the most deadly terrorist group. The Islamic State and al-Shabaab remained the two main terrorist actors in the Sahel region and the lethality rate had increased by 26%. In contrast however, governments were becoming less and less capable of tackling the security situation and terrorism.

The epicentre of terrorism now lay within sub-Saharan Africa, notably the Sahel region. In 2022, 43% of all terrorist attacks and deaths globally had taken place in the Sahel, which was an increase of 7% over the previous year. The interplay between strategic factors influencing peace and security, such as destabilization, violence, terrorism and ecological impact, was aggravating the situation in certain locations in the Sahel region and generating greater destabilization and security impact, and less resilience. Over the previous year, an increasing number of attacks in the Sahel region had not been claimed by any terrorist organization. Terrorism was becoming a business model for the entire region because of the poor levels of resilience.

Furthermore, many of the capabilities sent to the Sahel region by other countries had been redirected to Ukraine and the people of the Sahel region were less receptive to foreign intervention. The concentration of material and financial resources on Ukraine meant that other parts of the world were not receiving the focus they deserved and conditions were being created for international terrorist groups to impact those regions. Five of the 10 countries most impacted by terrorism were located in the Sahel region. Burkina Faso and Mali had seen the largest and third largest increases, respectively, in the impact of terrorism over the previous year. Deaths not linked to terrorism but to other forms of violence and conflict had increased considerably in the Sahel region over the previous five to six years, demonstrating a lack of preparedness and resilience and weak local authorities.

Research conducted by the IEP showed that strategic factors, such as ecological threats, the use of violence, destabilization, lack of resilience and terrorism all intersected in specific geolocations in the Sahel, destabilizing the entire region. The research also enabled authorities to identify the priorities to be set through a systemic analysis of the problem. The IEP also considered institutional structures and the attitudes to be developed to create and maintain more peaceful, equitable and resilient societies (positive peace). Such a systemic approach was conducive to training from the top down to the grassroots level, and training had been provided in various countries, including Libya. A project on positive peace training was currently being implemented in some areas of the Philippines and several young people had decided to abandon terrorist groups and their radicalized views after 6 to 12 months of positive peace training. The training was to be rolled out across the Philippines.

Such an approach of conducting research to identify priorities, and of mitigating impact, increasing resilience through positive peace and ongoing monitoring and evaluation could have potential for the Sahel region. Local solutions and approaches were central in positive peace training and a framework should be provided for communities to develop their own solutions. Strong communities and resilience were also essential. Noting that Europe remained the most peaceful and resilient region of the world and the least impacted by ecological degradation and terrorism, he said that Western countries, partners and stakeholders needed to find the strength to support local solutions in the Sahel. Leaders had a responsibility to help others achieve the same levels of resilience and preparedness.

**The Moderator** said that all stakeholders should recognize their responsibilities. The countries of the Sahel region should be honest and admit that they required assistance and the international community should also admit that it had made mistakes. No region that faced problems should be left to deal with them alone.

**Ms. M. Guerra Castillo** (Mexico) said that drug trafficking was a growing business that had diversified into other areas, such as extortion, kidnapping and assassination. Given its violent consequences, including in the Sahel region, drug trafficking might therefore also be viewed as a form of terrorism.

**Mr. M.F. Baldé** (Guinea) asked about the impact of terrorism in areas of the Sahel region that were not inhabited. Noting that exclusion could encourage an individual to adopt radical positions and to engage in terrorism, the question was whether the effect of factors such as electoral fraud and attempts by Heads of State to remain in power, including outside the Sahel region, were being taken into account. Authorities should be careful not to generate frustration among the population and he drew attention to the recent repatriation by countries of their citizens from Tunisia.

**Mr. B. Balbone** (Burkina Faso) said that strong, common action against violent extremism must be taken and support provided to affected countries, including his own. Many such countries had porous borders and did not have the means to combat such a challenging issue as terrorism; the problem would only escalate unless timely action was taken. The IPU should work with sister organizations to provide technical and financial support to the countries concerned. He asked how the initiative being implemented in the Philippines might be replicated in the countries of the Sahel region that were struggling to combat terrorism.

**Mr. B.N. Tankoano** (Executive Secretary, CIP G5 Sahel) commended the work of the IEP and asked what concrete actions it had identified from its research activities that could be of tangible benefit to countries.

**Mr. G. Craughwell** (Ireland) said that migration, which was now being run by criminal gangs, was a great concern. As migrants were often forced by their traffickers to relinquish their documents, it was very difficult to determine their identity and nationality during processing. Terrorist cells might therefore have been imported into countries all over the world, which was a concern. The West had stolen the resources of the countries under discussion and needed to rectify the situation, not through the provision of financial resources, which often fell into the wrong hands, but through the provision of education and training to empower citizens. The deployment of private security companies to allegedly secure those countries was outrageous and the international community should demonstrate greater honesty, particularly towards those in Africa. He asked what simple steps participants could share with their parliaments to promote the development of the countries of the Sahel region.

**Ms. C. Soucy** (Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie) underscored the importance of including women in the negotiation and reconstruction process.

**Mr. H. Traoré** (Mali) said that terrorism had been discussed for decades by the international community, yet it had not been eradicated. His country had been obliged to take matters into its own hands to combat terrorism and wanted to choose its own partners in a sovereign manner. The international community had failed to help combat the scourge of terrorism in the country. The considerable resources at the disposal of terrorist groups, including in Mali, came from somewhere, and there were entities represented at the IPU that were financing terrorism. Effective action, not simply dialogue, was required, and the developed countries should play their part in assisting developing countries and in finding a solution, including in the Sahel region. Development and prosperity were essential to prevent migration. He called for the convening of a meeting with developed countries.

**Mr. M. Reddad** (Morocco) said that the situation in the Sahel region was extremely serious, not only for the countries themselves, but also for the entire African continent and Europe. Security threats and ongoing activities by armed terrorist groups were being supported by others, and alternative solutions must be found to combat the scourge of terrorism. Efforts should be made to mobilize the security forces of the countries in the Sahel region, and his country would continue to train military personnel from those countries in facilities in Morocco. Human, economic and social development was essential, and Morocco stood ready to share its experience and knowledge with others. Arming children and young people was a serious matter that must be addressed and had been criminalized in Morocco. Recalling a recent television interview, he trusted that the European media was not conniving with terrorists responsible for certain terrorist activities in the Sahel region.

**Mr. S. Stroobants** (Director, Europe and MENA, IEP), panellist, said that drug trafficking was considered as another form of violence and destabilization, and was measured in the Global and Mexico Peace Indexes. Although a connection through the crime-terror nexus existed and the proceeds from the trafficking of people, equipment, drugs and weapons might be used to fund terrorist activities, drug trafficking did not meet the definition of narcoterrorism.

Geolocation had shown that the hubs of violence and destabilization in the Sahel region were often close to areas rich in minerals. However, it was important to remember terrorism was a global phenomenon. Strong structures were required for positive peace and attitudes needed to change.

Jihadist groups had spread from the Middle East and North Africa to the Sahel region, not because of religion, but because of conflicts in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. International terrorist groups had moved to regions that were less resilient where their ideologies were more likely to take hold. A concentration of services in the capital and weaker governance in remote areas of countries such as Mali and the Niger was also problematic. The positive peace plan implemented initially in a part of the Philippines had had a beneficial affect at all levels, strengthened institutions and structures and led to a systemic change in people's frame of mind. Local communities had to be supported in finding their own solutions.

The IEP was an independent, non-partisan and non-governmental body that sought to foster peace, resilience and conditions in society to enable all individuals to fulfil their full potential. The European Union was hearing more calls for the Global South to receive the respect and dignity that it deserved. It was hoped that the approach of European countries to the Global South would change. Much of the training provided by the Institute was given to women, who were key to peace building in communities. A gender-based approach was also important for some of the pillars of positive peace, namely equitable distribution of resources, acceptance of the rights of others and development of human capital. Furthermore, with the African population set to grow significantly in the future, particular attention should also be given to young people.

In countries affected by extreme violence and conflict, around 40% of gross domestic product (GDP) was used for managing violence. Accordingly, funds for other areas, such as development and resilience, were limited and external support was required. An analysis undertaken by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had shown the considerable negative economic impact of extreme violence and terrorism, which would have to be tackled before other priorities such as development or governance could be addressed.

The role of the media was key. Western countries received 89% of the global media impact of terrorism but only 1% of the global terrorist impact. Although the terrorist attacks in Pakistan had claimed many more lives than the Paris and Brussels attacks, they had not been as widely reported in the Western media. The main drivers of terrorism, namely conflicts, political destabilization and lack of respect for human rights, should also be highlighted.

Recalling some of the initiatives being undertaken by the UN Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT) Programme Office in Rabat, he said that some countries were shifting from a purely security-focused to a capacity-building approach. Similar initiatives were being set up by France and the UAE in Côte d'Ivoire, which would improve resilience and prevention.

By way of conclusion, he said that leaders must lead by example. However, there was no clear policy or legislation and a case-by-case approach was being adopted by certain countries. Furthermore, no international development efforts were being made to create the conditions to encourage citizens to remain in their countries and prevent violence and destabilization.

**Mr. M. Omar** (Senior Adviser to the IPU Secretary General), panellist, said that the way in which trust was rebuilt was of great importance and European parliamentarians that championed the Sahel cause were essential. The flow of immigration from Africa to Europe was serious against a backdrop of such strong population growth in Africa. He thanked Morocco for its work focusing on the Sahel region.

**The Moderator** underscoring the importance of mutual trust, dignity and respect, said that women should be part of the process of peace. While the media was sometimes challenging, free press and media were important and could highlight areas for improvement.

**Panel discussion: *Challenges of the security situation in the Sahel and the solutions to end the crisis: The challenges faced by the States of the Sahel and the international community***

**Mr. B.N. Tankoano** (Executive Secretary, CIP G5 Sahel), panellist, said that although terrorism did not spare any region of the world, the Sahel region had become a geostrategic and geopolitical focus. It was regrettable, however, that countries were reluctant to assist the region. There was a strong presence of numerous terrorist groups in the Sahel and terrorism was spreading to other countries in west Africa. There were a variety of factors that had led to the terrorism, including political instability prompted in part by the bombing and destabilization of Libya without prior consultation with African countries: weak military institutions, porous borders, unresolved conflicts, social injustice, underdevelopment, poverty and youth unemployment. Community involvement was essential in

combating terrorism, and while it was on the rise in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, it was still lacking in some countries. The existence of organized criminal gangs made the region a fertile ground for terrorist activities.

Terrorism and violent extremism manifested themselves in the Sahel region through political and military conflicts. The number of terrorist groups and lives lost was increasing. The terrorist groups were very adaptable. They had their own supply chains and access to more advanced tools and technologies than national armies, which made it increasingly difficult to counter their actions. Their aims included undermining the authorities and the legitimacy of the State in the eyes of the public, seizing power, establishing a trafficking corridor to the rest of the world and imposing Sharia law. The modalities of operation varied from complex attacks against government, religious and community authorities to ambushes, although a trend was emerging away from attacks in capitals to attacks in more peripheral areas. The humanitarian consequences of the terrorist activities in the Sahel region were considerable. Some five million people had been internally displaced and around 20,000 had died.

The region was particularly vulnerable to terrorist activities because of factors including governance issues, difficulties in mounting a regional response and in controlling the security sector. Although there had been some international military interventions to improve the security situation in the Sahel region, parliamentarians from the region had not been able to control the actions of the foreign armed forces. Such a scenario would be unthinkable for European parliamentarians, and the IPU and other stakeholders should intervene to ensure that parliamentarians were able to control the actions of foreign armed forces in the Sahel region.

The international community had failed in the Sahel. Despite the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, which was made up of 64 different nationalities, terrorism activities had increased. The international community must therefore reconsider its actions in the Sahel region. It had refused to intervene on the basis of Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations and had provided little support to the G5 Sahel. There had also been limited investment in social projects, but it had assured prompt and continued mobilization of resources for the conflict in Ukraine. The international community's communication with the countries of the Sahel region and the United Nations strategy of communicating directly with the terrorists must be reviewed and a new diplomatic approach adopted.

**Mr. S. Al-Kareem** (Arab Parliament) thanked the IPU for its efforts to strengthen peace and security in the vital Sahel region, including through the holding of thematic meetings on the *Call of the Sahel*. Despite numerous international attempts to bolster security and stability in the region, however, several challenges persisted. First, terrorism in the Sahel region remained the highest priority among the security difficulties in the region. Counter-terrorism efforts had not proven successful and new and effective policies and approaches were required. Second, the weak role of the State in some areas was another challenge. Certain armed groups with considerable financial resources had positioned themselves as providers of social services and economic assistance. Furthermore, the instability in the region created a fertile ground for reinforcing the capabilities of armed groups at the expense of the State. Third, the growing relationship between terrorist organizations and organized crime in the Sahel region presented numerous challenges, and organized crime constituted a major source of financing for terrorist activities. Fourth, the considerable international interest in the Sahel region was based on the narrow political interests of the major powers. Instead of strengthening security and stability and the fight against terrorism it had led to a lack of complementarity in counter-terrorism policies in the region, and to a crisis of confidence between domestic forces in the region and international players. Fifth, the weak funding and lack of logistical resources for the military and security forces had a direct impact on the security situation in the Sahel region.

There was an urgent need for a comprehensive review of all domestic and international policies in order to preserve security and stability in the vital Sahel region.

**Mr. M. Fouda** (Terrorism Prevention Branch, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)), panellist, speaking via video link, said that UNODC and the IPU enjoyed a fruitful partnership in ensuring that the principles of the rule of law, legality and due process were fully respected in all national and international counter-terrorism efforts. Recognizing the need for concrete actions, he said that, through its Terrorism Prevention Branch, UNODC was a key United Nations entity delivering counter-terrorism technical assistance with a focus on promoting a criminal justice response to terrorism.

There had been significant developments in the landscape of terrorism in the Sahel region in recent years. Major global terrorist organizations were expanding in Africa through their affiliates: two of the three most dynamic affiliates of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, namely the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara and the Islamic State in West Africa Province, were in Africa and the most successful Al-Qaida affiliate had been able to expand its operations in the Sahel and West Africa. Terrorist and violent extremist groups exploited local grievances to establish a strong foothold in local communities. The perception by certain vulnerable groups and communities that they had been left behind had been systematically exploited by terrorist groups for radicalization and recruitment purposes. Other key enablers of terrorist activities in the region included the long and porous borders between African countries and the spread of radical messages through cultural, educational and religious institutions, the media and the internet.

Several conflict zones and battlefields had been established primarily where civilian criminal justice actors were not able to act as first responders. Military actors had therefore become the de facto first responders and were entrusted with the important role of supporting the criminal justice response to terrorist incidents. Despite the security and military nature of such responses, they aimed to serve criminal justice and prosecution-related goals. However, an increase in the number of successful prosecutions or trials of terrorists captured during such operations had not been observed, which was a major setback for counter-terrorism efforts. Challenges identified included the lack of inter-agency coordination between first responders, law enforcement and criminal justice actors; the absence of an adequate legal framework for such collaboration; and insufficient knowledge among first responders of basic legal and technical requirements to collect and preserve evidence.

To help Member States face such challenges, UNODC in collaboration with other United Nations agencies and international partners including Belgium, Germany, Italy and the United States, had designed and delivered technical assistance programmes for several African countries. The aim, in principle, was to introduce institutional reform by enhancing interagency cooperation and coordination and to increase the first responders' understanding of legal and technical aspects related to observing the chain of custody. A memorandum of understanding and standard operating procedures had been developed and a comprehensive training programme had been implemented. UNODC had also been developing other initiatives to address certain challenges in the region, including an integrated border stability mechanism in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and a strategy for screening, prosecuting, rehabilitating and reintegrating persons associated with terrorist groups. UNODC had developed a stand-alone programme for countering the nexus between terrorism and organized crime, including the trafficking of drugs and arms, for several countries facing such challenges in coastal and North Africa. It was also working on countering emerging terrorist threats and provided technical assistance to support terrorist victims and initiatives to counter radicalization and extremism, including by promoting the role of women leaders in the justice and security sectors. UNODC was also involved in several regional and subregional initiatives.

Although terrorism and violent extremism threatened both the rule of law and the fundamental freedoms of citizens and society, inappropriate counter-terrorism responses could further exacerbate the situation. Relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions had reaffirmed that counter-terrorism measures must comply with international law and had conveyed a strong message that respect for human rights was not only a legal obligation but also essential to the success of any counter-terrorism measures. For an effective counter-terrorism response, States' legal procedures should function effectively and be able to deal with potentially complex criminal cases.

Effective prevention and response to terrorism should include a strong criminal justice element based on a normative legal framework that respected the core principles of the rule of law, due process and respect for human rights. Parliamentarians played a critical role in developing a comprehensive counter-terrorism legal regime that reinforced the rule of law and justice at the national and local levels. National counter-terrorism strategies should be revised regularly to ensure an adequate response to evolving threats.

He commended the IPU's efforts in mobilizing and encouraging much-needed support for Africa, in particular in the Sahel region, to address the growing threat of terrorism. Africa was also a priority for his organization and the UNODC Strategic Vision for Africa 2030 sought to respond to the specific needs and priorities of African countries. UNODC had also developed a new global programme on strengthening the legal regime against terrorism, which focused more on prevention and would include research on different terrorist threats and engagement with women and civil society in countering and preventing violent extremism.

Given the rise of terrorist-related challenges in Africa, there was an urgent need to scale up support and assistance to countries in the front line of the war against terrorism. The terrorist threat in the Sahel region endangered the security and stability of other parts of the world. UNODC stood ready to support African Member States in combating terrorism and counted on the support and partnership of its international partners.

**Ms. M.F. Sulem Yong** (Afrogiveness Movement) said that a top-down and bottom-up holistic approach was required to counter terrorism. Solutions should not be imposed, and citizens should be empowered to create solutions. Legislators should compel all leaders to lead by example and women should be included in peacebuilding.

**The Moderator** thanked all those who had contributed to the important discussion including the King of Bahrain and the IPU Secretariat, especially Ms. C. Castillo who had worked in spite of ill health in support of HLAG's work.

*The event ended at 17:30.*

## Adoption of resolutions, final documents and reports

### SITTING OF WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH

(Afternoon)

*The sitting was called to order at 16:50 with Mr. A.B.S. Almusalam, President of the Assembly, in the Chair.*

#### Item 3 of the agenda

#### **Manama Declaration on *Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance*** (A/146/3-DR)

**The President**, noting the substantive and robust deliberations that had taken place over the preceding three days of General Debate during which some 160 interventions had been delivered by close to 120 national parliaments and numerous partner organizations, invited Ms. H. Ramzy Fayeze of Bahrain and Mr. M. Bouva of Suriname to introduce the resulting Manama Declaration on *Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance*, as set out in document A/146/3-DR.

**Ms. H. Ramzy Fayeze** (Bahrain) and **Mr. M. Bouva** (Suriname) introduced the Manama Declaration, which began by highlighting the dangers posed by hate, intolerance, exclusion and violence to the foundations of democracy and the social contract holding societies together. The world was facing social and economic inequalities on an unprecedented scale, which was often giving rise to anger and frustration. Human dignity was being undermined by poverty, the denial of rights, a weakening of the rule of law, discrimination against women, and the exclusion of youth, the vulnerable and the marginalized.

The consequent deep malaise in society took many forms and affected many groups. Parliaments needed to recognize the diversity in their communities as a source of enrichment, and to reaffirm the fundamental rights and freedoms of all. Regrettably, some in positions of influence sought to exploit the vulnerabilities of others, sowing hate and division, including through digital means, and inspiring violence and wider intolerance.

The response to those challenges should be for parliaments to promote collaboration, dialogue, conflict prevention and resolution – including on the global stage through parliamentary diplomacy – mediation, moderation, education and the involvement of religious and community leaders. Parliamentarians had a unique responsibility to interact with everyone, even those who disagreed with them, bringing people together in pursuit of the common good. Inclusive and just societies were more likely to be cohesive, peaceful and democratic. Parliaments must pursue policies to fight inequality and uphold the dignity of every person, principally through the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, which remained the best hope for peace, democracy and sustainable development for all.

The Declaration committed parliamentarians to utilize their law-making, representative and oversight functions towards achieving 10 objectives: (1) making hate-motivated acts and violence an offence under the law; (2) investing in “education for democracy” for all; (3) opening up parliamentary proceedings to the input of civil society and community groups; (4) engaging in constructive and respectful dialogue across political divides; (5) using data to formulate inclusive economic and social policies; (6) assessing the level of inclusivity in parliaments and taking action to improve it; (7) upholding the rights of vulnerable people; (8) regulating digital platforms and media to eliminate hate speech; (9) protecting cultural and religious sites; and (10) promoting interaction with UN organizations working on interfaith and intercultural dialogue, as well as peacekeeping and mediation.

In endorsing the Declaration, the parliamentarians from around the world gathered at the 146th Assembly would pledge to take those concrete actions forward in accordance with the core values of the IPU.

**The President** said he took it that the Assembly wished to endorse the Manama Declaration.

*It was so decided.*

Item 5 of the agenda

***Cybercrimes: The new risks to global security***  
(Standing Committee on Peace and International Security)  
(C-I/146/DR)

**Mr. M.B.M. Al-Ahbabi** (Qatar), President of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, introducing a revised draft resolution entitled *Cybercrimes: The new risks to global security*, as set out in document C-I/146/DR, said that the Committee's discussion of the initial draft submitted by the two co-Rapporteurs, Mr. J. Cepeda of Spain and Ms. S. Falaknaz of the United Arab Emirates, had been preceded by introductory remarks from Ms. B. Brenner, Head of the Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations and international organizations in Vienna, in which she had underlined online protection as essential in a world increasingly reliant on digital technologies. The two co-Rapporteurs had then presented their initial draft, which they had meticulously prepared, along with the related explanatory memorandum, following a year of work spent gathering the views of fellow parliamentarians and interacting with key stakeholders, notably in the context of the UN negotiations on a cybercrime treaty.

In the ensuing debate, over 40 participants had engaged constructively and respectfully on a range of issues indicative of the concern generated by the magnitude of cybercrime. Equally indicative of that concern was the unprecedented number of proposed amendments received, which had amounted to over 320. With an amended title considered to reflect more appropriately the text's focus on cybercrimes, the draft resolution as revised reflected a diversity of views and was accordingly well balanced. It accentuated the parliamentary role in ensuring protection for citizens online as in the real world and underscored the need for international cooperation to counter the grave threat posed by cybercrime to democratic processes, international peace and security, and global economic stability while also upholding fundamental human rights principles, including freedom of expression. The Committee had approved by consensus the draft resolution for transmission to the Assembly, although reservations had been expressed by the delegation of India on operative paragraph 25 and by the delegation of the Russian Federation on preambular paragraph 11 and operative paragraph 1.

Lastly, with respect to preparations for future Assemblies, the Committee had proposed *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence* as the subject item for its new draft resolution and *The recruitment of child soldiers* as a topic for debate.

**The President** said he took it that the Assembly wished to adopt by consensus the resolution.

*It was so decided.*

**A representative of India** said that his delegation disassociated itself from operative paragraph 25 of the resolution and requested that its reservation be recorded in the final text.

Item 6 of the agenda

***Parliamentary efforts in achieving negative carbon balances of forests***  
(Standing Committee on Sustainable Development)  
(C-II/146/DR)

**Ms. A. Mulder** (Netherlands), President of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, recalling that the Committee had been tasked with debating and preparing a draft resolution entitled *Parliamentary efforts in achieving negative carbon balances of forests*, said that the designated co-Rapporteurs, Mr. C. Hoffman of Germany and Ms. H.V. Gavit of India, had diligently prepared an initial draft, together with an explanatory memorandum, which they had presented to the Committee.

In a fruitful and engaging debate, the Committee had then considered the text in conjunction with the many amendments submitted, following which it had in a further meeting examined and approved by acclamation for transmission to the Assembly the resulting revised draft resolution set out in document C-II/146/DR. Reservations had been expressed by the delegation of India on the preambular paragraphs 2, 5 and 8 and operative paragraphs 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 17 and 21 of the text, and by the delegation of the Russian Federation on preambular paragraph 19. As articulated in

that text, parliamentarians must stand together in the common struggle against deforestation and its impact on all humanity by securing the natural foundations of life essential to well-being and also instrumental in relation to climate, peace, stability and sustainable development. There could be no healthy economy on an unhealthy planet.

Lastly, the Committee had approved a workplan for the 147th Assembly, which included a debate on the subject of its proposed new draft resolution *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity*, a hearing on food security, and a segment focused on preparations for the Parliamentary Meeting at the 28th session of the UN Conference on Climate Change (COP28) in November 2023. In sum, there remained much work ahead for parliaments to do — and without delay, as the planet could wait no longer.

**The President** said he took it that the Assembly wished to adopt by consensus the resolution.

*It was so decided.*

**A representative of India** said that his delegation disassociated itself from preambular paragraphs 2, 5 and 8 and operative paragraphs 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 17 and 21 of the text, and requested that its reservation be recorded in the final text of the resolution.

#### Item 7 of the agenda

### **Reports of the Standing Committees**

**Mr. A. Gajadien** (Suriname), President of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, reporting on the Committee's work during the Assembly, said that, on 13 March 2023, the Committee had held a preparatory debate on its next draft resolution, *Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm*, for which it had designated as co-Rapporteurs Ms. L. Reynolds of Australia and Mr. E. Bustamante of Peru. Over 30 delegates had provided inputs, including in relation to the development of orphanage trafficking, which was an issue of supply and demand. The fact was that countries and individuals often made well-intentioned donations to orphanages after being misled by seasoned criminals and traffickers into believing that their donations would be used to support children in need. In such cases, however, the children were most often not orphans and had at least one living parent. The Committee had indicated its intention to prepare a draft resolution setting out best practices for combating orphanage trafficking, which was a new form of child trafficking and modern slavery.

At its second meeting on 14 March 2023, the Committee had engaged in a further debate entitled *Parliamentary impetus in favour of the fight against disinformation and hateful and discriminatory content in cyberspace*, with a representative of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) providing an overview of the main issues, followed by an expert hearing and lively discussion. The starting point for the debate had been the need to protect the extraordinary opportunities offered by the internet while also creating the means to prosecute online harms in accordance with international human rights standards. Among the areas of concern highlighted were online violence against parliamentarians, hate speech targeted at specific groups, and disinformation emanating from outside Europe and North America. In the current rapidly changing digital environment, parliaments needed to prepare appropriate legislation through a transparent and inclusive process that incorporated the views of the public and private sectors.

*The Assembly took note of the report.*

**A representative of Iraq** said that, in the Committee's meeting the previous day, his delegation had expressed its position on the issue of hate speech and online discrimination, including with reference to Islamophobia and anti-Muslim prejudice. It had called on all governments to look after the interests of all Muslim inhabitants of their countries and urged the Committee to remind all parliamentarians of the need to call out hatred directed at Muslims and punish all online discrimination against them.

**Mr. L. Wehrli** (Switzerland), Acting President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, reporting on the Committee's meeting of 14 March 2023, said that the proposed modalities and methods of work developed for consideration at the present Assembly by the Bureau, in line with the

process agreed in Kigali in October 2022 and in collaboration with the IPU Secretariat, had been unanimously approved. Thanks to the unstinting efforts of all concerned, the Committee's work was accordingly set to become more relevant, satisfactory and topical.

The first other matter addressed by the Committee related to gender equality at the UN General Assembly, where women accounted for only 25% of representatives. Participants had made a number of proposals for improving that figure, in line with IPU priorities, including through action by parliaments to impress upon governments the need to appoint more women as permanent representatives to the United Nations. The Committee would pursue the discussion further at the 147th Assembly in Luanda.

The second matter concerned the 2023 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) for the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), which were of fundamental importance, especially in view of the difficulties entailed in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In that regard, coordinated IPU action was needed, along with consolidated parliamentary action in support of government efforts to implement the SDGs. With the HLPF scheduled for July 2023, it was vital for parliaments to follow up, where applicable, on their country's VNR submission, including through steps to ascertain that the relevant questionnaires were completed and duly submitted before the deadline. Only by so doing would sufficient progress be made towards attainment of the all-important SDGs.

Lastly, the Committee had elected several new Bureau members on the basis of nominations received from the geopolitical groups, namely: Mr. A. Talbi (Algeria); Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada); Mr. D. Laouhingamaye (Chad); Mr. A. Almutairi (Kuwait); Mr. H. Aoyagi (Japan); Ms. P. Cayetano (Philippines); and Ms. A. Shkrum (Ukraine). He was approaching the end of his own term of office and considered it an honour and a pleasure to have worked for the Bureau. He would remain fully committed to working within the IPU.

*The Assembly took note of the report*

#### Item 8 of the agenda

### **Approval of the subject items for the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security and for the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development for the 148th Assembly and appointment of the co-Rapporteurs**

(A/146/8-R.1)

**The President** said that the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security had proposed as its subject item for the upcoming one-year cycle, *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence*, with Ms. M. Stolbizer of Argentina and Mr. L. Lacroix of Belgium as the designated co-Rapporteurs. He took it that the Assembly wished to approve the proposal.

*It was so decided.*

**The President** said that the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development had proposed as its subject item for the upcoming one-year cycle *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity*, with Mr. S. Patra of India, Ms. L. Vasylenko of Ukraine and Ms. M. Al Suwaidi of the United Arab Emirates as the designated co-Rapporteurs. He took it that the Assembly wished to approve the proposal.

*It was so decided.*

*A video providing key background information on Angola was played in anticipation of the 147th Assembly in Luanda.*

## Closure of the Assembly

**Ms. T. Ackson** (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said in her closing remarks that, as suggested at the 145th Assembly in Kigali, the IPU Statutes and Rules should be amended to set a deadline for the submission of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda so as to allow ample time for the geopolitical groups to take stock of the requests in advance of their consideration. Secondly, to have to choose only one emergency item was a significant challenge for parliamentarians from around the world who were unlikely to share the same views as to which single issue merited an emergency debate. Some issues, moreover, could be deemed of equal importance, yet Members were forced into voting for one over the other. The Statutes and Rules should, therefore, also be changed to allow for more than one emergency item, as one alone was inadequate to cater for all comers from such a diverse world with so many geographical subregions.

**Mr. A. Al-Salihi** (Iraq), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group, said that, during the Assembly, views had been exchanged on a wide range of topics associated with numerous global crises. The topics addressed had included mechanisms for combating terrorism; support for crisis-affected groups and vulnerable peoples; climate change action; promotion of a life of freedom and dignity for all, without distinction; elimination of extremism, terrorism, hatred and racial discrimination; and efforts to widen the spirit of compassion and tolerance among peoples. All those topics fell under the banner of the Assembly theme that had brought together IPU Members: *Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance*.

**Mr. M. Dick** (Australia), speaking on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group and commending the IPU on its principle of inclusivity of all nations, said that he took his responsibility as Chair of the Group very seriously and would strive during 2023 to ensure that all its members engaged fully in working towards the IPU goal of universal membership, to which he was deeply committed. He congratulated the nine Group members elected to IPU bodies, in particular the Speaker of Tonga, now a member of the important Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians. He intended to work closely with all Group members to ensure that the parliaments of all nations, irrespective of size, had equal opportunity to engage in IPU activities and fully represent the significant challenges faced in their regions. With such engagement more important than ever, it was very pleasing that a delegation from Kiribati had attended the Assembly with a view to possible affiliation with the IPU. He aimed to visit the Pacific islands over the coming months and looked forward to working with all Group members towards the 147th Assembly.

**Mr. Y. Bolgert** (Kazakhstan), speaking on behalf of the Eurasia Group, said that it was worth highlighting the significance of the topics chosen for discussion at the Assembly, notably in the General Debate, and the precise elaboration of meaningful reports on work undertaken. The resolutions adopted on cybercrimes and on negative carbon balances of forests were, moreover, highly important and extremely timely. He expressed gratitude to the staff of the Bahraini Parliament and the IPU Secretariat for their attention and friendliness towards delegates and was appreciative of the warm and comfortable atmosphere that had contributed substantially towards successful completion of the tasks assigned to participants.

**Mr. B. Llano** (Paraguay), speaking on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, said that the people and authorities of Bahrain were the measure of its greatness, as evidenced by their part in the success of the Assembly, to which all IPU officials and staff, including those working behind the scenes, had also contributed, likewise meriting applause. Shortly due to leave parliament, he would miss IPU Assemblies, from which he had learned much over the years, including about the true essence of the IPU and about the universality of issues that affected all without exception, regardless of identity, affiliation, or status — as in the case of the pandemic and climate change. Ever stronger, ever firmer in its convictions and ever focused in pursuit of its principles of freedom, social justice and equality, the IPU would continue to serve as a beacon for the entire membership. The IPU President had, through his outstanding work, forged a path for the IPU's future endeavours, with the current Assembly representing a milestone along the way.

**Mr. A. Gryffroy** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the Twelve Plus Group, after highlighting the active part played by the Group and its members in contributing to the work of the Assembly, said that resolutions adopted on the inhumane war of aggression in Ukraine had had very little effect on the

ground, for which only one country was to blame. In relation to the dire human rights situation in Afghanistan, a delegation from the Group had met with a delegation of Afghan parliamentarians in exile, whose 125 colleagues still in Afghanistan were on the Taliban death list. The Group called on Western countries to take on their responsibility to assist in evacuating those individuals, above all the 10 women among them, who were in greater imminent danger — as underscored by the murder of former Afghan female lawmaker Mursal Nabizada in January 2023 — and forced to live in hiding.

With reference to the regrettable incident in which visas issued to two Human Rights Watch members planning to attend the Assembly had been revoked by the Bahraini authorities, the Twelve Plus Group was not prepared simply to take note of the incident and let it lie. It was not a matter to be taken lightly; Human Rights Watch defended core IPU values in respect of which the Group would never compromise.

Lastly, at the 147th Assembly in Luanda, the Governing Council would elect a new President of the IPU, a position for which there were no formal requirements of candidates. Historically, however, IPU Presidents had been outstanding and respected political leaders firmly committed to core IPU values and principles, in particular the promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Twelve Plus Group was therefore keen to see that the candidates for the position met those high standards.

**The IPU President** said that thanks were due to the Bahraini hosts for their kind hospitality and tremendous work, to the Bahraini people for their warm welcome, and to the IPU Secretariat staff, volunteers, interpreters and many others whose contributions combined had made possible a successful Assembly at which much had been accomplished. In addition to the statutory and related meetings, hundreds of bilateral meetings had taken place, the distinctive Manama Declaration had been adopted, along with a number of resolutions, and the Organization had received the go-ahead to work with the Egyptian and Uruguayan authorities towards opening IPU regional offices in Cairo and Montevideo as soon as possible. The proposed amendments to the Cremer-Passy Prize rules had been approved, as had the future IPU Anthem in what would be remembered as one of the Assembly's most important decisions. As to colleagues elected to IPU bodies, the new Presidents of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians and of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians would inject fresh energy and vitality into the proceedings in both settings.

Concerning the pertinent suggestions from the African Group for changes to the IPU Statutes and Rules, it had been decided that he and the IPU Secretariat should convene with the Chairs of the geopolitical groups to agree on a road map for the presentation of related proposals in Luanda. A working group could then be established to analyse the proposals submitted and formulate for consideration a final set of proposed amendments to the Statutes, which it was indeed necessary to update periodically in the light of new realities.

The progress achieved in areas such as economic development, democracy, tolerance and respect for human rights was clearly visible in Bahrain. Parliamentarians must continue their work to resolve the problems of those they represented, not by obligation but by choice. Their status as parliamentarians was in turn dependent on the choice of voters. IPU Members understood that those problems were better and more easily resolved together.

The IPU was also addressing such issues as the situation in Myanmar, where it condemned the atrocities, the use of force against citizens, and the unprovoked killing of parliamentarians. It was addressing the situation in Afghanistan, defending all citizens — especially women, who were unjustly treated without regard for their fundamental human rights — and condemning the assassination of former woman parliamentarian Mursal Nabizada in her Kabul home. Already severely affected by multiple crises, the Sahel region was being further destabilized by murderous terrorist groups and organized criminals who were taking root. IPU Members were therefore urged to heed the *Call of the Sahel* and provide help. In Ukraine, the Russian aggression must end so that people could live in peace, while in Palestine, the IPU had criticized events on the basis that Israel's understandable need for security did not justify attacks on its neighbours.

The IPU had prayed for those who had died in the earthquake in Türkiye and Syrian Arab Republic, since when further thousands had been killed in Malawi by a powerful cyclone that demonstrated the reality of climate change. Another issue was migration, whether from Latin America to the United States, or around the Mediterranean, where many of those fleeing poverty or war died in attempted crossings in small boats, yet politicians went to bed at night without a thought to their plight. Parliamentarians not only represented their constituents but also served the entire global community and must consistently strive to do so.

In conclusion, his first basic point was that parliamentarians must lead by example and remember that healthy democracies held space for difference. As such, they must counter intolerance day by day, including within parliaments, with respectful disagreement and dialogue, in accordance with the main theme of the Assembly on promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies. Secondly, parliaments needed to be inclusive and representative of the diversity of their communities, with more women and young people, and to work through dialogue with their constituencies. Thirdly, parliaments must endeavour to create laws that upheld the rights and dignity of all people. The spirit of Manama would remain in the minds of parliamentarians as they worked throughout the coming year to continue effecting change.

**The President**, thanking all those who had attended the Assembly and participated so actively in the dialogues, discussions and deliberations, said that the desire to achieve shared goals and aspirations through global parliamentary action had shone through in the interventions made. From the very outset, the IPU's founding fathers had been committed to the aim of promoting peace and dialogue, bringing to mind the calls from His Majesty the King of Bahrain in the speech delivered on his behalf at the inaugural ceremony. He had, for instance, appealed for a new and more equitable economic and political world order, including in relation to security matters, for more legislative cooperation, and for the elaboration of an international treaty criminalizing all forms of religious, sectarian and racist hate speech as well as those who abused freedoms and media and digital platforms to discredit religion.

A response to such calls was urgently needed in light of the known consequences of hatred, enmity, war and conflict and given the challenges to security and stability. Those issues tied in with the focus on promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies while fighting intolerance, which called for multilateral cooperation under IPU auspices to formulate a shared vision that could be duly reflected in the legislation and positions adopted by Member Parliaments. Essentially, it was a matter of global partnership involving respectful dialogue and civilized discussion based on facts and reliable information. It also entailed respect for the rule of law and national sovereignty, with no interference in the domestic affairs of others.

The IPU had been founded on those principles, which were furthermore taken as key in international relations. In that context, ongoing meetings and dialogues were taking place that underlined the fundamentally important role of parliaments in bringing about the achievement of the SDGs and in tackling complex challenges bound up as never before with the interests of all humanity. With a shared future dependent on shared action, Members must work in close harmony to realize a better future for all peoples and communities.

Bahrain had been honoured to host the 146th Assembly and related meetings and was committed to supporting the IPU to achieve its noble objectives. Thanking all those who had contributed to the event's resounding success, he declared the 146th Assembly closed.

*The sitting rose at 18:35.*

## Manama Declaration

### *Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance*

*Endorsed by the 146th IPU Assembly  
(Manama, 15 March 2023)*

We, Members of Parliament from around the world, gathered at the 146th IPU Assembly in Manama, Bahrain, are deeply aware of the dangers that hate, intolerance, exclusion and violence in all their forms pose to the very foundations of democracy and to the social contract that holds our societies together.

Consumed by greed and competition, our world is facing social and economic inequalities on an unprecedented scale. Heightened economic insecurity is breaking communities apart and leaving growing numbers of people socially isolated, fending for themselves and often with inadequate access to public service delivery and social safety nets.

Inequality and economic insecurity can give rise to anger and frustration in communities everywhere. The dignity intrinsic to every human being can be undermined by factors such as poverty, the denial of inalienable economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, violations of the rule of law, discrimination against women, lack of inclusion of youth, and the de facto exclusion from politics of the most vulnerable and marginalized.

Xenophobia, racism, intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination and extremist narratives are all expressions of this deep malaise in our societies. They manifest themselves in hate speech or outright violence in various forms against migrants, people with disabilities, and national, ethnic, religious, linguistic or other marginalized groups perceived as a threat to the established order. They can also be expressed in the desecration of religious sites and symbols, actions which are deeply offensive to people of faith. We, however, recognize the diversity within our communities as a source of enrichment, and we reaffirm the fundamental rights and freedoms of all people, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Regrettably, some in positions of influence in society seek to exploit the vulnerabilities of others, sowing hatred and division as a way to advance their own interests. Digital platforms designed to facilitate social interaction and communication are being misused to micro-target, amplify and spread disinformation and ill intent against others. The ease with which some of these voices speak in total disregard of the truth carries profound dangers for democracy. Most worryingly, their words can be a direct cause of violence and intolerance within communities and between nations.

We can respond to these challenges by encouraging collaborative networks promoting dialogue and joint projects in service to the community, by creating channels for conflict prevention and mediation, by promoting moderation, by advancing education and awareness building, and by encouraging community and religious leaders to contribute to these objectives. We commit to speaking out against intolerance and especially any advocacy of hatred that constitutes discrimination, hostility or violence. We will also assist in the resolution of conflict through the exercise of parliamentary diplomacy.

With all this in mind, we consider it our unique responsibility, as parliamentarians, to speak and act responsibly towards all people, particularly those who disagree with us, and in ways that bring people together peacefully in pursuit of the common good. We affirm that societies that are inclusive and just, and in which rights are upheld, are more likely to be cohesive, peaceful and democratic. We pledge to fight inequality through rights-based economic and social policies that put people before profit and the weak before the strong, and that uphold the equality and dignity of every person. We reaffirm the urgent need to implement the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 – leaving no one behind – as our best hope for peace, democracy and sustainable development for all.

More concretely, we are committed to utilizing our law-making, representative and oversight functions towards the following objectives:

- Make hate-motivated acts and all forms of violence linked to religion, belief, xenophobia, racism, or intolerance of marginalized groups an offence under the law.
- Invest in education for all and at all levels, including peace education and “education for democracy”, pursuant to the United Nations General Assembly resolutions by this name.
- Make parliamentary proceedings consistently open to the input of relevant civil society organizations and community groups representative of the diversity of society.
- Engage in constructive, respectful dialogue with parliamentarians of all political persuasions, both nationally and internationally.
- Ensure that national statistical institutes and research bodies produce up-to-date disaggregated data to assist with the formulation of inclusive economic and social policies.
- Perform self-assessments of the inclusivity of our parliaments and take active measures to increase the representation in our parliaments of women and youth, as well as of underrepresented national, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and other marginalized and vulnerable communities.
- Uphold the rights of migrants, refugees and stateless people, as particularly vulnerable groups, consistent with international conventions.
- Regulate digital platforms and other media to diminish the risk of hate speech and various forms of disinformation while protecting the fundamental right of free speech as a bulwark of democracy.
- Protect cultural sites as expressions of our common heritage, as well as holy sites, places of worship and religious symbols as expressions of different religions and beliefs.
- Promote interaction with relevant UN organizations working for interfaith and intercultural dialogue, and support UN peacekeeping and mediation efforts.

We pledge to take this Declaration forward through concrete actions and in accordance with the core values of the IPU as outlined in its current Strategy.

## Cybercrimes: The new risks to global security

### *Resolution adopted by consensus\* by the 146th IPU Assembly (Manama, 15 March 2023)*

The 146th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

*Condemning* all forms of cybercrime and *reaffirming* the need to combat such acts through international cooperation,

*Reaffirming* the existing United Nations framework for responsible State behaviour in the use of information and communications technologies (ICTs) and the need to implement this framework,

*Recognizing* the need to build trust and mutual understanding between countries in response to the malicious use of ICTs by State as well as non-State actors, who recognize neither boundaries nor borders,

*Observing* the growing use of and dependence on ICTs worldwide,

*Cognizant* of the increase in cybercrime activities due to increasing digitalization, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic,

*Noting* the responsibility of parliaments to build a regulatory framework that protects citizens in cyberspace with new infrastructure and resources, in the same way as in the physical world,

*Recalling* United Nations General Assembly resolution 31/72 of 10 December 1976 on the *Convention on the Prohibition of Military or Any Other Hostile Use of Environmental Modification Techniques*, resolutions 55/63 of 4 December 2000 and 56/121 of 19 December 2001 on *Combating the criminal misuse of information technologies*, and resolution 57/239 of 31 January 2003 on the *Creation of a global culture of cybersecurity*,

*Recalling also* the annual resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly on *Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security*, and in particular resolution 69/28 of 2 December 2014, resolution 73/266 of 22 December 2018 establishing the Group of Governmental Experts on advancing responsible State behaviour in the context of international security, and resolution 75/240 of 31 December 2020 establishing the Open-ended Working Group on security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021–2025, and *highlighting* the voluntary and non-binding norms of responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs in the context of international security, developed by the Group of Governmental Experts and endorsed by United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/237 of 23 December 2015, which calls on United Nations Member States to be guided by these norms, as well as the establishment, through United Nations General Assembly resolution 77/37 of 7 December 2022, of a United Nations programme of action to discuss existing and potential threats and to support States' capacities and efforts to implement and advance commitments,

*Recalling further* the United Nations *Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* of 15 November 2000 and the United Nations *Convention against Corruption* of 31 October 2003,

*Stressing* the importance of regional conventions on cybercrime, transnational organized crime, exchange of information and administrative assistance, including the Council of Europe *Convention on Cybercrime* of 23 November 2001 and its *Additional Protocol concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems* of 28 January 2003, the *Agreement on Cooperation in Ensuring International Information Security between the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization* of 16 June 2009, the *Arab Convention on Combating Information Technology Offences* of 21 December 2010, the Latin American

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\* The delegation of India expressed reservations on operative paragraph 25.  
The delegation of the Russian Federation expressed reservations on preambular paragraph 11 and operative paragraph 1

and Caribbean Parliament (Parlatino) *Model Law on Cybercrime* of November 2013 and its updates, the Parlatino *Model Law on Social Prevention of Violence and Crime* of November 2015, the Parlatino *Model Law on Computer Crimes* of February 2021, and the Parlatino *Model Law on Combating Illicit Trade and Transnational Crime* of February 2021, the *Agreement on Cooperation among the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States in the Field of Ensuring Information Security* of 20 November 2013, the *Agreement on Cooperation among the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States in the Fight Against Crimes in the Field of Information Technology* of 28 September 2018, and the *African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection* of 27 June 2014,

*Stressing also* that the Council of Europe *Convention on Cybercrime*, which is open for accession by any country, has become an instrument of global significance, with States Parties from, and impact in, all regions of the world,

*Recalling* the IPU's work on the various new risks faced by our increasingly digitized societies, including the IPU resolutions *Cyber warfare: A serious threat to peace and global security* (adopted at the 132nd Assembly, Hanoi, 1 April 2015), and *Legislation worldwide to combat online child sexual exploitation and abuse* (adopted at the 143rd Assembly, Madrid, 30 November 2021), which also recalls the Council of Europe *Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse* (the "Lanzarote Convention") of 25 October 2007,

*Commending* the work of the United Nations on advancing responsible State behaviour in cyberspace,

*Commending also* the efforts of the United Nations to enact, through General Assembly resolution 74/247 of 27 December 2019, an international cybercrime convention, and *welcoming* the creation of an ad hoc committee charged with drafting this convention,

*Welcoming* the participation of the IPU in the multi-stakeholder consultation process of that ad hoc committee in order to ensure that the voice of parliaments is heard,

*Noting* the need for a global approach to the issue of cybercrime and its serious consequences for citizens, as well as the need to protect global peace, security and economic stability while upholding the basic tenets of human rights including freedom of speech,

*Recognizing* the urgent need for legislators, governments and all stakeholders to take more proactive national steps to combat cybercrime, given its renewed intensity and rapidly evolving nature,

*Recognizing also* that all actions in this field need to have respect for human rights and fundamental rights at their centre,

*Noting* the uneven development in countries' ICT application capacity and ability to protect ICT infrastructure, and *emphasizing* the need for increased technical assistance and collaboration, especially for developing countries,

*Noting also* that States shall act in accordance with their obligations under international human rights law, including but not limited to the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, the *Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*, the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, and additional protocols and other relevant international human rights instruments,

*Recognizing* the need for common, international parliamentary action to advance awareness and implementation of voluntary and non-binding norms regarding responsible State behaviour in the use of ICTs,

*Noting* that cybercrime may constitute a serious threat to democratic processes, especially interference in elections through cybersecurity breaches or false social media accounts,

*Acknowledging* that women, young people, children, elderly people, people with disabilities, and racialized communities are particularly vulnerable to cybercrimes,

*Acknowledging also* the need for efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls in all their diversity, including through gender mainstreaming, in the development, implementation and application of policies, programmes and legislation in this field,

*Noting* the nature of the threats and risks of transnational cybercrime to international peace and security, and the tremendous developments in cyberspace, as a result of which the methods used by cybercriminals are becoming increasingly sophisticated,

*Noting also* that cybercrime includes but is not limited to attacks on computer systems, breaches of privacy, the creation and deployment of malware, and, increasingly, the facilitation of attacks on critical civilian infrastructure, as well as other acts that can occur offline and be facilitated by computer systems, including online fraud, drug trade, money-laundering, hate crimes, human trafficking, and technology-facilitated gender-based violence such as sexual harassment, threats, stalking, bullying, sexist hate speech, and the sexual exploitation of women and children via the internet – all of which negatively affect global security and economic stability,

*Considering* that most national laws were enacted before cybercrime arose and therefore do not always adequately address these threats,

1. *Encourages* parliaments to consider taking the necessary steps for their country to accede, if it has not yet done so, to existing international instruments that address the use of ICTs for criminal purposes, including the Council of Europe *Convention on Cybercrime*, which is the most comprehensive multilateral cybercrime treaty in force and is open for accession by all States;
2. *Calls upon* parliaments to make sure their legislation on cybercrime is up to date and relevant, in accordance with international law, including international human rights instruments, to allocate the necessary resources to this end and to engage all stakeholders, including the private sector, academia, civil society and the technical community, considering the ongoing increase in the scale, scope, speed, complexity and frequency of such acts and their implications for national security, international peace and security, and global economic stability, as well as to include in such legislation extraterritorial jurisdiction to enable the prosecution of criminal acts, irrespective of where those acts were committed and whether they constitute offences in the foreign jurisdiction in question;
3. *Urges* parliaments to ensure that human rights impact assessments are embedded in all legislative processes on cybercrime;
4. *Calls upon* parliaments to enhance the capacity of law enforcement officers, including investigative authorities, prosecutors and judges, in the field of cybercrime, and to equip them to effectively investigate, prosecute and adjudicate cases of cybercrime offences;
5. *Encourages* parliaments to make full use of their oversight function to ensure that governments have the tools, including appropriate resources and capacity, to prevent and combat the rapid increase in cybercrimes and to protect the cybersecurity, identity, privacy and data of citizens while safeguarding human rights and freedoms;
6. *Strongly recommends* that parliaments ensure that their national legislative frameworks on the protection of critical national infrastructure, including the infrastructure that supports the internet, are up to date, or that they establish such frameworks where necessary;
7. *Encourages* parliaments to promote an open, free and secure cyberspace by calling on their governments to abide by the United Nations norms of responsible State behaviour in cyberspace, to cooperate in fighting cybercrime as well as cybercriminals and malicious actors, to respond to requests for assistance and capacity-building, if possible in real

- time, in accordance with the rule of law and fully respecting international human rights law and fundamental freedoms, to secure the supply chain of companies in their countries, to report voluntarily on potential vulnerabilities to third parties to assist them in preventing future incidents, and in particular to support and protect all cyber incident response teams within and beyond their borders;
8. *Also encourages* parliaments to draft gender-responsive legislation promoting cross-cutting cybersecurity services that prioritize prevention (awareness-raising, auditing and training), incident detection (24 hours a day, 7 days a week), and an instant and efficient response to cyber threats, through a victim-centric approach
  9. *Recommends* that parliaments promote the establishment of relevant institutions and bodies – such as national cybersecurity centres, computer emergency response teams, computer security incident response teams and security operations centres – where these do not already exist in their country;
  10. *Also recommends* that all parliaments ensure that such institutions and bodies have adequate budgetary resources and specialized personnel, including women cybersecurity experts, to allow for an agile, timely and effective response to cybercrime and to protect critical civilian infrastructure, public institutions, companies and citizens without breaching privacy, while taking into account that the increasing digitalization of public services and utilities could imply major exposure to digital risks;
  11. *Urges* parliaments to promote international coordination between such institutions and bodies in order to monitor, prevent, detect, investigate and respond to cyber threats;
  12. *Invites* parliaments to encourage their governments to provide specific cybersecurity training in order to help increase the number of cybersecurity professionals and to strengthen their performance;
  13. *Reaffirms* that an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful ICT environment is essential for all and requires effective cooperation among States to reduce risks to international peace and security, and *calls upon* the international community to promote full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms;
  14. *Calls upon* parliaments to encourage investment in research and development, incorporating into the design of each project specific cybersecurity provisions, with appropriate budget allocation, in order to anticipate and protect against possible emerging cyber threats;
  15. *Encourages* parliaments to partner with industry, academia and all other stakeholders, including civil society, with their respective governments as key facilitators, in order to foster a strong and collaborative cybersecurity ecosystem that fully respects human rights principles and international human rights obligations;
  16. *Calls upon* parliaments and parliamentarians to actively engage in promoting a shared, up-to-date national understanding of the nature of cybercrime as experienced by citizens, organizations and institutions;
  17. *Urges* parliaments to help foster a true “culture of cybersecurity” by developing educational curricula focused on training future generations, from childhood onwards, in digital literacy and technological know-how, covering both the great opportunities presented and the serious risks posed by technology;
  18. *Recommends* that parliaments broaden protections for women, young people, children, elderly people, people with disabilities, and racialized communities in cyberspace, taking respect for human rights and the prevention of gender-based violence into account in the development of educational policies on the use of social media;

19. *Urges* parliaments to take the necessary action to protect critical moments in democracy, and especially those periods when citizens exercise their right to vote, in order to avoid attacks and interferences that seek to influence, change or violate the free formation of public opinion during the electoral process;
20. *Calls upon* the international community to take action to protect democracy by ensuring that all parliaments worldwide, as institutions representing the will of the people, are afforded special protection through their inclusion in lists of critical civilian infrastructure and essential services;
21. *Stresses* the need to further enhance international cooperation and assistance in the area of ICT security and capacity-building, as a means to bridge digital divides and strengthen the response to cyber threats globally;
22. *Calls upon* parliaments to deepen their understanding of the complex and rapidly evolving nature of cybercrime by enabling the open sharing of knowledge, experience and expertise, and by holding specialized seminars, workshops and conferences on this subject;
23. *Invites* the IPU Secretariat, in partnership with other relevant organizations, to promote this new vision of cybersecurity by supporting parliaments in their capacity-building endeavours;
24. *Recommends* that the IPU, as the global organization of parliaments, play a leading role in preventing and combating cybercrime, and in stimulating cyber-resilience, by participating in all relevant international forums, including those led by the United Nations, with a view to ensuring that the voice of parliaments is heard;
25. *Promotes* the creation of a working group on cybercrime, subsidiary to the Governing Council of the IPU, whose specific mission shall be to comply with the mandates and objectives established in this resolution, and whose powers shall include both supporting the process for the promotion of an international convention on cybercrime within the framework of the United Nations, and strengthening the capacities of IPU Member Parliaments in terms of law-making, oversight and budgeting;
26. *Recommends* that the IPU raise awareness among parliaments on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through, above all else, their universal commitments to digital security.

## Parliamentary efforts in achieving negative carbon balances of forests

*Resolution adopted by consensus\* by the 146th IPU Assembly  
(Manama, 15 March 2023)*

The 146th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

*Recalling* the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 2015 Paris Agreement, including its goal to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, and in particular its Article 5, which calls on the Parties to the Agreement to take action to conserve and enhance sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases, including forests, and encourages them to develop policy approaches to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, to set positive incentives for sustainable management of forests, and to enhance carbon sequestration and reduce emissions in forests,

*Mindful* of the outcomes of the United Nations Climate Change Conferences in Glasgow (COP26) and Sharm el-Sheikh (COP27) and *taking note* of the forest-relevant contribution of the *Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use*, in which more than 140 countries committed to working collectively to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030 while delivering sustainable development and promoting inclusive rural transformation and value chains, and in which they reaffirmed international financial commitments, private finance and investment support to enable forest conservation and restoration, and support for indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as the findings of the IPCC Working Group III on mitigation and its recommendations on reducing deforestation and increasing reforestation,

*Welcoming* the *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework* adopted in December 2022 and its 4 goals and 23 targets, including target 2, which seeks to “ensure that by 2030 at least 30% of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and coastal and marine ecosystems are under effective restoration, in order to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity and connectivity”,

*Looking forward* to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Dubai (COP28), which will follow up on the COP26 and COP27 climate conferences' outcomes regarding forest protection,

*Recalling* the IPU resolutions *Climate change, sustainable development models, and renewable energies* (120th IPU Assembly, Addis Ababa, April 2009), *Addressing climate change* (141st IPU Assembly, Belgrade, October 2019), *Parliamentary strategies to strengthen peace and security against threats and conflicts resulting from climate-related disasters and their consequences* (142nd IPU Assembly, virtual session, May 2021), the *Nusa Dua Declaration Getting to zero: Mobilizing parliaments to act on climate change* (144th IPU Assembly, Nusa Dua, March 2022), and the *Declaration of the President of the Assembly on climate change* (116th IPU Assembly, Nusa Dua, May 2007),

*Guided by* the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize that climate policy, poverty reduction and universal peace are all inextricably linked in achieving sustainable development, in particular SDG 15 to “protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss” and SDG 13 to “take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts”, as well as SDG 17 to “strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development”,

*Committed* to the implementation of the *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework* adopted by the 15th Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in December 2022, in particular of target 2 to restore at least 30% of areas of degraded ecosystems

\* The delegation of India expressed reservations on preambular paragraphs 2, 5 and 8, and on operative paragraphs 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 17 and 21.

The delegation of the Russian Federation expressed reservations on preambular paragraph 19.

by 2030 and of target 3 to ensure that by 2030 at least 30% of terrestrial, inland water, coastal and marine areas are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures,

*Reaffirming* United Nations General Assembly resolution 76/300 recognizing the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right, resolution 71/285, in which the *United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030* was adopted, and resolution 73/284 on the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030),

*Committed to* the realization of the shared vision set out in the *United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030* “of a world in which all types of forests and trees outside forests are sustainably managed, contribute to sustainable development and provide economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits for present and future generations”,

*Reaffirming* the importance of the six goals defined in the *United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030*, and especially goal 1 to “reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation and contribute to the global effort of addressing climate change”, which would, among other benefits, serve the achievement of SDG targets 6.6 to “protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including [...] forests”, 12.2 to “achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources”, 15.1 to “ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests”, and especially 15.2 to “promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally”,

*Emphasizing* target 1.2 of goal 1 of the *United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030*, which calls for “the world’s forest carbon stocks [to be] maintained or enhanced”,

*Endorsing* goal 2 of the *United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030*, to “enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people”, especially its target 2.2 to “increase the access of small-scale forest enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets” and target 2.3, which calls for “the contribution of forests and trees to food security [to be] significantly increased”,

*Welcoming* the international community’s continuing engagement in numerous global initiatives to address the contribution of forests to climate protection, including the Forests and Climate Leaders’ Partnership; the Congo Basin Forest Partnership; the 15th World Forestry Congress held in Seoul in May 2022; the ASEAN Green Initiative to ramp up restoration efforts and plant at least 10 million native trees in the next 10 years across the 10 ASEAN Member States starting from 2021, and to set standards for the recognition of tree planting activities and programmes across the region that not only regrow forests in the region but also contribute to people’s well-being, livelihood improvement, and resilience-building; the Bonn Challenge, a global goal to bring 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested landscapes into restoration by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030; the World Economic Forum’s global initiative to conserve, restore and grow 1 trillion trees by 2030; the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative; and the *Strategic Plan of Action for ASEAN Cooperation on Forestry*; and *recognizing* that all of these initiatives have contributed to States’ affirmation of forest protection and emission reduction targets, and have showcased the many opportunities for prevention, mitigation, resilience-building and adaptation through the contributions of national governments, provinces, cities and villages, private corporations, financial institutions and civil society,

*Recognizing* the crucial role that women and youth play in forest ecosystem conservation and restoration, and stressing the need for the full participation of women and youth at all levels of policymaking and implementation in forest ecosystem conservation and restoration,

*Noting* that forests are resources of global significance, covering 31% of the Earth’s land surface, but storing almost half of terrestrial carbon; that forests help to regulate regional climate by influencing rainfall patterns and cooling urban areas; that trees and forests regulate the water balance, serve as drinking-water reservoirs and protect against erosion, landslide, rockfalls, avalanches, floods,

desertification, land degradation and food insecurity; that sustainably managed forests deliver natural, climate-neutral resources for various value chains; and that well-managed forests provide subsistence, medicines, recreational and cultural purpose, livelihoods, employment and income to forest-dwelling communities, forest-dependent people and Indigenous people, and act as a natural buffer against the transmission of zoonoses,

*Gravely concerned about* the loss, through deforestation, of 420 million hectares of forests between 1990 and 2020, equivalent to approximately 10.34% of the world's total forest area in the last 30 years, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations report *The State of the World's Forests 2022*, with associated damage as manifested in droughts, desertification, and changes to weather patterns, as well as about the severe impact of forest loss on aspects of human life and on human development, and the fact that deforestation has a multiplying effect on existing crises in many respects and aspects,

*Noting with great concern* that deforestation and forest degradation are having an accelerating severe impact on climate change, with destruction and degradation of forests, including their soils, accounting for around 15% of global human-induced carbon release on Earth,

*Cognizant* of the detrimental impact of armed conflicts on forest ecosystems and the contribution of such conflicts to greenhouse gas emissions,

*Regretting* that the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, the largest conflict currently in existence, accompanied by massive forest fires and resulting in at least 33 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions, has significantly undermined global efforts to achieve negative carbon emission balances of forests and to combat climate change,

*Aware* that the progression of deforestation and forest degradation is one of the main root causes of increasing biodiversity loss and loss of genetic resources, as forests provide habitat for 80% of amphibian species, 75% of bird species and 68% of mammal species; and that tropical forests are particularly important as they contain about 50% of all animal and plant species,

*Underlining* the concrete and existential threat to food security and agriculture caused by deforestation and forest degradation, with forest destruction having massive regional impacts on rainfall and consequently on rainfed agriculture, particularly in the Amazon and the African tropics,

*Recalling* paragraphs 47 and 48 of the *Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan* adopted at COP27 in November 2022 pertaining to the provision of adequate and predictable support to developing-country Parties, in the context of which Parties should collectively aim to slow, halt and reverse forest cover and carbon loss, in accordance with national circumstances, consistently with the ultimate objective of the UNFCCC, while ensuring relevant social and environmental safeguards,

*Expressing deep concern* about the severe damage caused by forest loss to societies and economies, with an estimated 1.6 billion people, or 20% of the global population, depending on forests for subsistence, livelihoods, employment and income generation, according to the *United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017–2030*,

1. *Urges* IPU Member Parliaments to provide, in line with their parliamentary tasks, national regulations and laws that commit to the objective of net zero deforestation, meaning that when forests or trees are cleared in one area, reforestation or afforestation is ensured in another area as appropriate, seeking to maintain the same CO<sub>2</sub> storage balance and taking account of the time that different varieties of tree take to grow;
2. *Calls on* IPU Member Parliaments and their governments to intensify urgent actions to prevent and halt deforestation and forest degradation, increase forest areas and enhance the resilience of forest ecosystems, which are among the most cost-effective actions for mitigating and adapting to climate change, while stressing that reducing deforestation to a minimum and encouraging climate-focused afforestation avoid the direct emissions from lost biomass and enable conservation and enhancement of the greenhouse gas absorbing and capturing capacity of forests;
3. *Urges* IPU Member Parliaments and their governments to: expand existing protected areas and create new ones to protect forest ecosystems in line with the relevant international commitments; guarantee demilitarization of protected areas, especially in

times of war; establish an appropriate legislative framework for the management of protected areas and take effective measures to enforce it; and cooperate, where appropriate, with neighbouring States to ensure better management and functioning of protected areas;

4. *Urges* IPU Member Parliaments to ramp up efforts to reforest and even restore degraded forests in the light of national circumstances, keeping in mind: that forest restoration is an active attempt to return an area to its previous naturally forested state using native trees; that non-native trees provide timber that can boost local economies and reduce logging pressure in native forests; that reforestation, afforestation and agroforestry using native and/or non-native trees help diversify livelihoods and landscapes to increase land productivity; that afforestation and restoration of forests can provide significant environmental, climatic, sociocultural and economic benefits; and that trees provide shade on agricultural land, prevent extreme sun exposure for the soil and cultivated plants, cool down temperatures on the ground, influence precipitation and lead to improved harvest results;
5. *Calls on* IPU Member Parliaments to promote more productive, efficient and sustainable agrifood systems by continuing to use existing arable land to reduce the demand for new agricultural land, maintain forests and secure the multiple benefits that forests provide to farming systems, keeping in mind that agricultural expansion is driving almost 90% of global deforestation, that many areas of arable land are not being utilized as efficiently and productively as possible, and that sustainably increasing productivity will reduce the pressure on forestland caused by a 35–56% increase in food demand by 2050 due to the projected growth in the global population to 9.7 billion people;
6. *Encourages* IPU Member Parliaments to take immediate action to ensure that sustainable forest management is more beneficial to generating income than deforestation and that such incomes are regular and high enough for people to sustain a living and compete with income derived from other land uses, while emphasizing that sustainable forest management and green value chains prevent the conversion of forest into agricultural land and support the transition to carbon-neutral economies, and that responsible forest management can counteract the underlying drivers of deforestation including poverty, unsustainable production practices and consumption patterns, and can enhance the adaptability and resilience of forests to the impact of climate change while creating green jobs, especially in developing countries;
7. *Recommends* that IPU Member Parliaments create shared value from collective efforts through experience-sharing and technological transfer to promote the following: application of the principles of the circular economy in the use of wood; reforestation to expand the use of sustainable wood; substituting non-renewable or emissions-intensive materials, such as cement and concrete, in construction with sustainably grown wood products; increasing the lifespan of wood products to address growing demand; reducing waste through more efficient processing and the cascading use of forest products; advancing green technology; changing consumption patterns; and facilitating a transition to more circular and green economies;
8. *Invites* IPU Member Parliaments to review and improve forest-related legislation, strengthen forest law enforcement, and promote good governance at all levels in order to support sustainable forest management, and to combat and eradicate illegal practices in forest-related sectors;
9. *Calls on* IPU Member Parliaments to: adopt strategies and a systematic review and self-monitoring system that will allow governments to increase the value of the conservation and restoration of forests, especially of rainforests and boreal forests; emphasize the global value of the ecosystem services and natural resources of forests; and highlight that national, regional or international emissions trading schemes, such as the European Union Emissions Trading System or the Kyoto Protocol emissions trading scheme, are beneficial instruments for mobilizing private capital to finance forest protection and afforestation, including the use of removal units on the basis of land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) activities such as reforestation, with an emphasis on maintaining the highest environmental and climate integrity of such schemes;

10. *Invites* IPU Member Parliaments to call on their governments to consider ecological fiscal reforms, to introduce policy initiatives to promote responsible consumption and production of forest-related goods, and to repurpose agricultural subsidies to include agroforestry and sustainable forestry, keeping in mind that policy instruments can be used strategically to create market incentives for responsible and sustainable forest management and to reorient incentives to boost green markets and financing;
11. *Encourages* IPU Member Parliaments to ensure that the objective of net zero emissions is incorporated in national economic, environmental and climate strategies, reaffirming the goals agreed upon in the Paris Agreement to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, largely through ambitious efforts to: reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a minimum, and remove residual emissions from the atmosphere by, inter alia, protecting and restoring natural sinks like forests, soil and peatlands or through negative emission technologies such as direct air capture, and bioenergy with carbon capture and storage;
12. *Recommends* that IPU Member Parliaments: scale up action to phase down unabated coal power and phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, especially for lignite and coal, which often require extensive logging; bear in mind the principle defined within the UNFCCC, and reconfirmed in the Paris Agreement, of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in the light of different national circumstances; and direct global development policy in supporting developing countries that plan to construct coal-fired power plants to instead consider renewable energy power plants allowing the same energy production while also protecting energy, job security, climate and forests;
13. *Calls on* IPU Member Parliaments to intensify efforts to reduce the use of charcoal as an energy source and to promote sustainable, cost-effective, viable, renewable and carbon-neutral alternatives such as solar, hydro, geothermal, wind and nuclear power, bearing in mind the considerable forest loss and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions resulting from charcoal being the major source of energy in many developing countries with limited access to energy;
14. *Urges* IPU Member Parliaments to: take into account the needs and knowledge of local communities, including forest dwellers, forest-dependent people and Indigenous people, as per national norms in sustainable forest management, which are integral to the fight against climate change; acknowledge that indigenous peoples and local communities have been sustainably managing forests for millennia, using practices based on indigenous knowledge systems, enabling them to fulfil their needs without undermining the capacity of the ecosystems and forests in which they live; reaffirm that land-tenure rights for Indigenous peoples and local communities should be protected and enforced as appropriate; and emphasize that forest restoration preserves the territories and resources of indigenous people and lowers the pressure on declining forests in terms of firewood extraction, illegal logging and charcoal production;
15. *Also urges* IPU Member Parliaments to ensure that forest conservation practices and other nature-based climate solutions promote and respect the inherent rights of Indigenous people related to their traditional territories, including their right to be consulted and accommodated when measures and actions might adversely impact them, their lands or their resources;
16. *Invites* IPU Member Parliaments to: take action to strengthen their common understanding of forests, their sustainable management and climate protection, taking into account national and regional conditions, including as a matter of intergenerational equity and solidarity; engage the educational sector and local communities in reforestation, through a multi-level strategy and multi-stakeholder approach, as a key to sustainable and inclusive economic growth; make sure that appropriate educational programmes on forests are implemented and included in school curricula; promote educational efforts with young people and include future generations in climate protection measures so that they are aware of the need to protect forests and the environment and the ways in which it can be done, keeping in mind that it is the children and young people

of today and tomorrow who will bear the consequences as climate change intensifies and who thus wish to actively engage in efforts to address climate change; and ensure that gender-sensitive approaches and tools are mainstreamed to provide men and women with an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from sustainable forest management while also ensuring the engagement of young people in forest-related decision-making;

17. *Urges* IPU Member Parliaments to set up mechanisms for agricultural extension services as intermediaries between researchers and farmers to explain the devastating effects of deforestation, train local populations in good agricultural practices, encourage farmers to adopt new, improved methods of farming, help farmers in their decision-making, and ensure that appropriate knowledge is implemented to obtain the best results with regard to sustainable production and rural development, while stressing the need for further investment in agronomy in tropical areas so that inputs like seeds and nutrients as well as training and access to markets can be provided;
18. *Recommends* that IPU Member Parliaments use their legislative powers to support incentives for local people and entrepreneurs in green economic employment and investment, as well as to enhance the balance of economic development at all levels, namely for individuals, families, communities and societies, and to pursue green growth strategies and the benefits of the sharing economy by taking into consideration social, cultural and environmental contexts for life-long learning, resilience and inclusive growth;
19. *Requests* that IPU Member Parliaments allocate a sufficient national budget in terms of investing in research and development for leveraging technology like cross-breeding of trees that are high-performing, have fast-growing roots and possibly promote forest rejuvenation and regeneration, and hence CO<sub>2</sub> storage capacity and climate resilience or the diversification and combination of tree varieties in forest plantations, in order to take advantage of the existing complementary characteristics of different species;
20. *Encourages* IPU Member Parliaments to provide an appropriate national budget to ramp up efforts to mobilize and invest in digital technologies and broadband services that provide access for households in rural and remote areas to online information about sustainable land use and forestry income opportunities, bearing in mind the importance of creating awareness about the need for sustainable forest management;
21. *Strongly urges* IPU Member Parliaments to maintain peaceful relations among themselves, to respect State sovereignty and State territory, and to take concerted and united action, despite political, economic and social differences, to bring a rapid end to wars of aggression around the world, bearing in mind that violent conflicts and wars, as well as mines, may lead to the destruction and contamination of ecosystems such as forests that are important not only for the people living in them but also for humankind as a whole;
22. *Urges* IPU Member Parliaments to foster enhanced coherence, collaboration and synergies among themselves and with national and international bodies and partners in working towards the common goals set out in this resolution, and to facilitate enhanced support and partnerships, including in terms of financial resources, technology transfer and capacity-building, in order to assist developing countries in promoting forest ecosystems, sustainable afforestation and agroforestry, as well as people's well-being;
23. *Requests* that the IPU Secretary General transmit the present resolution to IPU Member Parliaments, the United Nations Secretary-General and all relevant institutions;
24. *Encourages* IPU Member Parliaments to take suitable measures as per national circumstances to achieve the implementation of this resolution.

## Report of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

*Noted by the 146th IPU Assembly  
(Manama, 15 March 2023)*

The Committee held two sittings on 13 and 14 March.

The debate held on 13 March was chaired by Ms. J. Mahmood (Maldives), member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, substituting for Committee President Mr. A. Gajadien (Suriname). Around 80 participants attended, from 44 countries. The objective of the meeting was to debate the next resolution on *Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm*.

Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia) and Mr. C. E. Bustamante (Peru) served as co-Rapporteurs. Ms. Reynolds provided opening remarks and described how that new kind of child trafficking and slavery had developed. It was an issue of supply and demand whereby well-intentioned countries, tourists and volunteers donated money to orphanages without any due diligence as to whether or not they were supporting an ethical charity (creating a demand) and very skilled criminals and traffickers deliver the “perfect” and “tailor-made” orphanage experience for donors (the supply). Those illicit schemes were achieved by creating “paper orphans”: an orphan by virtue of their false documentation only, while a very large proportion of children in such orphanages actually had at least one living parent.

Ms. K. Van Doore (Deputy Head of Griffith Law School, Australia) and Ms. R. Nhep, Senior Technical Advisor of the Better Care Network joined as expert panelists. Ms. Van Doore noted that the sheer number of children involved made it incumbent on governments to address the issue and that the recruitment or transfer of children into orphanages for the purpose of profit was exacerbated in times of crisis.

Ms. Nhep spoke about the three PPPs: Prevention, Prosecution and Protection, and added a fourth P, “Partnership,” given the transboundary nature of the issue. Key challenges included a lack of requirements for documentation (e.g. registration of facilities) and lack of monitoring of orphanages.

Both experts touched on some gatekeeping measures that could support the three PPPs and mentioned Australia’s “Smart Volunteer” campaign as a good practice example. An integral gatekeeping measure was to educate donors on how to do due diligence and understand the potential harm of their good intentions and generosity; and also to enforce appropriate visa requirements for volunteering and adopt standards for working with vulnerable children. As poverty was a driver of that form of child trafficking, they recommended that instead of sending volunteers, tourists and money to orphanages, funding should be made available to help keep children in their families.

In the ensuing discussion, 31 delegations took the floor to contribute their countries’ experiences. Some practical actions suggested were to regulate donations of both individuals and countries (Kuwait), to consider the linkage between orphanage trafficking and forced labour (Malawi), to enable cash transfers for children/orphans (Kenya), to conduct a comparative analysis of all existing rules/legislation and outline best practices (Kenya), and to utilize parliamentary inquiries and legislation on modern slavery as tools for prevention, prosecution and protection (New Zealand).

There was general acknowledgement that a number of good practices existed and that orphanage trafficking was a problem that could be addressed together. A consensus was reached to prepare a comprehensive resolution on the subject and for countries to work together and capitalize on parliamentary action via the IPU, the United Nations and other relevant international/regional bodies.

The co-Rapporteurs would draft a resolution including practical recommendations that could work across parliaments in tandem with existing UN recommendations and resolutions that recognize the link between tourism and orphanage trafficking.

Members have until 3 April 2023 to submit written contributions for consideration and the co-Rapporteurs would circulate a draft resolution for review in July. Proposals for amendments to the draft would be considered when the Committee met to finalize the resolution at the 147th IPU Assembly in October 2023.

On 14 March the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights held a debate entitled *Parliamentary impetus in favour of the fight against disinformation and hateful and discriminatory content in cyberspace*. The purpose of the debate was to discuss the issues of disinformation, misinformation and hate speech on the internet, share information regarding how parliaments and parliamentarians were combatting those issues and what parliaments could do to better curb harmful content online.

The debate was held in two parts – an overview followed by interventions and questions from delegates, and an expert hearing with questions from delegates. In part one the Committee was joined by Mr. G. Canela, Chief, Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists Section, UNESCO. Mr. Canela provided an expert overview of issues related to disinformation and hate speech online and UNESCO's work in that area.<sup>1</sup> The internet represented a significant development in freedom of expression and policies needed to be developed to protect that benefit while mitigating risks of online harms in accordance with international human rights standards. The phenomena under discussion were not new, but were growing in volume, velocity and virality and while parliaments were trying to regulate and test legislation. UNESCO's research suggested that in most cases such legislation was not fully aligned with human rights standards. He further noted that disinformation and hate speech were related but distinct phenomena and needed to be addressed separately.

The discussion touched on a number of common areas including the threat of disinformation to the legitimacy of public institutions, the role of social media platforms, content moderation policies and the importance of education and media literacy to counter disinformation. Many delegates provided the view that legislation should be developed to regulate or criminalize some forms of speech online and some delegates gave examples of legislation that had already been developed in their countries. A number of references were made to the COVID-19 pandemic and disinformation related to health measures. Delegates also referred to the hate speech addressed at parliamentarians online, as well as towards women and religious communities.

In response, Mr. Canela reiterated the view that when regulating or legislating, parliaments should do so carefully and with necessary safeguards to protect freedom of expression. He suggested legislation that limited speech online be accompanied by an independent regulator who followed the logic of international human rights law and conventions. He added that parliamentarians should look first to existing human rights standards, which provided strong avenues to deal with the issues under discussion.

In part two of the debate the Committee was joined by experts from three organizations. Ms. R. Vazquez Llorente, Head of Law and Policy, WITNESS, outlined issues related to the responsibilities of social media platforms and the importance of protection of human rights defenders and journalists who challenge disinformation. Mr. Z. Amanullah, Resident Senior Fellow, Networks & Outreach, Institute for Strategic Dialogue, spoke to the issue of content moderation in languages other than English and the need for more research on disinformation in countries outside North America and Europe.

Ms. L. Zommer, Factchequeado co-founder, Director & Editor-in-Chief at Chequeado, and creator of LatamChequea, gave delegates an overview of the fact checking work of her organization with Spanish-speaking communities in the United States, especially regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

An expert hearing followed, during which delegates were encouraged to ask questions to the experts present. Delegates also took the floor to share their respective countries' experiences. Additional points raised included the need for a global response to disinformation and hate speech, the challenge of hate speech based on religion and the use of social media to intimidate women, including women MPs.

In their responses the expert panel spoke to other processes that could break the cycle of social media algorithms promoting and spreading disinformation and hate speech, and the need for further independent research to ensure effective legislating, especially in languages other than English. In total 27 delegations contributed during the debate.

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<sup>1</sup> Key UNESCO resources: the Internet for Trust conference (<https://www.unesco.org/en/internet-conference>); and Countering hate speech (<https://www.unesco.org/en/countering-hate-speech>).

## Report of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

*Noted by the 146th IPU Assembly  
(Manama, 15 March 2023)*

The Chair, Mr. L. Wehrli (Switzerland), welcomed everyone in his capacity as Acting President of the Committee, and introduced the items on the agenda which was adopted along with the summary record of the Committee session held during the 145th IPU Assembly in October 2022.

### **Debate on the proposed new modalities and methods of work for the Committee**

The Chair recapped the debate in the Committee's Bureau meeting the previous day regarding the new mandate and working methods for the Committee, which the Bureau had adopted unanimously.

The Chair invited delegates to provide feedback on the paper that had been circulated in the room.

Expressing overall approval of the proposed new mandate and working methods for the Committee, delegates noted the following points:

- Reform of the UN Security Council ought to be a distinct area of work for the Committee going forward.
- The Committee should help strengthen parliamentary oversight of the United Nations, possibly positioning the IPU as an advisory council of the United Nations.
- The Committee should promote practical modalities of interaction between the IPU and the United Nations, as well as between national parliaments and UN agencies in the field.
- The Committee needs to emphasize the parliamentary role in the implementation of UN conventions.

The Committee's mandate and working methods were unanimously adopted by a show of hands.

### **Debate on the participation of women Permanent Representatives in the UN General Assembly**

The session began with a video message from Ms. S. Malcorra, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Argentina and former Chief of Staff to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. Ms. Malcorra leads a global campaign to make the United Nations more inclusive of women. Among other things, Ms. Malcorra noted that the question of gender equality at the United Nations must apply to both the Secretariat and the decision-making bodies of the United Nations, such as the General Assembly.

Ms. P. Torsney (Head of the Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations in New York and Committee Secretary) introduced the debate by referring to IPU's work to make national parliaments gender equal and how that needed to be extended to the General Assembly where a solid majority of the Permanent Observers were men. She presented data showing the current gender gap in the General Assembly as well as the results of an IPU survey enquiring about the parliamentary oversight processes for the appointment of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in New York.

Committee members showed strong interest in the issue and overall support for further Committee engagement. In particular, delegates noted the following points:

- There is a strong correlation between gender parity in parliaments and other decision-making bodies on the one hand, and the implementation of policies to empower women and girls on the other hand.
- Achieving gender equality in the UN General Assembly will assist the global effort for the empowerment of women and girls as well as, by extension, the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- The inclusion of women at the United Nations must include the peace and security apparatus in the field, where a lot of the United Nations peacebuilding and conflict resolution work takes place.
- It was high time for the United Nations to appoint a woman to the post of Secretary-General.

At the conclusion of the debate, Ms. Torsney announced that the question of gender equality in the UN General Assembly would be a recurring item on the Committee's agenda which would be pursued in campaign mode not just at formal Committee sessions but also between sessions. As a first step, a virtual meeting of interested parliamentarians would be convened before the next IPU Assembly in Angola, in October 2023.

### **Debate on parliamentary engagement in the Voluntary National Reviews for the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**

Mr. A. Motter (Senior Advisor for Economic and Social Affairs, Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations) explained how national reports that governments volunteer to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) each year constituted the United Nations main accountability process to incentivize the implementation of the SDGs at the country level. The voluntary national review (VNR) process was designed to include all national stakeholders, including parliaments. The IPU survey of parliamentary engagement in the 42 countries that volunteered reports in 2022 showed very weak parliamentary engagement in the VNR process. Mr. Motter also noted a very low participation rate in the IPU Member survey on the issue.

In their comments from the floor, delegates highlighted the following points:

- Parliamentary engagement in the VNRs is indeed a very good thing and needs further strengthening particularly now as the SDGs are badly off track.
- Integrating a complex framework such as the SDGs into national plans and policies is very difficult and requires a sophisticated machinery and capacities that many governments still lack. The United Nations expectations in this regard are not entirely realistic.
- To facilitate greater participation in the IPU survey, there needs to be greater coordination between the IPU focal points who receive the IPU survey and the relevant parliamentary bodies responsible for the SDGs.

In bringing the session to a close, the Chair urged the parliaments whose governments would be submitting reports in 2023 to respond to the IPU questionnaire thoroughly and in time.

### **Elections to the Bureau of the Standing Committee**

The Chair announced the following nominations to the Committee Bureau: Mr. A. Talbi (Algeria), Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), Mr. M. Alajmi (Kuwait), Mr. H. Aoyagi (Japan), Ms. P. Cayetano (Philippines), Ms. A. Shkrum (Ukraine). All nominations were accepted by acclamation.

The Chair thanked the outgoing members of the Bureau and informed that his own term on the Bureau was ending at this Committee session. It was agreed that Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium) would serve as president ad interim until a new Committee president was elected at the next session in Angola, in October 2023.

Thanking delegates for their contributions, the Chair brought the meeting to a close.

## The urgent need to combat violence against women in politics, particularly in light of the proliferation of hate speech, fake news and violent incidents

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

#### Results

Affirmative votes.....	393	Total of affirmative and negative votes ..	1,120
Negative votes .....	727	Two-thirds majority.....	747
Abstentions .....	373		

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Albania		<i>Absent</i>		Guinea	7		6	Peru	4	11	
Algeria		16		Guyana	<i>Absent</i>			Philippines	20		
Angola		7	8	Hungary		12		Poland		15	
Argentina	7		7	Iceland			10	Portugal		13	
Armenia	<i>Absent</i>			India	23			Qatar		11	
Australia		14		Indonesia		22		Republic of Korea	17		
Austria		12		Iran (Islamic Republic of)		19		Romania		13	
Azerbaijan			13	Iraq		16		Russian Federation		20	
Bahrain		11		Ireland			12	Rwanda			13
Bangladesh	<i>Absent</i>			Israel		12		San Marino		10	
Belarus		12		Italy		17		Saudi Arabia		15	
Belgium		13		Japan	20			Senegal	<i>Absent</i>		
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	13			Jordan		13		Serbia	12		
Botswana			11	Kazakhstan			13	Seychelles			8
Brazil	20			Kenya	17			Sierra Leone	<i>Absent</i>		
Burkina Faso	7		7	Kuwait		11		Singapore	<i>Absent</i>		
Burundi			13	Lao People's Dem. Republic	12			Slovakia	<i>Absent</i>		
Cabo Verde	<i>Absent</i>			Latvia		11		Slovenia		11	
Cambodia	5		5	Liberia	<i>Absent</i>			Somalia	<i>Absent</i>		
Cameroon	<i>Absent</i>			Libya		12		South Africa			17
Canada		15		Liechtenstein			10	South Sudan	13		
Chad			13	Lithuania		10		Spain		16	
Chile		6	7	Madagascar	<i>Absent</i>			Sri Lanka	<i>Absent</i>		
Comoros			10	Malawi	13			Suriname	5		5
Côte d'Ivoire			14	Malaysia	10			Sweden		13	
Croatia	<i>Absent</i>			Maldives	10			Switzerland		6	6
Cyprus			11	Mali			14	Syrian Arab Rep.		14	
Czech Republic		13		Malta		8		Thailand	18		
DR of the Congo			19	Mauritius	11			Timor-Leste			11
Denmark		12		Mexico	10		10	Tonga	8		
Ecuador	13			Monaco	<i>Absent</i>			Türkiye	19		
Egypt		20		Mongolia	<i>Absent</i>			Turkmenistan	<i>Absent</i>		
Equatorial Guinea	3		8	Morocco		15		Uganda	16		
Estonia			11	Mozambique	5		10	Ukraine		16	
Eswatini	<i>Absent</i>			Namibia			11	United Arab Emirates		12	
Ethiopia	20			Nepal	<i>Absent</i>			United Kingdom		18	
Fiji	10			Netherlands		13		United Republic of Tanzania		18	
Finland		10		New Zealand		12		Uruguay		11	
France		18		Niger		14		Uzbekistan	<i>Absent</i>		
Gabon	<i>Absent</i>			Nigeria	<i>Absent</i>			Viet Nam	<i>Absent</i>		
Gambia (The)			11	Norway		12		Yemen		13	
Georgia			11	Oman		11		Zambia		13	
Germany		19		Pakistan	12		10	Zimbabwe			13
Ghana			15	Palestine		12					
Greece	13			Paraguay		8					

N.B. This list does not include delegations present at the session which were not entitled to vote pursuant to the provisions of Articles 5.2 and 5.3 of the Statutes. Parliaments participating in the IPU in a non-voting observer capacity in accordance with the decision of the 209th session of the Governing Council in Nusa Dua do not appear on this list.

## Criminalizing contempt for religions and the spreading of hatred, and promoting coexistence, tolerance, peace and international security

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

#### Results

Affirmative votes.....	756	Total of affirmative and negative votes ..	1,200
Negative votes .....	444	Two-thirds majority.....	800
Abstentions .....	293		

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Albania	<i>Absent</i>			Guinea	13			Peru		15	
Algeria	16			Guyana	<i>Absent</i>			Philippines	20		
Angola	8		7	Hungary		12		Poland		15	
Argentina	7		7	Iceland		10		Portugal		13	
Armenia	<i>Absent</i>			India			23	Qatar	11		
Australia		14		Indonesia	22			Republic of Korea			17
Austria		12		Iran (Islamic Republic of)	19			Romania		13	
Azerbaijan	13			Iraq	16			Russian Federation	20		
Bahrain	11			Ireland		12		Rwanda	13		
Bangladesh	<i>Absent</i>			Israel		12		San Marino		10	
Belarus	12			Italy		17		Saudi Arabia	15		
Belgium		13		Japan			20	Senegal	<i>Absent</i>		
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	10		3	Jordan	13			Serbia	12		
Botswana			11	Kazakhstan	13			Seychelles			8
Brazil			20	Kenya	17			Sierra Leone	<i>Absent</i>		
Burkina Faso	14			Kuwait	11			Singapore	<i>Absent</i>		
Burundi	13			Lao People's Dem. Republic	12			Slovakia	<i>Absent</i>		
Cabo Verde	<i>Absent</i>			Latvia		11		Slovenia		11	
Cambodia	5		5	Liberia	<i>Absent</i>			Somalia	<i>Absent</i>		
Cameroon	<i>Absent</i>			Libya	12			South Africa			17
Canada		15		Liechtenstein		10		South Sudan			13
Chad	13			Lithuania		10		Spain		16	
Chile		13		Madagascar	<i>Absent</i>			Sri Lanka	<i>Absent</i>		
Comoros	10			Malawi			13	Suriname	5		5
Côte d'Ivoire	14			Malaysia	10			Sweden		13	
Croatia	<i>Absent</i>			Maldives	10			Switzerland		12	
Cyprus			11	Mali	14			Syrian Arab Rep.	14		
Czech Republic		13		Malta		8		Thailand	18		
DR of the Congo			19	Mauritius	11			Timor-Leste	11		
Denmark		12		Mexico	20			Tonga	8		
Ecuador	4		9	Monaco	<i>Absent</i>			Türkiye	19		
Egypt	20			Mongolia	<i>Absent</i>			Turkmenistan	<i>Absent</i>		
Equatorial Guinea	8		3	Morocco	15			Uganda	16		
Estonia		11		Mozambique	7		8	Ukraine	3		13
Eswatini	<i>Absent</i>			Namibia			11	United Arab Emirates	12		
Ethiopia	20			Nepal	<i>Absent</i>			United Kingdom		18	
Fiji	10			Netherlands		13		United Republic of Tanzania	18		
Finland		10		New Zealand		12		Uruguay		11	
France		18		Niger	14			Uzbekistan	<i>Absent</i>		
Gabon	<i>Absent</i>			Nigeria	<i>Absent</i>			Viet Nam	<i>Absent</i>		
Gambia (The)			11	Norway		12		Yemen	13		
Georgia			11	Oman	11			Zambia	13		
Germany		19		Pakistan	22			Zimbabwe	13		
Ghana			15	Palestine	12						
Greece			13	Paraguay		8					

N.B. This list does not include delegations present at the session which were not entitled to vote pursuant to the provisions of Articles 5.2 and 5.3 of the Statutes. Parliaments participating in the IPU in a non-voting observer capacity in accordance with the decision of the 209th session of the Governing Council in Nusa Dua do not appear on this list.

## Raising awareness and calling for action on the serious humanitarian crises affecting the peoples of Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and other countries, and on the particular vulnerability of women and children

### Results of the roll-call vote on the request of the delegations of Argentina, Chile, Germany, Netherlands and Ukraine, with the support of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) and the Twelve Plus Group for the inclusion of an emergency item

#### Results

Affirmative votes..... 817                      Total of affirmative and negative votes ..1,134  
 Negative votes ..... 317                      Two-thirds majority..... 756  
 Abstentions ..... 358

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Albania		Absent		Guinea	10		3	Peru	15		
Algeria		16		Guyana	Absent			Philippines	20		
Angola			14	Hungary	12			Poland	15		
Argentina	7		7	Iceland	10			Portugal	13		
Armenia	Absent			India			23	Qatar		11	
Australia	14			Indonesia		22		Republic of Korea	17		
Austria	12			Iran (Islamic Republic of)		19		Romania	13		
Azerbaijan			13	Iraq		16		Russian Federation		20	
Bahrain		11		Ireland	12			Rwanda	13		
Bangladesh	Absent			Israel	12			San Marino	10		
Belarus		12		Italy	17			Saudi Arabia		15	
Belgium	13			Japan	20			Senegal	Absent		
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	5	8		Jordan		13		Serbia			12
Botswana			11	Kazakhstan			13	Seychelles	8		
Brazil	20			Kenya	17			Sierra Leone	Absent		
Burkina Faso			14	Kuwait		11		Singapore	Absent		
Burundi			13	Lao People's Dem. Republic		12		Slovakia	Absent		
Cabo Verde	Absent			Latvia	11			Slovenia	11		
Cambodia	7		3	Liberia	Absent			Somalia	Absent		
Cameroon	Absent			Libya		12		South Africa			17
Canada	15			Liechtenstein	10			South Sudan			13
Chad			13	Lithuania	10			Spain	16		
Chile	13			Madagascar	Absent			Sri Lanka	Absent		
Comoros			10	Malawi	13			Suriname	10		
Côte d'Ivoire			14	Malaysia	10			Sweden	13		
Croatia	Absent			Maldives	10			Switzerland	12		
Cyprus	8		3	Mali	6		8	Syrian Arab Rep.		14	
Czech Republic	13			Malta	8			Thailand	18		
DR of the Congo			19	Mauritius	11			Timor-Leste	11		
Denmark	12			Mexico	20			Tonga	5		3
Ecuador	6		7	Monaco	Absent			Türkiye			19
Egypt		20		Mongolia	Absent			Turkmenistan	Absent		
Equatorial Guinea	3	8		Morocco		15		Uganda	16		
Estonia	11			Mozambique			15	Ukraine	16		
Eswatini	Absent			Namibia			11	United Arab Emirates		12	
Ethiopia			20	Nepal	Absent			United Kingdom	18		
Fiji			10	Netherlands	13			United Republic of Tanzania	18		
Finland	10			New Zealand	12			Uruguay	11		
France	18			Niger		14		Uzbekistan	Absent		
Gabon	Absent			Nigeria	Absent			Viet Nam	Absent		
Gambia (The)	11			Norway	12			Yemen		13	
Georgia	11			Oman		11		Zambia	13		
Germany	19			Pakistan			22	Zimbabwe			13
Ghana			15	Palestine		12					
Greece	13			Paraguay	8						

N.B. This list does not include delegations present at the session which were not entitled to vote pursuant to the provisions of Articles 5.2 and 5.3 of the Statutes. Parliaments participating in the IPU in a non-voting observer capacity in accordance with the decision of the 209th session of the Governing Council in Nusa Dua do not appear on this list.

## Creation of a global fund for countries vulnerable to natural disasters to address loss and damage from climate change

### Results of the roll-call vote on the request of the African Group for the inclusion of an emergency item

#### Results

Affirmative votes..... 535	Total of affirmative and negative votes ..1,175
Negative votes ..... 640	Two-thirds majority..... 783
Abstentions ..... 318	

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Albania	<i>Absent</i>			Guinea	12		1	Peru			15
Algeria	16			Guyana	<i>Absent</i>			Philippines	20		
Angola	10		5	Hungary		12		Poland		15	
Argentina	7		7	Iceland		10		Portugal		13	
Armenia	<i>Absent</i>			India	23			Qatar		11	
Australia		14		Indonesia		22		Republic of Korea	17		
Austria		12		Iran (Islamic Republic of)		19		Romania		13	
Azerbaijan			13	Iraq		16		Russian Federation			20
Bahrain		11		Ireland		12		Rwanda	13		
Bangladesh	<i>Absent</i>			Israel		12		San Marino		10	
Belarus		12		Italy			17	Saudi Arabia		15	
Belgium		13		Japan			20	Senegal	<i>Absent</i>		
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	13			Jordan		13		Serbia			12
Botswana	11			Kazakhstan			13	Seychelles	8		
Brazil			20	Kenya	17			Sierra Leone	<i>Absent</i>		
Burkina Faso	14			Kuwait		11		Singapore	<i>Absent</i>		
Burundi			13	Lao People's Dem. Republic	12			Slovakia	<i>Absent</i>		
Cabo Verde	<i>Absent</i>			Latvia		11		Slovenia		11	
Cambodia	10			Liberia	<i>Absent</i>			Somalia	<i>Absent</i>		
Cameroon	<i>Absent</i>			Libya			12	South Africa	17		
Canada		15		Liechtenstein			10	South Sudan	13		
Chad			13	Lithuania		10		Spain		16	
Chile		7	6	Madagascar	<i>Absent</i>			Sri Lanka	<i>Absent</i>		
Comoros	8		2	Malawi	13			Suriname	10		
Côte d'Ivoire			14	Malaysia	10			Sweden		13	
Croatia	<i>Absent</i>			Maldives	10			Switzerland		6	6
Cyprus	6		5	Mali	14			Syrian Arab Rep.		14	
Czech Republic		13		Malta		8		Thailand	18		
DR of the Congo			19	Mauritius	11			Timor-Leste	2		9
Denmark		12		Mexico	5		15	Tonga			8
Ecuador	13			Monaco	<i>Absent</i>			Türkiye		19	
Egypt		20		Mongolia	<i>Absent</i>			Turkmenistan	<i>Absent</i>		
Equatorial Guinea	11			Morocco		15		Uganda	16		
Estonia		11		Mozambique	15			Ukraine	11		5
Eswatini	<i>Absent</i>			Namibia	11			United Arab Emirates		12	
Ethiopia	20			Nepal	<i>Absent</i>			United Kingdom		18	
Fiji	10			Netherlands		13		United Republic of Tanzania	18		
Finland		10		New Zealand		12		Uruguay			11
France			18	Niger		14		Uzbekistan	<i>Absent</i>		
Gabon	<i>Absent</i>			Nigeria	<i>Absent</i>			Viet Nam	<i>Absent</i>		
Gambia (The)	11			Norway		12		Yemen		13	
Georgia			11	Oman		11		Zambia	13		
Germany		19		Pakistan	22			Zimbabwe			13
Ghana	15			Palestine		12					
Greece	9	4		Paraguay		8					

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## Call for urgent action to stop aggression, occupation and massive human rights violations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in order to preserve its sovereignty and territorial integrity

### Results of the roll-call vote on the request of the delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the inclusion of an emergency item

#### Results

Affirmative votes..... 88                      Total of affirmative and negative votes ..793  
 Negative votes ..... 705                      Two-thirds majority.....529  
 Abstentions ..... 700

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Albania		<i>Absent</i>		Guinea			13	Peru		15	
Algeria			16	Guyana	<i>Absent</i>			Philippines		20	
Angola	15			Hungary		12		Poland		15	
Argentina			14	Iceland		10		Portugal		13	
Armenia	<i>Absent</i>			India			23	Qatar		11	
Australia		14		Indonesia		22		Republic of Korea			17
Austria		12		Iran (Islamic Republic of)		19		Romania		13	
Azerbaijan			13	Iraq		16		Russian Federation		20	
Bahrain		11		Ireland		12		Rwanda		13	
Bangladesh	<i>Absent</i>			Israel		12		San Marino		10	
Belarus		12		Italy			17	Saudi Arabia		15	
Belgium			13	Japan			20	Senegal	<i>Absent</i>		
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	5		8	Jordan		13		Serbia		12	
Botswana			11	Kazakhstan			13	Seychelles			8
Brazil			20	Kenya			17	Sierra Leone	<i>Absent</i>		
Burkina Faso			14	Kuwait		11		Singapore	<i>Absent</i>		
Burundi	13			Lao People's Dem. Republic			12	Slovakia	<i>Absent</i>		
Cabo Verde	<i>Absent</i>			Latvia		11		Slovenia		11	
Cambodia			10	Liberia	<i>Absent</i>			Somalia	<i>Absent</i>		
Cameroon	<i>Absent</i>			Libya			12	South Africa			17
Canada		15		Liechtenstein		10		South Sudan			13
Chad			13	Lithuania		10		Spain		16	
Chile			13	Madagascar	<i>Absent</i>			Sri Lanka	<i>Absent</i>		
Comoros	7		3	Malawi			13	Suriname			10
Côte d'Ivoire			14	Malaysia			10	Sweden		13	
Croatia	<i>Absent</i>			Maldives			10	Switzerland		12	
Cyprus		11		Mali	14			Syrian Arab Rep.		14	
Czech Republic		13		Malta		8		Thailand			18
DR of the Congo	19			Mauritius			11	Timor-Leste	5		6
Denmark		12		Mexico			20	Tonga			8
Ecuador			13	Monaco	<i>Absent</i>			Türkiye			19
Egypt		20		Mongolia	<i>Absent</i>			Turkmenistan	<i>Absent</i>		
Equatorial Guinea			11	Morocco		15		Uganda			16
Estonia		11		Mozambique			15	Ukraine		16	
Eswatini	<i>Absent</i>			Namibia			11	United Arab Emirates		12	
Ethiopia			20	Nepal	<i>Absent</i>			United Kingdom		18	
Fiji			10	Netherlands		13		United Republic of Tanzania			18
Finland		10		New Zealand		12		Uruguay			11
France			18	Niger		14		Uzbekistan	<i>Absent</i>		
Gabon	<i>Absent</i>			Nigeria	<i>Absent</i>			Viet Nam	<i>Absent</i>		
Gambia (The)			11	Norway		12		Yemen		13	
Georgia			11	Oman		11		Zambia			13
Germany		19		Pakistan			22	Zimbabwe			13
Ghana	10		5	Palestine		12					
Greece			13	Paraguay		8					

N.B. This list does not include delegations present at the session which were not entitled to vote pursuant to the provisions of Articles 5.2 and 5.3 of the Statutes. Parliaments participating in the IPU in a non-voting observer capacity in accordance with the decision of the 209th session of the Governing Council in Nusa Dua do not appear on this list.

## Raising awareness and calling for action on the serious humanitarian crises affecting the peoples of Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and other countries, and on the particular vulnerability of women and children

*Resolution adopted by consensus\* by the 146th IPU Assembly  
(Manama, 14 March 2023)*

The 146th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

*Considering* that low- and middle-income countries host 74% of the world's refugees and other people in need of international protection, that the least developed countries provide asylum to 22% of these people, and that 90% of the world's humanitarian needs are concentrated in 20 countries that, together, represent no more than 13% of the world's population and 1.6% of global GDP,

*Cognizant* that the affected countries cannot meet the needs of the at-risk population, making it essential for the international community to guarantee humanitarian assistance including food distribution, health care and, in many cases, infrastructure reconstruction, and that, in 2023, an estimated 340 million people will need humanitarian assistance,

*Recalling* that such international humanitarian assistance is protected by the "right to life, liberty and security" of all persons, an inalienable and universal principle enshrined in Article 3 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of 1948, and that these rights have been endorsed in the *International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights* and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* of 1966, the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* of 1948, and the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols, among others, which together constitute the international legal framework that, pursuant to Article 2 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, promotes and protects the human rights of all "without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status",

*Underlining* that the United Nations General Assembly has made achieving gender equality by 2030 a target of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular through Goal 5, including but not limited to Target 5.2: "Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation",

*Recalling* United Nations General Assembly resolution 2816 of 14 December 1971, which established the post of Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (DRC) to provide humanitarian assistance to victims of natural disasters and other emergencies, and resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, through which the DRC was renamed the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and given expanded powers to coordinate humanitarian assistance, to facilitate access to emergency areas, to conduct the organization's needs assessment missions, to prepare joint appeals and to mobilize resources,

*Welcoming* the creation of the Central Emergency Response Fund, managed by OCHA, which, based on voluntary donations, makes it possible to finance humanitarian response actions worldwide,

*Recalling* the *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* of 1951, which defines a refugee as any person who, "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country",

*Recalling also* United Nations General Assembly resolution 73/195 of 29 December 2018 on the *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*,

*Noting with deep concern* that women and girls are still exposed to sexual violence, in particular committed by combatants,

\* The delegation of Yemen expressed a reservation on the entire resolution.  
The delegation of India abstained from supporting the resolution.

*Emphasizing* that rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization and all other forms of sexual violence of comparable gravity constitute crimes against humanity,

*Noting with deep concern* the especially dramatic situation in Afghanistan, where about 24 million Afghans are experiencing misery, hunger and freezing temperatures, including many children at severe risk of violence and family separation,

*Noting* that decades of uninterrupted war, coupled with years of drought and low temperatures, have led to total social and economic collapse, causing the displacement of 3.5 million people and making Afghans one of the largest refugee populations in the world,

*Recalling* that the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) works in favour of peace and cooperation among peoples, promoting the defence of universal human rights, and *stressing* that absolute respect for such rights is an essential factor for democracy and the development of all nations,

*Recalling also* the joint statement on Afghanistan issued on 30 August 2021 by the IPU Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law and the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians,

*Alarmed* by the situation of Afghan women and girls, and *noting* that the Taliban takeover caused the immediate repression of women, excluding them from secondary and university education, while the absence of a male “guardian” prevents many of them from leaving their homes or even accessing essential services, causing them to lose jobs and the corresponding economic support,

*Deeply disturbed* by attacks on women parliamentarians, including the assassination of Ms. Mursal Nabizada on 15 January 2023 and the attempt on the life of Ms. Fawzia Koofi on 14 August 2020, and *recalling* that the looming risk to women parliamentarians in Afghanistan prompted a decision by the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians on 2 February 2023,

*Acknowledging* the disastrous humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, caused by a war of aggression, where civilian casualties and the destruction of critical infrastructure have forced millions of people to cross borders into neighbouring countries, in addition to the internally displaced,

*Noting* that, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of February 2023, an estimated 17.6 million people in Ukraine require urgent humanitarian assistance and an estimated 8 million refugees from Ukraine are scattered throughout Europe, 90% of them women and children, and that, according to the International Organization for Migration, there are 5.3 million internally displaced persons within Ukraine,

*Recalling* the emergency item resolutions adopted at the 144th and 145th IPU Assemblies, held in Nusa Dua and Kigali respectively, which recognized the magnitude of the humanitarian situation in Ukraine and were aligned with the resolutions adopted on this subject by the United Nations in 2022,

*Recalling also* the situation in Yemen, where a bloody civil war, in one of the countries with the most vulnerable populations in the Middle East, has resulted in violence that has affected millions of people, caused hundreds of thousands of deaths and led to mass displacement,

*Noting* that over 20 million Yemenis require humanitarian assistance, including 4 million internally displaced persons,

*Recognizing* the catastrophic and unsustainable situation faced by people in the Syrian Arab Republic, where the recent earthquake that affected the north of the country, and the south of Türkiye, has created a humanitarian crisis, compounding the effects of the civil war in the Syrian Arab Republic,

*Noting* that some 6.6 million Syrians have been forced to flee to other countries, and that there are 6.7 million internally displaced persons within the Syrian Arab Republic,

*Considering* the current situation in South Sudan, a country ravaged since its birth by an ongoing civil war, where 4.3 million people are currently in need of humanitarian assistance, including refugees (of which 63% are children), internally displaced persons and asylum-seekers,

*Recognizing* the crisis in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, where violence, insecurity, and lack of food, medicine and essential services have triggered the largest migration in the history of Latin America, with 7 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants, and *noting* that these refugees and migrants are frequently forced to take unauthorized routes, falling victim to traffickers and irregular armed groups,

*Cognizant* that humanitarian crises are caused not only by conflicts, corrupt governments, wars of aggression, invasions and civil wars, but also by climate change, such as the massive floods that hit Pakistan in 2022, which claimed 1,800 lives, left more than 2.1 million people homeless and affected 33 million people in total,

*Acknowledging* that the above-mentioned crises are only those with the highest numbers of displaced persons, and *emphasizing* that other humanitarian crises are also taking place in many other regions of the world, including but not limited to Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iraq, Mali, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Palestine, Somalia and the Sudan,

1. *Considers* that humanitarian crises are the leading cause of human rights violations in the world;
2. *Recognizes* that it is up to the international community to collaborate to protect human lives, to alleviate suffering, to safeguard dignity, and to guarantee access to basic services such as food, medical care, water and shelter for all persons, regardless of their origins, through legal and policy measures at the national level, and *encourages* governments to pursue the SDGs, and Goal 5 in particular, through such measures;
3. *Expresses its sympathy* for the populations of Afghanistan, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen, as well as for the millions of people who, on every continent, suffer deprivation and persecution as a result of war, oppressive regimes, terrorism, violence and natural disasters;
4. *Calls upon* the parliaments of the world to speak out against, and to exert political and diplomatic pressure on, those who bear responsibility for humanitarian crises, and to offer support to affected populations;
5. *Calls for* awareness-raising for national authorities and civil society in countries around the world, so that they are able to contribute, to the greatest extent possible, to the creation of specialized assistance programmes for people affected by humanitarian crises;
6. *Calls upon* all nations to strengthen the United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on Preventing Famine, adopting simplified protocols to increase the access of children and young people to treatment for malnutrition;
7. *Appeals* for the strengthening of regional and interregional cooperation in order to facilitate the opening of humanitarian corridors that guarantee safe transit for vulnerable people, especially women and children from crisis-affected areas, while managing or negotiating agreements that allow the safe passage of humanitarian assistance;
8. *Strongly condemns* any attack on the lives, integrity and well-being of civilians, and *calls upon* parliaments and governments to take action against impunity for international crimes that cause humanitarian crises and persecution, in particular through support for the International Criminal Court, through national prosecution efforts and through appropriate legal mechanisms for the punishment of aggression and other international crimes;
9. *Calls for* an increase in international support and assistance for refugees and internally displaced persons, be they men, women or children, who lack access to basic rights and reasonable living conditions, as well as for other people who do not have refugee status;
10. *Notes* that women, together with children, are the main victims of humanitarian crises;
11. *Calls for* support for the efforts of the United Nations and other organizations working for the defence and promotion of women's rights;

12. *Demands* that governments refrain from the use of sexual and gender-based violence as a systematic tactic of warfare;
13. *Urges* governments to meet the needs of survivors of sexual and gender-based violence;
14. *Strongly supports* the empowerment of women and youth, and *affirms* its defence of the rights and interests of women, especially in Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine and Yemen, and of all those living through humanitarian crises;
15. *Calls for* global support for vulnerable host countries which have capacity constraints in order to enable them to provide sufficient education and health care for refugees and asylum-seekers, and *urges* host countries to develop and implement frameworks that guarantee refugees and asylum-seekers, particularly women and girls, access to these vital services,
16. *Calls upon* governments to consistently enforce the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of gender in all respects;
17. *Deplores* the practice of forced deportation, which is a crime under international criminal law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and the forced deportation of children in particular, and *calls for* urgent action by United Nations Member States to stop this practice and to return children to their families;
18. *Expresses particular concern* about the persecution experienced by women and girls in Afghanistan, and *calls upon* the current de facto authorities to respect the *Charter of the United Nations*, international treaties and conventions, and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*;
19. *Calls upon* all governments and parliaments to ensure that there are no obstacles, including under immunity provisions or procedural law, that prevent the award of compensation to victims of international crimes, either through their governments or directly;
20. *Calls for* closer coordination between United Nations agencies and the international community in order to guarantee the implementation of the provisions of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and its Optional Protocols, especially in countries such as Afghanistan;
21. *Endorses* the decision of the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians to condemn, in the strongest possible terms, the atrocious murder of Afghan citizen and parliamentarian Ms. Mursal Nabizada, and *affirms* that this brutal crime is an affront to the rights, values and principles promoted by the IPU;
22. *Calls upon* the IPU Executive Committee to follow up on parliamentary work on the humanitarian crises in Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and other countries to support the efforts of the international community, and its parliaments in particular, aimed at providing assistance to populations, and at promoting order, stability and the long-term restoration of institutions in order to achieve human and sustainable development in democracy;
23. *Calls upon* the international community to address the urgent need for robust financial support by strengthening its institutional support and cooperative financing mechanisms, including the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, the Central Emergency Response Fund managed by OCHA, and UNHCR, and *recommends* that the above financial support be allocated not only to immediate and individual humanitarian assistance such as food and medicine, but also to the design of reconstruction plans for essential infrastructure in order to maintain the basic functions of society in Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine and Yemen;
24. *Calls for* the strengthening of humanitarian assistance mechanisms to respond to these humanitarian crises.

## **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS** ***LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS***

Mr./M. Duarte Pacheco  
President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union  
*Président de l'Union interparlementaire*

Mr./M. Ahmed Bin Salman Almusalam  
Speaker of the Council of Representatives of Bahrain  
*Président du Conseil des représentants du Bahreïn*

Mr./M. Martin Chungong  
Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union  
*Secrétaire général de l'Union interparlementaire*

**I. MEMBERS - MEMBRES****ALBANIA**

Mr. PALOKA, Edi Leader of the delegation	Member of Parliament (DP)
Ms. DODA, Mesila	Member of Parliament
Ms. KRYEMADHI, Monika	Member of Parliament (PL)
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Mr. NALLBATI, Bledjon	Member of Parliament (DP)
Mr. SALIANJI, Ervin	Member of Parliament (DP)
Mr. GOLI, Genci Secretary of the delegation	Director for bilateral cooperation
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(DP: Democratic Party)  
(PL: Freedom Party)

**ALGERIA**

Mr. BOUDEN, Monder Chef de la délégation Membre du Groupe consultative de haut niveau sur la lutte contre le terrorisme et l'extrémisme violent	Vice-Président de l'Assemblée populaire nationale (RND)
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Mr. KHODJA, Abdelhamid	Ambassador
Mr. HARFOUCH, Omar	Conseiller Diplomatique

(RND: Rassemblement National Démocratique)  
(FLN: Conseil de la Nation)

**ANGOLA**

Ms. CERQUEIRA, Carolina Leader of the delegation President of the Group	Speaker of the National Assembly
Ms. VALENTE, Maria	Member of the National Assembly (MPLA)
Mr. VAN-DÚNEM, Kilamba	Member of the National Assembly (MPLA)
Ms. CHIMBINDA, Arlete	Member of the National Assembly
Ms. FELISBERTO, Albertina	Member of the National Assembly
Mr. GASPAS, João	Member of the National Assembly (MPLA)
Mr. NERI, Pedro Member of the ASGP	Secretary General of the National Assembly
Ms. BARRICA, Nildeice Secretary of the delegation	
Mr. MUACHENDO, Neemias Adviser	Director
Ms. ANDRADE, Veronica	Adviser
Ms. BRAVO, Laureth	Adviser
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(MPLA: Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola)

#### ARGENTINA

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on Democracy and Human Rights

Senator (FDT)  
Secretary of the Women's Commission,  
Secretary of the Science and Technology Commission

Ms. CREXELL, Carmen Lucila  
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Senator (MPN)

Ms. BRAWER, Mara  
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Member of Parliament, Chamber of Deputies (FDT)  
First Vice President of the Science, Technology and  
Innovation Committee,  
Member of Foreign Affairs Committee,  
Member of the Chamber of Deputies (GEN)

Ms. STOLBIZER, Magarita  
Ms. TINI, Natalia  
Secretary of the delegation

(FDT: Frente de Todos / Everybody's Front)

(GEN: Generation for a National Encounter)

(MPN: Movimiento Popular Neuquino / Neuquén People's Movement)

#### ARMENIA

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Ms. HAKOBYAN, Hasmik  
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Member of the National Assembly (CC)  
Member of the Standing Committee on Science,  
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Member of the National Assembly (CC)

Ms. VARDANYAN, Tsovinar  
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Adviser

Secretary General

Mr. SEIRANIAN, Tigran  
Mr. MKHITARYAN, Aleksandr  
Adviser

Director of the Foreign Relations Department  
Chief of Protocol

Mr. GEVORGIAN, Gamlet  
Ms. GHAZARYAN, Zabela  
Secretary of the delegation

Assistant to the President of the National Assembly  
Senior specialist of the Foreign Relations Department

Mr. MARGARYAN, Mamikon  
Ms. KHACHATRYAN, Tsovinar  
Mr. HAKOBYAN, Davit

Protocol Officer  
Press secretary of the President of Parliament  
Assistant to the President of the National Assembly

(CC: Civil Contract- Party)

#### AUSTRALIA

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President of the Group  
Mr. ENTSCH, Warren

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Ms. PAYMAN, Fatima

Member of the House of Representatives (LNP)  
Committee Member, Joint Select Committee on Northern  
Australia

Senator (ALP)  
Committee Member, Joint Standing Committee: Foreign  
Affairs, Defence and Trade,  
Committee Member, Senate Standing Committee:  
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Mr. REID, Gordon

Member of the House of Representatives (ALP)  
Committee Member, Joint Standing: Aboriginal and  
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Committee Member, House of Representatives Standing:  
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Ms. REYNOLDS, Linda

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Ms. SURTEES, Claressa  
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Ms. THOMSON, Jane  
Secretary of the delegation

Ms. WILLIAMSON, Elise  
Assistant Delegation Secretary

Mr. MOORE, Jason  
Diplomat

Committee Secretary

Senior Research Officer

(ALP: Australian Labour Party)

(LNP: Liberal National Party of Queensland)

(LP: Liberal Party of Australia)

## AUSTRIA

Mr. LOPATKA, Reinhold  
Leader of the delegation  
Member of the High-level Advisory Group on  
Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism

Mr. MATZNETTER, Christoph

Mr. KASSEGGGER, Axel

Ms. ERNST-DZIEDZIC, Ewa

Mr. SCHERAK, Nikolaus

Mr. WINTONIAK, Alexis

Member of the ASGP

Mr. MATUSCHEK, Matthias

Secretary of the delegation

Ms. GABRON, Nadine

Member of the National Council (ÖVP)

Member of the National Council (SPÖ)

Member of the National Council (FPÖ)

Member of the National Council (Grüne)

Member of the National Council (NEOS)

Deputy Secretary General

Adviser

Adviser

(ÖVP: Austrian People's Party)

(SPÖ: Austrian Social Democratic Party)

(FPÖ: Austrian Freedom Party)

(Grüne The Greens)

(NEOS Austrian Liberal Party)

## AZERBAIJAN

Ms. GAFAROVA, Sahiba

Leader of the delegation

President of the Group

Mr. ALLAHVERDIYEV, Elnur

Mr. Mammadov, Ramin

Ms. MIKAYILOVA, Sevil

Speaker of the National Assembly (YAP)

Member of the National Assembly

Member of the National Assembly

Member of the National Assembly,

Member, Committee on Family, Woman and Child Affairs,

Member, Committee on International Relations and

Foreign Affairs

Secretary-General

Mr. HAJIYEV, Farid

Member of the ASGP

Mr. MAHMUDOV, Rustam

Ms. CHALABIZADA, Lala

Secretary of the Group

Mr. ALI-ZADA, Mir Kamal

Mr. Mammadov, Ilkin

Mr. TAGHIYEV, Teymur

Mr. HAJIYEV, Firudin

Mr. HUSEYNOV, Elmar

Mr. HUMMATOV, Agshin

Mr. RAFIYEV, Yalchin

Ms. NURAHMADOVA, Aynur

Mr. ABDULLAYEV, Shahin

Mr. KHALILLI, Elvin

Deputy Secretary General

Head of the Division on Work with International

Parliamentary Organizations

Head of the Division

Head of the International Relations department

Head of the Secretariat of the Speaker

Chief Administrator

Adviser

Assistant to the Speaker on media

Adviser

Assistant to the Speaker

Ambassador

Diplomat

(YAP: New Azerbaijan Party)

**BAHRAIN**

Mr. AL-SALEH, Ali,  
Leader of the delegation  
Mr. SALMAN, Abdulnabi  
Mr. FAKHRO, Jamal  
Mr. ALBINMOHAMMED, Bassam

Ms. ALDHAIN, Mariam

Ms. AL ZAYED, Dalal  
Ms. RAMZY FAYEZ, Hala  
Mr. IBRAHIM, Hasan  
Mr. SUROOR, Muneer  
Mr. ABUNAJMA, Rashed  
Ms. ALABBASI, Kareema  
Dr. (Ms.) ALJEEB, Fouzia  
Mr. ABDULMOHSEN, Ghazi  
Ms. GHAYYATH, Aysha

Ms. HASAN, Safa

Mr. ALMAHMEED, Mahmeed  
Mr. ALJABRI, Mohammed  
Ms. ALQATTAF, Ameera  
Mr. HAMD, Saleh  
Mr. MOHAMMED Sayed Ali  
Ms. ALENEZI, Hanadi  
Secretary of the Group  
Secretary of the delegation

Speaker of the Shura Council

Deputy Speaker of the Council of Representatives  
Deputy Speaker of the Shura Council  
Member of the Shura Council,  
Member of Committee on Financial and Economic Affairs  
Member of the Council of Representatives,  
Member of Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense, and  
National Security  
Member of the Shura Council  
Member of the Shura Council  
Member of the Council of Representatives  
Member of the Council of Representatives  
Secretary-General of the Council of Representatives  
Secretary-General of the Shura council  
Media and Relations Advisor  
Director of the Communications Department  
Head of Follow-up and Coordination Department,  
Council of Representatives  
Head of Public and International Relations Department,  
Shura Council  
Media Advisor  
Presidential Affairs Director  
Parliamentary Group Director  
Protocol and PR Coordinator  
Media Senior Specialist  
Senior Parliamentary Relations Development Specialist

**BANGLADESH**

Ms. CHAUDHURY, Shirin Sharmin  
Leader of the delegation,  
President of the Group  
Mr. ALAM, Md Sham-E

Ms. BEGUM, Umme Fatema Nazma

Mr. ERSHAD, Rahgir Al Mahe

Mr. FAKHRUL, Razee Mohammad

Ms. SMRITY, Umme Kulsum

Mr. SALAM, K M Abdus  
Secretary of the delegation  
Member of ASGP

Mr. BILLAH, M A Kamal  
Mr. CHOWDHURY, Mohammad Rashed Iqbal  
Mr. HAQUE, Md Enamul  
Mr. HOSSAIN, Md Wares  
Mr. ISLAM, Md Nazrul  
Mr. KAYES, Mohuddini

(BAL: Bangladesh Awami League)  
(JP: Jatiya Party)

Speaker of Parliament (BAL)  
Chairman, Business Advisory Committee  
Chairman, Committee on Petitions  
Member of Parliament (BAL)  
Member, Standing Committee on Ministry of Local  
Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives  
Member of Parliament (BAL)  
Member, Standing Committee on Ministry of Land  
Member of Parliament (BAL)  
Member, Standing Committee on Ministry of Health  
Member of Parliament (BAL)  
Member, Standing Committee on Ministry of Local  
Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives  
Member of Parliament (BAL)  
Member, Standing Committee on Ministry of Agriculture  
Secretary General of Parliament

Official, Parliament  
Official, Parliament  
Official, Parliament  
Official, Parliament  
Ambassador  
Diplomat

**BELARUS**

Mr. BELSKI, Valery  
Leader of the delegation  
Mr. SAVINYKH, Andrei  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing  
Committee on United Nations Affairs

Deputy Speaker of the Council of the Republic  
  
Member of the House of Representatives  
Chairman, Standing Commission on International Affairs

Ms. LEONCHIK, Tamara  
Delegation Secretary and Administrative  
Secretary of the Group

Deputy Head of the International relations Department

#### BELGIUM

Ms. D'HOSE, Stephanie  
Leader of the delegation

President of the Senate  
(Open VLD)

Mr. GRYFFROY, Andries  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee  
on United Nations Affairs

President, Committee on Institutional Matters  
Vice-President of the Senate (N-VA)  
Member, Democratic Renewal, Citizenship and  
International Affairs,  
Chairperson of the Twelve Plus Group  
Senator, (Ecolo)  
Vice-Chair, Committee on Foreign Relations,  
Member, Committee on European Matters

Mr. COGOLATI, Samuel  
President of the Group  
President of the Committee on the Human Rights  
of Parliamentarians  
Member of the Group of Facilitators for Cyprus  
Mr. LACROIX, Christophe  
Member of the Committee to Promote Respect for  
International Humanitarian Law

Member of the House of Representatives, (PS)  
Vice-President, Committee on Economy, Consumer  
Protection and Digital Agenda,  
Member, Committee on Foreign Relations  
Member of the House of Representatives, (MR)  
Member, Committee on Foreign Relations,  
Member, Committee on European Matters  
Deputy Director

Mr. DE MAEGD, Michel

Deputy Director

Mr. VERCAMMEN, Peter  
Secretary of the Group  
Mr. DANG-DUY, Liêm  
Deputy Secretary of the Group  
Mr. DE GHELLINCK, Thierry

Adviser

(N-VA: New Flemish Alliance)  
(Ecolo: Green Party)  
(PS: Socialist Party)  
(MR: Mouvement Réformateur)

#### BOLIVIA

Mr. ZUÑIGA ROJAS, Luis Alberto  
Leader of the delegation

Member of the Chamber of Deputies

Mr. ARRIEN CRONEMBOLD, Carlos Hernán  
Mr. MENDOZA LEIGUE, Gonzalo Adolfo Ramon  
Mr. OLLISCO BARRERO, Faustino  
Member of the Working Group on Science and  
Technology

Member of the Chamber of Deputies  
Member of the Chamber of Deputies  
Member of the Chamber of Deputies

Mr. RIVAS MONJE, Jaime  
Ms. RODRÍGUEZ MONTERO, Aleiza Alcira  
Ms. RUIZ FLORES, Martha  
Ms. TICONA QUISPE, Alicia Lisseth

Member of the Chamber of Deputies  
Member of the Chamber of Deputies  
Member of the Chamber of Deputies  
Member of the Chamber of Deputies

#### BOTSWANA

Mr. MOATIHODI, Pono  
Leader of the delegation  
Ms. MAKWINJA, Wilhemina N.  
Member of the Committee on Middle  
East Questions  
Mr. KEORAPETSE, Dithapelo L.  
Mr. LETSHOLO, Thapelo  
Ms. DITHAPO, Barbara N.  
Member of the ASGP  
Secretary of the Group  
Mr. KEEKAE, Lesedi  
Secretary of the delegation

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Member of the National Assembly (BDP)  
Member, Parliamentary Caucus on Women

Member of the National Assembly  
Member of the National Assembly  
Clerk

Adviser

(BDP: Botswana Democratic Party)

**BRAZIL**

Mr. LINS, Atila  
Leader of the delegation, President of the Group  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing  
Committee on United Nations Affairs  
Mr. CAJADO SAMPAIO, Claudio  
Mr. MOTTA, Hugo  
Mr. SABINO DE OLIVEIRA, Celso  
Mr. SILVESTRE FILHO, Irajá  
Mr. BACELAR FILHO, Joao Carlos  
Ms. ARAUJO, Silvia  
Secretary of the Group  
Mr. BARBOSA, Igor  
Diplomat

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PSD)

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PP)  
Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PR)  
Member of the Chamber of Deputies (União)  
Senator (PSD)  
Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PL)  
Adviser

(PL: Liberal Party)  
(PP: Progressives)  
(PR: Republican Party)  
(PSD: Democratic Social Party)  
(PT: Labour Party)  
(União: The Brazil Union)

**BURKINA FASO**

M. LOMPO, Dafidi David  
M. BALBONE, Boubacar  
M. KABRE, Kalifa  
Mme KONSEIBO TIENDREBEOGO, Félicienne  
Marie Pélagie  
M. NIKIEMA, Wendyelle Ambroise  
M. SAVADOGO, Yacouba  
M. OUEDRAOGO, Souleymane  
Mme SEMPORE SOUBEICA, Valerie  
M. KONATE, Abdoul Aimé Roland  
M. ZONG-NABA, Wendmissida Antoine Elisée  
M. BICABA, Paul Ismail

Premier Vice-Président de l'Assemblée nationale  
Membre de l'Assemblée nationale  
Secrétaire Générale  
Conseiller  
Conseiller

**BURUNDI**

Mr. NDABIRABE, Gelase Daniel  
Ms. NIYIBITANGA, Neema

Président de l'Assemblée nationale (CNDD-FDD)  
Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (CNDD-FDD),  
Membre de la Commission de l'Agriculture, de l'élevage,  
de l'environnement, du développement communal et des  
travaux publics

Ms. NDUWIMANA, Patricie

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (CNDD-FDD),  
Membre de la Commission des affaires sociales, du  
genre, du rapatriement, et de la lutte contre le sida

Mr. MISAGO, Zachée

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (CNDD-FDD),  
Membre de la Commission de l'Agriculture, de l'élevage,  
de l'environnement, du développement communal et des  
travaux publics

Ms. MUNEZERO, Charlotte  
Mr. SABUSHIMIKE, Gorgon

Conseillère diplomatique et politique  
Conseiller

(CNDD-FDD: Conseil Nationale pour la Défense de la Démocratie – Force de Défense de la Démocratie)

**CABO VERDE**

Mr. JOÃO DA LUZ, Armindo  
Ms. DELGADO ROCHA, Mircea Isidora  
Mr. DA SILVA EVORA, Walter Emanuel  
Mr. DA VEIGA SEMEDO, Jailson de Jesus

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly  
Member of the National Assembly  
Member of the National Assembly  
Adviser

**CAMBODIA**

Mr. YANG, Sem  
Leader of the delegation

Senator  
Chairman of the Commission on Human Rights,  
Complaint Reception and Investigation of the Senate  
Member of the National Assembly  
Secretary of the Commission on Foreign Affairs,  
International Cooperation, Information and Median of the  
National Assembly

Mr. TY, Sokun

Mr. CHHIT, Kim Yeat	Senator Vice-Chair of the Commission on Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Information and Media of the Senate Member of the National Assembly Secretary General
Mr. KHUT, Chandara	
Mr. OUM, Sarith	
Member of the ASGP	
Secretary of the Group	
Mr. SRUN, Dara	
Member of the ASGP	
Mr. CHHENG, Mengkheang	Official of International Relations Office
Secretary of the delegation	
Mr. CHHEN, Kimlong G.	Adviser
Adviser	
Mr. KOY, Malayvireak	Director
Secretary of the Group	
Mr. KIM, Sochetra	Deputy Director General of Research
Secretary of the delegation	
Mr. SENG, Thy	Chief of International Relations Office
Secretary of the delegation	
Mr. HEANG, Thul	Director General
Secretary of the delegation	

**CAMEROON**

Mr. NIAT NJIFENJI, Marcel	Président du Sénat (RDPC)
Président de la délégation	
Président du Groupe	
Ms. HANGLOG EPOUSE TJOUES, Genevieve	Vice-Présidente du Sénat (RDPC)
Ms. ABOUI, Georziane Marlyse	Sénatrice (ANDP)
Mr. OLIVER BAMENJU, Agho	Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (CPDM)
	Membre, Pétition et résolutions
	Secrétaire, Mise en œuvre des Objectifs de développement durable
Mr. VINCENT DE PAUL, Emah Etoundi	Membre de l'Assemblée nationale
Ms. KOULTCHOUMI EPSE AHIDJO, Oumoul	Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (UNDP)
Ms. JOHANNA, Ebangha Epse Agbor	Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (RDPC)
Ms. ASAA EPOUSE AWASOM, Florence Fru	Secrétaire général adjoint du Sénat
Mr. WONGOLO, Bernard	Secrétaire général adjoint
Mr. NJOMATCHOUA, Justin	Directeur du Cabinet du Président du Sénat
Ms. MEDOUANE AWOLE EPOUSE	Conseiller
ETOGA, Edwige Ursule	
Secretary of the delegation	
Mr. MEDARD, Mvondo	Directeur adjoint
Secretary of the delegation	
Mr. NGANE, Gustave Leopold	Conseiller technique

(ANDP: Alliance Nationale pour la Démocratie et le Progrès)  
(RDPC: Rassemblement Démocratique du Peuple Camerounais)  
(SDF: Social Democratic Front)  
(CPDM: Cameroon's People's Democratic Movement)  
(UNDP: Union Nationale pour la Démocratie et le Progrès)

**CANADA**

Mr. MCGUINTY, David	Member of the House of Commons (LPC)
Leader of the delegation	Chair, National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians
President of the Group	Member, Joint Interparliamentary Council
Ms. REMPEL GARNER, Michelle	Member of the House of Commons (CPC)
	Member, Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration
Mr. JULIAN, Peter	Member of the House of Commons (NDP)
	Member, Board of Internal Economy
	Member, Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage
Ms. SAINT-GERMAIN, Raymonde	Member of the Senate (ISG)
	Chair, Subcommittee on Human Resources
	Member, Standing Senate Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration

Ms. ATAULLAHJAN, Salma

Member of the Senate (CPC)  
Chair, Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights  
Member, Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and  
Oceans

Ms. LAROUCHE, Andr eanne

Member of the House of Commons (BQ)  
Vice-Chair, Standing Committee on the Status of Women  
Member, Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure of the  
Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Mr. JANSE, Eric

Member of the ASGP

Ms. MYCHAJLYSZYN, Natalie

Ms. PETRY, Shannon

Mr. LEBLANC-LAURENDEAU, Olivier

Adviser

Secretary of the Group

Adviser

(LPC: Liberal Party of Canada)

(CPC: Conservative Party of Canada)

(NDP: New Democratic Party)

(ISG: Independent Senators Group)

(BQ: Bloc Qu b cois)

**CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC**

Mme PATASSE, Marie-Christine

M. NGAMANA, Evariste

M. VELE FAIMINDI AD-NGUERET AROUN,  
S verin

M. MORDJIM, Ghislan Junior

Membre de l'Assembl e nationale

Membre de l'Assembl e nationale

Directeur de la Coop ration de l'Assembl e nationale  
Centrafricaine et point focal de l'UIP

Secr taire g n ral

**CHAD**

M. MAKI, Mahamat Saleh

Chef de la d l gation

M. ABDERAMANE KOKO, Abdelgader

M. DJIDD, Ahmed

M. LAOUHINGAMAYE, Dingaomaibe

M. NDJIBO, Nobo

M. BEYOM MALO, Adrien

M. HUSSEIN, Oumar Yaya

M. KHAMIS, Alghassim

Membre du Conseil National du Transition

Secr taire g n ral

Conseiller

Secr taire administratif

**CHILE**

Mr. INSULZA SALINAS, Jos  Miguel

Leader of the delegation

Mr. CASTRO, Jos  Miguel

Mr. J RGENSEN, Harry

Mr. EDWARDS SILVA, Jos  Manuel Rojo

Mr. MATHESON, Christian

Ms. MIX, Claudia

Member of the Bureau of Women

Parliamentarians

Ms. CARVAJAL AMBIADO, Mar a Loreto

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PS)

Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee,

Member of the Public Budget Committee

Member of the Chamber of Deputies

Member of the Chamber of Deputies

Member of the Senate (PLR)

Member of the Government Affairs Committee

Member of the Chamber of Deputies

Member of the Chamber of Deputies

Member of the Senate (PPD)

Member of the Economics Committee,

President of the Mining and Energy Committee

Member of the Chamber of Deputies

Secretary General of the Senate

Secretary General of the Chamber of Deputies

Director of International Affairs

Adviser, Director

Diplomat

(PLR: Partido Republicano / Republican Party)

(PPD: Partido por la Democracia)

(PS: Socialist Party / Partie socialiste)

**COMOROS**

Mr. ABDOU, Moustadroine

Leader of the delegation

Speaker of the Assembly of the Union (CRC)

Mr. ABDEREMANE, Mohamed Salim  
Ms. ATHOUMANI BEDJA, Toiymina  
Secretary of the delegation  
Mr. KAMBI, Sambu Soumali

Member of the Assembly of the Union (CRC)  
Personal Secretary to the Speaker

(CRC: Convention pour les renouveaux des Comores)

#### CÔTE D'IVOIRE

M. BICTOGO, Adama  
Chef de la délégation  
M. CAMARA, Pogabaha Thomas

Président de l'Assemblée nationale (RHDP)

Mme DAO NEE MACOURA, Coulibaly

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (RHDP)  
Président, Commission des Relations Extérieures  
Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (RHDP)  
Membre, Commission de la Sécurité et de la Défense  
Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (RHDP)  
Président, Commission de l'Évaluation des politiques publiques

M. KOUASSI, Koffi Kra Paulin

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale  
Membre, Commission des Relations Extérieures

M. YOUTE, Wonsebeo Innocent

M. DIOMANDE, Aboubacar Sidiki  
Mme DIABY NEE BARRY, Mouminatou  
M. TRAORE, Abdul Wahab  
M. KOUASSI, Amani Sébastien  
Secrétaire de la délégation  
Secrétaire du Groupe

Conseiller  
Chef du Service des Relations Interparlementaires,

(RHDP: Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix)

#### CROATIA

Ms. MARTINČEVIĆ, Natalija  
Leader of the delegation,  
President of the Group  
Mr. ČELIĆ, Ivan  
Member of the Health Advisory Group

Member of Parliament (NS-Reformists)  
Member, Interparliamentary Co-operation Committee

Mr. VUKAS, Stjepan  
Secretary of the delegation

Member of Parliament (HDZ)  
Member, Health and Social Policy Committee,  
Member, Foreign Affairs Committee  
Adviser

(NS-Reformists: People's Party – Reformists)  
(HDZ: Croatian Democratic Union)

#### CYPRUS

Mr. KYPRIANOU, Andreas  
Head of the delegation  
Ms. ATTALIDES, Alexandra

Member of the House of Representatives (AKEL)

Ms. EROTKRITOU, Christiana

Member of the House of Representatives (KOSP)  
Member, House Standing Committee on Internal Affairs  
Member, House Standing Committee on Human Rights and on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women  
Member of the House of Representatives (DIKO)  
Chairperson, House Standing Committee on Financial and Budgetary Affairs  
Member, House Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs

Mr. MOUSHOUTTAS, Marinos

Member of the House of Representatives (DEPA)  
Chairperson, House Standing Committee on Transport, Communications and Works  
Member, Standing Committee on Internal Affairs  
Senior International Relations Officer

Ms. CHRISTOU, Avgousta  
Secretary of the delegation  
Mr. KOULLAPIS, Kostas  
Secretary of the delegation

International Relations Officer

(AKEL: AKEL-LEFT-NEW FORCES)  
(DIKO: Democratic Party)  
(KOSP: Cyprus Greens-Citizens' Cooperation)

**CZECH REPUBLIC**

Mr. VOJTKO, Viktor,  
Leader of the delegation  
President of the Group  
Member of the Working Group on Science and  
Technology  
Mr. FIFKA, Petr

Ms. HORSKÁ, Miluše

Mr. KOHOUTEK, Tomáš

Mr. NYTRA, Zdeněk

Ms. ZEMANOVA, Radka  
Secretary of the delegation  
Ms. TUČKOVÁ, Alena  
Secretary of the Group

(STAN: Mayors and Independents)  
(ODS: Civic Democratic Party)  
(ANO 211)

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (STAN)  
Member, Committee on Social Affairs  
Member, Committee on Public Administration and  
Regional Development

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (ODS)  
Vice-Chair, Committee on European Affairs, Member,  
Committee on Health Care  
Member of the Senate  
President, Committee on Social Policy  
Member of the Chamber of Deputies  
Member, Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs  
Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs, N/Y  
Member of the Senate  
Member, Committee on EU Affairs  
Adviser

Adviser

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

M. MUNDELA KANKU, Eddy  
Chef de la délégation

M. MBATA BETUKUMESU MANGU, André  
Mme KAMONJI NASSERWA, Ida  
Mme KAVIRA MAPERA, Jeannette

M. MBUKU LAKA, Boris  
Membre du Comité des droits de l'homme  
des parlementaires  
M. VUNABANDI KANYAMIHIGO, Célestin

M. TSUNDU TSUNDU, Jonas

M. MABAYA, Juvens

M. MUKWALA BATEKE, Jean  
M. NGUVULU, Khojjean  
M. CISHAMARHA MUGOMOKA, Emmanuel  
M. MADJUBOLE MODRIKPE, Patrice  
M. KABANZI MABALA, Blaise

Mme PASI VALU MAOAO, Marie Suzanne

M. TRAORE, Abdoul Wahab  
M. COULIBALY, Drissa  
Mme WANGATA ANTUL, Josée

(UDPS: Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social)  
(PALU: Parti Lumumbiste Unifié)  
(ACN: Action pour un Congo nouveau)

Vice-Président du Sénat (UDPS)  
Membre, Politique Administrative, juridique et Droits  
humains

Vice-Président de l'Assemblée nationale  
Sénatrice  
Membre de l'Assemblée nationale  
Comité de sages  
Membre de l'Assemblée nationale

Sénateur (ACN)  
Vice-Président de la Commission Economique,  
financière et de la bonne Gouvernance  
Député national,  
Membre, Comité de l'Economie et finance  
Secrétaire du Cabinet du Président de  
l'Assemblée nationale  
Secrétaire Général du Sénat  
Secrétaire Général de l'Assemblée nationale  
Directeur, Sénat  
Directeur, Assemblée Nationale  
Secrétaire au Cabinet du Président de l'Assemblée  
nationale  
Conseillère, Coordinatrice du Bureau d'études du  
Sénat  
Conseiller  
Conseillère diplomatique  
Conseillère diplomatique

**DENMARK**

Mr. SOENDERGAARD, Soeren  
Leader of the delegation  
President of the Group  
Mr. Karsten HOENGE

Member of Parliament (EL)  
Member, Cultural Affairs Committee  
Member, Defence Committee  
Deputy Speaker (SF)  
Member, Foreign Policy Committee,  
Member, Foreign Affairs Committee

Ms. DAUGAARD, Katrine	Member of Parliament (LA) Vice Chairman, Social Affairs Committee, Member, Cultural Affairs Committee
Mr. MEILVANG, Jens	Member of Parliament (LA) Vice Chairman, Transport Committee, Member, Domestic Affairs Committee
Mr. Thomas MONBERG	Member of Parliament (S) Member, Cultural Affairs Committee, Member, Climate, Energy and Utilities Committee
Mr. SKRIVER Kris Jensen	Member of Parliament (S) Vice Chairman, Rural Districts and Islands Committee, Member, Climate, Energy and Utilities Committee
Mr. Kim VALENTIN,	Member of Parliament (V), Member, European Affairs Committee, Member, Foreign Affairs Committee
Ms. DELEURAN, Pernille	Member of ASGP
Mr. RIIS, Peter	Secretary of the Group
Mr. LARSON, Claudius	Assistant Secretary of the Group
(L: The Red-Green Alliance)	
(SF: The Green Left)	
(LA: Liberal Alliance)	
(S: The Social Democratic Party)	
(V: The Liberal Party)	

**ECUADOR**

Ms. CUESTA, Esther Leader of the delegation	Member of the National Assembly Member of the Committee on Children's and Adolescents Rights
Ms. AGUIRRE, Pamela Ms. ANDRADE MUÑOZ, Wilma Piedad Second Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians	Member of the National Assembly Member of the National Assembly
Ms. CAMPAIN, Rina Mr. FRÍAS BORJA, Edwin Ramiro	Member of the National Assembly (CREO) Member of the National Assembly

**EGYPT**

Dr. GIBALY, Hanafy Leader of the delegation	Speaker of the House of Representatives
Ms. ATTIA, Sahar Member of the Working Group on Science and Technology	Member of the House of Representatives, Member, Tourism and Civil aviation committee
Mr. DARWISH, Karim Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions, Member of the High-level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism	Member of the House of Representatives (Liberal) Chairman, Foreign Relations Committee
Ms. AYYOUB AWADALLAH, Aida Nassif Member, Bureau of Women Parliamentarians	Member of the Senate (Liberal) Secretary of the Committee, Foreign, Arab and African Affairs Committee, Senate
Ms. ALBAZAR, Sahar President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians	Member of the House of Representatives (Liberal) Vice-Chair, Foreign Relations
Mr. ZAKI, Yasser	Member of the Senate (Liberal) Vice-Chair, Economic and Financial Affairs Committee at the Egyptian Senate Secretary General of the Senate
Mr. ETMAN, Mahmoud Member of the ASGP	Secretary General of the House of Representatives
Mr. MANAA, Ahmed Member of the ASGP	
Mr. KAMEL, Mahmoud	Senior Protocol Officer
Mr. NOURELDIN, Haytham	Director
Mr. FAROUK, Abdel Latif	Senior Political Researcher at the Egyptian House of Representatives
Mr. SHABAN, Yasser	Ambassador
Mr. EL SAEED, Ahmed	Diplomat
(Liberal: The Future of Nation Party Liberal)	

**EQUATORIAL GUINEA**

Mr. NTUGU NSA, Atanasio-Ela Leader of the delegation	Member of the Senate (PDGE) Member, Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget, Member, Committee on Foreign Policy, Justice and Human Rights
Ms. MBA OBONO, Maria Flavia	Member of the Senate (PDGE) Member, Committee on Economy, Finance and Budget, Member, Committee on Foreign Policy, Justice and Human Rights
Ms. MELE COLIFA, Amparo	Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PDGE) Member, Committee on Justice and Human Rights, Member, Committee on Women in Parliament
Mr. OBIANG MAYE, Victorino-Nka Secretary of the delegation Member of the ASGP	Secretary General of the Senate
Mr. ESONO ABE, Bienvenido Ekna	Secretary General of the Chamber of Deputies

(PDGE: Partido Democrático de Guinea Ecuatorial)

**ESTONIA**

Mr. KIVIMÄGI, Toomas Leader of the delegation	Member of Parliament, (REF) Member, Constitutional Committee, Chairman, Security Authorities Surveillance Select Committee
Ms. HELME, Helle-Moonika	Member of Parliament, (C) Member, Cultural Affairs Committee
Ms. KÜTT, Helmen	Member of Parliament, (SOC) Chairman, Social Affairs Committee, Member, European Union Affairs Committee
Ms. TUUS-LAUL, Marika	Member of Parliament, (KESK) Member, Social Affairs Committee
Mr. HABICHT, Antero Member of the ASGP	Secretary General
Ms. FUNK, Kristina	Adviser
Mr. REINHOLD, Jaan	Ambassador/Permanent Representative

(REF: Group Estonian Reform Party)  
(C: Conservative People's Party of Estonia)  
(SOC: Social Democratic Party)  
(KESK: Estonian Centre Party)

**ESWATINI**

Mr. MAVIMBELA, Petros Vusi Leader of the delegation President of the Group	Speaker of the House of Assembly
Ms. BUJELA, Nokunceda Member, Bureau of Women Parliamentarians	Member of the House of Assembly
Mr. DLAMINI, Mkhululi	Member of the Senate
Mr. KHUMALO, Marwick	Member of the House of Assembly
Mr. SHABANGU, Treasure Sabelo Secretary of the delegation	Adviser

**ETHIOPIA**

Mr. GESSESSE, Agegnehu Teshager Leader of the delegation President of the Group	Speaker of the House of the Federation
Mr. GAKA, Fikre Aman	Member of the House of the Federation
Mr. GOSHU, Banchyirga Melese	Member of the House of the Federation
Mr. SHOA, Kebede Kayima	Secretary General
Ms. YENENEH, Haymanot	Protocol

**FIJI**

Mr. LALABALAVU, Naiqama Leader of the delegation President of the Group	Speaker of Parliament
Ms. BAINIVALU, Alitia	Member of Parliament (PAP)

Mr. SERUIRATU, Inia  
Fiji First

Member of Parliament

Ms. EMBERSON, Jeanette

Secretary-General to Parliament  
Member of the ASGP

Mr. SAKULU, Abele  
Mr. WAINIU, Senitieli

Deputy Secretary General

(PAP: People's Alliance Party PAP)

## FINLAND

Ms. JARVINEN, Heli  
Leader of the delegation  
President of the Group

Member of Parliament (G)  
Member, Finance Committee,  
Deputy Member, Audit Committee  
Member, Supervision and intelligence committee

Ms. KYLLONEN, Merja

Member of Parliament (VAS)  
Second Vice Chair, Grand Committee,  
Second Vice Chair, Working Subcommittee of the Grand  
Committee

Ms. PAAVOLA, Maija-Leena  
Mr. VUOSIO, Teemu  
Secretary of the Group  
Ms. LEHTIMAKI, Outi  
Secretary of the delegation

Secretary-General  
Adviser

Assistant

(G: The Greens)

(VAS: Left Alliance)

## FRANCE

M. MARCHAND, Frédéric  
Chef de la délégation

Membre du Sénat (RDPI)  
Vice-Président, Commission de l'aménagement du  
territoire et du développement durable

M. DE NICOLAY, Louis-Jean  
Membre du Bureau de la Commission permanente  
de la paix et de la sécurité internationale

Membre du Sénat, Membre (LR)  
Commission de l'aménagement du territoire et du  
développement durable,

M. JULIEN-LAFERRIERE, Hubert  
Membre du Comité sur les questions relatives au  
Moyen-Orient  
Mme LISO, Brigitte

Membre, Commission des affaires européennes  
Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (NUPES)  
Membre, Commission des affaires étrangères

Président du comité de Moyen-Orient

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (RE)

Membre, Commission de la défense nationale et des  
forces armées

Mme RIOTTON, Véronique  
Membre du Bureau des femmes parlementaire

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (RE)

Membre, Commission des affaires culturelles et de  
l'éducation,

Présidente délégation Droit des Femmes de l'Assemblée  
nationale

M. RHODES, Yann  
M. KESSAR, Antoine  
Mme CAPON, Capucine  
M. DELIVET, Philippe  
Mme LAMBRECQ, Cécile  
Mme VELASCO, Karine  
M. CAUCHARD, Jérôme  
M. MAYER, Emmanuel

Administrateur-adjoint

Administratrice

Directeur adjoint

Conseillère

Assistante de direction et de gestion

Ambassadeur

Diplomate

(RDPI: Rassemblement des démocrates, progressistes et indépendants)

(LR: Groupe Les Républicains)

(NUPES: La nouvelle union populaire écologique et sociale)

(RE: Parti Renaissance)

## GABON

M. NDOUMA MBADINGA, Jean Victor  
Chef de la délégation  
Membre du Bureau de la Commission permanente  
de la paix et de la sécurité internationale

Membre du Sénat (PDG)

Secrétaire du Bureau

Membre, Finances et Budget,

Membre, Plan et développement, Paix et sécurité  
internationale

M. MBADINGA MBADINGA, Aurélien

Membre du Sénat (PDG)  
Secrétaire du Bureau,  
Membre, Lois et Affaires Administratives, chargé des Droits de l'Homme,  
Membre, Plan et développement, Paix et sécurité internationale

(PDG: Parti Démocratique Gabonais)

**GAMBIA (THE)**

Mr. NJIE, Seedy Sk  
Leader of the delegation

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly (NPP)  
Chairperson of the Committee, Member of the Committee, Select Committee on Tourism, Arts, Culture, Youth and Sports

Ms. CHAM, Fatou

Member of the National Assembly (UDP)  
Member, Standing Committee on Public Accounts,  
Member, Standing Committee on Public Appointments,  
Member, Select Committee on Gender, Women and Children,  
Member, Select Committee on Trade and Regional Integration,

Mr. CHAM, Musa

Member of the National Assembly (PDOIS)  
Member, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Select Committee on the Monitoring and Implementation of Projects

Mr. JALLOW, Kebba

Member of the National Assembly (NPP)  
Member, Select Committee on Education, Training, Science and Technology,  
Member of the Committee, Select Committee on Trade and Regional Integration

Mr. TOURAY, Assan

Member of the National Assembly (UDP)  
Member, Standing Committee on Subsidiary Legislations,  
Member, Select Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development  
Deputy Director

Mr. KONTEH, Sainey  
Secretary of the delegation

(PDOIS People's Democratic Organisation for Independence and Socialism)  
(NPP National People's Party)  
(UDP United Democratic Party)

**GEORGIA**

Mr. VOLSKI, George

First Deputy Speaker of Parliament (GD)

Mr. SAMKHARADZE, Nikoloz

Member of Parliament (GD)  
Chairperson Foreign Relations Committee,  
Member European Integration Committee  
Chief Specialist; Department for International Relations

Mr. BROKISHVILI Irakli  
Secretary of the Group

(GD The n Dream-Democratic Member of Parliament)

**GERMANY**

Mr. BRINKHAUS, Ralph  
Leader of the delegation

Member of the Bundestag (CDU/CSU)  
Member, Committee on European Union Affairs,  
Member, Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development

Mr. LAREM, Andreas

Member of the Bundestag (SPD)  
Deputy Chairperson, Subcommittee on the United Nations, International Organisations and Globalization,  
Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs

Mr. SCHÄFER, Axel

Member of the Bundestag (SPD)  
Member, Committee on European Union Affairs

Mr. RADWAN, Alexander

Member of the Bundestag (CDU/CSU)  
Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs,  
Member, Committee on European Union Affairs

Ms. WALTER-ROSENHEIMER, Beate	Member of the Bundestag (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen) Member, Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid, Member, Petitions Committee
Mr. HOFFMANN Christoph Member of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development	Member of the Bundestag (FDP) Deputy Chairperson, Committee on Economic Cooperation and Development
Mr. SOBOLEWSKI, Frank	Deputy Secretary General of the German Bundestag Member of the ASGP
Mr. KLEEMANN, Georg	Deputy Secretary General of the German Bundesrat Member of the ASGP
Ms. ZÁDOR, Katalin Secretary of the delegation	International Parliamentary Assemblies Department, German Bundestag
Ms. BRAMMER, Claudia Assistant to the delegation.	International Parliamentary Assemblies Department, German Bundestag
Mr. GROHE, Werner	Deputy Head of Mission
Mr. KETTNER, Lars-Uwe	Diplomat
(CDU/CSU Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union)	
(FDP Free Democratic Party)	
(Bündnis 90/Die Grünen Green Party / Bündnis90/Die Grünen)	
(SPD Social Democratic Party)	

**GHANA**

Mr. BAGBIN, Alban Sumana Kingsford Leader of the delegation	Speaker of Parliament
Ms. APPIAGYEI, Patricia	Member of Parliament
Mr. IBRAHIM, Ahmed	Member of Parliament
Mr. IDDRISU, Habib	Member of Parliament
Mr. KYEI - MENSAH - BONSU, Osei	Member of Parliament
Mr. FORSON, Cassiel Baah	Member of Parliament
Ms. GOMASHIE, Abla Dzifa	Member of Parliament
Mr. MARFO, Emmanuel	Member of Parliament
Mr. NSIAH, Cyril Kwabena Oteng	Clerk
Mr. ANNAN, Francis Ekow	Adviser
Ms. YORNAS, Alice Adjua	Adviser
Mr. SALIFU, Paul Seodaaye	Adviser
Ms. EFA - QUAYSON, Claris	Adviser
Ms. OSEI, Sheba Nana Afriyie	Adviser, Director
Mr. ACHEAMPONG, Richard Kwame	Adviser, Director

**GREECE**

Mr. MOUZALAS, Ioannis Leader of the Delegation	Member of the Hellenic Parliament (SYRIZA) Member of the Standing Committee on National Defense and Foreign Affairs, Member of the Special Permanent Committee on Equipment Programs and Contracts
Ms. KAFANTARI, Charoula	Member of Parliament (SYRIZA) Member of the Standing Committee on Production and Trade, Vice-Chairwoman of the Special Permanent Committee on Environmental Protection
Ms. KARTSAKLI, Aikaterini Secretary of the delegation	Deputy Director, Hellenic Parliament
Ms. TSOUNI, Foteini	Adviser, Hellenic Parliament
(SYRIZA: Coalition of the Radical Left – Progressive Alliance)	

**GUINEA**

Mr. BALDE, Mamadou Fadia Leader of the delegation	Member of the Transitional National Council
Ms. BAH, Fatoumata Yebhe	Member of the Transitional National Council
Mr. SENE, Makhoudia	Member of the Transitional National Council
Mr. CISSE, Aboubacar Sidiki	Member of the Transitional National Council

**GUYANA**

Mr. NADIR, Manzoor  
Leader of the delegation  
President of the Group  
Mr. SHUMAN, Lenox  
Ms. HASTINGS-WILLIAMS, Dawn

Mr. NANDLALL, Mohabir

Ms. PARAG, Savitri  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee  
on Sustainable Development  
Ms. PERSAUD, Vindhya  
Member of the Bureau of Women  
Parliamentarians

Ms. CHARLES, Carleta  
Secretary of the delegation  
Mr. ISAACS, Sherlock  
Secretary of the Group  
Member of the ASGP

(ANUG, LJP & TMN: New and United Guyana, Liberty and Justice Party and the New Movement)  
(APNU: Partnership for National Unity)  
(PPPC: People's Progressive Party Civic)

Speaker of Parliament (PPPC)  
Chairman, Parliamentary Management Committee,  
Chairman, Committee of Selection  
Deputy Speaker (ANUG, LJP & TNM)  
Member of Parliament (APNU)  
Member, Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources  
Member of Parliament (PPPC)  
Member, Committee of Privileges,  
Member, Parliamentary Management Committee  
Member of Parliament (PPPC)  
Member, Parliamentary Management Committee,  
Member, Evidence Amendment Bill, Member  
Member of Parliament (PPPC)  
Chairperson, Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on  
Social Services,  
Member, Standing Orders Committee, Member  
Parliamentary Executive Officer

Clerk

**HUNGARY**

Mr. BALLA, Mihaly  
Leader of the delegation  
President of the Group  
Ms. BARTOS, Monika

Mr. LATORCAI, Janos  
Mr. SIMICKSKO, Istvan

Ms. VADAI, Agnes  
Member of the High-level Advisory Group on  
Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism  
Mr. TOROCZKAI, Laszlo  
Mr. SUCH, Gyorgy,  
Member of ASGP  
Ms. SOMFAINE ADAM, Katalin,  
Secretary of the delegation  
Secretary of the group  
Mr. MOLNAR, Gabor

(DK: Democratic Coalition)  
(KDNP: Christian-Democratic People's Party)  
(FIDESZ:- Hungarian Civic Union)

Member of Parliament (FIDESZ)  
Deputy Chair, Foreign Affairs

Member of Parliament (FIDESZ)  
Member, Committee for Foreign Affairs,  
Member, Committee on Defence  
Deputy Speaker (KDNP)  
Member of Parliament (KDNP)  
Member, National Security  
Member of Parliament (DK)  
Member, Committee for Foreign Affairs

Member of Parliament (Mi Hazank)  
Director General

Adviser

**ICELAND**

Mr. GUNNLAUGSSON, Sigmundur  
Leader of the delegation,

Mr. FRIÐRIKSSON, Jóhann Friðrik

Ms. GUDMUNSDOTTIR, Berglind Ósk

Ms. ÁRNADÓTTIR, Ragna  
Member of the ASGP  
Ms. BANG, Arna Gerður  
Adviser, Secretary of the delegation

Member of Parliament (Center Party)  
Member, the Future Committee,  
Member, Foreign Affairs Committee  
Member of Parliament Party (Progressive Party)  
Member, Member of the Credentials Committee,  
Member, Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee  
Member of Parliament (Independence Party)  
Member of the Constitutional and Supervisory  
Committee,  
Member of the Industrial Affairs Committee  
Secretary General

Adviser

Mr. BIRLA, Om  
Leader of the delegation  
President of the Group  
Mr. MAHTAB, Bhartruhari  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee  
on Peace and International Security  
Ms. GAVIT, Heena Vijaykumar  
Member of the Working Group on Science and  
Technology

Ms. KUMARI, Diya  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee  
on United Nations Affairs  
Ms. SARANGI, Aparajita  
Member of the Executive Committee  
Ex-Officio member of the Bureau of Women  
Parliamentarians  
Ms. MAADAM, Poonamben Hematbhai

Mr. PATRA, Sasmit  
Member of the Committee to Promote Respect for  
International Humanitarian Law  
Mr. TIRUH, Siva  
Mr. DAS AGRAWAL, Radha Mohan  
Mr. RAM, Vishnu Dayal  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee  
on Sustainable Development  
Mr. SINGH, Utpal Kumar  
Secretary of the Group  
Member of the ASGP  
Mr. MODY, Pramod Chandra Gyandeo  
Member of the ASGP  
Mr. PUNHANI, Raji  
Mr. YUMNAM, Arun Kumar  
Adviser  
Mr. KUMAR, Ajay  
Secretary of the delegation  
Mr. DUTTA, Rajeev  
Mr. LINGALA, Venkata Ramana  
Adviser  
Mr. NAGIA, Vikas  
Mr. MEENA, Rajendra Kumar  
Mr. SRIVASTAVA, Piyush  
Mr. CHITTETHUKUDI SHEIK, Ihjas Aslam

(BJD: Biju Janta Dal)

Mr. ZON, Fadli  
Leader of the delegation  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee  
on Democracy and Human Rights  
Ms. KOMARUDIN, Puteri Anetta  
Member of the Bureau of Women  
Parliamentarians  
  
Mr. RUDANA, Putu Supadma

## INDIA

Speaker of the Lok Sabha  
Chairperson, Rules committee  
Chairperson, Business advisory committee  
Member of the Lok Sabha (BJD)  
Member, General purposes Committee  
Member, Committee on public accounts  
Member of the Lok Sabha (BJP)  
Chairperson, Committee on Empowerment of Women,  
Member, Consultative Committee, Ministry of Tribal  
Affairs  
Member of the Lok Sabha (BJP)  
Member, Standing Committee on Railways, Member,  
Consultative Committee, Ministry of culture and tourism  
Member of Lok Sabha (BJP)  
Member, Committee on Ethics,  
Member, Committee on Housing and Urban Affairs  
  
Member of the Lok Sabha (BJP)  
Member, Committee on Empowerment of Women,  
Member, Consultative Committee, Ministry of Civil  
Aviation  
Member of the Rajya Sabha (BJP)  
Member, Committee on ethics  
Member, committee on petroleum and natural gas  
Member of the Rajya Sabha  
Member of the Rajya Sabha  
Member of the Lok Sabha (BJP)  
Member, Standing Committee on Home Affairs, Member,  
Rules Committee  
Secretary General of the Lok Sabha

Secretary General of the Rajya Sabha

Secretary, Lok Sabha  
Director  
Lok Sabha  
Adviser  
Lok Sabha  
Officer on special duty  
Director  
Lok Sabha  
Staff  
Staff  
Ambassador  
Diplomat

## INDONESIA

Member of the House of Representatives  
Chair, Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation,  
Member, Commission I: Defense, Foreign, and  
Information Affairs  
Member of the House of Representatives (Golkar)  
Member, Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation,  
Member, Commission XI: Finance, National Development  
Planning, Banking and Non-Banking Financial Institutions  
Member of the House of Representatives (Democratic  
Party)  
Vice-Chair, Committee for Inter-Parliamentary  
Cooperation, Member, Commission VI; Trade,  
Investments, Cooperative, SMEs, and State-Owned  
Enterprises

Mr. ALI SERA, Mardani Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions,	Member of the House of Representatives (PKS) Vice-Chair, Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation, Member, Commission II: Governance, Regional Autonomy, State Apparatus and Agrarian Affairs
Ms. KRISDAYANTI	Member of the House of Representatives (PDI-P) Member, Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation, Member, Commission IX: Demography, Health and Labor
Ms. ALIYAH, Himmatul	Member of the House of Representatives (GERINDRA) Member, Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation, Member, Commission X: Education, Research and Technology, Youth Affairs, Sports, Tourism, Arts, and Culture
Ms. RETNOASTUTI, Endah T.D. Secretary of the Group	Head of Bureau for Interparliamentary Cooperation
Ms. AMRIS, Elvira Dianti Secretary of the delegation	Head of International Cooperation Division
Mr. ERLANGGA, Naufal Fakhri Secretary of the Group	Foreign Cooperation Analyst Staff
Mr. ILYAS, Mochamad Secretary of the delegation	Adviser
Ms. HARYANTI Secretary of the delegation	Adviser
Ms. PRATIJIVANANTI, Vinita Mr. PRATAMA, Tide Aji	Sub-Head Division of International Cooperation
Mr. SABRI, Beny Rahbandiyosa Secretary of the Group	
Mr. HERMAWAN, Ardi Mr. HARRIS, Muhammad Omarsyah	Ambassador
Mr. SASTROAMIDJOJO, Widjoseno	Diplomat

(Gerindra: Great Indonesian Movement Party)  
(Golkar: Partai Golongan Karya)  
(NasDem: National Democratic Party)  
(PAN: National Mandate Party)  
(PKS: Prosperous Justice Party)  
(PDI-P: Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle)

**IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)**

Mr. AMOUEI, Abolfazl Ms. AZAD, Elham Ex officio of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians	Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran Member & Secretary of the Article 9 commission
Mr. GOLROO, Abbas	Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran Foreign Policy and Internal Security
Mr. GAVIT, Rohollah	Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran Member, Education and Research
Mr. NOWROUZI, Rahmatollah	Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran Member, Agriculture, Water and Natural Resource Committee
Ms. RAFIEI, Somayeh	Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran Member, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
Mr. REZAKHAH, Mojtaba	Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran, Member, Committee of Planning Budget and Audit
Mr. MOTAFAKERAZAD, Rohollah	Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran Member, Education and Research
Mr. ABOULHASSANI CHIMEH, Jalal Adviser	Deputy Director
Ms. TARKASHVAND, Zahra Secretary of the Group	Adviser
Ms. ABBASI, Fahimeh Mr. GHANEI, Mohsen	Diplomat
Ms. AGHAMOHAMMADI, Zahra	Diplomat

**IRAQ**

Mr. AL – HALBOOSI, Mohammed Leader of the delegation	Speaker of the Council of Representatives
Mr. ABDULRAHMAN, Ahmed	Member of the Council of Representatives

Mr. AHMED, Arian Aziz	Member of the Council of Representatives
Ms. FAHAD, Wihda	Member of the Council of Representatives
Member of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights	
Mr. AL-SALIHI, Arshed	Member of the Council of Representatives
Ms. HAMMOOD, Siham	Member of the Council of Representatives
Ms. MOHAMMED, Najwa	Member of the Council of Representatives
Mr. HUSSEIN, Wasfi Assi	Member of the Council of Representatives
Adviser	
Mr. SALEH, Abbas Hussein	Member of the Council of Representatives
Adviser	
Mr. YOUNUS, Safwan Basheer	Secretary-General
Mr. AHMED, Mohammed Noort	Speaker's Office
Mr. MAHOOD, Ahemd Nayyef	Speaker's Office
Mr. KHALAF, Ahemd Hamid	Secretary of the Speaker
Mr. ESMIEL, Esam Rasheed	Protocol
Mr. MOHAMMED, Ahmed Othman	Public Relations
Mr. ENAD, Majid Hammeed	Protocol
Mr. ABDAL SATAR, Ghaih Majjo	Protocol
Mr. MOHAMMED, Salim Ali	
Mr ABDULRAHMAN, Muayad	Diplomat

**IRELAND – IRLANDE**

Mr. BUTTIMER, Jerry	Speaker of the Senate (FG)
Leader of the delegation	Chair, Seanad Committee on Procedure and Privileges,
Ms. CLIFFORD LEE, Lorraine	Member of Parliament (FF)
	Member, Committee on Health,
	Member, Committee on the Irish Language, Gaeltacht and the Irish-speaking Community
Mr. CRAUGHWELL, Gerard	Member of Parliament,
	Member, Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence,
	Member, Joint Committee on Transport and Communications
Ms. GARVEY, Róisín	Member of Parliament (GP)
	Member, Committee on Environment and Climate Action,
	Member, Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media
Mr. NAUGHTEN, Denis	Member of Parliament, Chair, Committee on Social Protection, Community and Rural Development and the Islands
Chair of the Working Group on Science and Technology	Deputy Clerk of the Seanad
Ms. DOODY, Bridget	
Member of the ASGP	
Ms. MATHEWS, Bernadette	Adviser
Secretary of the delegation	
Mr. MC LAUGHLIN, Eden	Adviser, Private Secretary to the Cathaoirleach

(FF: Fianna Fáil – The Republican party)  
(FG: Fine Gael)  
(GP: Róisín Green Party)

Mr. DANON, Danny	Member of the Knesset
Leader of the delegation	
Ms. SHASHA BITON, Yifat	Deputy Speaker of the Knesset
Mr. ILLOUZ, Dan.	Member of the Knesset
Mr. STERN, Elazar	Member of the Knesset
Ms. MARGALIT, Liat	Adviser
Secretary of the Group	

**ISRAEL**

Mr. DANON, Danny	Member of the Knesset
Leader of the delegation	
Ms. SHASHA BITON, Yifat	Deputy Speaker of the Knesset
Mr. ILLOUZ, Dan.	Member of the Knesset
Mr. STERN, Elazar	Member of the Knesset
Ms. MARGALIT, Liat	Adviser
Secretary of the Group	

**ITALY**

Ms. QUARTAPELLE, Lia	Member of Parliament (PD)
Member of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians,	Deputy Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee
Member of the Group of Facilitators for Cyprus	
Leader of the delegation	

Ms. BERGAMINI Deborah	Member of Parliament (FI) Member, Constitutional Affairs Committee Adviser
Ms. RADONI Susanna Secretary of the Group, Secretary of the Delegation	
Ms. AMADEI, Paola	Ambassador
Mr. MILLARTE, Marco	Diplomat
(PD: Democratic Party) (FI: Forza Italia)	
<b>JAPAN</b>	
Mr. ITO, Shintaro Leader of the delegation	Member of the House of Representatives (LDP) Director, Commission on the Constitution Member, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs
Mr. KAMEOKA, Yoshitami	Member of the House of Representatives (LDP) Member, Standing Committee on Budget Member, Standing Committee on Discipline
Mr. YUHARA, Shunji	Member of the House of Representatives (CDP) Director, Special Committee for Regional Revitalization, Policies on Children, and Digital Society Promotion Member, Standing Committee on Internal Affairs and Communications
Mr. AOYAGI, Hitoshi	Member of the House of Representatives (JIP) Director, Standing Committee on Budget Member, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs
Mr. MIURA, Yasushi	Member of the House of Councillors (LDP) Director, Standing Committee on General Affairs Director, Research Committee on Natural Resources and Energy, Sustainable Society
Ms. TAMURA, Mami	Member of the House of Councillors (DPFP) Member, Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Labour Member, Special Committee on Consumer Affairs Adviser
Mr. FUJITA, Hiromitsu Secretary of the delegation	Adviser
Mr. FUTAMI, Akira	Adviser
Mr. TSUCHIDO, Shu	Adviser
Ms. NISHIHARA, Narumi	Adviser
Mr. SHIMA, Ryosuke	Adviser
Ms. AOKI, Moe	Adviser
Mr. KONDO, Tomoya	Adviser
Ms. YAZAWA, Akiko	Adviser
Mr. IMUTA, Ryohei	Adviser
Mr. MIYAMOTO, Masayuki	Ambassador
Ms. IKEDA, Yutaka	Diplomat
Ms. SUZUKI, Takako	Diplomat
Ms. KURE, Kyoko	Staff
(LDP: Liberal Democratic Party of Japan) (CDP: The Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan) (JIP: Nippon Ishin (Japan Innovation Party) (DPFP: Democratic Party for the People of Japan)	
<b>JORDAN</b>	
Mr. SAFADI, Ahmad Leader of the delegation	Speaker of the House of Representatives
Mr. HADDADIN, Bassan Adviser	Senator
Mr. AL-JBOUR, Abeer	Member of Parliament
Mr. ALHELALAT, Mohammed	Member of the House of Representatives
Mr. ALMADI, Talal	Senator
Ms. ALRIYATI, Tamam Adviser	Member of the House of Representatives
Mr. MASADEH, Mohamed Taisir	Member of the House of Representatives
Mr. SLEHAT, Nemer	Member of the House of Representatives
Mr. SUALIK, Mohamed	Member of the House of Representatives
Mr. BANI YASSIN, Moh'd Taisir	Member of the House of Representatives

Mr. BANI HASAN, Mahmoud Secretary of the delegation	Secretary General
Mr. ALGHUWAIRI, Awwad	Secretary of the group
Mr. ALMASHAKBEEH, Adnan	Adviser
Mr. ABUALGANAM, Anmar	Adviser
Mr. ABDALAISH, Abdulraheem	Adviser
Mr. ALAKAYLEH, Hamza	Adviser
Mr. ALSAFADI ; Husni	Adviser
Mr. KHALEEL, Ali	Adviser

**KAZAKHSTAN**

Ms. RYSBEKOVA, Lyazzat	Member of the Senate
Mr. BOLGERT, Yevgeniy	Member of the Senate
Mr. TLEGENOV, Rustam	Adviser, House of Representatives

**KENYA**

Mr. MURUNGI, Kathuri Leader of the delegation	Deputy Speake (UDA) Chairman, Senate Liaison Committee
Mr. GACHOBE, Samuel	Member of the National Assembly
Mr. KANDIE, Joshua	Member of the National Assembly
Ms. LESUUDA, Josephine	Member of the National Assembly
Ms. MUGE, Cynthia	Member of the National Assembly
Ms. MUMMA, Catherine Muyeka Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians	Member of Parliament (ODM) Member, Committee on Devolution and Intergovernmental Relations, Member, Committee on Justice, Legal Affairs and Human Rights
Ms. MUTUNGA, Beth Kalunda	Member of Parliament (ODM) Member, Committee on Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Member, Committee on National Cohesion, Equal Opportunity and Regional Integration
Mr. MWINZAGU, Raphael Chimera (UDA)	Member of Parliament (UDA) Member, Committee on Justice, Legal Affairs and Human Rights, Member, Committee on Health
Ms. ODHIAMBO, Millie Vice-President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians	Member of the National Assembly
Ms. TONKEI, Rebecca Adviser	Member of the National Assembly
Mr. WAWERU, John Kiarie Chair of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law	Member of the National Assembly
Mr. NYEGENYE, Jeremiah Makokha Adviser	
Member of the ASGP	
Mr. MOHAMED, Mohamed Ali Adviser	Deputy Clerk
Mr. KIPKEMDI, Kirui Arap	Director
Mr. MOGERE, Zakayo Izanta Secretary of the delegation	Deputy Director
Ms. KARANU, Perpetual. W. Muiga	Adviser
Ms. GATHURU, Angela Wangechi Secretary of the delegation	Adviser
Ms. KAWIRE, Nancy	Adviser

(UDA: United Democratic Alliance)  
(ODM: Orange Democratic Party)

**KUWAIT**

Mr. ALZUFAIRI, Thamer Leader of the delegation	Member of Parliament, Head of Committee, Committee on the protection of public funds, Member of the Committee, Committee Human Rights Commission
Mr. ALAJMI, Mohammad	Member of Parliament Rapporteur, Committee on Home Affairs and Defense, Member, Committee on Public Utilities

Mr. ALAMIRAH, Khaled	Member of Parliament Member, Committee on Interior and Defense Affairs, Member, Committee on Public Utilities
Mr. ALOBAID, Hamad	Member of Parliament Member, Committee on Budgets and Final Account Member, Committee on Housing and Real Estate
Ms. RAMADAN, Jenan Mohsen	Member of Parliament Rapporteur, Committee on the Protection of Public Funds, Rapporteur, Committee on Women, Family and Child Affairs
Mr. ALANEZI, Meshal	Deputy Secretary-General
Mr. ALNUSIF, Jasem	Director
Mr. ALHARBAN, Talal	Deputy Director
Secretary of the Group	
Mr. ALBEHBEHANI, Ahmad	Adviser
Secretary of the Group	
Mr. ALAJMI, Mubarak	Adviser
Mr. ALMUNAIKH, Fahad	Adviser
Secretary of the delegation	
Ms. ALSUBAIE, Sarah	Adviser
Secretary of the delegation	

**LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**

Ms. XAYACHACK, Sounthone	Vice-President of the National Assembly (SP)
Leader of the delegation	Member, Foreign Affairs Committee
Mr. PRASEUTH, Sanya	Member of the National Assembly (SP)
	Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee,
	Director
Mr. ANOTHAY, Khemphone	
Adviser	
Mr. SAMPHET, Viengdalat	Adviser
Mr. INTHABANDITH, Boun	Ambassador

(SP: Lao People's Revolutionary Party)

**LATVIA**

Mr. TEIRUMNIEKS, Edmunds	Member of Parliament (NA)
Leader of the delegation	Deputy Chairman, Legal Affairs Committee,
President of the Group	Member, Sustainable Development Committee
Mr. DAUDZE, Gundars	Member of Parliament (ZZS)
	Member, Legal Affairs Committee, Member,
	Parliamentary Inquiry Committee
Mr. JUDINS, Andrejs	Member of Parliament (JV)
	Chairman, Legal Affairs Committee, Member, Citizenship,
	Migration and Social Cohesion Committee, Committee on
	United Nations Affairs
Ms. SIMANOVSKA, Jana	Member of Parliament, Member, Economic, Agricultural,
PROGRESSIVES (PRO)	Environmental and Regional Policy Committee, Member,
	Parliamentary Inquiry Committee, Committee on
	Democracy and Human Rights
Ms. PAURA, Sandra	Director
Secretary of the Group, Secretary of the delegation	

(NA: National Alliance)

(ZZS: Union Of Greens And Farmers)

(JV: The New Unity)

**LIBERIA**

Ms. HOWARD-TAYLOR, Jewel	President of the Senate
	Vice-President of Liberia
Ms. MENSAH, Moima Briggs	Member of the House of Representatives
Mr. MOONEY, Moses S.	Chief of protocol
Mr. NEUFVILLE, Richmond O.	Press Secretary

**LIBYA**

Mr. SALIM, Fouzi  
Leader of the delegation  
Ms. ABD ULRAHIM; Sultan  
Mr. ALSSGIR, Alhadi  
Ms. ABOURAS, Rabeeah  
Mr. KSHIR, Ali  
Mr. SHEMBESH, Ramadan  
Mr. MUSSA, Abdulla  
Mr. MUSMARI, Osama  
Mr. AMER, Abdullah  
Mr. HASHASH, Ahmed  
Mr. ALBAKOUSH, Ali  
Mr. ELJAAFRI, Ashraf  
Mr. ELWALID, Abdelhafiz

Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Member of the House of Representatives  
Secretary-General  
Deputy Director  
Adviser  
Adviser  
Secretary  
Secretary  
Secretary

**LIECHTENSTEIN**

Mr. FRICK, Albert  
Leader of the delegation  
President of the Group  
Ms. BÜHLER-NIGSCH, Dagmar  
Ms. WACHTER, Gabriele  
Secretary of the delegation

President of the Landtag (FBP)  
Chairman, Executive Committee of the Parliament  
Member of the Landtag (VU)  
Adviser

(FBP: Progressive Citizens' Party)  
(VU: Patriotic Union)

**LITHUANIA**

Ms. BUROKIENE, Guoda  
Leader of the delegation  
President of the Group  
Ms. SKIRMANTIENE, Asta  
Secretary of the delegation

Member of Parliament (LFGU)  
Member, Committee on State Administration and Local  
Authorities  
Adviser

(LFGU: Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union)

**MADAGASCAR**

Mr. RAKOTOMALALA, Miarintsoa Andriantsitonta  
Leader of the delegation  
Member of the Board of the Forum of Young  
Parliamentarians  
Mr. TOVONDRAY RETSANGA, Brillant De L'Or  
Member of the Working Group on Science and  
Technology  
Mr. RANDRIAMAHAFANJARY, Calvin  
Secretary of the Group  
Member of ASGP

Member of the National Assembly  
Member of the National Assembly  
Secretary General

**MALAWI**

Ms. GOTANI HARA, Catherine  
Leader of the delegation  
Mr. BONONGWE, Jailos Kalenje

Speaker of the National Assembly  
Member of the National Assembly (MCP)  
Member, Commissions, Statutory Corporations and State  
Enterprises,  
Member, Local Authorities  
Member of the National Assembly  
Member, National Resources and Climate Change  
Committee  
Member, International Relations Committee  
Member of the National Assembly (MCP)  
Member, Budget and Finance Committee,  
Member, International Relations Committee  
Member of the National Assembly,  
Member, Defence and Security,  
Member, Commissions, Statutory Corporations and State  
Enterprises

Ms. JOLOBALA, Esther Jailosi

Mr. KANDODO, Kenny

Mr. KANYAMA, Reuben

Mr. KAPICHILA, Misolo Mussa	Member of the National Assembly (UDF) Member, Legal Affairs Committee, Member, International Relations Committee
Mr. MKUMBA, Ismail Rizzq	Member of the National Assembly (UDF) Member, Defense and Security, Member, Industry, Trade and Tourism,
Mr. MLOMBWA, Clement Claude	Member of the National Assembly (MCP) Member, Legal Affairs Committee, Member, International Relations Committee
Mr. MUSOWA, Victor	Member of the National Assembly (DPP) Member, Legal Affairs Committee, Member, International Relations Committee
Ms. KALEMBA, Fiona	Clerk of Parliament Member of the ASGP Executive Committee
Ms. KILINO, Constance	Principal Protocol Officer
Mr. MWENYEHELLI, Jeffrey	Adviser
Secretary of the Group	
Ms. CHIKANDIRA, Nancy	Adviser
Mr. DUBE, Gerald	Personal Assistant to the Speaker

(DPP: Democratic Progressive Party)  
(MCP: Malawi Congress Party)  
(UDF: United Democratic Front UDF)

**MALAYSIA**

Mr. WONG, Chen	Member of the House of Representatives (PKR)
Leader of the delegation	
Member of the Working Group on Science and Technology	
Mr. MD ARIP, Muhammad Zahid	Senator (BERSATU) Member, Special Select Committee on People's Well- Being
Ms. IBHARIM, Nurul Fadhilah	International Relations and Protocol Division
Secretary of the delegation	

(BERSATU: The Malaysian United Indigenous Party)  
(PKR: The People's Justice Party)

**MALDIVES**

Mr. RIYAZ, Abdulla	Member of the People's Majlis (MNP)
Leader of the delegation	Committee Member, Public Accounts Committee, Committee Member, Budget Committee
Mr. HAMEED, Ali	Member of the People's Majlis (JP) Committee Member, Committee on Independent Institutions, Committee Member, Committee on State-owned Enterprises
Ms. MAHMOOD, Jeehan	Member of the People's Majlis (MDP)
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights	Chairperson, Committee on Human Rights and Gender, Committee Member, Committee on Social Affairs, Asia- Pacific Group Member
Ms. NIUSHA, Fathimath	Clerk
Member of the ASGP	
Ms. EAMAN, Aishath	Foreign Relations Officer
Adviser	

(MNP: Maldives National Party)  
(JP: Jumhooree Party JP)  
(MDP: Maldivian Democratic Party)

Mr. TRAORE, Hamidou  
Leader of the delegation  
Mr. ALY, Amadou  
Member of the High-level Advisory Group on  
Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism  
Mr. SIDIBE, Modibo  
Member of the ASGP

Mr. FARRUGIA, Angelo,  
Leader of the delegation  
President of the Group  
Mr. CUTAJAR, Robert  
  
Mr. DE BATTISTA, Randolph  
Mr. BAJADA, Ian Paul  
Secretary of the delegation

(PN: The Nationalist Party)

Mr. PHOKEER, Soorojdev  
Mr. RAMDHANY, Anjiv  
Member of the Working Group on Science and  
Technology  
Ms. JUTTON, Teenah  
Member of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians  
Mr. ASSIRVADEN, Patrick Gervais  
Member of the Standing Committee on  
Sustainable Development  
Ms. RAMCHURN, Urmeelah Devi  
Secretary of the delegation  
Secretary of the Group

Ms. REYNOSO SANCHEZ, Alejandra Noemi  
Member of the Committee on Human Rights of  
Parliamentarians  
Ms. GUERRA CASTILLO, Marcela  
Ms. CARVAJAL ISUNZA, Sofia  
Mr. GOMEZ HERNANDEZ, Adolfo  
Ms. LOPEZ CASTRO, Cynthia Iliana  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee  
on United Nations Affairs  
Mr. MADRAZO LIMÓN, Carlos  
Mr. RITTER OCAMPO; Klaus Uwe

Mr. NOTARI, Fabrice  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee  
on Sustainable Development

Mr. LKHAGVA, Munkhbaatar  
Leader of the delegation  
Mr. GANZORIG, Temuulen

Mr. JADAMBA, Bat-Erdene  
Ms. ERDENE-OCHIR, Anujin  
Secretary of the delegation  
Secretary of the Group  
Ms. GANBOLD, Azjargal  
Secretary to ASGP Delegate  
Mr. ORSOO, Bat-Erdene  
Secretary of the delegation

(MPP: Mongolian People's Party)

## MALI

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Member of the National Assembly

Secretary General

## MALTA

Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Chairperson, House Business Committee, Chairperson,  
Privileges Committee  
Member of the House of Representatives (PN)  
Member, House Business Committee  
Member of the House of Representatives  
Manager II (Research)

## MAURITIUS

Speaker of Parliament  
Member of Parliament

Member of Parliament

Member of Parliament

## MEXICO

Deputy Speaker of the Senate

Deputy Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies  
Member of the Chamber of Deputies  
Senator  
Member of the Chamber of Deputies

Member of the Chamber of Deputies  
Member of the Chamber of Deputies

## MONACO

Member of the National Council  
President of the Foreign Affairs Committee

## MONGOLIA

Vice-Chairperson of the State Great Hural (MPP)

Member of the State Great Hural (MPP)  
Chairman of the Standing Committee of State Budget  
Member of the State Great Hural (MPP)  
Foreign Relations Department

Officer, Secretariat of State Great Hural

Adviser

**MOROCCO**

M. MAYARA Enaam Chef de la délégation	Président de la Chambre des Conseillers (PI) Président de l'Assemblée parlementaire de la Méditerranée (PAM)
M. AIT MIK, Kamal Membre du Bureau de la Commission permanente de la démocratie et des droits de l'homme	Membre de la Chambre des Conseillers
M. CHOUMAIS, Hassan Membre du Bureau de la Commission permanente du développement durable	Membre de la Chambre des Conseillers
M. TOUIZI, Ahmed Président du Groupe	Membre la Chambre des Représentants (PAM)
Membre du Bureau de la Commission permanente de la paix et de la sécurité internationale	
M. HEJIRA, Omar	Membre de la Chambre des Représentants
M. REDDAD, Mustapha	Membre de la Chambre des Représentants (RNI)
Mme SLASSI, Khaddouj	Membre la Chambre des Représentants (USFP)
M. EL KHADI, Najib Président de l'ASGP	Secrétaire général Chambre des Représentants
M. ZEROUALI, El Assad Membre de l'ASGP	Secrétaire général Chambre des Conseillers
M. AZARKAN, Hassan Conseiller	Chef de division des relations extérieures Chambre des Conseillers Chambre des Conseillers
M. DRIOUCHE, Abdelwahad Secrétaire du Groupe	
M. SATRAOUY, Said Secrétaire du Groupe	Chef de la division des relations multilatérales Chambre des Représentants
Secrétaire de la délégation,	
M. GHAZI, Saad Conseiller	Directeur adjoint Chambre des Conseillers
M. LAHNINI, Zakaria Conseiller	Chef de cabinet Chambre des Conseillers
M. KADIRI, Fouad	
M. BENKHAYI, Mostafa	Ambassadeur

(PI: Parti Istiqlal - Parti conservatoire)

(RNI: Rassemblement National des Indépendants)

(USFP: Union socialiste des forces populaires)

(PAM : Partie Authenticité et Modernité)

**MOZAMBIQUE**

Ms. BIAS, Esperança, Leader of the delegation	Speaker of the Assembly of the Republic (FRELIMO)
Mr. MULEMBWE, Eduardo President of the Group	Member of the Assembly of the Republic (FRELIMO)
Ms. MALEMA, Lucinda	Member of the Assembly of the Republic (FRELIMO)
Ms. MUSSAGY, Gania	Member of the Assembly of the Republic (RENAMO)
Mr. MANGERA, Mauro Member of ASGP	Deputy-Clerk
Ms. LISSENGA, Lucrecia Secretary of the delegation	Secretary to the Speaker
Mr. Narcisio MANJATE Secretary of the Group	Adviser
Ms. BONIFÁCIO, Marina Adviser	Member of ASGP
Ms. BALOI, Marília	Director
Mr. MADROBA, José	Adviser
Mr. OFINAR, Délio, Adviser	Adviser
Mr. VENÂNCIO, Salvador	Adviser
Mr. RIBEIRO CORREIA, Rui	Interpreter
Mr. DA SILVA, Joaquim	Interpreter
Mr. CHAPO, Francisco	
Ms. FLORINDO, Sara	
Ms. PARRUQUE, Gertrudes	

(FRELIMO: Mozambique Liberation Front)

(RENAMO: Mozambique National Resistance)

Mr. KATJAVIVI, Peter  
Leader of the delegation,  
President of the Group  
Member of the Bureau of the  
Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs  
Mr. AUPINDI,  
Mr. IIPUMBU, Longinus Ndakolonkoshi  
Ms. NUYOMA SWAPO, Emilia Inamudimbwa  
Ms. VAN DEN HEEVER, Jennifer Muriel  
Mr. Deriou Andred BENSON  
Ms. KAUMA, Victoria Mbawo  
Ms. HANGHUWO, Olivia Tuyenikelao  
Ms. KANDETU, Lydia  
Member of the ASGP  
Mr. NGHILEENDELE, Ndaningaweni Protasius  
Secretary of the delegation  
Ms. TJAONDJO Cornelia  
Secretary of the delegation  
Secretary of the Group  
Mr. NAMISEB, Johannes Tousy,  
Secretary of the delegation,  
Member of ASGP  
Mr. MWIRA, Bernhard Mbangu  
Ms. KULULA, Priskila,  
Adviser  
Mr. KAVHURA, Petrus Muyenga Adviser,

(SWAPO: South West Africa People's Organization)  
(IPC: Independent Patriots for Change)  
(NEFF: Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters)  
(PDM: Popular Democratic Movement)

Mr. GHIMIRE, Dev Raj  
Mr. LEKHAK, Ramesh  
Ms. KADARIYA BISTA, Indu  
Mr. PANDE, Hita Raj  
Mr. PARIVAR, Santosh  
Mr. GAUTAM, Sharat Raj  
Mr. YOGI, Gopal Nath  
Mr. BHATTARAI, Tej Prakash  
Mr. GHIMIRE, Rajan  
Mr. WAGLE, Tirtha Raj

Mr. AT SMA, Joop  
Leader of the delegation

Ms. GERKENS, Arda  
Member of the Committee on the Human  
Rights of Parliamentarians  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing  
Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

Ms. MULDER, Agnes  
President of the Standing Committee on  
Sustainable Development

Ms. STIENEN, Petra

## NAMIBIA

Speaker of the National Assembly (SWAPO)  
Chairperson, Committee on Standing Rules and Orders  
and Internal Arrangements, Chairperson, Committee on  
Privileges

Member of the National Assembly  
Member of the National Assembly (NEFF)  
Member of the National Assembly (SWAPO)  
Member of the National Assembly (PDM)  
Member of the National Council (IPC)  
Member of the National Council (SWAPO)  
Member of the National Council (SWAPO)  
Clerk of the National Assembly

Deputy Director

Secretary General of the National Council

National Council  
Parliamentary Clerk  
National Council  
Director  
National Council

## NEPAL

Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Member of the House of Representatives  
Member of the National Assembly  
Member of the House of Representatives  
Member of the House of Representatives  
Secretary General  
Secretary  
Personal Secretary to the Speaker  
Section Secretary  
Ambassador

## NETHERLANDS

Senator (CDA)  
Vice-Chair, Economic Affairs and Climate / Agriculture  
Nature and Food Quality,  
Member, Infrastructure Water Management and  
Environment (IWO)  
Vice-President of the Senate (SP)  
Member, Economic Affairs and Climate / Agriculture  
Nature and Food Quality, member, Public Health Welfare  
and Sport,  
Member of the Committee on the Human Rights of  
Parliamentarians  
Member of the House of Representatives (CDA)  
Chair, Economic Affairs and Climate Policy,  
Member, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation,

Senator (ALDE)  
Vice-Chair, Committee on Immigration & Asylum,  
Member, Committee on European Affairs

Mr. Hendrik-Jan TALSMA Christian Union (C)	Senator (CDA) Member, Justice and Security, member, Immigration & Asylum Secretary General
Mr. NEHMELMAN, Remco Vice-Chair of the ASGP	
Ms. CHRISTIAANSE, Monique Secretary of the delegation	Deputy Clerk Interparliamentary Relations
(CDA: Christian Democratic Appeal) (SP: Socialist Party) (ALDE: Alliance of Liberals for Europe)	

**NEW ZEALAND**

Ms. WALTERS Vanushi Leader of the delegation	Member of the House of Representatives (L) Deputy Chairperson, Justice, Member, Regulations Review
Mr. LEAVASA, Anae Neru	Member of the House of Representatives (L) Member, Health, Member, Pae Ora Legislation
Mr. O'CONNOR Simon National (N)	Member of the House of Representatives, (N) Member, Justice
Mr. SIMPSON, Scott National (N)	Member of the House of Representatives (N) Member, Environment
Mr. HOLMES, Winton Secretary of the delegation	Adviser
(L: New Zealand Labour Party) (N: National Party)	

**NIGER**

M. KARIDIO, Mahamadou Chef de la délégation Membre du Groupe consultatif de haut niveau sur la lutte contre le terrorisme et l'extrémisme violent, Parti Nigérien pour la Démocratie et le Socialisme	Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (PNDS)
M. DOGARI MOUMOUNI, Oumarou	Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (MODEN LUMANA FA)
Mme HABIBOU, Aminatou	Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (PNDS)
Mme MADOUGOU, Ousseyna	Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (MDN FALALA) CAEC, Commission des Affaires Etrangères et de la Coopération
M. MOUSSA Ousmane,	Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (ANDP)
M. TOUDJANI IDRISSE, Abdoulaye Conseiller	Conseiller technique
(ANDP : Alliance Nigérienne pour la Démocratie et le Progrès) (PNDS Tarrava: Parti Nigérien pour la Démocratie et le Socialisme) (MODEN Lumana FA: Mouvement Patriotique Nigérien pour une Fédération Africaine ) (MODEN FALALA :Mouvement Démocratique pour l'Emergence du Niger)	

**NIGERIA**

Mr. IDRIS, Ahmed Leader of the delegation	Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives
Mr. GALADIMA, Zakariyau Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security	Member of the House of Representatives (APC) Chairman, House Committee on Inter-Parliamentary Affairs, Member, House Committee on Federal Capital Territory Judiciary
Ms. OLUGA, Taiwo Olukemi Ms. ONANUGA, Adewunmi	Member of the House of Representatives Member of the House of Representatives (APC) Chairman, House committee on Women Affairs, Member, House committee on Inter- Parliamentary
Mr. TUKURA, Kabir	Member of the House of Representatives (APC) Vice Chairman, House committee on Judiciary, Chairman, House committee on Young Parliamentarian Forum
Ms. AIMUA EHIKIOYE, Henrietta Member of the ASGP	Representative of the Secretary General Senate

Ms. FOFAH, Florence  
Secretary of the delegation, IPU Desk officer  
Mr. IBRAHIM, Atiku  
Adviser  
Ms. MBAKARA, Sharon  
Secretariat  
Mr. ORUMWENSE, Felix  
Adviser  
Mr. SHEHU, Umar  
Adviser  
Mr. ABDUL HANEED, Awodi Ibrahim  
Ms. IBRAHIM, Fatima Atiku

(APC: All Progressive Congress)

Deputy Director  
House of Representatives  
Director  
the House of Representatives  
Chief Legislative officer  
Senate  
Permanent Secretary  
Senate  
Director  
Senate

#### NORWAY

Mr. MORLAND, Tellef Inge  
Leader of the delegation  
President of the Group  
Ms. FOSS, Ingunn  
Mr. ALMELAND, Grunde  
Ms. HJEMDAL, Silje  
Ms. MYKJALAND, Gro-Anita  
Mr. TRELLEVIK, Ove  
Mr. FRASER, Thomas  
Secretary of the delegation  
Ms. RYSST-JENSEN, Vibeke  
Head of International department  
Ms. STOCK, Lisbeth Merete  
Secretary of the delegation

(L: Labour Party)

Member of Parliament (L)  
  
Member of Parliament  
Member of Parliament  
Member of Parliament  
Member of Parliament  
Senior Adviser  
  
Head of International Dept  
  
Adviser

#### OMAN

Mr. AL MAAWALI, Khalid Hilal Nasser  
Head of the delegation  
Ms. AL MANTHARI, Rayya Salim  
Mr. AL RAHBI, Yaqoob Mohammed  
Mr. AL MUBAHSI, Yaseer  
Ms. AL ZAABI, Lujaina Mohsin  
Ms. AL WASHAHI, Aysha  
Mr. AL SAAIDI, Mansoor Abdallah  
Mr. AL-SAAD, Khalid  
Mr. AL NADABI, Ahmed  
Mr. AL AZRI, Nabhan  
Ms. AL AMRI, Sumaiya Issa  
Mr. ALHOSNI, Ahmed Hilal  
Ms. AL MUKHAINI, Reem Abdullah  
Mr. AL WAHABI, Mahmood  
Ms. AL ISSAEI, Shurooq Ahmed  
Mr. AL NAIMI, Rashid Ali

Speaker of the Shura Council  
  
Member of the Shura Council  
Member of the Shura Council  
Member of the Shura Council  
Member of the State Council  
Member of the State Council  
Member of the State Council  
Secretary General, State Council  
Secretary General, Shura Council  
Adviser, State Council  
Adviser, Shura Council  
Adviser, Shura Council  
Adviser, Shura Council  
Adviser, State Council  
Adviser, State Council  
Adviser, Shura Council

#### PAKISTAN

Mr. CHEEMA, Nisar Ahmed  
Member of the Health Advisory Group,  
  
Mr. GILANI, Syed Ali Musa  
Mr. HUSSAIN, Mushahid  
Member of the Committee on the Human  
Rights of Parliamentarians  
Mr. KAMALUDDIN, Sahibzada  
Mr. NAEK, Farooq Hamid  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee  
on United Nations Affairs  
Ms. SOBIA, Shazia  
Mr. ALI, Muhammad

Member of the National Assembly (PMLN)  
Member, National Health Services, Regulations and  
Coordination,  
Member, Federal Education and Professional Training  
Member of the National Assembly (PPP)  
Senator (PMLN)  
Convener, Defense  
  
Member of the National Assembly  
Senator (PPP)  
Convener, Foreign Affairs  
  
Member of the National Assembly  
Assistant Director National Assembly

Mr. WAJDAN

Assistant Director

(PPP: Pakistan People's party)  
(PMLN: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz)**PALESTINE**Mr. FATOOH, Rawhi  
Leader of the delegation  
President of the Group

Speaker of the Palestine National Council

Mr. FAYSAL, Ali  
Mr. HADID, Musa  
Member of the Committee on Middle  
East Questions  
Mr. ZARIR, FahmiDeputy Speaker of the Palestine National Council  
Deputy Speaker of the Palestine National Council  
Member, Political Affairs committee, MemberMr. ABDULKADER, Taha  
Ms. AGHABEKAIN, Varsen  
Mr. SULAIMAN, Bashar  
Secretary of the delegation  
Secretary of the Group  
Mr. FATTOUH, Ahmed  
Mr. ELTURK, Mohamed  
Mr. CHESHNIA, Hassan  
Mr. ABULHAYJAA, Ibrahim  
Mr. QETAMI, SamehMember of the Palestine National Council  
Secretary General of the Palestinian National Council  
Member of the Palestine National Council  
Member of the Palestine National Council  
DirectorDirector of the Speaker's Office  
Diplomat  
Diplomat  
Staff  
Staff**PARAGUAY**Mr. LLANO, Blas  
Leader of the delegation  
President of the Group

Senator (PLRA)

(PLRA: Partido Liberal Radical Autentico)

**PERU**Ms. ALVA PRIETO, Maria del Carmen  
Leader of the delegation  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee  
on Democracy and Human Rights  
Mr. BUSTAMANTE DONAYRE, Carlos Ernesto  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee  
on United Nations Affairs  
Mr. PAREDES GONZALES, Alex Antonio  
Member of the Committee to Promote Respect for  
International Humanitarian Law  
Mr. SOTO PALACIOS, Wilson  
Member of the Board of the Forum of Young  
Parliamentarians  
Mr. ZAPATA, CarlosMember of the Congress of the Republic  
President of the Commission of External Relations,  
Member of the Commission of work and social security

Member of the Congress of the Republic

Member of the Congress of the Republic

Member of the Congress of the Republic

Ambassador

**PHILIPPINES**Ms. CAYETANO, Pia  
Leader of the delegationSenator (NP)  
Chair of Sustainable Development Goals, Innovation, and  
Futures Thinking Committee, Vice Chair of the Finance  
Committee,

Mr. MENDOZA, Raymond Democrito

Member, Governing Council  
Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives (TUCP)  
Member, Governing Council

Mr. NOLASCO, Ramon Jr.

Member of the House of Representatives  
Member of the Information and Communications  
Technology Committee,  
Member of the Justice Committee  
Member, Governing Council

Ms. LABADLABAD, Glona

Member of the House of Representatives (PDP-LABAN)  
Chair of the Interparliamentary Relations and Diplomacy  
Committee,  
Vice-Chair of the Ecology Committee

Ms. ARENAS, Maria Rachel	Member of the House of Representatives (LAKAS-CMD) Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Vice-Chair of the Appropriations Committee
Mr. SALO, Ron	Member of the House of Representatives (KABAYAN Partylist) Chair of the Overseas Workers Affairs Committee, Vice-Chair of the Government Reorganization Committee
Mr. RODRIGUEZ, Rufus	Member of the House of Representatives (CDP) Chair of the Constitutional Amendments Committee, Vice Chair of the Trade and Industry Committee
Mr. BAÑAS, Arnel Jose	Deputy Secretary of the Senate for Administrative and Financial Services
Mr. TUANO, Jose Maria Antonio Badelles	Deputy Secretary General for Internal Audit House of Representatives
Ms. ARENAS, Rose Marie	Former Representative and Adviser of the House of Representatives' Delegation
Ms. AYSON, Esperanza Acting Secretary of the Group	Deputy Director-General, Office of International Relations & Protocol and Deputy Director General, Senate
Mr. SABARRE, Raymund	Officer-in-Charge, International Relations Service, Office of International Relations & Protocol and Technical Officer Senate of the Philippines
Ms. SEVILLA, Rosa Victoria	Assistant Director for Protocol, Office of International Relations & Protocol and Delegation Secretary Senate of the Philippines
Mr. RAMOS, Joe Anthony	Delegation Secretary House of Representatives
Mr. BESAS, Alfredo Sanjorio	Delegation Secretary, House of Representatives
Ms. LOUIS, Anne Jalando-on	Ambassador
Mr. BAGUIO, Bryan Jess	First Secretary and Consul
(CDP: Centrist Democratic Party)	
(KABAYAN Partylist: Kabalikat ng Mamamayan Partylist)	
(LAKAS-CMD: Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats)	
(NP: Nacionalista Party)	
(PDP-Laban Partido Demokratiko Pilipino-Lakas ng Bayan)	
(TUCP: Trade Union Congress of the Philippines)	

**POLAND**

Mr. FOGIEL, Radosław Leader of the delegation	Member of the Sejm (PiS) Chairman, Foreign Affairs Committee Member, National Defence Committee
Ms. MORAWSKA-STANECKA, Gabriela Member of the Committee to Promote Respect of International Humanitarian Law	Vice President of the Senate Member, Human Rights, the Rule of Law and Petitions Committee, Member, Foreign and European Union Affairs Committee
Ms. BARTUŚ, Barbara	Member of the Sejm (PiS) Vice-Chairman, Foreign Affairs Committee, Vice-Chairman, Legislative Committee
Ms. Margareta BUDNER	Member of the Senate
Ms. JASKIEWICZ, Natalia Beata	Deputy Director Sejm
Ms. KARWOWSKA-SOKOŁOWSKA, Agata Adviser	Director Senate
Mr. MYKIETYŃSKI, Marcin Secretary of the delegation	Adviser
Ms. ŚLESICKA, Magdalena	Adviser
Ms. WÓJCIK-PAWLICZAV, Agata Adviser	Head of Unit Senate
(PiS: Law and Justice)	

**PORTUGAL**

Mr. BARRETO, Joaquim Leader of the delegation	Member of the Assembly of the Republic (SP)
Ms. BRAZ, Vera	Member of the Assembly of the Republic (SP)
Ms. MATOS, Sofia	Member of the Assembly of the Republic (SDP)
Mr. PEREIRA, Carlos	Member of the Assembly of the Republic (SP)
Mr. SANTOS, Paulo Miguel	Member of the Assembly of the Republic (SDP)
Mr. COSTA, Rui Member of the ASGP	Deputy Secretary General
Mr. COELHO, João Campos Adviser	Head of International Division
Ms. SANTOS, Suzana Secretary of the delegation	Adviser
Mr. REIS, Artur	Adviser

(SDP: Social Democratic Party)  
(SP: Socialist Party)

**QATAR**

Mr. AL-GHANIM, Hassan bin Abdullah Leader of the delegation	Speaker of the Shura Council
Mr. ALDOSARI, Sultan bin Hassan Member of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights	Member of the Shura Council
Mr. AL-AHBABI, Mohammed bin Mahdi President of the Standing Committee on Peace	Member of the Shura Council
Mr. BUKSHAISHA, Nasser bin Mohsin	Member of the Shura Council
Mr. AL-BUAINAIN, Saoud bin Jassim	Member of The Shura Council
Mr. AL-HITMI, Ahmad bin Hitmi	Member of the Shura Council
Mr. ALNAEMI, Amair bin Abdulla	Member of the Shura Council
Mr. AL-FADIBA, Ahmed bin Nasser Al-Fadala	Secretary General
Mr. SHAHBAIK, Mohamed bin Ibrahim	Director of the International Cooperation Department
Mr. AL-SHAIKH, Mohamed bin Ibrahim	Director of Legislative Affairs Department
Mr. AL-SULAITI Nasser bin Mahanna	Director of the Public Relations and Communication Department
Mr. AL-QADI, Abdulrahman bin Darwish	Director of Secretary General Office
Mr. AL-MOHAMADI, Hassan bin Abdulla	Media Consultant
Mr. Mohamed bin Aayed Al-Otaibi	Speakers Office
Mr. AL-ALI, Nasser bin Mohamed	Public relations
Mr. AL-NOBI, Ahmed bin Awad	International Affairs Specialist

**REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

Mr. CHO, Jung Hun	Member of the National Assembly (TK)
Ms. KIM, Yea Ji	Member of the National Assembly (PPP)
Mr. OH, Gi Young	Member of the National Assembly (DPK)
Mr. PARK, Youngjin	Member of the National Assembly (DPK)
Ms. YANG, Yi Wonyoung	Member of the National Assembly (DPK)
Ms. HYUN, Seonin	Deputy Director
Mr. CHOI, Sungchan Secretary of the delegation	
Ms. KIM, Kyunghee Secretary of the delegation	
Ms. KIM, Minioung	Secretary
Ms. KO, Jeonghyeon	Secretary
Ms. Lee, Ga Yeon	Secretary
Mr. CHUNG, Hae Kwan	Ambassador
Mr. KWON, Kyung Ik	Diplomat

(TK: Transition Korea)  
(DPK: Democratic Party of Korea)  
(PPP: People Power Party)

**ROMANIA**

Ms. DINICĂ, Silvia-Monica Member of the Working Group on Science and Technology, Leader of the delegation	Member of the Senate (SRU) Chairperson, Committee. for Science, Innovation and Technology, Member, Committee for Economic Affairs, Industries and Services
Mr. ZAKARIAS, Zoltan	Member of the Governing Council Member of the Chamber of Deputies (DAHR) Member, Committee. for Health and Family, Member, Committee for European Affairs, Member of the Governing Council
Mr. ZAMFIR Daniel-Cătălin	Member of the Senate (SDP) Chairman, Committee. for Economic Affairs, Industries and Services, Member, Committee. for Energy, Infrastructure and Mineral Resources
Mr. VELA, Ion Marcel	Member of the Senate (NLP) Vice-Chairman, Foreign Policy Committee, Member, Committee for Defense, Public Order and National Security
Mr. CUPȘA, Ioan	Member of the Chamber of Deputies (NLP) Vice-Chairman, Committee. for Legal Matters, Discipline and Immunities, Member, Committee for Education
Mr. MATEESCU, Sorin-Cristian	Member of the Senate (AUR) Vice-Chairman, Committee for Constitutionality, Member, Committee. for Legal Affairs, Appointments, Discipline, Immunities and Validations
Ms. MIHALCEA, Silvia-Claudia	Member of ASGP
Mr. OPREA, Mario-Ovidiu	Member of ASGP
Ms. Andreea-Elena CLERAS	Director
Ms. DUMITRESCU, Cristina	Director
Secretary of the Group	
Ms. TRUINEA, Paula-Roxana	Director
Ms. Teodora-Elena POTERAȘU	Adviser
Secretary of the Group	
Ms. Luminița TEODOREL	Adviser
Secretary of the delegation	

(AUR: The Alliance for the Union of Romanians Political Party)  
(DAHR: Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania)  
(NLP: National Liberal Party)  
(SDP: Social Democratic Party)  
(SRU: Save Romania Union)

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

Mr. KOSACHEV, Konstantin Leader of the delegation	Deputy Speaker of the Council of the Federation, Member, Federation Council Committee on Foreign Affairs
Mr. TOLSTOY, Petr Leader of the delegation Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security	Deputy Speaker of the State Duma
Ms. KARELOVA, Galina Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians	Deputy Speaker of the Council of the Federation, Member, Federation Council Committee on Social Policy
Mr. DENISOV, Andrei	Member of the Council of the Federation, First Deputy Chair, Federation Council Committee on Foreign Affairs
Mr. GAVRILOV, Sergei Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development	Member of the State Duma
Mr. KLIMOV, Andrei	Member of the Council of the Federation, Deputy Chair, Federation Council Committee on Foreign Affairs

Mr. MAIOROV, Aleksei	Member of the Council of the Federation, First Deputy Chair, Federation Council Committee on Agriculture and Food Policy and Environmental Management Member of the State Duma
Mr. SLUTSKIY, Leonid Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs	
Ms. GOROKHOVA, Valeriya	Adviser
Mr. KHODYREV, Oleg	Adviser
Mr. KUKARKIN, Pavel Interpreter	Adviser
Ms. SHCHERBATKINA, Mariia	Adviser
Ms. SHMACHKOVA, Olga	Adviser
Ms. SKVORTSOVA, Daria Interpreter	Adviser
Ms. ZHOLOBOVA, Mariia Secretary of the delegation	Adviser
Mr. SKOSYREV, Aleksey	Ambassador
Mr. BYSTROV, Gleb	Diplomat

**RWANDA**

Ms. NYIRASAFARI, Espérance Leader of the delegation Ex officio member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians	Vice-President of the Senate (RPF-INKOTANYI)
Mr. DUSHIMIMANA, Lambert (RPF-INKOTANYI: Rwandese Patriotic Front- INKOTANYI)	Member of the Senate (RPF-INKOTANYI)

**SAN MARINO**

Ms. MULARONI, Mariella Leader of the delegation	Member of the Great and General Council (PDCS) Member, Committee on Constitutional and Institutional Affairs
Ms. MONTEMAGGI, Marica	Member of the Great and General Council (LIBERA) Member, Committee on Constitutional and Institutional Affairs, Member, Committee on Foreign Affairs
Mr. SPAGNI REFFI Alberto Giordano	Member of the Great and General Council (I R.E.T.E.) Member, Committee on Constitutional and Institutional Affairs

(LIBERA: Libera)  
(R.E.T.E.: Movimento Civico R.E.T.E.)  
(PDCS: Partito Democratico Cristiano Sammarinese)

**SAUDI ARABIA**

Ms. AL SHAMAN ; Amal	Member of the Shura Council
Mr. ALHARBI, Abdulrahman	Member of the Shura Council
Mr. ALOTAIBI, Saad	Member of the Shura Council
Mr. ALSALAMAH, Abdullah	Member of the Shura Council
Mr. AL-MANSOUR, Khalid	Adviser
Mr. AL-SAUD, Turki Secretary of the Group, Secretary of the delegation	Adviser
Mr. ALTAKHAIS, Mansour	Protocol

**SENEGAL**

Mr. DIOP, Amadou Mame President of Group, Leader of Delegation	President of the National Assembly (APR)
Ms. MERGANE KANOUTÉ, Adjii Diarra Member of the Executive Committee Ex-Officio Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians	Vice-President of the National Assembly (UDSA)
Ms. SALL, Fanta	Member of the National Assembly
Mr. SOW, Yoro	Member of the National Assembly
Mr. YOUM, El Hadji Omar	Member of the National Assembly
Ms. DIOP, Khoudia	Communications Director

**SERBIA**

Ms. PAUNOVIC, Snezana Leader of the delegation	Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly (SPS) Member, Committee on the Economy, Regional Development, Trade, Tourism and Energy, Member, Committee on the Rights of the Child
Ms. DRAGICEVIC, Nikola	Member of the National Assembly (Zavetnici) Member, Defence and Internal Affairs Committee, Member, Security Services Control Committee
Mr. RADIN, Milan	Member of the National Assembly (SNS) Member, European Integration Committee, Deputy Member, Defence and Internal Affairs Committee
Ms. RASKOVIC IVIC, Sanda	Member of the National Assembly (NS) Member, Committee on Kosovo-Metohija, Member, Health and Family Committee Secretary General of the National Assembly
Mr. SMILJANIC, Srdjan Member of the ASGP	Deputy Secretary General
Mr. KUKOLJ, Dario Member of the ASGP	Adviser
Ms. DJURASINOVIC RADOJEVIC, Dragana Secretary of the Group	Adviser
Ms. MLADJAN, Aleksandra	Interpreter
Ms. POKRAJAC, Dragana	
(SPS: Socialist Party of Serbia)	
(SNS: Serbian Progressive Party)	
(NS: People's Party Parliamentary Group)	
(Zavetnici: Serbian Party Oathkeepers Parliamentary Group)	

**SEYCHELLES**

Mr. MANCIENNE, Roger Leader of the delegation President of the Group	Speaker of the National Assembly (LDS) Chairperson, House Committee, Chairperson, Assembly Business Committee
Mr. WILLIAM, Waven Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development	Member of the National Assembly (LDS) Chairperson, International Affairs Committee, Member, Standing Orders Committee, Vice-President
Mr. AGLAE, Egbert	Member of the National Assembly (US) Member, Standing Orders Committee, Member, International Affairs Committee Research Officer
Ms. DIDON, Emma Secretary of the delegation, Desk Officer	
(LDS: Linyon Demokratik Seselwa)	
(US: United Seychelles)	

**SIERRA LEONE**

Mr. BUNDU, Abass Chernor Leader of the delegation, President of the Group	Speaker of Parliament
Ms. SIAFFA, Hawa Roselyn	Member of Parliament (SLPP)
Ms. SANKOH, Hannah Secretary of the delegation	Parliamentary Relations Officer
(SLPP: Sierra Leone People's Party)	

**SINGAPORE**

Mr. GAN, Thiam Poh Leader of the delegation	Member of Parliament (PAP) Member, Government Parliamentary Committee for Sustainability, and the Environment, Member, Government Parliamentary Committee for Transport
Mr. SITOH, Yih Pin	Member of Parliament (PAP) Chairperson, of the Parliamentary Committee for Culture, Community and Youth, Member, of the Parliamentary Committee for Home Affairs and Law
Mr. JOSHUA, Thomas Raj	Nominated Member of Parliament

Ms. SAFUAN, Siti Aisyah Binte  
Secretary of the delegation  
Ms. TING, Francine Yu Qing  
Secretary of the delegation

Associate

Assistant Manager

(PAP: People's Action Party)

Mr. GOGA, Ludovit  
Leader of the delegation  
Mr. BLCHAC, Jan

Mr. GUSPAN, Daniel

(SR: We Are Family)  
(HLAS-SD: :Voice – Social Democracy)

**SLOVAKIA**

Member of the National Council (SR)  
Member, European Affairs Committee  
Member of the National Council (HLAS-SD)  
Member, Financial and Budgetary Committee  
Secretary-General

**SLOVENIA**

Mr. BAKOVIĆ, Predrag  
Leader of the delegation  
President of the Group  
Ms. BON KLANJSCEK, Mirjam

Member of the National Assembly, President, Committee on Foreign Policy, Member, Committee on Infrastructure, the Environment and Spatial Planning (SD)  
Member of the National Assembly, President, Committee on Education, Science, Sport and Youth  
Member, Commission for Relations with Slovenes in Neighbouring and Other Countries (Svoboda)  
Member of the National Assembly, Member, Committee on EU Affairs, Member, Commission for Petitions, Human Rights and Equal Opportunities (SDS)  
Head of Section for International Relations Protocol and Translation

Mr. MOJSKERC, Zoran  
Slovenian Democratic Party

Ms. PANDEV, Tatjana  
Secretary of the Group

(SD: Social Democrats)  
(SvobDa: Freedom Movement)  
(SDS: Slovenian Democratic Party)

**SOMALIA**

Mr. ABSHIR, Abdullahi Omar Abshir  
Leader of the delegation  
Mr. MOHAMUUD, Said

Deputy Speaker of the House of the People

Mr. MOHAMUD, Zamzam Dahir  
Mr. MOHAMED, Ismail

Member of the House of the People,  
Member, Resource & Environment Committee  
Leader, IPU Committee  
Member of the Upper House  
Member of the House of the People,  
Member, Justice, and Judiciary Committee,  
Member of Parliament  
Member of the House of the People,  
Member, Committee of Information  
Adviser

Mr. MOHAMED, Abdikani Gelle  
Mr. BISHAR, Farah Moalim

Mr. MOHAMED, Mohamud Hadis  
Mr. GULED, Abdinasir Ibrahim Guled  
Secretary of the delegation

**SOUTH AFRICA**

Ms. MAPISA NQAKULA, Nosiviwe Noluthando  
Leader of the delegation  
President of the Group  
Ms. LUCAS, Sylvia Elizabeth

Speaker of the National Assembly (ANC)

Ms. LOTRIET, Annelie  
Ms. DLAKUDE, Doris  
Mr. FROLICK, Cedric  
Mr. KWANKWA, Neabayonzi  
Ms. MASIKO, Fikile  
Mr. SINGH, Harend  
Mr. SHIVAMBU, Floy  
Mr. GEORGE, Xolile Christopher  
Member of the ASGP  
Mr. SITHOLE, Dumisani Job  
Ms. MAHABENI, Zukiswa

Deputy Speaker of the National Council of Provinces (ANC)  
Member of the National Assembly (DA)  
Member of the National Assembly (ANC)  
Member of the National Assembly (ANC)  
Member of the National Assembly (UDM)  
Member of the National Assembly (ANC)  
Member of the National Assembly (IFP)  
Member of the National Assembly (EFF)  
Clerk,  
Adviser  
Executive Secretary

Ms. DE BRUYN, Zeenad  
 Ms. MONNAKGOTLA, Roseline Mpho  
 Ms. MVULANE, Sebolelo Constance  
 Ms. NOJOZI, Nogolide Feziwe  
 Mr. WOLELA, Manelsi Horatious  
 Ms. NDENZE, Nonyaniso Faith

Secretary  
 Adviser  
 Adviser  
 Adviser  
 Adviser  
 Adviser

(ANC: African National Congress)  
 (DA: Democratic Alliance)  
 (UDM: United Democratic Movement)  
 (IFP: Inkatha Freedom Party)  
 (EFF: Economic Freedom Fighters)

## SOUTH SUDAN

Ms. KUMBA, Jemma Nunu  
 Leader of the delegation  
 President of the Group  
 Mr. ACIEN, Gabriel Guot Guot  
 Mr. ATHIAN, Athian  
 Ms. BENEDICT, Queenta  
 Mr. JOOYUL, John Yoal Gai  
 Ms. TABAN, Janet Aya Alex  
 Mr. THEOPHILUS, Samuel Buhori Lotti  
 Mr. YOH, John Gai Nyuot  
 Ms. MALWAL, Sandra Bona  
 Adviser  
 Mr. MALOU, Daniel Abocha  
 Adviser  
 Mr. AKOT, Makuc Makuc Ngong  
 Mr. MANANGO, Hakim Angello Dabi  
 Mr. CHOL, Ador Deng Ador  
 Mr. LADU, Peter Amos Wilson  
 Ms. OWICH, Veronica  
 Ms. OSMAN, Viola Haider Juma  
 Mr. FRANCIS WAN, Robert Pitia  
 Secretary of the delegation

Speaker of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly  
  
 Member of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly  
 Member of the Senate  
 Member of the Senate  
 Member of the Senate  
 Member of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly  
  
 Member of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly  
  
 Clerk  
 Executive Director  
 Public Relations Officer  
 Protocol Officer  
 Protocol Office  
 Personal Assistant

## SPAIN

Mr. ECHÁNIZ, José Ignacio  
 Leader of the delegation  
 President of the Group  
 Vice-President of the Executive Committee,  
 Member of the Bureau of the Standing  
 Committee on Peace and International Security,  
 President of the Health Advisory Group  
 Mr. ALMODÓBAR, Agustín

Member of the Congress of Deputies (PP)  
 President, Defence Committee,  
 Member, Foreign Affairs Committee

Mr. CEPEDA, José  
 Rapporteur, Committee on Peace and  
 International Security

Member of the Congress of Deputies (PP)  
 Second Secretary of the Bureau of the Committee,  
 Committee on Budget, Spokesperson, Committee on  
 Industry, Trade and Tourism  
 Member of the Senate (PSOE)  
 Spokesperson, Committee on Latin-American affairs,  
 Vice-Spokesperson, Joint Committee on Relations with  
 the Ombudsman

Ms. GONZALEZ, Marta  
 Mr. HUELVA, Amaro

Member of the Congress of Deputies (PP)  
 Member of the Senate (PSOE)  
 First Secretary of the Bureau of the Committee,  
 Committee on Youth, Spokesperson, Committee on  
 Agriculture, Fisheries and Food  
 Member of the Congress of Deputies (VOX)  
 Spokesperson, Committee on International Cooperation  
 for Development,  
 Deputy Spokesperson, Foreign Affairs Committee  
 Secretary General, Senate  
 Member of the ASGP  
 Adviser  
 Secretary of the delegation

Mr. CAVERO, Manuel  
 Adviser  
 Mr. CABEZAS, Joaquín  
 Ms. GÓMEZ-BERNARDO, Teresa  
 Secretary of the Group

(PP: Popular Party)  
(PSOE: Partido Socialista Obrero Español)  
(VOX: National Conservative Party of Spain)

Mr. ABEYWARDANA, Mahinda Yapa  
Leader of the delegation  
President of the Group  
Ms. ATUKORALE, Thalatha

Mr. JAYATHILAKA, Milan

Mr. RAHEEM, Ali Sabry

Mr. WIJESUNDARA, Rohana Bandara

Mr. DASANAYAKE, Dhammika  
Secretary of the Group  
Member of the ASGP

(MNA: Muslim National Alliance)  
(SLPP: Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna)  
(SJB: Samagi Jana Balawegaya)

Mr. GAJADIEN, Asiskumar  
Leader of the delegation  
President of the Standing Committee on  
Democracy and Human Rights

Mr. BOUVA, Melvin  
Member of the Working Group on Science and  
Technology  
Ms. JHAKRY, Niesha  
Mr. ALGOE, Naresh  
Member of the ASGP  
Ms. RADJARAM, Asna

(VHP: The Progressive Reform Party)  
(NDP: National Democratic Party)

Ms. KRONLID, Juli  
Leader of the delegation  
Sweden Democrats  
Mr. KARAPET, Arin  
President of the Group  
Ms. ANSTRELL, Alexandra

Ms. ALM ERICSON, Janine  
Member of the Executive Committee  
Mr. KARLSSON, Mattias  
Member of the Advisory Group on Health

Mr. KÖSE, Serkan

Ms. LINDBERG, Linda

## SRI LANKA

Speaker of Parliament (SLPP)  
Chairman, Committee on Parliamentary Business,  
Chairman, Committee on Standing Orders  
Member of Parliament, Member (SJB)  
Women Parliamentarians Caucus in Parliament,  
Member, Ministerial Consultative Committee on Woman,  
Child Affairs and Social Empowerment  
Member of Parliament (SLPP)  
Member, Committee on Public Finance,  
Member, Ministerial Consultative Committee on Sports  
and Youth Affairs  
Member of Parliament (MNA)  
Member, Ministerial Consultative Committee on Urban  
Development & Housing,  
Member, Sectoral Oversight Committee on Religious  
Affairs and Co-Existence  
Member of Parliament (SJB)  
Member, Parliamentary Caucus for Youth, Member,  
Ministerial Consultative Committee on Irrigation

## SURINAME

Member of the National Assembly (VHP)  
Chairman, Standing Committee of the Ministry of Foreign  
Affairs for International Business and International  
Cooperation  
Chairman, Standing Committee of the Ministry of Finance  
and planning  
Member of the National Assembly  
Member, Education Culture Committee  
Member, Transport Communication Tourism Committee  
Member of the National Assembly (NDP)

Adviser

## SWEDEN

Deputy Speaker of Parliament (SD)

Member of Parliament (M)  
Member, Committee on the Labour Market  
Member of Parliament (M)  
Member, Committee on Defence  
Member of Parliament (Green)  
Member, Committee on Finance  
Member of Parliament (SD)  
Substitute member, Committee on Foreign Affairs

Member of Parliament (SP)  
Member, The Committee on Labour Market  
Member of Parliament (SD)  
Member, Committee on Social Insurance

Ms. TIMGREN, Beatrice  
Sweden Democrats (C)  
Mr. MATTSON, Ingvar  
Member of the ASGP  
Ms. HEDSTRÖM, Anna-Karin  
Adviser  
Mr. HERMANSSON, Ralph  
Secretary of the delegation  
Mr. SONDEN, Bjorn  
Secretary of the delegation

(SD: Sweden Democrats)  
(M: Moderate Party)  
(Green: The Green Party)

Member of Parliament (SD)  
Member, Committee on Environment and Agriculture  
Secretary General of Parliament  
Head of the International Department  
Adviser  
Adviser

#### SWITZERLAND

M. JOSITSCH, Daniel  
Chef de la délégation  
Président du Groupe

M. HURTER, Thomas  
Vice-Président du Groupe  
Membre du Groupe de travail sur la science  
et la technologie  
Mme BADERTSCHER, Christine

Mme FEHLMANN RIELLE, Laurence,  
Membre, Comité sur les questions relatives au  
Moyen-Orient

M. WEHRLI, Laurent  
Président a.i. de la Commission permanente des  
Affaires des Nations Unies,  
Groupe de facilitateurs concernant Chypre

M. EQUEY, Jérémie  
Secrétaire du Groupe  
Secrétaire de la délégation  
Mme GNÄGI, Anna-Lea  
Secrétaire adjointe du Groupe,  
Secrétariat de la délégation

(SP/PS: Parti socialiste)  
(SVP/UDC: L'Union démocratique du centre)  
(M/C: Le Centre)  
(FDP/PLR: Les Libéraux-Radicaux)  
(G/V: Les Verts)

Membre du Conseil des Etats, (SP/PS)  
Membre, Commission de politique extérieure,  
Membre, Commission des affaires juridiques,  
Membre, Commission de la politique de sécurité,  
Membre, Commission des institutions politiques  
Membre du Conseil national, (SVP/UDC),  
Membre, Commission de la politique de sécurité,  
Membre, Commission des transports et des  
télécommunications  
Membre du Conseil national, (G/V),  
Membre, Commission de politique extérieure,  
Membre, Commission des finances  
Membre, Commission auprès de l'Assemblée  
parlementaires de l'OSCE  
Membre du Conseil national, (SP/PS)  
Membre, Commission des affaires juridiques,  
Membre, Commission des finances  
Membre, Commission de l'immunité  
Membre du Conseil national, (FDP/PLR)  
Membre, Commission de politique extérieure,  
Membre, Commission de gestion,  
Membre Délégation auprès de l'Assemblée  
parlementaires de la Francophonie  
Relations internationales

Relations internationales

#### SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

Mr. AKKAD, Manaf  
Mr. AMMAR ; Nidal  
Ms. MIRZA ; Rouba  
Ms. MOHAMMAD SALEH, Maysa  
Mr. AZIM DIAB, Abdul

Member of Parliament  
Member of Parliament  
Member of Parliament  
Member of Parliament  
Director of Protocol

#### THAILAND

Ms. KRAIRIKSH, Pikulkeaw  
Leader of the delegation  
Vice-President of the IPU  
Member of the Executive Committee  
Ex officio Member of the Bureau of Women  
Parliamentarians

Member of the Senate  
Chairperson Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs,  
Senate

Mr. SITTHEEAMORN, Kiat	Member of the House of Representatives Second Vice-Chairperson, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives
Mr. SUWANMONGKOL, Anusart	Member of the Senate Deputy Spokesperson, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Senate
Mr. TONTISIRIN, Kraisid	Member of the Senate Third Vice-Chairperson, Standing Committee on Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, Senate
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development	Secretary-General, House of Representatives
Ms. PHETCHAREON, Pornpith	Member of the ASGP Secretary-General, Senate
Ms. JAISUJJA, Napaporn	Member of the ASGP Deputy Secretary-General, House of Representatives
Ms. TAIPIBOONSUK, Steejit	Member of the ASGP Deputy Secretary-General, House of Representatives
Ms. SUKPUM, Suppornrattana	Deputy Secretary-General, House of Representatives
Ms. THAWORNPHUN, Kaewkate	Adviser on Legislative Procedure, Secretariat of the Senate
Ms. WIBOONCHAN, Nisaporn	Director, Bureau of Foreign Affairs Secretariat of the Senate
Mr. BAMRUNGPON, Tanukom	Director of the IPU Division Secretariat of the House of Representatives
Secretary of the delegation	Foreign Affairs Officer
Ms. THONGSAMRIT, Pilantana	Secretariat of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Officer
Ms. SIRIWONG, Kanjanat	Foreign Affairs Officer Secretariat of the Senate
Ms. PONGSUTTHI, Mancharee	Foreign Affairs Officer Secretariat of the Senate
Mr. SUKPORNCHAIKAK, Kanon	Foreign Affairs Officer Secretariat of the House of Representatives
Mr. UDOMSIN, Koson	Foreign Affairs Officer Secretariat of the House of Representatives
Ms. PATADEE, Wichayaporn	Foreign Affairs Officer Secretariat of the House of Representatives
Mr. SRICHAROEN, Piyapak	Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand to the Kingdom of Bahrain
Advisor	

**TIMOR-LESTE**

Mr. GUTERRES LOPES, Aniceto Longuinhos	Speaker of the National Parliament (FRETILIN)
Leader of the delegation	
President of the Group	
Ms. BARRETO FREITAS XIMENES, Isabel Maria	Member of the National Parliament (FM)
Mr. DA COSTA, Adérito Hugo	Member of the National Parliament (CNRT)
Mr. DIAS XIMENES, David	Member of the National Parliament (FRETILIN)
Ms. DOS SANTOS MARTINS, Lídia Norberta	Member of the National Parliament (FRETILIN)
Mr. NUNES, Duarte	Member of the National Parliament
Ms. MARQUES LEMOS MARTINS, Veneranda Eurico	Member of the National Parliament (CNRT)
Ms. RANGEL DA CRUZ DOS REIS, Maria Angelica	Member of the National Parliament (FRETILIN)
Mr. AMARAL, João Rui	Member of the ASGP
Secretary General	
Mr. AMARAL, Joao Rui	Deputy of Secretary of Parliament
Ms. GONZAGA VIDIGAL, Maria Isabel	Parliamentary Support Technician
Secretary of the Group	

(FRETILIN: Revolutionary Front of Independent East Timor)

(CNRT: National Congress for the Reconstruction of Timor-Leste)

(FM: Moving Front)

**TONGA**

Mr. FAKAFANUA, Fatafehi Kinikini Lau Lolomanai	Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Mr. PULOKA, Tevita Fatafehi	Member of the Legislative Assembly
Ms. ATIOLA, Silivia	Adviser

**TÜRKIYE**

Ms. KAVAKCI KAN, Ravza  
Leader of the delegation, President of the Group  
Member of the Committee on Middle East  
Questions,  
Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians  
Mr. ANDİCAN, Abdul Ahat

Mr. ÖZSOY, Hişyar  
Ms. POLAT DÜZGÜN, Arife  
Mr. ŞATIROGLU, Nevzat  
Ms. YILDIZ, Zeynep  
Mr. KILIÇKAYA, Ömer Faruk

Mr. ÇOBAN, Naim  
Ms. DENERİ, Hande  
Mr. GÜNER, Mümtaz  
Mr. POLAT, Fevzettin  
Ms. TÜRKMEN, Elif  
Mr. YILDIZ, Ali  
Secretary of the delegation

(AK: Justice and Development Party)  
(İYİ Parti: The Good Party)  
(CHP: Republican People's Party)  
(HDP: People's Democratic Party)

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (AK)

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (İYİ Parti)

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (HDP)

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (AK)

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (AK)

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (AK)

Deputy Director of Foreign Relations and Protocol  
Department

Deputy Secretary General

Adviser

Adviser

Diplomatic corps

Adviser

Adviser

#### TURKMENISTAN

Mr. ASHYROV, Gurbanmyrat  
Leader of the delegation  
Mr. KOMEKOV, Nury  
Mr. BABAYEV Mekan

Member of the Assembly

Member of the Assembly

Secretary-General

Head of Protocol

#### UGANDA

Mr. TAYEBWA, Thomas  
Leader of the delegation  
Ms. ANYAKUN, Esther Davinia,  
Member of the Executive Committee  
Ms. ACORA, Nancy Odonga  
Mr. AKAMBA, Paul  
Member of the Bureau of the Standing  
Committee on United Nations Affairs  
Ms. AMERO, Susan

Deputy Speaker of Parliament (NRM)

Member of Parliament (NRM)

Member of Parliament

Member of Parliament (NRM)

Member, Budget Committee,

Member, Environment and Natural Resources Committee

Member of Parliament, Member, Trade and Tourism

Committee, Member, Climate Change Committee

Member of Parliament (NRM)

Member of Parliament (NUP)

Member, Committee on Science, Technology & Innovation

Member of Committee, Defence and Internal Affairs,

Equal Opportunities

Member of Parliament (NRM)

Member of Parliament (NRM)

Clerk of Parliament

Clerk, Member of the ASGP

Deputy Secretary General

Mr. LUBEGA, Bashir  
Mr. MUTUMBA, Abdhul,  
Ms. KATONO, Susann  
Mr. WABWIRE, Paul Gamusi  
Ms. CHEROTICH, Sitnah Chemisto  
Adviser

Director

Mr. BAKYENGA, Louislordnay  
Adviser

Mr. BUSINGE, Police Fred

Secretary of the Group

Mr. MPUGA, Mohammed

Mr. NUWABIINE, Meshach

Secretary of the Delegation

Personal Assistant to Clerk

Principal Assistant Secretary

Clerk Assistant

Deputy Director

(NRM: National Resistance Movement)  
(NUP: National Unity Platform)

#### UKRAINE

Mr. KORNIYENKO, Oleksandr Leader of the delegation	Deputy Speaker of Parliament
Mr. GERASYMOV, Artur	Member of Parliament
Mr. Merezhko, Oleksandr	Member of Parliament
Ms. RUDENKO, Olga Member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians	Member of Parliament
Mr. SANCHENKO, Oleksandr	Member of Parliament
Ms. SHKRUM, Alona Member of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security	Member of Parliament
Ms. VASYLENKO, Lesia President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians	Member of Parliament
Mr. ZHMARENENSKYI, Oleksii	Member of Parliament
Mr. KANIUKA; Andriy	Adviser
Mr. KUCHERENKO, Erik	Adviser
Mr. RYZHAK, Artem	Adviser
Ms. SHEHERBA, Viktoriia	Secretary of the delegation

**UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

Mr. GHOBASH, Saqr Leader of the delegation, President of the Group	Speaker of the Federal National Council, Member, Defence, Interior and Foreign Affairs Committee, Member, Financial, Economic and Industrial Affairs Committee
Mr. AL NUAIMI, Ali Rashid President of the Group Member of the Executive Committee	Member of Parliament, Chair, Defence, Interior and Foreign Affairs Committee
Mr. AL MHERI, Marwan	Member of the Federal National Council
Ms. AL SUWAIDI, Meera Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians	Member of the Federal National Council, Member, Financial, Economic and Industrial Affairs Committee
Ms. ALAMERI, Mouza	Member of the Federal National Council, Member, Committee on Constitutional and Legislative Affairs and Appeals
Ms. ALMANSOORI, Hawaa	Member of the Federal National Council, Member, Committee on Technology, Energy and Mineral Resources Affairs, Member, Social Affairs, Labor, Population and Human Resources Committee
Ms. AL TENEIJI, Shaikah Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions	Member of the Federal National Council, Member, Education, Culture, Youth, Sports and Media Affairs Committee
Ms. FALAKNAZ, Sara Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security	Member of the Federal National Council, Member, Committee on Technology, Energy and Mineral Resources Affairs, Member, Education, Culture, Youth, Sports and Media Affairs Committee
Mr. AL NUAIMI, Omar Secretary of the Group, Secretary of the delegation	Member of the ASGP
Ms. AL BASTI, Afra Assistant Secretary General	Member of the ASGP
Mr. AL AQILI, Ahmad Adviser	Adviser
Ms. AL DHANHANI, Wadha	Adviser
Ms. AL SHEHHI, Roudha Adviser	Adviser
Ms. AL SHEHHI, Salama	Protocol
Mr. ALMHEIRI, Juma	Director
Ms. AL REMEITHI, Bakhita Secretary of the delegation	Adviser
Mr. AL YAFEI, Mubarak Secretary of the delegation	Adviser
Mr. AL JUWAIED, Mansour	Diplomat
Mr. ALKUBAR, Abdulla	Diplomat

**UNITED KINGDOM**

Ms. BRADLEY, Karen Leader of the delegation, Chair of the British Group Mr. CARDEN, Dan	Member of the House of Commons (C) Chair of the Select Committee on Procedure
Mr. CHARALAMBOUS, Bambos	Member of the House of Commons (L) Member of the Public Accounts Committee Member of the House of Commons (L) Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs
Ms. HOOPER, Gloria Mr. MOHINDRA, Gagan	Member of the House of Lords (C) Member of the House of Commons (C) Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Foreign Minister Member of the House of Lords (LD) Clerk
Mr. RENNARD, Christopher Ms. MAWSON, Chloe ASGP representative from the House of Lords Ms. DAVIES, Sarah ASGP representative from the House of Commons Mr. NIMMO, Rick Ms. REES, Dominique Ms. EDWARDS, Rhiannon Ms. GARVIE-ADAMS, Elektra Mr. MOELLER, Daniel	Clerk Director-BGIPU Deputy Director-BGIPU Multilateral Programme Manager Joint Secretary of the ASGP Assistant to the ASGP Secretariat

(C: Conservative)  
(L: Labour)  
(LD: Liberal Democrat)

**UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA**

Ms. (Dr.) ACKSON, Tulia, Leader of the delegation Mr. KINGU, Elibariki Immanuel	Speaker of the National Assembly (CCM) Chairperson, Steering Committee Member of the National Assembly (CCM) Member, Infrastructure Development Committee Member of the National Assembly (CHADEMA) Member, Budget Committee
Ms. MATIKO, Esther Nicholas Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights Mr. MHAGAMA, Dr Joseph Kizito	Member of the National Assembly (CCM) Chairperson, Constitution and Legal Affairs Committee Member of the National Assembly Member of the National Assembly (CCM) Member, Constitution and legal affairs committee Member of the National Assembly (CCM) Member, Infrastructure Development Committee Clerk of the National Assembly Director, National Assembly Adviser Assistant to the Speaker Adviser
Mr. NDUGULILE, Faustine Engelbert Mr. RAMADHAN, Ramadhan Suleiman	Member of the National Assembly (CCM) Member, Constitution and legal affairs committee Member of the National Assembly (CCM) Member, Infrastructure Development Committee Clerk of the National Assembly Director, National Assembly Adviser Assistant to the Speaker Information Officer Adviser
Ms. ULENGE, Engr. Mwanaisha	Member of the National Assembly (CCM) Member, Infrastructure Development Committee Clerk of the National Assembly Director, National Assembly Adviser Assistant to the Speaker Information Officer Adviser
Ms. MWIHAMBI ndc, Nenelwa Joyce Mr. KILEO, Mathew Nionzima Advisor Mr. MBOGGO, Emmanuel Ms. KIHANGE, Zainab Issa Secretary of the delegation Ms. LYAFUMILE, Martha Mr. MSOMBE, Michael Ms. MAKUNGU, Ruth Stanley Advisor Mr. SAPALI, James Nyengwa Ms. TUHOYE, Emiliana Changwa Mr. HANGI, Mgaka Laban	Member of the National Assembly (CCM) Chairperson, Constitution and Legal Affairs Committee Member of the National Assembly Member of the National Assembly (CCM) Member, Constitution and legal affairs committee Member of the National Assembly (CCM) Member, Infrastructure Development Committee Clerk of the National Assembly Director, National Assembly Adviser Assistant to the Speaker Adviser Special guest

(CCM: Chama Cha Mapinduzi)

**URUGUAY**

Ms. ARGIMÓN, Beatriz Leader of the delegation President of the Group Member of the Executive Committee, Vice-President of the IPU Mr. ANDÚJAR Sebastián Mr. GANDINI, Jorge Member of the High-level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism	President of the General Assembly and of the Senate (PN) Vice President of the Republic  President of the House of Representatives (PN) Deputy Speaker of the Senate (PN)
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Ms. ASIAÍN, Carmen Member of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, Mr. CERVINI, Walter Mr. LOZANO, Raúl Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development Ms. NANE, Silvia Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights Mr. NIFFOURI, Amín Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions Mr. RIPOLL, Fernando	Member of the Senate (PN)  Member of the House of Representatives (PC) Member of the Senate (CA)  Member of the Senate (FA)  Member of the Senate (PN)  First-Secretary General House of the People Member of the ASGP First Secretary General of the Senate Member of the ASGP Second Secretary General of the Senate Vice-President of the ASGP Head of International Relations
Mr. SÁNCHEZ, Gustavo	
Mr. MONTERO, José Pedro	
Ms. GALVALISI, Carina Secretary of the Group and member of the GRULAC Secretariat Mr. PIQUINELA, Oscar Secretary of GRULAC Mr. CHABEN, Nelson	Adviser  Ambassador
(CA: Cabildo Albierto) (PN: Partido Nacional) (PC: Partido Colorado)	

**UZBEKISTAN**

Ms. NARBAEVA, Tanzila Leader of the delegation, President of the Group Ms. BEKATOVA, Zumrad Mr. ZAFAR, Khudayberdiev, Ms. ODINAKHON, Otakhonova, Mr. SHIRINOV, Djakhongir Mr. MIRKHAMIDOV, Mirbotir Adviser Ms. RAKHMONOVA, Surayyo Mr. TOSHMATOV, Eldiyor Adviser	Speaker of the Senate  Member of the Legislative Chamber Member of the Legislative Chambers Member of the Legislative Chambers Member of the Legislative Chamber Adviser Adviser Director
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**VIET NAM**

Mr. TRAN, Thanh Man Leader of the delegation Mr. BUI, Van Cuong	First Vice-President of the National Assembly (CPV)
Mr. DON, Tuan Phong Ms. NGUYEN, Thi Le Thuy	Member of the National Assembly (CPV) Chairperson of the office of the National Assembly Member of the National Assembly Member of the National Assembly (CPV) Vice-Chairperson of the science, technology and environment committee
Ms. THAI OUYNH, Mai Ling Ms. NGUYEN, Thanh Cam	Member of the National Assembly Member of Parliament Executive Member of the Social Affairs the National Assembly
Mr. NGUYEN, Hoang Hai Secretary of the delegation Ms. LE, Thi Yen Secretary of the delegation Mr. DAO, Duy Trung Secretary of the delegation Ms. NGUYEN, Thi Quynh Secretary of the delegation Mr. LUU, Anh Tuan Mr. DUNG, Dang Xuan Mr. HIEN, Tran Thi Thanh	Assistant to the First Vice-President of the National Assembly Deputy Director  Deputy Director  Desk-Officer
(CPV: Viet Nam Communist Party)	Interpreter Ambassador Diplomat

**YEMEN**

Mr. AL BARKANI, Sultan Saeed Leader of the delegation, President of the Group	Speaker of the House of Representatives
Mr. AL-HANEQ, Mansoor Ali	Member of the House of Representatives
Mr. AL-AHMAR, Hamid Abdullah	Member of the House of Representatives
Mr. AL-ZOWAIDI, Mohamed Ahmed	Member of the House of Representatives
Mr. ZUHRA, Ameen Ali Secretary of the delegation,	Deputy Director
Mr. ALBARKANI, Suhaib Sultan Secretary of the delegation	Adviser
Mr. ALBARKANI, Aseed Sultan	

**ZAMBIA**

Ms. MUTTI, Nelly B K Leader of the delegation President of the Group	Speaker of the National Assembly
Mr. AMUTIKE, Oliver	Member of the National Assembly (UPND) Member, Media Information and Communication Technologies
Ms. KATUTA MWELWA, Given Member of the Health Advisory Group	Member of the National Assembly (IND) Vice-Chairperson, Local Government Accounts, Member, Cabinet Affairs
Ms. LUNGU, Tasila	Member of the National Assembly (PF) Vice-Chairperson, Committee on Legal Affairs, Human Rights and Governance, Vice-Chairperson, Committee on Transport, Works and Supply
Ms. SABAO, Jacqueline	Member of the National Assembly (UPND) Vice-Chairperson, Public Accounts
Mr. KAMBONI, Harry K.S. Member of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians	Member of the National Assembly (UPND) Member, Local Government Accounts, Chairperson, National Guidance, Gender Matters and Governance
Mr. ROY, Ngulube	Secretary General
Mr. KAWIMBE, Stephen C. Secretary of the Group	Acting Deputy Clerk, Corporate Affairs
Mr. BWALYA B.	Adviser
Ms. MONGA, Pauline Secretary to the Group	Adviser, Executive Assistant to the Clerk
Ms. MUTETO, B.S. Secretary to the Group	Adviser
Mr. SAGE, Samuwika	Executive Assistant to the Speaker

(UPND: United Party for National Development)  
(PF: Patriotic Front)

**ZIMBABWE**

Mr. MUDENDA, Jacob Francis Nzwidamilimo, President of the Group Leader of the delegation, Member of the Executive Committee	Speaker of the National Assembly, Chairperson, Committee on standing rules and orders
Mr. TSVANGIRAI, Vincent	Member of Parliament (MBC)
Mr. CHOKUDA, Kennedy Mugove	Clerk of the National Assembly Member of the ASGP
Ms. CHISANGO, Rumbidzai Pamela Secretary of the delegation	Principal External Relations Officer
Mr. MAKUBAZA, Farai Nicholas Adviser	Director
Mr. JENJE, Asha Adviser	Director
Ms. Martha MUSHANDINGA Secretary of the delegation	Principal Executive Assistant to the Hon. Speaker

(MBC: Movement for Democratic Change)

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**DELEGATIONS PARTICIPATING IN AN OBSERVER CAPACITY /  
DÉLÉGATIONS PARTICIPANT EN QUALITE D'OBSERVATEURS****AFGHANISTAN**

Mr. RAHMANI, Mir Rahman Leader of the delegation	Speaker of the House of the People
Mr. ATAL, Mohammad Karim	Member of Parliament, Member of International Relations Committee
Ms. ELHAM KHALILI, Khadija	Member of Parliament
Mr. DEHQAN, Ferdous	Secretary General
Secretary of the delegation	Member of the ASGP
Mr. ZAZI, Abdul Qadar	Secretary General

**MYANMAR**

Mr. AYE, Win Myat	Member of Parliament, CRPH
Mr. HTET, Nay Myo	Member of Parliament, CRPH
Ms. THIDA, Mya	Advisor, CRPH

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**PARLIAMENTS PARTICIPATING AS OBSERVERS WITH A VIEW  
TO A POSSIBLE AFFILIATION/REAFFILIATION  
PARLEMENTS PARTICIPANT EN QUALITE D'OBSERVATEURS EN VUE D'UNE  
AFFILIATION/REAFFILIATION EVENTUELLE****BAHAMAS**

Ms. ADDERLEY, J. LaShell	President of the Senate
Mr. GRIFFIN, Barry	Vice-President of the Senate
Ms. GLOVER—Rolle, Pia	Member of Parliament
Ms. HEPBURN, Erecia	Senator
Mr. ALMANZAR, Mario	Adviser

**KIRIBATI**

Ms. REETE, Tangariki	Speaker of the House of Assembly
Mr. KAIEA, Taoaba Bakatu	Member of the House of Assembly
Mr. KIRITAN, Batoromaio	Member of the House of Assembly
Mr. TONG, Vincent Anotu	Member of the House of Assembly
Mr. TEKANENE, Eni	Clerk
Ms. BERENATO, Rui	Executive Office of the Speaker

**II. ASSOCIATE MEMBERS – MEMBERS ASSOCIES****ARAB PARLIAMENT  
PARLEMENT ARABE**

Mr. AL-ASOOMI, Adel	President of the Arab Parliament
Mr. AL-KAREEM, Shaalan	Vice-President of the Arab Parliament
Mr. AL-SAAD, Said	Member of Parliament, Chairperson of the Arab Parliament Committee on Legislative and Legal Affairs and Human Rights
Mr. ABDELKRIM; Korichi	Member of Parliament
Ms. KHALLEEFAH, Ahlaam	Member of Parliament, Chairperson of the Arab Parliament Committee on Social, Educational and Cultural Affairs, Women and Youth
Ms. AL-KHALILI, Mona	Member of Parliament
Dr. EL-SEIDY, Ashraf	Political Advisor to the President of the Arab Parliament
Mr. AL-SHUROOQI, Nabeel	Assistant Secretary General of the Arab Parliament
Mr. ALY, Mohamed	Protocol Officer
Mr. HASSABALLA, Ahmed	Protocol Officer
Ms. EL-SAYED, Mais	Media Coordinator

**EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (EALA)  
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'EST**

Mr. NTAKIRUTIMANA, Joseph	Speaker
Mr. HASSAN OMAR, Hassan	Member of Parliament
Ms. AMODING, Priscilla	Adviser
Mr. OBATRE, Alex Lumumba	Secretary-General
Ms. MBEBA, Anastasia Monica Nthenya	Adviser
Ms. TUHOYE, Emiliana Changwa	Adviser
Mr. MUTEGA, John Njoroge	Secretary

**INTERPARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF MEMBER NATIONS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF  
INDEPENDENT STATES (IPA CIS)  
ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DES NATIONS MEMBRES DE LA COMMUNAUTE DES ETATS  
INDEPENDENTS**

Mr. CHULLIEV; Shukhrat	Member of Parliament
Mr. KOBITSKII, Dmitri	Member of Parliament
Mr. ZHUK, Denis	Head of the Expert and Analytical Directorate

**LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN PARLIAMENT  
PARLEMENT LATINO-AMERICAIN ET CARIBEEN (PARLATINO)**

Ms. GIACOPPO, Silvia	Speaker
Mr. GAMIETEA, Santiago	Secretary-General

**PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT  
PARLEMENT PANAFRICAIN**

Mr. CHARUMBIRA, Fortune Zephania	Speaker
Mr. ANGO NDOUTOUME, Francois	Deputy-Speaker
Mr. WOLDEGIORGIS, Gayo Ashebir	Deputy-Speaker
Mr. ESSISSIMA, Ndi	Member of Parliament
Mr. BOULARAF, Morad	Policy Officer

**PARLIAMENT OF THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF WEST AFRICAN STATES (ECOWAS)  
PARLEMENT DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ ÉCONOMIQUE DES ÉTATS DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST (CEDEAO)**

Mr. TUNIS, Sidie Mohamed	Speaker
Mr. ABIANTE, Awaji-Inombek Dagomie	Member of Parliament
Mr. ALPUI, Senanu Koku	Member of Parliament
Ms. CHUBA IKPEAZU, Lynda	Member of Parliament
Mr. SNOWE, Edwin Melvin	Member of Parliament
Mr. TUNKARA, Billay G.	Member of Parliament
Mr. FWANGDER, Ezekiel Friday	Chief Protocol Officer
Ms. HARVEY, Nancy	Principal Parliamentary Affairs Officer
Mr. MILLER, Edwin	Adviser to the Speaker
Mr. SOME, Kountouon Bertin	Director of Parliamentary Affairs
Mr. AZUMAH, John	Secretary-General

**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF LA FRANCOPHONIE  
ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE**

Ms. SOUCY, Chantal	Member of Parliament
Mr. LECI, Fatmir	Adviser

**III. OBSERVERS - OBSERVATEURS****INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (IFAD)  
FONDS INTERNATIONAL DE DÉVELOPPEMENT AGRICOLE (FIDA)**

Ms. PRATO, Bettina, Lead Policy and Technical Advisor

**UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)  
HAUT-COMMISSARIAT DES NATIONS UNIES POUR LES RÉFUGIÉS (HCR)**

Ms. PAVEY, Safak, Senior Adviser

Mr. ABU HAWA, Ibrahim

**UNITED NATIONS HIGH-COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (OHCHR)  
HAUT-COMMISSARIAT DES NATIONS UNIES AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME (HCDH)**

Mr. FATTORELLI, Erik, Human Rights Officer

**PARTNERSHIP FOR MATERNAL NEWBORN AND CHILD HEALTH**

Mr. PRAMANIK, Mohit, Technical officer

Ms. FOGSTAD, Helga, Executive Director

**JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)  
PROGRAMME COMMUN DES NATIONS UNIES SUR LE VIH/SIDA (ONUSIDA)**

Mr. N'DAW, Bechir, Senior Adviser

**WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)  
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTÉ (OMS)**

Mr. SILBERSCHMIDT, Gaundenz, Director, Health and Multilateral Partnerships

Mr. CLARK, Dave, Unit Head a.i., System's Governance and Stewardship

Ms. GOVENDER, Veloshnee, focal point for SRHR/UHC linkages, Department of Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) including the UNDP/UNFPA/UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Special Programme for Research and Training (HRP)

**UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST  
(UNRWA)**

Mr. LASSOUAOUI, Marc, Senior Manager, Outreach Europe UNRWA representative office to the EU

Mr. ADWAN, Rami, Senior External Relations and Projects Officer, UNRWA

Ms. DÍAZ, Estefanía, Communications Officer

**AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION (APU)  
UNION PARLEMENTAIRE AFRICAINE**

Mr. IDI GADO, Boubacar, Secrétaire général

Mr. CHEROUAT, Samir, Directeur

**AMAZONIAN PARLIAMENT  
PARLEMENT AMAZONIEN**

Mr. TRAD FILHO, Nelson, Delegate

**ARAB INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION (AIPU)  
UNION INTERPARLEMENTAIRE ARABE (UIPA)**

Mr. AL-SHAWABKAH, Fayez, Secretary-Genera

Mr. NIHAWI, Samir, Director of Parliamentary Relations

**ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (AIPA)  
ASSEMBLEE INTERPARLEMENTAIRE DE L'ASEAN (AIPA)**

Ms. DATO HJ ABD RAHMAN, Siti Rozaimeryanty, Secretary General

Ms. LIMA, Putri, Director of Committees of AIPA Secretariat

**ASIAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (APA)  
ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE ASIATIQUE**

Mr. GHASHGHAHI, Mehdi, Executive Deputy

Mr. HASHEMI, Seyed Javad, Director

Mr. MAJIDI, Mohammad Reza, Secretary-General

**ASSOCIATION OF SENATES SHOORA AND EQUIVALENT COUNCILS IN AFRICA AND THE ARAB WORLD (ASSECAA)****ASSOCIATION DES SENATS, SHOURA ET CONSEILS EQUIVALENTS D'AFRIQUE ET DU MONDE ARABE (ASSECAA)**

Ms. ALARASHI, Amatakarim, Delegate  
Mr. ALTAYEB, Mohamed, Delegate  
Mr. ABDULWASIE, Yusuf Ali, Secretary General

**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COLLECTIVE SECURITY TREATY ORGANISATION (CSTO PA)**

Mr. POSPELOV, Sergei, Executive Secretary  
Mr. BOKHANOVICH, Gleb, Secretary

**FORUM OF PARLIAMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE GREAT LAKES REGION (FP- ICGLR)****FORUM DES PARLEMENTS DE LA CONFÉRENCE INTERNATIONALE SUR LA RÉGION DES GRANDS LACS (FP-CIRGL)**

Ms. KATYA, Violette, Administrative Assistant and Protocol to the Secretary-General of the Forum of Parliaments of the ICGLR  
Mr. KAKOBA, Onyango, Delegate

**GLOBAL ORGANIZATION OF PARLIAMENTARIANS AGAINST CORRUPTION (GOPAC)  
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DES PARLEMENTAIRES CONTRE LA CORRUPTION (GOPAC)**

Mr. ZON, Fadil, Vice-Chair  
Mr. ANGGORO, Heriyono Adi, Program and GTF Support Officer

**INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENT ON TOLERANCE AND PEACE (IPTP)  
PARLEMENT INTERNATIONAL POUR LA TOLÉRANCE ET LA PAIX (PITP)**

Mr. ALJARWAN, H.E. Ahmed, President

**MAGHREB CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL  
CONSEIL CONSULTATIF MAGHRÉBIN**

Mr. MOKADEM, Saïd, Secretary General, Member of the ASGP

**PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMEMENT (PNND)  
PARLEMENTAIRES POUR LA NON-PROLIFÉRATION ET LE DÉSARMEMENT NUCLÉAIRES (PNND)**

Ms. KIENER NELLEN, Margareta, Council Member

**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN (PAM)  
ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA MÉDITERRANÉE (APM)**

Mr. COIMBRA, Bruno, President of the PAM Energy, Environment and Water Committee

**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF TURKIC SPEAKING COUNTRIES (TURKPA)  
ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DES PAYS DE LANGUE TURCIQUE**

Ms. KAZIMOVA, Suzanna, Executive Secretary of the Women Parliamentarians Group  
Ms. SADIKOVA, Aliiya, Executive Secretary of the Youth Parliamentarians Group

**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION OF BELARUS AND RUSSIA  
ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DE L'UNION DU BELARUS ET DE LA RUSSIE**

Mr. BELSKI, Valery, Member of Parliament  
Ms. GERMANOVA, Olga, Member of the Parliamentary Assembly Commission on Culture, Science and Education  
Ms. SUKHAREVA, Elena, Secretary of the delegation

**PARLIAMENTARY UNION OF THE OIC MEMBER STATES (PUIC)  
UNION PARLEMENTAIRE DES ETATS MEMBERS DE L'OIC (UPCI)**

Mr. GHAVI, Mehdi, Director  
Mr. HASHEMI, Seyed Javad, Secretary-General  
Mr. NIASS, Mouhamed Khouraichi, Secretary-General

**SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PARLIAMENTARY FORUM (SADC PF)  
FORUM PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA COMMUNAUTE (SADC)**

Ms. MUNGANDI, Yapoka, Director of Finance and Corporate Services  
Mr. MUNGENDJE, Unaro, Finance & Protocol Officer

**UNITE PARLIAMENTARIANS NETWORK FOR GLOBAL HEALTH  
RÉSEAU DE PARLEMENTAIRES POUR LA SANTÉ MONDIALE UNITE**

Mr. LEITE Ricardo, President  
Ms. INFANTE, Mafalda, Head of Parliamentary Engagement

**THE GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT TUBERCULOSIS, MALARIA AND AIDS**

Mr. BOULE, Scott, Senior Specialist, Parliamentary Affairs

**IV. ADVISERS AND OTHER PERSONS TAKING PART IN THE WORK OF THE 146th ASSEMBLY-  
CONSEILLERS ET AUTRES PERSONNES PARTICIPANT AUX TRAVAUX DE LA 146e ASSEMBLEE****BULGARIA**

Ms. KARASLAVOVA-VODENICHARSKA, Stefana	Secretary-General, National Assembly of Bulgaria
Ms. ALEXANDROVA, Stefka	Adviser, National Assembly of Bulgaria
Ms. GALABINOVA, Adriana	Adviser, National Assembly of Bulgaria

**V. SPECIAL GUESTS TAKING PART IN ACTIVITIES FORESEEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
146th ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION****INVITES SPECIAUX PRENANT PART A DES ACTIVITES PREVUES A L'OCCASION DE LA  
146e ASSEMBLEE DE L'UNION INTERPARLEMENTAIRE****Assembly**

Mr. VITORINO, Antonio, Director General, International Organization of Migration (IOM)  
Ms. TRIGGS, Gillian, UN-Assistant Secretary-General and UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection  
Ms. SULEM YONG, Ma-lh Franca, President of Afrogiveness Movement (#Afrogiveness) and Positive Youths Africa (PYA)  
Ms. BENNETT MATHIESON, Betsy, Deputy Chairwoman, King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence  
Ms. GHANEA, Nazila, United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief with the OHCHR

**Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights**

Ms. VAN DOORE, Kate, Deputy Head of School (Learning & Teaching), Griffith Law School, Australia

**Forum of Women Parliamentarians**

Ms. HAIDAR, Nahla, Member of the CEDAW Committee  
Ms. KIENER NELLEN, Margret, PNND Council Member

**High-Level Advisory Group on Counter-Terrorism and Violent Extremism**

Mr. STROOBANTS, Serge, Director Europe and the MENA region, Institute for Economics and Peace  
Mr. TANKOANO, Bahouba Norbert, Executive Secretary of the Interparliamentary Committee of the G5 Sahel  
Mr. KARIMIPOUR, Masood, Chief of Terrorism Prevention Branch in UN Office on Drugs & Crime

**Panel discussion on climate oversight action**

Ms. FRIEDRIKSON, Camilla, Manager Global Foundations Unit, INTOSAI Development Initiative  
Mr. RIFFATH, Ibrahim, Auditor General, Maldives

**Other events**

Mr. MUNIRA, Sirazoom, Climate Vulnerable Forum

**GLOSSARY / GLOSSAIRE****English****Titles/Functions:**

Speaker of Parliament  
President of the Group

Adviser  
Chair/Chairman/Chairperson  
Clerk  
Deputy Speaker  
Head  
Leader of the delegation  
Officer  
Researcher  
Secretary of the Group/delegation  
Spokesman

**Parliaments:**

House of Commons  
House of Representatives  
National Assembly  
People's Representatives

**Parliamentary Committees:**

Abroad  
Agreements  
Broadcasting  
Building  
Citizenship  
Complaint Reception  
Computer Science  
Cross-cutting Issues  
Directive Board  
Elderly  
Fishery  
Food  
Foreign Affairs  
Freedoms  
Funding  
Gender Equality  
Growth  
Health/Healthcare  
Heritage  
Home Affairs  
Housing  
Human Rights  
Intelligence  
Investigation/Inquiry  
Joint Committee  
Labour/Work  
Law  
Legal  
Local Self-government  
Missing, Adversely Affected Persons  
Oversight  
People with Disabilities  
Physical Planning, Land Use Planning, Country  
Planning  
Public Expenditure  
Public Works  
Rehabilitation  
Social Welfare  
Standing Committee  
Standing Orders/Rules  
State Device

**Français****Titres/Fonctions :**

*Président du Parlement*  
*Président(e) du Groupe*

*Conseiller*  
*Président(e)*  
*Secrétaire général/Greffier*  
*Vice-Président(e)*  
*Chef*  
*Chef de la délégation*  
*Fonctionnaire*  
*Chercheur*  
*Secrétaire du Groupe/ de la délégation*  
*Porte-parole*

**Parlements :**

*Chambre des Communes*  
*Chambre des représentants*  
*Assemblée nationale*  
*Représentants du peuple*

**Commissions parlementaires :**

*A l'étranger*  
*Approbations*  
*Radiodiffusion*  
*Bâtiment*  
*Citoyenneté*  
*Instruction des plaintes*  
*Informatique*  
*Matières transversales*  
*Comité directeur*  
*Aînés*  
*Pêche*  
*Alimentation*  
*Affaires étrangères*  
*Libertés*  
*Financement*  
*Egalité entre les sexes*  
*Croissance*  
*Santé*  
*Patrimoine*  
*Affaires internes*  
*Logement*  
*Droits de l'homme*  
*Renseignement*  
*Enquête*  
*Comité mixte*  
*Travail*  
*Lois*  
*Juridique*  
*Autonomie locale*  
*Personnes disparues ou lésées*  
*Surveillance*  
*Personnes handicapées*  
*Aménagement du territoire*  
  
*Dépenses publiques*  
*Travaux publics*  
*Réinsertion*  
*Protection sociale*  
*Comité permanent*  
*Règlement*  
*Dispositif étatique*

Sustainable Development  
Trade  
Training  
Truth  
Underprivileged  
Ways and Means  
Wildlife  
Women, Children and Youth

*Développement durable*  
*Commerce*  
*Formation*  
*Vérité*  
*Défavorisés*  
*Voies et moyens*  
*Faune*  
*Les femmes, les enfants et les jeunes*

**IPU Committees:**

Advisory Group on Health  
Bureau of Women Parliamentarians  
Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians  
Committee on Middle East Questions  
Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (IHL)  
Executive Committee  
Forum of Young Parliamentarians  
Gender Partnership Group  
Group of Facilitators for Cyprus  
Standing Committee on Peace and International Security  
Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade  
Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights  
Standing Committee on UN Affairs

**Commissions et Comités de l'UIP :**

*Groupe consultatif sur la santé*  
*Bureau des femmes parlementaires*  
*Comité des droits de l'homme des parlementaires*  
*Comité sur les questions relatives au Moyen-Orient*  
*Comité chargé de promouvoir le respect du droit international humanitaire (DIH)*  
*Comité exécutif*  
*Forum des jeunes parlementaires*  
*Groupe du partenariat entre hommes et femmes*  
*Groupe de facilitateurs concernant Chypre*  
*Commission permanente de la paix et de la sécurité internationale*  
*Commission permanente du développement durable, du financement et du commerce*  
*Commission permanente de la démocratie et des droits de l'homme*  
*Commission permanente des affaires des Nations Unies*