



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Summary Records of the Proceedings of the 147th IPU Assembly

Luanda, Angola
23-27 October 2023

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Introduction

Delegations from 128 Member Parliaments took part in the work of the Assembly:

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

The following eight Associate Members also took part in the Assembly: the Arab Parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), the Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO), the Pan-African Parliament, the Parliament of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), 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, 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), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Health Organization (WHO);

(ii) parliamentary assemblies and associations: African Parliamentary Union (APU), Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), Collective Security Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly (CSTOPA), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), Forum of Parliaments of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (FP-ICGLR), Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption (GOPAC), Maghreb Consultative Council (MCC), International Parliament on Tolerance and Peace (IPTP), Parliamentary Assembly of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (AP-CPLP), Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic Speaking Countries (TURKPA), 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), UNITE Parliamentarians Network for Global Health;

(iii) International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI);

(iv) Socialist International (SI).

Of the 1,153 delegates who attended the Assembly, 622 were members of parliament (604 from Member Parliaments and 18 from Associate Member delegations). Those parliamentarians included 51 Presiding Officers, 42 Deputy Presiding Officers, 227 women MPs (36.5%) and 188 young MPs (31.28%).

* As per the decision of the Governing Council in Madrid in November 2021, the IPU continues to engage with the Committee to Represent Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (CRPH) for Myanmar. The corresponding delegation attends the Assembly in a non-voting observer capacity.

Inaugural ceremony of the 147th Assembly

MONDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2023

The inaugural ceremony of the 147th IPU Assembly took place at Baía Luanda, Luanda, Angola at 19:00 on Monday, 23 October 2023.

The national anthem of Angola and the new IPU anthem were played by the Kaposoka Symphony Orchestra.

Ms. Carolina Cerqueira (President of the National Assembly of Angola) welcomed delegates to Luanda on behalf of the people of Angola and the 220 members of its National Assembly, and said that their presence was testimony to their commitment to build bridges of dialogue and fraternity. The Assembly would see a historic milestone for the IPU, with the election of one of four African women candidates as President. In a time of conflict around the world, it was incumbent on parliamentarians to strive to build peace and enhance their commitment to justice and stronger institutions, in line with the theme of the Assembly.

In response to the proliferation of violent conflict around the world, the international community had to act to ensure the maximum preservation of human life and dignity, and join forces to fight for world peace. World leaders also needed to work to guarantee fundamental freedoms and create a world less prone to inequality. Angolans had had their lives torn apart by over 30 years of conflict, but had learned the route to peace, reconciliation and reconstruction, which in turn had led to development, stability and social cohesion. She wished delegates a pleasant stay in Luanda and expressed her hope that the Assembly would live long in their memories.

Mr. Martin Chungong (Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union) said that the 147th Assembly was an auspicious and momentous occasion, being the first ever to be held in a Portuguese-speaking African country. As an African himself, he was delighted that it was the second time in the course of a year that an IPU Assembly was being held in Africa, following the 145th Assembly in Rwanda. He believed that Africa was full of potential and he urged the continent's leaders to mobilize that potential in support of their communities. He congratulated President Lourenço for being a champion of peace and inclusion, not only in Angola, but also in the wider region. Earlier in the year, he had visited several West African countries experiencing political instability and had been reassured to hear from their leaders that they were keenly aware of the challenges they faced in restoring peace, justice and strong institutions. He had come away with an even greater resolve to mobilize the global community to support the leadership and people of those countries.

In the context of the theme of the Assembly, the IPU understood strong institutions to mean strong parliaments first and foremost. He commended the countries of the Southern Africa region for the high level of representation of women in their parliaments; no less than 12 parliaments in the region were led by women Speakers. A further aspect that parliaments could not ignore in their quest to become stronger institutions was digital transformation, the potential of which needed to be harnessed to make parliamentary business more effective and more attuned to the needs and aspirations of the people. He hoped that, in their deliberations, delegates would make every effort to live up to the motto of the IPU: For democracy. For everyone.

Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga (Special Representative of the United Nations, Secretary-General to the African Union) delivered a message on behalf of Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, who sent his warmest greetings and apologized for being unable to attend in person due to the many pressing issues on his agenda. The United Nations was grateful to the IPU for its work in promoting the domestication of international law and treaties, its relentless efforts to promote the rule of law globally and strengthen multilateralism, and its steadfast support for the implementation of the SDGs. In response to the overlapping global challenges of violent conflict, terrorism and extremism, the climate emergency, pandemics and widening inequalities — all inflicting the greatest suffering upon the most vulnerable — the United Nations Secretary General had called for a surge in diplomacy and dialogue to rebuild global consensus.

Angola had risen from the ashes of a decades-long fratricidal conflict to become a land of potential and it was no surprise that the African Union had appointed President Lourenço as its Champion for Peace and Reconciliation. Peace must be considered a paramount prerequisite for sustainable development and dialogue, and inclusive political systems were needed to build stronger and more harmonious nations. In Africa, 90% of the targets of the SDGs remained off-track, due to

reductions in the continent's share of global trade, the growth of violent conflict and weak or ineffective institutions. Strong institutions were required not just in Africa, but around the world and as part of a reinvigorated and reformed multilateral system.

Mr. Duarte Pacheco (President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union) thanked the National Assembly of Angola for its capable hosting of the 147th Assembly. He had been shocked to learn at the start of his mandate that the IPU had not held an Assembly in a Portuguese-speaking country since 1962, in Brazil, and he was therefore thrilled that the final Assembly of his time in office was taking place in the beautiful city of Luanda, which for the next few days would be the global capital of parliaments. Luanda was an ideal city in which to talk about peace; after many years of conflict, Angolans knew all too well the fundamental role played by peace in ensuring economic and social development. The Assembly was taking place at a time when the front pages of newspapers were filled with stories of conflict: in Ukraine, in the Middle East, in Africa, in Myanmar and in Afghanistan. In all those situations, the IPU unreservedly condemned all barbaric and inhumane acts and encouraged the opposing sides to come together to engage in dialogue and seek a peaceful resolution of conflicts and disputes.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, people had thought it would be possible to return to a normal world, but many other challenges and crises had emerged. Parliaments therefore needed to step up their actions to implement the Paris Agreement on climate change, to achieve the SDGs by 2030, and to prepare for the impact of new technologies and digitalization on their own work and on society in general. In a year marked by the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, parliaments must look to uphold the rule of law and protect people's fundamental freedoms. Throughout his mandate as IPU President, which would come to an end at the present Assembly, he had worked tirelessly to reinforce the visibility of the IPU, implement its Strategy, fight for peace and development, and consolidate the Organization's good governance. He wished his successor, likely to be a woman from Africa, every success in taking the IPU into the next phase of its illustrious history.

H.E. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço (President of Angola) expressed his personal satisfaction and the joy of all Angolans at the fact that the 147th Assembly would be taking place in Luanda. Angola was a country of peace and reconciliation, wide religious and cultural diversity, and extensive natural resources, which was engaging in constant efforts to promote sustainable development and social justice. Its National Assembly was the main guarantor of the rule of law, the promotion of citizens' freedoms and rights, and the development of policies representing the wealth of the country's diversity. Angola's greatest achievement was its national reconciliation and return to political stability, and it endeavoured to share and promote solutions for peace founded on those successes among its neighbours in the Great Lakes and Southern African regions.

Parliamentary diplomacy offered a valuable opportunity for resolving conflicts and guaranteeing universal peace and security. In response to the recent escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it was essential that the guns be silenced and the way cleared for all types of diplomacy in order to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe. Only the effective creation of a State of Palestine would put an end to the 75-year-long cycle of hatred and violence. Thanking again the Member Parliaments of the IPU for their choice of Angola as the host of the Assembly, he expressed his hope that their deliberations would contribute objectively and concretely to the solution of the various problems facing the world.

H.E. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço declared the 147th IPU Assembly open.

Sitting of Tuesday, 24 October 2023

(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 11:15, with Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), President of the IPU, in the Chair.

Item 1 of the agenda

Election of the President of the 147th Assembly

The President, welcoming delegates to the 147th IPU Assembly, said that Ms. C. Cerqueira, Speaker of the National Assembly of Angola, had been elected by acclamation of the Governing Council as President of the Assembly.

Ms. C. Cerqueira (Angola), President of the Assembly, took the Chair.

Opening remarks

The President, expressing thanks for the trust placed in her to preside over the 147th Assembly on behalf of the Angolan Parliament, said in her opening remarks that the forthcoming General Debate on parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions was highly topical in the current geopolitical scenario, with peace more vital than ever before and justice and strong institutions needed to address the challenges faced. Parliamentarians must use their political will to improve that scenario, which was accompanied by a rise in armed conflicts around the world. The Assembly served as an ideal platform for condemning all warfare and seeking solutions through dialogue aimed at peaceful coexistence.

All matters relating to justice and strong institutions were especially important for ensuring a consistent and robust parliamentary response to emerging issues. In many parliaments, the signs of increased youth and women's representation were encouraging, as in sub-Saharan Africa, where there were 19 women Speakers of Parliament, including herself. Her Parliament was among those actively involved in promoting peace in the Great Lakes region, notably in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in northern Mozambique. It was similarly concerned by armed conflicts elsewhere, as they created instability and invariably affected the most vulnerable. Strong institutions were also associated with transparency and good financial oversight. Since the early 1990s, Angola had had a strong multiparty parliament in which the right to express differing opinions was fully respected, which also went without saying for the General Debate.

Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), President of the IPU, thanking the Speaker and her team for their committed endeavour to organize the 147th Assembly, said in recognizing the Angolan role in championing peace in Africa and beyond that Luanda was a fitting location for the forthcoming General Debate, which captured in its theme the IPU's core mandate as a democracy-building organization and addressed the key elements of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16. With too many institutions lacking capacities, the legitimacy and credibility to act appropriately and deliver, SDG 16 — otherwise known as the governance goal — was especially important to the achievement of more effective decision-making for sustainable development. Implicit in that Goal, moreover, was the need to bolster democracy worldwide and reverse the dysfunction in politics that discouraged participation and consensus.

The IPU, in cooperation with partners, had played a strong advocacy role in the birth of SDG 16, which was relevant to developed and developing countries alike, as none could rightfully claim that their institutions operated perfectly. In the case of parliaments, that fact was exemplified by the mixed picture of women's representation therein and the lack of any clear divide between those countries. The General Debate should not be seen as an opportunity to settle scores for perceived failures of governance or other wrongs, but rather as a platform for learning from the experiences of others and showing, through a robust declaration to be adopted at the close of the Assembly, what parliamentarians could do for sustainable development by strengthening government and reforming politics across the board.

Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, providing a gender perspective on the topic of the General Debate, said that women and girls must be central to the deliberations, as good decisions and efficient actions clearly hinged on the consideration given to the needs and views of one half of the world's population. Although United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security recognized gender inclusivity as vital to sustained peace, the goal of women's equal and meaningful participation in peace processes remained far from a reality. Parliamentarians must demand and ensure the achievement of that goal, along with access to justice for women and girls, an area in which much remained to be done to honour commitments made to empower both. Legal reforms, too, must continue so as to eliminate discrimination, violence and harmful practices against women and girls, and close persistent gaps in inheritance, property and family matters. Courageous gender-responsive justice reforms must likewise be promoted, including through work with all stakeholders.

As to stronger institutions, the creation of gender-sensitive parliaments — a concept successfully advocated by the IPU — was key to a more resilient and peaceful world. The time had come for parliamentary action towards parity in decision-making and a culture of equality in all endeavours. She applauded those parliaments that had reached gender parity, which included her own, as well as those with women Speakers, and urged parliaments which had not yet done so to continue working hard to support women's representation in politics with a view to the attainment of gender parity among their members.

Mr. D. Carden (United Kingdom), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, articulating the youth perspective on the topic of the General Debate, said in a pre-recorded video message that the SDGs, in particular SDG 16, promoted the vision of progress towards the elusive goal of government of the people, by the people, for the people. Although women had gained the right to vote and sit in parliament, many glaring examples of exclusion remained, most conspicuously among youth. As revealed by data contained in the IPU's 2023 report on youth participation in national parliaments, only a tiny percentage of under-30s, who accounted for one half of the world's population, were parliamentarians, with many chambers comprising no members at all from that age group.

In their role as designated changemakers, young parliamentarians were working to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs. At the recent Ninth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in Hanoi, they had outlined a distinct set of proposals, including in relation to SDG 16, with delivery guided in that respect by the pledges of the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign. Africa, the world's youngest continent, was showing inspiring leadership by way of its youth quotas, lower ages of eligibility for office, and youth caucuses. For its part, the Board had proposed that the IPU — a bold leader for youth — should reduce the age limit for the category of young parliamentarians to 40 years. It hoped that the IPU and its Members would support that initiative.

Mr. J. Caholo (Executive Secretary, International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)), special guest, welcoming the opportunity to address the Assembly, said that he had witnessed first-hand the boundless potential and immense challenges in the Great Lakes region. Strongly aligned with the primary ICGLR mission of promoting peace, security, stability and development in that region, SDG 16 provided a comprehensive framework for steadfastly tackling those challenges, which included conflict, arms trafficking and lack of access to justice. It also aligned perfectly with the objectives of an ICGLR pact among its 12 Member States for improving governance, security, justice and development cooperation in pursuit of peace.

Parliamentarians had a fundamental role to play in achieving the crucial goals of peace, justice and strong institutions, which were key to sustainable development and social progress. The Forum of Parliaments of the ICGLR served as a platform for the sharing of best practices and for effective and strategic cooperation towards those goals. Parliamentarians were encouraged to maximize the impact of their legislative authority to promote peacebuilding through a range of measures so as to foster prosperity and stability, notably through prioritizing justice and the rule of law. Against the backdrop of recent ICGLR activities aimed at restoring peace and security in conflict-affected countries in the region, he urged parliamentarians to encourage all armed groups in those countries to lay down their weapons and comply with the relevant collective decisions. Only through a democratic dispensation could the people of the region be a leading force for peaceful coexistence, stability and development in the African continent and beyond.

Ms. P.F. Maharavo (co-founder, Together for a New Africa (T4NA)), special guest, after outlining her Malagasy background, education and the genesis of her T4NA initiative, said that the initiative had facilitated the development of educational, mentoring and networking activities for promoting peace and justice among African youth. Social ills and lack of experience and positive role models prevented that group, who constituted the continent's majority population, from participating actively and democratically in society, and fostering its prosperity. In response, the T4NA was implementing a four-year pilot project for preparing thousands of young Africans to take charge of their future in a globalized world of interdependence and common experiences, including of the critical consequences of lack of peace and justice.

A new move towards good governance as a whole was under way, involving co-leadership and co-responsibility between actors such as parliament and civil society. Those two concepts were highly in tune with deep-rooted African values, prompting the T4NA to experiment in the field with what it called "co-governance" with the aim of contributing towards the regeneration of democracy at home and abroad. SDG 16 stood precisely for co-governance but its attainment would depend on the elimination of violence, corruption and other scourges detrimental to good governance. Young people recognized that parliaments alone could not overcome such challenges and looked to co-leadership as the answer. The T4NA example would hopefully inspire parliamentarians to work for a better world with young people, who pledged to support their efforts to promote good leadership, build strong and effective institutions, and accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.

Item 3 of the agenda

General Debate on the theme: *Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)* (A/147/3-Inf.1)

Mr. M. Nadir (Guyana), commencing the high-level segment of the General Debate reserved for Speakers of Parliament, said that the calls for peace, justice and strong institutions were resonating ever louder in a world of rising conflict, demanding a show of greater solidarity and determination from the IPU and other institutions working to uphold democracy, promote justice and build a strong humanity. His small nation was under threat from its Venezuelan neighbour, which was actively seeking to annex two thirds of its territory. Guyana put its faith in strong institutions, including the United Nations (UN) and the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and prayed that its resolve to promote democracy, peace and dialogue would spare it from that threat.

Mr. A. Almusallam (Bahrain) said that, amid the current global humanitarian and economic challenges affecting present and future generations, the achievement of SDG 16 was vital to ensuring that no one was left behind. Bahrain's approach to addressing such challenges was to uphold international law, avoid interfering in the domestic affairs of States, enhance conflict-prevention mechanisms, and optimize resource utilization to better serve humanity. Fully committed to achieving the SDGs, Bahrain had recently presented its second voluntary national review, was implementing a three-year sustainable development action plan and had created a ministry for sustainable development. It had also introduced mechanisms and laws aimed at promoting human rights, justice and equality.

The full achievement of any SDG would, however, be hampered in the Middle East especially by the ongoing war crimes against the Palestinian people, including the heinous killing and collective punishment of innocent civilians. Double standards were clearly at play when it came to violations of Palestinian human rights and of international law involving, among others, the use of internationally prohibited weapons. In its steadfast support of the Palestinian cause, Bahrain called for the urgent opening of humanitarian corridors in Gaza, protection of civilians, de-escalation and a halt to the blockade, and indiscriminate violence threatening regional peace and security. It joined in advocating a peaceful political settlement based on the two-State solution and compliance with all resolutions of international legitimacy, categorically rejecting the displacement of Palestinians from their ancestral land. Peace through solidarity and dialogue was the only route to stability and prosperity in any country.

Mr. J. Buttimer (Ireland) said that his country's 25 years of peace brought about through dialogue, engagement and ecumenism showed the power of political leadership in which differences could be cast aside to create harmony and coexistence. In a world faced with a multitude of

challenges ranging from conflict, climate issues and a cost-of-living crisis to misinformation and threats to democracy and human rights, the task of parliamentarians was to lead by action. In so doing, they must listen to one another, make citizens' voices heard and shun political point-scoring, opting instead always to uphold democracy. In a divided world, they must be about coming together as nations and people, mindful of the obligation under the Charter of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security, and remembering all those killed in war.

Human rights were critical and especially so for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. As a member of that community, he was disappointed that the IPU was not doing more to promote equality directly by supporting LGBT parliamentarians around the world. In driving action to make the world a better place, parliamentarians should provide such support to their fellow LGBT colleagues, in particular at IPU Assemblies and during LGBT Pride Months. Given their shared responsibility to build a world of peace, human rights and equality for all citizens, parliamentarians must not hide, but lead.

Mr. A.M. Diop (Senegal) said that the world of openness, peaceful development and multilateralism had recently given way to an anxiety born of ever-increasing planetary threats, with grave implications for the achievement of SDG 16. Tensions generated by upheavals were further exacerbated by the harmful effects of climate change and natural disasters, added to which were the conflicts and economic injustices prompting constant migration. Upheavals were fuelled not only by strategic issues, such as water access and control, but also by the increasing number of fundamentalist groups and acts of terrorism, with the Ukraine war and the Middle East conflict adding yet further dimensions threatening international peace and security. The perpetuation of differences provided succour to those who sowed hatred and ran counter to efforts to cooperate for justice and prosperity.

The entire international community must urgently mobilize to act on those issues, with the IPU driving the momentum in line with its ideals, encompassing universality, solidarity, freedom and peace, in the service of multilateralism. A useful tool in response to challenges, multilateralism relied on multifaceted cooperation, the rule of law, justice, collective action and common principles. Its solidarity aspect must be further strengthened at the same time as ensuring respect for differences and pursuit of the shared values enshrined in article 1 of the IPU Statutes and Rules. Senegal was firmly committed to working with the IPU towards the shifting goals uniting the inter-parliamentary community.

Mr. A. Santos Silva (Portugal) said that parliaments fostered civil peace by welcoming debate and peacefully managing social conflict; promoted justice by guaranteeing the rule of law, crafting legislation and overseeing its enforcement; and strengthened institutions by making them more accessible to all social, ethnic, religious and political groups. Strong, prestigious and active parliaments were essential to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition to serving as a platform for mutual learning, cooperation and consultation, parliaments encouraged collaboration among States and helped to shape global public opinion; all crucial in a time of coexisting globalization and deglobalization trends.

International cooperation involved overcoming divisions and avoiding confrontations, with voices advocating peaceful solutions to crises, in opposition to those engaged in sowing hatred and in perpetrating violations of international law. In that context, multilateral organizations such as the IPU were essential spaces where partners invested in the same noble mission of acting for peace, justice and strong institutions could regularly convene to deliberate on matters of common interest and learn about one another. Inter-parliamentary cooperation was indeed a very effective means of working together for the common good.

Ms. N.B. Kashumba-Mutti (Zambia) said that parts of the world were engulfed in endless cycles of conflict and violence that had reversed years of investment in development and adversely affected human well-being. Now a stable country admirably championing peace in Africa and beyond after almost three decades of war, Angola had demonstrated that development and respect for human rights could ensue from peace, justice and strong institutions. As statistics showed, however, there was currently a global deterioration in peace and justice, which were among the elements needed to achieve and sustain meaningful development. Parliaments had a critical role to play in the attainment of SDG 16 through resource allocation and oversight of public spending, coupled with effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms for overseeing the activities of institutions mandated to ensure peace, justice and inclusiveness.

In her country, heralded as a beacon of peace with a record of free and fair elections followed by smooth transfers of power, Parliament had legislated for the establishment of such institutions, which were overseen by parliamentary committees empowered to conduct reviews and make recommendations in relation to, for example, legal affairs, human rights and governance. As to institutions mandated to ensure peace and security both locally and internationally, they were monitored by a parliamentary committee on national security and foreign affairs. With SDG 16 being a catalyst for the achievement of other SDGs, the coming seven years would be critical in terms of necessary legal and institutional reforms. Parliaments must contribute to the attainment of that Goal by redoubling their efforts.

Mr. E. Sinzohagera (Burundi) said that the global village was experiencing endless war and conflict, compounded by multiple other challenges, including terrorism, rising extremism, poverty and insecurity. Lack of human rights guarantees was another issue. To create a world of peace for future generations to inherit, parliamentarians must promote the establishment of effective, inclusive and transparent public institutions responsible for the delivery of quality education and health care, fair and inclusive economic policies, and environmental protection; hold national and local institutions accountable for their actions and ensure equal access to services for all; encourage freedom of expression in private and in public; engage the public in decision-making and enforce laws and policies without discrimination; promote political and legal dispute resolution systems; bring institutions, civil society and communities together to work on lasting solutions for reducing violence, securing justice, fighting corruption and guaranteeing inclusive participation; and foster peaceful relations and cooperation with neighbouring countries.

Regrettably, however, some countries preferred to impose sanctions on their neighbours, impoverishing them further and obstructing development. Frustrated by lack of access to material goods displayed on the media, the marginalized poor could be pushed into violence, while poverty itself could create other factors detrimental to economic development and prosperity. All those who truly wanted peace and sustainable development in countries under sanctions should contribute towards ending that situation as soon as possible. It was time to turn words about peace into action.

The sitting rose at 13:25.

Sitting of Tuesday, 24 October 2023

(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 14:50, with Ms. C. Cerqueira (Angola), President of the Assembly, in the Chair.

Item 3 of the agenda (continued)

General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)* (A/147/3-Inf.1)

Ms. C. Gotani Hara (Malawi) said that the effective delivery of public services depended on strong bonds of trust with the people, transparent decision-making, and accessible information about government actions and policies. Robust accountability mechanisms were similarly needed, along with independent oversight bodies and whistle-blower protection systems, as existed in Malawi. The use of diverse public communication channels should also be enhanced and widened to promote more open dialogue with citizens and seek their input for addressing their concerns. Thanks to new legislation and other measures, Malawian institutions, including parliament, had grown more transparent, inclusive and accountable, with previously restricted information now freely available to all.

As to the rights and responsibilities of individuals and institutions, they must be clearly defined by law, which should be non-discriminatory and comply with international human rights standards. Parliamentarians must furthermore seek to strengthen law enforcement agencies, ensure access to fair, impartial and timely justice for those seeking legal redress, and allocate adequate resources to activities focused on conflict resolution, peaceful coexistence, human rights, tolerance and respect for diversity. In Malawi, provision for such activities was made in a recently enacted law on peace and unity. Building trust in public institutions was a long-term endeavour requiring consistent effort, collaboration among all stakeholders and commitment to democratic values. It involved structural reforms, a shift in culture, and key input from parliamentarians to ensure that institutions, as was the case in Malawi, were geared towards the attainment of SDG 16.

Ms. S. D'Hose (Belgium), pondering as to whether parliamentarians ever questioned their own institutions, said that parliamentary democracy was being challenged, with many often not wrongly accusing parliamentarians of being out of touch. Citizens were clamouring for more involvement in decision-making, which would be best achieved through deliberative democracy. As practised in two of Belgium's parliaments by way of panels representing all layers of society, deliberative democracy entailed an analysis of public sentiments and ideas on a range of topics with a view to better policymaking. In one of the regions concerned, trust in democracy had since doubled. Hence, rather than talking about strengthening democracy, preventing riots against parliaments and addressing democratic backsliding, it would be more politic to talk about reinventing democracy, not so as to replace it but rather to find ways to enhance it.

In Ireland, for example, citizen panels had decided on tough questions such as same-sex marriage and abortion — both now legalized as a result — without polarizing society. Another impressive example of deliberative democracy was in Iceland, where citizens had rewritten the Constitution, albeit with expert help. Parliamentary initiatives around the world also provided further proof that people would cooperate and use their voices if allowed to do so. Moreover, their faith in democracy rose if they felt heard. Parliamentarians should therefore cast a critical modern eye over the old ways of parliaments and give citizens a much louder voice. The Belgian Senate was proposing to do exactly that by installing permanent citizens' assemblies, which might well save democracy.

Mr. R. Mancienne (Seychelles) said that even small countries like his must speak out for peace so as to eclipse voices in favour of war, conflict and hate. His country was committed to the achievement of SDG 16, which was vital in a world plagued by innumerable racial, ethnic, religious and political conflicts with complex causes and no winners, which made them pointless. Innocent victims of those conflicts paid the price, including with their lives. The irony was that the tremendous advances in knowledge and technology also boosted the capacities for waging war, leading to a more dangerous world and placing humanity at greater risk.

Justice should be at the core of all relations. It included respect, tolerance and fairness towards others and required acceptance of the principles of international law and acceptance of arbitration, all of which equated with strong institutions. Despite their contribution to the maintenance of stability over the preceding 70 years, the United Nations (UN) and other supporting institutions were powerless in the face of current challenges as long as their members refused to observe the principles of justice. To secure peace and stability, those institutions needed reform and revitalization. With democracy as the best recourse for conflict prevention and the establishment of peace and security, democratic institutions must also be strengthened to prevent those in power from acting to the detriment of their citizens' interests. The Seychelles was committed to all measures for securing the IPU's goal of democracy for everyone.

Ms. N. Mapisa-Nqakula (South Africa) said that talk of peaceful and inclusive societies necessitated a response to the devastating escalation of the Israel-Palestine conflict, which had claimed thousands of lives. All parties involved must prioritize peace over violence, implement relevant UN resolutions and establish a credible peace process. South Africa stood ready to contribute its substantial expertise in mediation and conflict resolution towards concerted efforts in support of a just and lasting peace, which was achievable only through dialogue and respect for human rights. In Africa, destructive conflicts had pushed millions into deep poverty, reversing progress made towards poverty eradication. The hosting of the Assembly by an African parliament provided an opportunity to bring such pressing concerns to global attention and perhaps prompt international action to address the root causes of those conflicts.

SDG 16 encapsulated the essence of a sustainable future in which all individuals thrived, basic freedoms were protected, and public trust in elected representatives and public institutions was restored. The latter was essential to enhancing transparency and openness, fostering ethical behaviour and ensuring accountability. For parliaments, it involved enacting appropriate legislation as well as legislation that promoted justice, protected human rights and fought corruption. Crucially, however, such legislation must be enforced. Parliamentarians must be unwavering in their commitment to preserving the rights of citizens, including members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community, who should be able to express themselves freely, without fear of repression. Safeguarding such fundamental freedoms would foster an environment of trust and inclusivity.

Mr. A. Bictogo (Côte d'Ivoire) said that acts of terrorism and violent extremism severely tested institutions and undermined stability. Running counter to such values as the rule of law, respect for human rights and political and religious tolerance, those acts threatened States and must be prevented. Parliamentarians should think strategically and develop a new vision as part of their commitment to peace and to combating all persistent security threats, bearing in mind their potential to undermine democracy. In Africa, and West Africa in particular, the succession of coups d'état was cause for parliamentarians to shoulder their responsibilities. National and regional institutions had grown fragile, and legislative and regulatory measures introduced to create a fairer world had failed to yield the expected results.

On another note, the threat of global warming called for international solidarity and the establishment of a climate change fund, with all UN Member States making a collective effort on that score. His country advocated global peace and, with particular reference to the Israel-Palestine conflict, an immediate ceasefire, respect for the inalienable right to life, protection of civilians and the most vulnerable, and the opening of humanitarian corridors. History and a sense of responsibility demanded nothing less. Concerning the upcoming election of a new IPU President, the fact that all candidates were women from Africa sent a strong message to the world about women's rights and the participation of women in decision-making bodies. Whatever the outcome of the election, the winner would be Africa.

Mr. M. Dick (Australia) said that the IPU 2022–2026 Strategy, which prioritized action towards the achievement of the SDGs, was centred on a specific commitment to improving the representation of women, youth and other groups in parliament. In 2022, a record number of women had been elected to the Australian Parliament and indeed the Upper House had become a majority female chamber. Women currently accounted for 45% of Australian parliamentarians, which illustrated the trend of increasing diversity in parliaments. That trend must be accompanied, however, by ongoing work to ensure that the workplace changed to match, thereby setting an important example. As part of continuing efforts to build further confidence in its public institutions, Australia – consistently ranked among the world's least corrupt countries – had tough laws criminalizing bribery of foreign and Commonwealth public officials and had also established an independent agency charged with investigating and reporting on serious or systemic corruption within the public sector.

Currently numbering over three million, young Australians were involved in public decision-making, which provided an opportunity for civic engagement and for education and understanding about governing and democracy. In that regard, a parliamentary education office ran countrywide programmes from which over 2.4 million schoolchildren had benefited over three decades, with civics education also newly available to all, including in rural and remote areas. Australia sought to strengthen young people's involvement in public decision-making and ensure their continued engagement in the vibrant civil society that was a key feature of Australia's democracy, cohesive society and success as a peaceful multicultural nation.

Mr. P.T.C. Skelemani (Botswana) said that elected representatives must be accountable to the people as explicitly defined in law, with remedial action provided for in the case of breaches. The rule of law placed obligations on the State and citizens, including civil society, to observe, respect and, above all, take ownership of the legal order. Botswana's journey towards peace, justice and strong governance institutions was characterized by a commitment — equally demonstrated by its Parliament — to democracy, rule of law and sustainable, inclusive development. Peace and justice had historically been promoted through legislation aimed at, among others, preventing land disputes and conflicts over ambiguous traditional leadership transitions. Married women had also been granted land rights previously denied to them. As to human rights, they were promoted and protected by law, with provision made for the investigation of violations.

Parliamentary oversight mechanisms in Botswana critically ensured and enhanced transparency and accountability, including in public expenditure, helping to prevent corruption and maintain public trust. Parliament was also instrumental in advocating justice and peace for marginalized groups and in championing gender equality and women's rights. Currently being further advanced thanks to new innovative technologies, its engagement with civil society and the public had facilitated an ongoing dialogue on key issues. In sum, through its political will and dedication to upholding the rule of law, protecting democratic principles and liberties, safeguarding judicial integrity, and building institutions capable of withstanding pressures and ensuring good governance, the Parliament of Botswana had contributed significantly to the country's success, peace and stability.

Mr. M.Y. Abeywardana (Sri Lanka), referring to the recent challenging period faced by his country in overcoming widespread social unrest, securing a peaceful transition of power and maintaining the stability of its democratic institutions, said that positive outcomes had ensued from an emphasis on working through reforms for economic recovery and the restoration of public trust. Those outcomes included lower inflation, a stronger currency, increased tourism and improved medical supplies. The aim was to move towards sustainable development and growth to ensure peace, prosperity and reconciliation for all, with parliament playing a vital part through its legislative, budgetary and oversight functions. Constitutional amendments and new legislation had led to stronger democratic governance, the establishment of independent electoral and human rights commissions, and the enhancement of anti-corruption measures. Reconciliation and development efforts had furthermore been prioritized, with a focus on the country's northern and eastern provinces, and a counter-terrorism law was in the making.

A new national action plan on women, peace and security was in place to increase women's representation in governance and peacebuilding, and youth now contributed to the work of parliamentary sectoral oversight committees. Regrettably, recent UN Human Rights Council resolutions had failed to acknowledge the headway made in strengthening democratic institutions and promoting peace, justice and reconciliation, but the country continued to engage constructively with the international community nonetheless. Ever committed to the achievement of the SDGs, it had taken measures to accelerate progress to that end, including the establishment of a body dedicated to coordinating, facilitating, monitoring, evaluating and reporting on their implementation.

Mr. H. Gebaly (Egypt), noting that development depended on a solid foundation of stability, said that international peace and comprehensive sustainable development were threatened by such factors as rising conflict, terrorism and climate change. If global crises were fairly addressed, there would be no enduring poverty or lack of basic needs and nor would the Palestinian people still be living under an oppressive occupation and fighting for their legitimate rights after so many decades. With the current escalation of violence in the Palestinian territories now further perpetuating that historical injustice, the victim-blaming must stop in favour of examining the real causes behind the worsening situation of Palestinians.

Egyptian policymaking had always centred on peace, development and cooperation, as reflected in the country's ambitious sustainable development plan, which sought to increase citizens' engagement in decision-making, integrate groups such as women and children with special needs in

development programmes, invest more in human resources, and provide youth leadership training. With regard to security threats, Egypt's comprehensive approach encompassed both military and intellectual aspects by way of an appropriate legislative framework and initiatives to provide opportunities for rural youth and to combat illegal migration, with the result that no migrant boats had arrived on Egyptian shores since 2016. Given their immense responsibility to voice and achieve the hopes and aspirations of their peoples, parliamentarians must work tirelessly to find ways of bringing about peace, driving forward sustainable development for all, and tackling the underlying causes of marginalization, poverty, insecurity and the like.

Mr. G.P. Timilsina (Nepal) said that his country had internalized the core pillars of the SDGs into domestic law, with the ambitions of sustainable peace, good governance, development, security, social justice and inclusion enshrined and protected as fundamental rights under its Constitution. Non-discrimination, equality and justice were furthermore pursued as a matter of policy. A national steering committee also ensured that all national and provincial plans were harmonized with the SDGs, considered a priority, while the Federal Parliament, for its part, scrutinized bills from an SDG perspective and reviewed progress on SDG-related action plans with all three levels of government. Challenges such as violence, terrorism, cross-border crime and climate change could not, however, be resolved by governments alone but required input from civil society, business and the private sector, which in turn required as motivation institutions that were effective, transparent, accountable, trustworthy, representative and conducive to promoting unity and not division.

Alongside its miraculous development accomplishments, humanity had expended maximum resources on military capabilities and weapons of mass destruction, rather than on peace and justice, harnessing scientific and technological advances to develop such weapons. A drastic reduction in that irrational expenditure was imperative to the maintenance of peace and justice and the creation of a prosperous future for all, irrespective of geographical location, economic status or political hue. Equally imperative was a collective commitment from parliaments to enhance their role in that campaign.

Mr. G.O. Akpabio (Nigeria) said that, while grappling with numerous challenges, parliamentarians must collectively strive in their representative role for a better future, recognizing in that context the paramount importance of peace as the foundation for prosperous nations and of justice as the bedrock of fair and equitable societies. Parliamentarians played a vital role in creating inclusive societies of peace and justice, for which a focus on building strong institutions was a prerequisite. In addition to establishing a government office to promote achievement of the SDGs, the Parliament of Nigeria had created agencies for combating insurgencies in troubled parts of the country, dealing with the ravaging ecological and other effects seen in areas of oil production, and establishing social investment programmes to help the vulnerable in society. A counter-terrorism unit was also working to reduce the menace of terrorism in Nigeria to the barest minimum.

Effective governance and robust democratic processes relied on the strength of the parliamentary institution in discharging its functions, including to ensure transparency, accountability and inclusivity. Parliaments could foster action through legislation and cooperation to address social inequities, promote gender equality and protect marginalized communities from such scourges as human trafficking. As to parliamentary diplomacy, it had proved instrumental in resolving conflicts and nurturing long-lasting peace through dialogue by focusing away from political differences towards shared objectives. Lastly, parliamentarians must uniformly condemn all non-democratic practices and work in tandem for solutions to the current crises in the Middle East and Europe.

Mr. D. Mohamed Dileita (Djibouti) said that his country's tireless efforts to hone the efficiency of its institutions had borne fruit, with peace and civil stability ensuing from the continued implementation of strategic policies comprising ideals embraced by the population. In constructing a new Djibouti, the legislature listened constantly to the legitimate concerns of constituents in its efforts to drive progress as reflected in the SDG indicators. Significant progress had been achieved through parliamentary initiatives in the areas of political pluralism, good governance, justice and the rule of law. Parliament had also been a key player in concerted action on human rights, food security, education for all, social protection and universal health coverage, as well as on business and environmental matters.

The quest for peace, justice and strong institutions was universal, as each represented fundamental values intrinsic to human life. In a world tipping ever further towards division and in which security appeared ever elusive, all parliamentarians must cooperate in that quest. The situations in Gaza, Ukraine and parts of Africa underscored the importance of peace, justice, equity and tolerance, and highlighted the massive impact of armed violence on development, human rights and good

governance. Parliamentarians were obligated to avert all risk factors that could jeopardize the achievement of the SDGs, and must work together to bolster good governance and learn lessons from the past. Providing the foundation for justice and strong institutions, peace was achieved through the daily practice of tolerance and generosity, which were values to be handed down to future generations.

Mr. A.C. Bundu (Sierra Leone) said that, in their primary role of promoting and maintaining peace, parliamentarians enacted laws to protect human rights, foster social cohesion and address the root causes of conflict, including through dialogue and mediation. The cornerstone of any thriving society and the foundation for progress and development, peace sustained human rights, social harmony and economic growth. The world unfortunately continued, however, to be bedevilled by armed conflict, which endangered lives in ways unimaginable. SDG 16 must therefore serve to strengthen parliaments in their advocacy for peaceful solutions and in their work to ensure equal access to justice for all, promote the rule of law and reduce corruption.

In promoting and protecting human rights, the Parliament of Sierra Leone had replaced the death penalty with life imprisonment and bolstered its oversight responsibilities, recognizing that accountability and transparency relied on strong inclusive institutions, as did good governance and resilience. Under the new mantra of radical inclusion, women's participation in the legislature and the executive had risen to almost one third following changes in the electoral law. Parliament had also strengthened freedom of speech, removed legal restraints affecting citizens' full participation in governance, and established a functioning legal aid service and an alternative dispute resolution mechanism. The attainment of SDG 16 was challenged, however, by lack of political will and resources, corruption and an absence of institutional transparency, all of which were among the issues that parliaments must work proactively to tackle for the sake of a just, peaceful and prosperous world.

Mr. A.S.K. Bagbin (Ghana) said that the troubling statistics on people living in conflict-affected nations, on refugees and internally displaced people, and on global military spending were primarily linked with enduring regional conflicts, political instability and economic difficulties, thus highlighting the continued influence of conflict-related factors on worldwide displacement and expenditure. As was currently evident, conflict tended to degenerate, with countries fast aligning along the global geopolitical divide and setting the stage, when coupled with technological advancements, for a world war with catastrophic consequences. That state of affairs had arisen because the voices of peace and justice were silent.

The direct cost to countries in conflict readily extended to other countries in the same region by exacerbating the refugee situation and endangering global food security. Parliamentarians had a responsibility to pass laws promoting equal access to basic health care, education and other necessities and guaranteeing fair income distribution. In so doing, they would contribute towards achievement of the SDGs, notably SDG 16.B, which was to promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development. The IPU Members must work together more closely than ever to change the post-war global governance institutions with a view to inclusivity, relevant decision-making and broader participation of countries from the Global South, which would help to minimize dissent within those institutions and create much-needed balance. Calls for parliamentary action to resolve current disagreements with cool heads and calm dialogue were worthy of universal support, as there could be no development without peace.

Ms. C. Sacramento (Sao Tome and Principe) said that the democratic rule of law hinged on public trust in public and representative institutions, which should be effective, transparent and accountable, work for all, foster civic engagement, and tackle corruption, tax evasion, violence and crime. To that end, legislative reforms were needed to guarantee public access to information and active public participation in governance. Social contracts with those institutions should also be enhanced through public policies promoting education for peace in schools and wider society, along with sustainable socioeconomic development based on preservation of the environment and responsible use of natural resources to reduce conflict over shortages. The participation of women, youth and other underrepresented groups in parliaments must also be increased to make for more inclusive and effective decision-making that would in turn increase public trust.

Concerning the rule of law and protection of fundamental freedoms, the aim must be to promote the independence of powers, and freedom of expression and the press, to eliminate barriers to the exercise of citizenship, strengthen institutional practices, encourage legal education, deter violence by ensuring proper punishment for offenders, and foster national and international cooperation for more balanced governance. It was furthermore essential to raise awareness of the need to protect women,

children and adolescents from abuse, trafficking, torture and similar ills. All such measures were imperative in a world where sustainable development and security were increasingly impeded by conflict and where parliamentarians must continue to be voices for the voiceless.

Mr. R.N. Lalabalavu (Fiji) said that the constitutional responsibility of parliaments to oversee the implementation of the SDGs in their nations included the establishment of an appropriate legal framework and the allocation of adequate funding. In Fiji, the recent focus in its SDG-related initiatives had been on mainstreaming the SDGs in parliamentary committee activities as a means of oversight. Building on the outcome of a self-assessment exercise, the committees concerned sought to align their systems, structures and mandates to SDG-linked national development priorities, including with baselines and agreed progress reporting procedures.

In the case of SDG 16, the relevant committees – specifically those dealing with justice, law and human rights and foreign affairs and defence – reviewed the annual reports of institutions and agencies falling within their purview and conducted any necessary inquiries. The Fijian Parliament was determined to improve and strengthen that system by facilitating the investigation of matters raised in that process. Parliaments needed to assess whether it was preferable to mainstream the SDGs in their work through a single overarching committee or through multiple issue-specific committees. Such steps were best taken within new or existing structures or through caucuses or parliamentary groups. He looked forward to learning more during the debate about actionable initiatives that parliamentarians could take home with them to implement.

Mr. S. Papuashvili (Georgia) said that bloody conflicts around the world were derailing the global path to peace and prosperity, with devastating consequences for all, especially the vulnerable. In the current complex geopolitical setting, the value of peace must be recognized alongside the crucial role of parliamentarians in promoting the rule of law, protecting human rights, and fostering open and accountable institutions to ensure a peaceful, stable and prosperous environment. In Georgia, its effective institutional architecture had, as reflected in influential international rankings, made it a frontrunner in effective and innovative public services, the fight against corruption and organized crime, and transparency and accountability. In recent years, however, it had not been immune to rising disinformation campaigns driven by external and internal factors and aimed at manipulating public opinion and undermining trust in democratic institutions.

Externally, the Russian Federation had been ferociously undermining Georgian territorial integrity and sovereignty through its occupation of two of the country's historic regions, refusing to comply with its international commitments and maintaining instability and crime on the ground. Those actions, which must stop, demanded ongoing international solidarity with Georgia. Internally, the increasing domestic radicalism and populism called for continuation of the fight against disinformation narratives and for trustworthy, credible and swift outreach to the population. The role of state institutions in upholding the principles of democracy and protecting citizens' rights could not be overemphasized. Parliamentarians should do their utmost in such volatile times to defend and advocate for those institutions, both internally and externally.

Mr. D.S. Pereira, Speaker of the National Assembly of Guinea-Bissau, took the Chair.

Special segment to launch the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments

The Secretary General, introducing the special segment, said that the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments constituted an important instrument representing the culmination of four years of work in collaboration with the partners identified in the publication itself, which was available for downloading — thus far in English, French and Spanish — from the IPU website. In that process, some 50 parliaments had been canvassed for their views as to the hallmarks of a democratic parliament. Designed to support parliamentary learning and development, the Indicators served as a framework for the self-assessment of parliamentary capacity and practice with the aim of pinpointing strengths and weaknesses to be addressed, and generating ideas accordingly for the implementation of development programmes. The Indicators resonated with the theme of the current General Debate and indeed with the IPU 2022–2026 Strategy, which placed great emphasis on the development of parliaments and democracy, with three of its goals relating specifically to parliaments and their functioning.

Given the role and mandate of parliaments as central institutions of democracy whose decisions shaped the future, the way in which they functioned was of utmost importance. As public opinions evolved, they were challenged to be ever more effective, accountable and transparent, with decision-

making processes that were inclusive, responsive, participatory and representative. The Indicators therefore answered questions about a parliament's effectiveness and covered the criteria characteristic of democratic parliaments, as would be more fully explained by the three speakers contributing to the special segment.

Mr. A. Richardson (IPU Programme Manager, Parliamentary Standards Setting and Knowledge Generation), accompanying his presentation of key points pertaining to the Indicators with a number of digital slides, said that the development of the Indicators had been a multiparty activity involving the entire parliamentary community and parliaments themselves. Built on the experiences of Members and partner organizations over the preceding decades, the Indicators were intended for the purpose already described by the Secretary General and were organized on the basis of seven targets corresponding to the adjectives used in SDGs 16.6 and 16.7 relating to effectiveness, accountability, transparency and so forth. While all parliaments were unique and had their own set of circumstances, they also all had lawmaking, oversight and representation as features in common, along with shared aspirations towards being participatory and effective institutions. Every target was associated with a number of indicators — 25 in all — covering all areas of parliamentary activity, and every indicator had a number of dimensions, each containing a description of an aspiring goal and each associated with criteria for assessing performance, capacity and practice on a graded scale to help with recommendations for improvement.

In short, the process was a cooperative enterprise between parliamentarians, who could make political judgements about where their parliaments stood in those terms, and the parliamentary administration, which could gather evidence to support parliamentarians in making their self-assessments. No external judgement was involved, as the Indicators were a tool owned by parliaments and informed by evidence likely to generate recommendations leading to their further development with the goal of strengthening the institution, mindful of the fact that strong parliaments made for strong democracy.

Mr. M.H. Sayed (Pakistan), providing an overview of his experience in rolling out the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments as a self-assessment toolkit in his country's Senate, said that the IPU's important initiative in the form of those Indicators had been successfully deployed in Pakistan, with credit due to the IPU for its close collaboration on aligning the Senate's legislative work with the SDGs and institutionalizing the role of parliament as an effective, transparent and inclusive institution representing the country's people. In the Pakistani case, the success was attributable to a troika for delivery established to ensure that the aims of the exercise were achievable within a given time frame. Included in that troika was a parliamentary development unit responsible for coordinating multiple branches and departments of the Senate, which was in step with the parliamentary leadership on the matter.

In addition to achieving the aims set, markers for future action to make parliament more effective, inclusive, transparent, responsible and responsive to popular aspirations had been laid down. The Senate had identified 14 Indicators for itself, including the establishment of a parliamentary budget office, legislation on conflict of interest, input in decision-making, greater inclusivity, and representation for specific groups. Hailing the Indicators as a road map for institutionalizing democracy through the mainstay of parliament, which was the lifeblood of any democracy, he thanked the IPU and its team for their out-of-the-box initiative.

Mr. J. Matiya (Deputy Secretary-General, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)), welcoming the launch, said that his Association had gladly partnered with the IPU in drafting the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments, which were an important means of helping parliaments to self-evaluate their performance in discharging their constitutional duties. In respect of similar benchmarks for democratic legislatures developed by the CPA in 2006 and reviewed in 2018, the experience had been that voluntary self-assessments produced practical and enriching outcomes in terms of enabling parliaments to consider ways of strengthening the institution in specific areas. Examples of recent outcomes in that vein included the development and review of standing orders, enhanced public outreach and engagement and, in one country, the establishment of a women's caucus. As part of their voluntary self-assessments, parliaments had considered organizational changes and reforms under way and had crucially engaged with stakeholders that might help the institution going forward.

Since 2018, the CPA had worked with 22 Commonwealth parliaments and legislatures, all of which had come to understand that the benchmarks for democratic legislatures were a useful tool for examining their status quo and future direction. With an increasing number of parliaments now

beginning to own those benchmarks, he hoped that the IPU Members would welcome the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments and use them as a medium for engaging with society and other stakeholders. The CPA was currently again reviewing the benchmarks with a view to further assisting its member parliaments in their self-assessments, which were always critical to the continued strengthening of any organization.

The Chair, voicing his support for the new toolkit and noting that any weakness in democratic institutions was generally attributed to lack of accountability, expressed the hope that all Members would use the Indicators to improve their own institutions.

The Secretary General, concluding the launch of the Indicators, said that the IPU was mindful of the environment and had therefore not produced hard copies of the publication, which was, as mentioned, readily available instead via the IPU website. The important point was for parliamentarians to return home resolved to use the Indicators for improving their ways of doing business so as to make their parliaments ever stronger, ever more transparent and ever more accountable and responsive to needs. The IPU commended the Indicators for Democratic Parliaments to all Members as a helpful tool in that endeavour and was ready to assist them in rolling out the instrument in their countries, as were the partners that had participated in its design.

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

Item 2 of the agenda

Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda (A/147/2-P.1, P.2-rev, P.3 and P.4-rev)

The President, introducing the item, said that four requests had been received for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda.

The first of those requests, received on 13 October 2023 from the delegation of Pakistan, was entitled *Countering Islamophobia and the rise in extremist Islamophobic events through understanding and education, the promotion of tolerance and interfaith harmony, and fostering an environment that encourages respect and empathy among different faith communities*.

The second, received on 23 October 2023 from the delegations of Algeria and Kuwait on behalf of the Arab Group, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), and South Africa on behalf of the African Group, was entitled *Stopping the war and violations of human rights in Gaza*.

The third, received on 23 October 2023 from the delegation of Malaysia, was entitled *A multifaceted approach to the question of Palestine: Parliamentary diplomacy and Sustainable Development Goal 16*.

The fourth and final request, received on 23 October 2023 from the delegation of Canada on behalf of the delegations of Argentina, Austria, Croatia, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom, was entitled *Towards common ground for peace*.

He invited the respective sponsors to present their proposals for the inclusion of an emergency item in the agenda, which would be followed, if requested, by a statement from not more than one speaker holding a contrary opinion. Thereafter, the Assembly would proceed to a vote by roll call to decide which of the proposed emergency items was to be included in its agenda.

The Secretary General recalled in that connection Rule 11.2(b) of the Rules of the Assembly, which provided that the Assembly could place only one emergency item on its agenda and that, should several requests obtain the requisite majority, the one having received the largest number of positive votes would be accepted.

Mr. M.H. Sayed (Pakistan), presenting the proposal set out in document A/147/2-P.1 and noting its relevance to all civilized society as well as to the world's 1.5 billion Muslims, said that Islamophobia was rooted in bigotry, racism and hatred of an entire community that believed, moreover, in the Islamic principles of tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Islamophobia was behind attacks on Muslims, desecration of Muslim holy sites and blatant anti-Muslim discrimination. With the sanctity of Prophet Muhammad and the Holy Qur'an sometimes gravely undermined in addition, blasphemy laws were sorely needed. Muslims respected all religions and rejected attacks on any one of them. The proposal had been submitted before the terrorist State of Israel had embarked on its current genocide of the

Palestinian people and crimes of humanity against them, in which many Western countries were complicit. Given the urgency of that situation, his delegation withdrew its proposal in order to support that on stopping the war and human rights violations in Gaza.

Mr. F. Zon (Indonesia), presenting the proposal set out in document A/147/2-P.2-rev, said after reading out the explanatory memorandum annexed thereto that the proposal essentially focused on four issues, specifically: a stop to the military attack on Gaza by way of a complete ceasefire; a lifting of the blockade on the Gaza Strip; more objectivity, fairness and collaboration on the part of the international community in seeking a lasting solution to the Palestinian question; and a reform of international systems so as to enhance the effectiveness of international law enforcement.

Ms. Z. Musa (Malaysia) presenting the proposal set out in document A/147/2-P.3, said that parliamentarians must put aside their differences and work as one to stop the catastrophic violence and unwarranted killings, including of women and children, in Gaza, which were taking place against the backdrop of a decades-long conflict involving territorial disputes, political tensions and social inequalities. More than an act of aggression, those killings constituted crimes against humanity, and there should be no bias involved in any talk of self-defence. Outlining key points from the draft resolution annexed to the document and describing the text as balanced and fair, she noted its resemblance in content to the draft resolution on stopping the war and violation of human rights in Gaza. Her delegation therefore wished to withdraw its proposal and instead join the co-sponsors of the latter.

Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), presenting the proposal set out in document A/147/2-P.4-rev and inviting support for the draft resolution annexed thereto, said that the shocking crisis engulfing Israel and Palestine was yet another reminder of the extent of global interconnectedness. His delegation viewed that draft resolution, which spoke to the cessation of violence and the sustained delivery of humanitarian aid, as a respectful starting point for building common ground and facilitating discussions towards peace. Parliamentarians could not be driven on the issue by ideology, mistrust or division, nor by blame or recriminations. Rather, it was their responsibility to lift up those whom they were privileged to represent. The text before the Assembly was informed by views of Members, including from the Arab world, the Global South and beyond. An end to the terrible cycle of violence and hate would be expedited by the selection of an emergency item that strived to achieve the solidarity systems on which those in need of help counted.

Mr. M.R. Ousahla (Algeria) said, in a statement of contrary opinion, that the Canadian proposal was biased and typified selectivity and double standards. It falsified history, equating the occupying entity with the Palestinian people denied even their most basic right to freedom. Neither condemning in the slightest the entity responsible for the current suffering nor even expressing condolences to Palestinian victims, it disregarded the plight of the thousands of women, children and others killed in the Gaza Strip. By contrast, demonstrations were being held in capitals across the world to support Gaza and denounce the aggression against it. His delegation opposed the proposal, which disrespected those whom parliamentarians were supposed to represent and was an insult to the memory of those thousands killed.

A video entitled "Voting guide for emergency items during an IPU Assembly" was screened.

Mr. D.S. Pereira (Guinea-Bissau), preceding the vote with a few general remarks, said that the decision on the emergency item was taking place at a time of calamitous escalation and humanitarian tragedies that were polarizing communities around the world. The aim of participants in the Assembly was not to further divide the world but to unite it. The IPU's founding fathers had established the Organization in 1889 with the aim of enabling parliamentarians to settle international conflicts through mediation and arbitration. Ever since then, parliamentarians had seized every opportunity to achieve that goal, which was the *raison d'être* of the IPU, the world's oldest international parliamentary organization.

A vote by roll call was taken on the two proposals presented by the delegates from Indonesia and Canada.

With 607 votes in favour, 439 against and 219 abstentions, the proposal presented by the delegate from Indonesia failed to obtain the required two-thirds majority of the 1,046 "yes" and "no" votes cast and was therefore rejected.

With 507 votes in favour, 452 against and 306 abstentions, the proposal presented by the delegate from Canada also failed to obtain the required two-thirds majority of the 959 “yes” and “no” votes cast and was therefore similarly rejected.

Mr. D.S. Pereira, Speaker of the Parliament of Guinea-Bissau, took the Chair.

The Chair said in response to reaction from the floor that all votes had been counted and ascertained by the IPU Secretariat, which was ready to double-check the figures in case of doubt.

Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), IPU President, confirmed that neither proposal had received the two-thirds majority of votes cast, required in accordance with Rule 11.2 of the Assembly, and that as such neither proposal could be added to the Assembly agenda as an emergency item.

The Secretary General, himself confirming that information, said that the results of the vote had been tallied electronically by his IPU colleagues but that anyone wishing to cross-check them for accuracy was welcome to do so. The voting table would be made available to delegations and included in the Assembly Results.

Mr. M. Bouden (Algeria), supported by **Mr. M. Rezakhah** (Islamic Republic of Iran) and **Mr. F. Salim** (Libya), said that the proposal presented by the delegate from Indonesia on behalf of its numerous co-sponsors had obtained the overwhelming majority of votes. Whenever the IPU President spoke from the podium, he was representing the IPU Members and could under no circumstances speak in a personal capacity. The result of the vote was clear and should be respected.

The Chair reminded delegates that no debate on any issue could be reopened after a vote had taken place.

Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium), speaking in his capacity as Chair of the Twelve Plus Group, said that the position expressed by the delegate from Algeria was understandable but that the relevant rules had been agreed decades previously by all IPU delegations and must be observed.

The Chair noted that parliaments too had rules, with which their members readily complied.

Mr. P.F. Casini (Italy) said that, irrespective of differences of opinion, the long-standing Rules of the Assembly were clear and must be respected, along with the history of the IPU. It was therefore pointless to continue the discussion.

The sitting rose at 18:50.

Final Agenda

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1. Election of the President of the 147th Assembly
 2. Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda
 3. General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)*
 4. Special accountability segment on the implementation of IPU resolutions and other decisions
 5. *Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm*
(Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights)
 6. Reports of the Standing Committees
 7. Approval of the subject item for the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights at the 149th IPU Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs
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Sitting of Wednesday, 25 October 2023

(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 09:05, with Ms. C. Cerqueira (Angola), President of the Assembly, in the Chair.

Item 3 of the agenda (continued)

General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)* (A/147/3-Inf.1)

Mr. A. Farrugia (Malta) said that lack of governance, rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, inclusivity and accountability generated dissatisfaction, driving conflict and dangerous spirals of violence. Other consequences included corruption, insecurity, inefficient and unreliable justice systems, and institutions less capable of delivery, all of which threatened sustainable development and hindered personal development. Freedom of expression should be guaranteed, and parliaments should set the example for transparency and accountability, as in Malta, where the highest possible level of standards in public life were scrupulously maintained so as to build public trust in elected representatives. Instrumental in promoting fundamental values, including non-violence, tolerance and respect for others, parliamentarians must affirm mutual understanding and dialogue involving the exchange of differing views and beliefs as the basis for functioning societies, interpersonal relationships and lasting peaceful coexistence.

Strong globally structured institutions were equally required to secure peace, justice and understanding. Unfortunately, however, the opposite to such aims was being witnessed in the Middle East, which was a matter of universal concern and begged the question as to why no two-State solution had been implemented and why the Palestinian people had been so shamefully ignored for decades. All parties involved must refrain from engaging in power politics and move towards dialogue, understanding and durable peace. Multilateral institutions such as the United Nations (UN) must also urgently pursue their efforts to promote the observance of international law. In the current global village, the UN role in achieving those objectives was more important than ever.

Mr. P. Katjavivi (Namibia), after expressing similar concern over the escalation of the Israel-Hamas conflict and also voicing support for the two-State solution, said that the dire consequences of the absence of peace were apparent in conflict-ridden parts of the world and that a multisectoral approach was needed to address the scourge of instability tearing at the moral fabric. Through legislation and vigilant oversight, parliamentarians played a crucial role in promoting human rights and inclusivity and in combating corruption to create an environment conducive to fostering peace and sustainable development, while through transparency and accountability they could promote democracy by bridging the gap between government and citizens. Inclusive planning involving civil society and the private sector was furthermore paramount in achieving socioeconomic and political development.

In Namibia, the Constitution guaranteed human rights and freedoms, and required government to uphold the rule of law and work for peace, security, social justice and economic welfare. The country was committed to multiparty democracy, conducted regular elections and gave youth a voice in the democratic process through a children's parliament, with constructive results. It had adopted initiatives for rectifying inherited inequality and for integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in its national development plans, which were reviewed annually. Legislation had been enacted to promote peace, justice and strong institutions, increase women's representation in parliament, protect whistle-blowers and combat domestic violence. Parliamentarians must mobilize resources to eradicate the vices threatening peace, security and stability — prerequisites for sustainable development — to pave the way for prosperity and well-being for all.

Mr. J.-F. Ndongou (Gabon) said that his country appreciated the solidarity shown towards it since the historic day of its liberation by patriotic security and defence forces in August 2023, which had been welcomed by the people and demonstrated to the world that peace could be maintained, even in a crisis, with parliamentarians playing a pivotal role. Throughout its independent history, Gabon had always moved towards conciliation thanks to its deep-seated culture of peace and its values of dialogue and consensus. That legacy of promoting peace had been handed down by the country's founding fathers to individuals, communities and collective entities, including parliament which had in public meetings widely referenced a compilation of work on peace and non-violence — produced by some of his predecessors — to ward off negativity and violence on the eve of what were crucial elections.

Such examples should serve as reassurance that Gabonese parliamentarians would continue to play their role as sentinels of peace, in line with the current transitional charter. The sole objective of the expected new governance model was to ensure social peace, the rule of law and inclusivity, for which there were preconditions to be met. The condemnations of Gabon for its shift away from democratic principles was understandable but, in the country's special circumstances, they justified neither its isolation nor sanctions against a people who had peacefully taken destiny into their own hands. A land of opportunity, Gabon was an active member of the international community and needed its help in effecting a return to constitutional order.

Ms. E. Bias (Mozambique), noting that the fundamental right to freedom, peace and harmonious development was enshrined in her country's Constitution, said that Mozambicans remained committed to peace in the wake of a decades-long destructive war and that Mozambique's experience of conflict, dialogue and mediation was proving useful and relevant in the context of its current membership of the UN Security Council. Peace and harmony had prevailed across most of the country in the 30 years since the signing of a peace treaty, the population had returned home to daily life, and disarmament and demilitarization were finally complete.

Under its multiparty system, elections were regularly conducted in Mozambique, which had parliamentary, general and provincial elections coming up in 2024. Citizens aged over 18 years were eligible to stand as candidates in all elections, including for membership of local bodies. Citizens were also able to participate in the legislative process and in oversight, as part of which the Head of State was required to report annually to Parliament on the state of the nation, with other officials and entities similarly bound to provide information on their activities. A constitutional principle, gender balance was treated as a priority, as was evident from the extent of women's participation in government institutions and in parliament. Judicial organs, too, played their part in resolving gender-related issues, for which legal assistance was available in some instances.

Mr. S. Andújar (Uruguay) said that peace, democracy and human rights were complementary elements essential to building a better world of progress and a just, equitable, stable and harmonious society. A fundamental human right, peace implied the absence of all violence, promoted socioeconomic and cultural development, and fostered international cooperation. Concerted efforts must always be made to prevent conflict and resolve disputes peacefully. Democracy was the political system that best guaranteed peace and citizen participation. It encouraged diversity, tolerance and dialogue and allowed conflict resolution through peaceful processes but must be inclusive. As to human rights: they were universal and must be respected, protected and guaranteed, without restrictions based on race, gender, religion or sexual orientation. Their promotion was key to preventing discrimination, oppression and violence.

Peace, democracy and human rights were directly related. Democracy encouraged participation and respect for human rights, which in turn built and contributed to peace and stability. When human rights were respected, justice was promoted and tensions that might end in conflict were reduced. Peace, furthermore, allowed prosperity and development, which in turn strengthened institutions and therefore democracy. Neither of those three elements were definitive achievements, however, as they required continued efforts, vigilance and collaboration at all levels to promote them at all times. That meant advocating for justice, equality and inclusion and working together to resolve conflicts peacefully and to strengthen democratic institutions. Parliamentarians must not leave the Assembly without speaking in favour of peace and human rights, and against terrorism and the use of force.

Mr. A. Tavares Correia (Cabo Verde) said that the concept of stronger and weaker in the modern-day world was a mere illusion and did nothing to foster peaceful coexistence, which was a precondition for lasting peace in any country. Of unimagined proportions and intensity, current conflicts were a reminder of dark times and of the urgent need to build lasting peace, which required a

thoroughly holistic approach entailing an examination of the causes of conflict, respectful diplomatic and political dialogue involving all parties, a willingness to reconcile, and respect for differences, human rights and social justice. Peace was achieved through justice for all and through strong and effective institutions that guaranteed both and protected rights, guided by the rule of law.

Such was the aim of SDG 16, which was indispensable but had unfortunately been neglected. With time for its attainment now running short, parliamentarians shared the responsibility to develop and reinforce actions that would genuinely accelerate its achievement. Rather than bowing to vested interests, parliaments must be made strong, transparent and accountable, involve citizens in legislative processes, hear their concerns, and address their needs and legitimate aspirations within the limits specified by law and in accordance with the separation of powers. In the current challenging and complex scenario, parliaments must increasingly unite as well as promote inter-parliamentary cooperation and parliamentary diplomacy aimed at facilitating mutual understanding and building consensus. In striving together for those shared objectives, parliamentarians could build a world in which peace, justice and strong institutions were a reality.

Mr. A. Al Asoomi (Arab Parliament) said that there could be no talk of justice when the struggle of the oppressed Palestinian people for the basic human right to freedom and self-determination remained ongoing after 75 years of persecution, killing, exploitation and abuse. Palestinians were being subjected to the most flagrant acts of inhumanity, including genocide and forced displacement, at the hands of the brutal occupation forces, who practised State terrorism, directly targeted civilians and used internationally proscribed weapons against them. The international community, which proclaimed to defend democracy and human rights, nonetheless maintained a shameful and complicit silence over the horrific scenes of daily killing and destruction in Gaza. History would record the truth about the double standards at play and the blind support of some for those crimes in breach of international humanitarian law, now supplanted by the law of the jungle.

The IPU must urgently call for an immediate ceasefire and a lifting of the blockade on the Gaza Strip as well as for the occupation authorities and their supporters to be held fully accountable for their war crimes. The current tragedy in the region proved beyond doubt that rightful causes never died and that war and killing were not the answer. It also reaffirmed that security and peace in the Middle East continued to hinge on a just, comprehensive and lasting solution based on an independent Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital. He appealed to the IPU President to condemn the civilian deaths in Gaza, including of women and children.

Mr. M. Bahati Lukwebo (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that nothing was possible without peace, while without justice there could be no peace or indeed effective institutions. Often at the root of conflict were crises of public trust in institutions arising from such matters as governance and disregard of international law. A breakdown of peace had adverse consequences for lives, including by dragging child soldiers into conflicts and bringing disproportionate suffering to women. To alleviate conflict and improve governance, efforts should be made to increase women's and youth representation — and, in turn, inclusiveness — and to build resilient and innovative institutions. The Congolese Parliament was pursuing that path and also legislating to protect rights and freedoms.

Domestic law alone, however, was not enough to guarantee peace. International law also had its place but some unfortunately chose to apply it selectively. Burning issues were divisive precisely because international law was not scrupulously applied. Even where there was solidarity in cases of aggression or disaster, the application of international law was two-tiered. Human beings quickly forgot things that had happened to them, as with the recent COVID-19 pandemic, which had shown their fragility, irrespective of which part of the globe they inhabited. That example alone should encourage greater solidarity, complementarity and the abandonment of pride. The IPU offered the ideal forum for building such solidarity and good governance with a view to strengthening public trust in institutions and thereby constructing lasting peace.

Ms. J.N. Kumba (South Sudan) said that peace, justice and effective institutions had a symbiotic relationship and were key for democratic governance, sustainable development and indeed the attainment of all SDGs. Parliaments were best placed to champion all three, including through collaboration with the executive for effective governance and service delivery to citizens. Injustice and lack of tranquillity often weakened public trust in government, which could be rebuilt through parliamentary action and public participation in legislative processes and government projects, as in South Sudan. Since its establishment, the country's transitional legislature had enacted laws to promote transparency and accountability in public institutions as well as to ensure the smooth implementation of the peace agreement signed in 2018 and facilitate the post-war reform agenda. In

that regard, the country was on track, with elections scheduled in 2024. Measures taken to increase women's and youth representation in parliament and the executive were also bearing fruit, as improvements in the related figures showed.

The prevention of all violence and the maintenance of international peace and security demanded collective efforts and continued political dialogue. Since the 146th Assembly, new conflicts had emerged, including in neighbouring Sudan, where massive destruction, loss of lives, internal displacement and an exodus of refugees to South Sudan had ensued, creating a humanitarian crisis that the country was unable to manage without support. The South Sudanese authorities were meanwhile leading efforts to resolve the conflict peacefully through mediation and negotiation. She called on all warring parties in that and other conflicts to give dialogue a chance.

Mr. A. Ruhunda (Uganda) said that peace, justice and stability were the foundational pillars for achieving the sustainable development craved by all humanity and that parliaments were accordingly duty bound to internalize the SDGs in domestic law and thereafter monitor their implementation. Given their exclusive responsibility, parliamentarians must choose to place a strong focus on fostering the tenets of peace, justice and strong institutions, including through the enactment of appropriate laws.

Despite institutional challenges, Uganda had registered progress towards the achievement of SDG 16. The preceding decades of relative peace and stability had ushered in a multiparty democracy, with regular elections and public participation in legislative activities now the norm. Home to many refugees from conflict, the country had spearheaded numerous peacebuilding initiatives in the region and mobilized resources to that end. It had taken steps to strengthen its legal framework and promote access to justice for its citizens, such as through the creation of specialized courts and the provision of legal aid to the vulnerable and marginalized. Parliament had furthermore paved the way for a better funded judiciary, the recruitment of more judicial officers and an improved appeals system. It had also strengthened its oversight so as to increase government transparency, accountability and efficiency, and had taken steps to ensure gender budgeting and establish parliamentary forums on the SDGs and on ethics and integrity. He urged parliamentarians to champion the causes of justice and peace, engage in conflict prevention and recovery, and facilitate strong partnerships among stakeholders to promote the effective implementation of SDG 16.

Mr. J. Ntakirutimana (East African Legislative Assembly (EALA)), highlighting peaceful coexistence and the peaceful settlement of disputes as fundamental EALA principles, said that one of the main EALA roles was to oversee and hold to account all institutions established by the East African Community (EAC) as part of deepening cooperation among its members. In so doing, it strived to ensure that those institutions recognized any need for change and identified steps for delivering such change for the well-being of citizens. It was therefore committed to working closely with national parliaments to achieve good governance, democracy, human rights, social justice and the rule of law within and among EAC partner States. It also remained committed to voicing East African concerns by advocating for the implementation of all policies aimed at promoting peace, justice and strong institutions.

Ms. S. Giacoppo (Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (PARLATINO)) said that the discussion was timely in view of the resurgence of conflicts that illustrated the fragility of peace and the inadequacy of global governance institutions, not to mention a lack of humanity and the weaponization of civilians as political pawns. The matter was one of social commodification and criminal governance by violent actors who influenced politics through co-optation or coercion and laid down conditions for negotiations or for dealing with tragic consequences such as displacement, trafficking and migration, which netted them huge profits.

In her region, the growing number of such actors amplified the worsening socioeconomic situation, making it harder for politicians and institutions to address problems of insecurity and violence. Although now free of conflict, it was the world's most violent area, the common factor among its countries being the abundance and ready availability of the weapons responsible for over one half of violent deaths. Until that changed, the bloodshed would continue. The majority of Latin Americans distrusted their leaders and felt governed by a small but powerful group of self-interested individuals. Government lack of response to social needs had created more organized crime, which was increasingly dominant and politically active. To reverse that situation before it was too late, parliamentarians must think creatively to find realistic pragmatic solutions for improving the quality of lives. There was no magic wand, however. Peaceful coexistence and fairer societies required common sense and genuine attention to those most in need.

Mr. D.S. Pereira (Guinea-Bissau) said that any failure of parliaments to regulate the essential aspects of life in line with the needs, desires and expectations of citizens would be cheating them and breaking the social contract. Enacting laws without guaranteeing their enforcement favoured impunity and disorder in reaction to institutional weakness. It was deeply regrettable that politicians and leaders whose job it was to improve well-being for all should be judged responsible by their electorate for current social upheavals. Countless countries continued to experience systemic crises that jeopardized the sacred values of peace, justice and human rights. In Guinea-Bissau, governments were dismissed and parliaments dissolved regularly — and usually unlawfully so — for purely political reasons and regardless of the public interest. Instability weakened institutions, in turn encouraging nepotism and human rights violations.

That gloomy scenario demanded urgent cooperation to strengthen parliaments and develop a global agenda for supporting the most fragile among them. The values associated with peace, justice and strong institutions were universal and, as such, merited special focus and protection. In that context, the IPU would lose relevance and credibility unless its words were backed by concerted action to stop genocides and save the lives of innocent victims of hatred and greed. The IPU should also establish an early warning mechanism to facilitate faster, more effective and more robust interventions in situations where democratic values and principles were at risk. Key in that regard were ongoing dialogue, sharing of best practices and a determination to prevent the instrumentalization of decision-making bodies at all costs.

Special segment to mark the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Secretary General, introducing the special segment and welcoming the IPU President to the occasion, said that the IPU had designed two important tools as part of the parliamentary contribution to Human Rights 75, an initiative involving celebrations in Geneva on 10 December 2023, which was Human Rights Day, for the 75th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights. Aware of the increasing need to promote robust parliamentary action in support of human rights, the IPU had developed those tools in cooperation and coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the head of which had sent a video message to the Assembly.

Mr. V. Türk (UN High Commissioner for Human Rights), in his video message, said that the Assembly's focus on SDG 16 was very timely, as a recent report by the OHCHR and partners had shown little or no progress made towards the attainment of that Goal since 2015, perhaps largely explaining why the achievement of the entire 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was lagging behind. The integration of human rights in governance was key to more effective law- and policymaking and to inclusive and participatory sustainable development, with the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights providing an important blueprint. The most transversal prevention tool available, human rights were the connecting thread that cut through silos and across all sectors to mirror the full spectrum of national governance, clarify priorities and promote the advancement of socioeconomic stability, inclusion, trust and justice.

All States had an interest in centring policy and governance on a strong core of human rights to achieve SDG 16, not least in view of the current global turbulence. In that regard, the crucial role of parliaments ranged from upholding the rule of law and safeguarding institutional independence to conflict prevention, mediation, reconciliation and peacemaking. Through constructive dialogue and bodies such as standing committees on human rights, they were also instrumental in standard-setting and in holding governments to account for the human rights impact of policies, practices and legislation. Moreover, their direct links with grass-roots civil society organizations and national human rights institutions strengthened public trust in institutions and decision makers. In exercising their legislative, budgetary and oversight functions, parliaments also took into account human rights developments and concerns and translated recommendations by international and regional human rights mechanisms into national practice. In that context, parliamentarians would do well to engage in the work of the UN Human Rights Council, including the Universal Periodic Review and treaty body processes, and to seek inclusion in the membership of their national delegations.

In what was a milestone year, the Human Rights 75 initiative was primarily aimed at collecting firm transformative pledges from States and other stakeholders, including parliamentarians, to advance human rights. In June 2023, a parliamentary round table co-organized by the OHCHR and the IPU had focused on the role of parliament in advancing women's rights in the areas of political

participation, decent work and education. He encouraged IPU Members to endorse the first valuable pledges made on that occasion and to consider making additional pledges to engage in human rights-related action. Their voice was needed.

Mr. M. Dick, Speaker of the Parliament of Australia, took the Chair.

The Secretary General, welcoming that video message, said that the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights clearly believed that parliaments had a role to play as guardians of human rights. Following on from its active collaboration with the OHCHR to ensure that parliaments were at the forefront of the latter's efforts to promote the universality of human rights, the IPU was pleased to present the resulting two publications. The first was a human rights self-assessment toolkit for parliamentarians, copies of which — available in four languages — he encouraged Members to take home with them. The IPU would send copies to partners around the world, although the toolkit was also accessible via its website. With the aim of ensuring that parliaments had the capacity and awareness required to promote human rights, the toolkit explained how they could implement in their own countries the international norms, treaties and mechanisms underpinning those rights. In particular, it featured questions and checklists for enabling parliaments to identify their priorities and areas for improvement, which might include legislating in support of human rights, enhancing their involvement with UN human rights mechanisms, and securing adequate financial resources for their human rights-related activities, all of which tied in with the theme of the General Debate. The IPU and its partners, including the OHCHR, stood ever ready to help parliaments roll out and implement the toolkit and ensure that their daily work was informed by international human rights standards. He commended the self-assessment toolkit to all.

Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, reporting on the earlier-mentioned parliamentary round table in her capacity as its Chair, said that the event, held in June 2023 and entitled *Parliaments and women's rights: Implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), realizing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for all*, had been attended either in-person or online by parliamentarians from around the globe as well as by the IPU Secretary General, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Chairperson and members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee). Aimed at contributing a parliamentary perspective to the Human Rights 75 initiative, the discussions on the three priority areas identified for the advancement of gender equality and women's rights had highlighted equality in political decision-making, ambitious gender quotas, firm action to eliminate violence against women in politics, and the role of gender-sensitive parliaments in encouraging and ensuring the implementation of gender-sensitive legislation on labour rights and education.

As to the three pledges endorsed at the time, they concerned taking action to ensure women's equal and safe participation in political decision-making at all levels, women's equal access with men to decent work, and the achievement of gender equality in and through education and information systems. The second edition of the IPU-OHCHR handbook for parliamentarians on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol had also been pre-launched at the event.

A video providing an overview of the handbook was screened.

The Secretary General, underlining the utmost importance of the two new tools presented, said that progress achieved towards gender equality remained slow, with much still left to accomplish. The parliamentary community needed to be more robust in ensuring that all women lived lives of dignity, free from all fear of any harmful or other practices. The IPU was therefore pleased to be launching the second edition of its handbook on what was a very important legal instrument focused on equality of opportunity and results. Indeed, the Convention was about considering the effect of laws and policies on women and girls, removing legal provisions that led to gender-based discrimination, introducing special measures to ensure that no one was left behind, and challenging gender stereotypes that prompted violence and discrimination against women and girls as well as their exclusion.

The IPU and the CEDAW Committee had for decades been engaging parliaments in embedding the Convention not only in lawmaking, oversight and budget allocation but in foreign policy, development, cooperation and parliamentary diplomacy. The Convention was relevant, too, in climate change, humanitarian action and economic and fiscal policies as well as in health and education. At a time when hard-won gains in human rights generally and women's rights especially were under threat,

parliaments could — and should — make a difference by advancing the Convention through their work. The IPU worked with the CEDAW Committee to support parliaments in that quest, including through guidance from the handbook. Such tools, however, were only as good as the use made of them, which in the case of the handbook meant drawing from its descriptions of the experiences of others from around the world in implementing the Convention. He was truly thrilled to be launching both the handbook and the self-assessment toolkit in conjunction with partners, including the CEDAW Committee, whose Chairperson had also sent a video message to the Assembly.

Ms. A. Paláez (CEDAW Committee Chairperson), in her video message, said that, 40 years after its adoption, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women remained the most important fundamental standard for the effective achievement of gender equality in all spheres of life. Along with its Optional Protocol, it had been widely ratified thanks to the collective efforts of the many stakeholders also working to raise awareness of the Convention and participate in monitoring its implementation and ensuring the accountability of States in the CEDAW context.

The IPU's support had been instrumental to the work of the CEDAW Committee, which had formally documented its strategic alliance and cooperation with the IPU and the importance of parliaments nationally. The IPU had indeed played an essential role in raising the profile of the Convention and in promoting its use by all parliamentarians, as demonstrated by its publication of two editions of the parliamentary handbook on the subject. Parliaments were critical to addressing historical and current issues around women's rights and gender equality. Ratification of the Convention and its Optional Protocol also fell within their remit, as did matters concerning reservations to the former. Their most important task, however, was perhaps to enact new legislation that did not discriminate against women and to amend current legislation and policies that did, all while taking into account any recommendations made by the CEDAW Committee in its concluding observations to a State party's report and using them as a road map.

In closing, she expressed profound thanks and appreciation to national parliaments for their work to advance women's rights, which in the present-day was more needed than ever. There could be nothing more appropriate in the year of the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights than for those parliaments to bring about equality of men and women.

The two new publications, [Parliaments and Human Rights: A self-assessment toolkit](#) and [The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol: Handbook for Parliamentarians](#), were officially launched.

The sitting was suspended at 11:05 and resumed at 12:20.

Item 3 of the agenda (resumed)

General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)* (A/147/3-Inf.1)

Mr. M.A. Shahid (Bangladesh), commencing the segment of the General Debate reserved for first speakers from delegations (non-presiding officers), said that, already adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the progress needed to achieve all SDGs by 2030 was being hampered by ongoing conflicts and widespread societal violence. Although peace-loving, politically stable and conflict-free with a homogeneous society living in communal harmony, Bangladesh was a densely populated country where violence and insecurity remained a reality. Thanks to effective government initiatives, the situation of law and order had improved, along with access to justice following a reduction in court backlogs through the encouragement of alternative dispute resolution, and public service was set to grow more responsive, transparent and accountable. Capacity-building for public officials, cutting-edge technology, civil society cooperation and, above all, citizen engagement additionally promised to contribute towards the country's achievement of SDG 16.

Having experienced genocide during its Liberation War of 1971, Bangladesh was committed to preventing crimes against humanity and believed in a culture of cooperation, in the peaceful settlement of disputes and in building peace through an end to racism. It had thus been instrumental in the adoption of a norm-setting UN General Assembly resolution on the culture of peace and of the flagship follow-up resolution adopted in 1999. It was also an acclaimed model for women's

empowerment, including through political participation, as evidenced in the current make-up of its Parliament. Building cohesive, inclusive and harmonious societies based on peace, justice and strong institutions required tolerance, respect and love for all others. Bangladesh had always highly valued those attributes and the related principles of secularism, ethnic diversity and communal harmony.

Mr. A.-E. Ntugu Nsa (Equatorial Guinea) said that the SDGs were aimed at, among others, guaranteeing security for all, facilitating access to justice and minimizing all violence. Solid institutions were needed to assess risks and continue their delivery of services in adverse situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic. As to parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions, it must play a strategic role in ensuring the effective implementation of the SDGs and support national institutions towards that objective. In addition to exercising their legislative functions to that end, parliaments must review budget allocations, work to align fiscal and socioeconomic policies with national SDG planning, and analyse the effectiveness of public spending on SDG-related activities. Parliamentary committees must also be tasked with overseeing the implementation process and holding the government bodies concerned to account.

The Parliament of Equatorial Guinea contributed to the national efforts to maintain peace and harmony — considered a priority to prevent a repeat of incidents from the country's history — by enacting relevant legislation and raising public awareness around the importance of keeping peace. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, it had taken action through its standing committees on justice and human rights, and on complaints and petitions, created a human rights ombudsperson's office, and abolished the death penalty. It had also approved budget allocations for initiatives to promote human rights, improve judicial practice, foster gender equality and ensure social peace.

Mr. Kameoka Yoshitami (Japan) said that strengthening the rule of law was a pillar of Japanese foreign policy and that confidence in international law and the international organizations underpinning it, including the United Nations, was indispensable to a stable international order. Recent developments were, however, threatening that order. Some months previously, Japan had started releasing into the ocean treated water from the nuclear power plant in his district of Fukushima, where a nuclear accident had taken place in 2011. In its treated form, the water met the required regulatory standards for the release of radioactive materials into the environment. Essential to the reconstruction of Fukushima, the release was being conducted in compliance with international standards and practices, with all safety measures observed and with the impact on people and the environment confirmed as negligible by the UN nuclear watchdog agency. The related monitoring data had also been independently confirmed as highly transparent and reliable.

Unfortunately, some had questioned that analysis and circulated misinformation about the situation, concerning which Japan would continue to provide detailed explanations and maintain full transparency in the interest of safeguarding a broad-based and stable international order and friendly international relations. All nations should positively cultivate confidence in scientific knowledge and international organizations by providing detailed data, disseminating accurate information and engaging in open discussion. Trust in the rule of law and related domestic and international systems would be strengthened as a result, in turn contributing to the achievement of SDG 16.

Mr. H. Traore (Mali) said that international peace and people's rights were under particular threat, with the rich and powerful prevailing over the poorest and weakest. Where systematically entrenched, injustice and unequal distribution of wealth and means of subsistence jeopardized the future of all humanity. In Mali and the Sahel in general, peace had been imperilled for over a decade by terrorism and violent extremism, which had forced a cruel asymmetric war on governments and civilians alike and undermined sustainable development. The widespread insecurity encouraged trafficking in arms, drugs and people, which was associated with, among others, terrorism, mass migration, school closures and lack of basic health care, with women, youth and children as the main victims.

The country's transitional authorities were guided in their actions by respect for Mali's sovereignty, strategic choices and partnerships, together with respect for the vital interests of the population, and appealed on that basis for help in curbing terrorism and restoring security. All Sahel countries needed material and financial assistance to overcome the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism and such challenges as poverty, access to health care and education, food self-sufficiency and insecurity. With citizens awaiting change, States must stop giving material, financial and moral support to terrorism. While looking to the Assembly to produce resolutions for strengthening parliamentary action to promote peace, justice and effective institutions, the Sahel countries also looked to wealthy States to assume their responsibility to finance development projects in the region so as to make peace, justice, human rights and democracy a reality.

Mr. M.H. Sayed (Pakistan) said that parliamentary action for peace and justice was currently the ultimate requirement, especially in view of the situation in occupied Palestine, which was a test case for the entire international community, including the IPU. Those who failed to speak out against the acts of Israeli State terrorism in Gaza were complicit in the worst crimes against humanity being committed in plain sight. It was shocking that countries subscribed to human rights and the rule of law were opposed to a ceasefire, thereby allowing the massacre to continue. The UN Secretary-General's comment that the events of 7 October 2023 did not happen in a vacuum was apt, as the context was over 50 years of illegal immoral and unjust Israeli occupation based on racial discrimination, against which resistance was justified under international law.

Pakistan demanded an immediate end to the genocide of Palestinians, to the occupation and years-long blockade of Gaza, and to the Israeli desecration of Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem. The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination must also be upheld. In conclusion, he described the evident connectivity among countries in the resurgent African and Asian continents as the way forward in the twenty-first century, during which the Global South must work to build a better tomorrow free of overlords and underdogs.

Mr. Hoon Sul (Republic of Korea) said that sustainable peace and justice required an effective and accountable public administration in a democratic political environment, in which parliaments played a critical role. The question that MPs should ask themselves, however, was whether they faithfully fulfilled that mission or instead represented only vested interests. In striving to create a fair and just society, the Korean Parliament often engaged citizens in the process to better reflect the diversity of interests. Examples of the resulting outcomes could be seen in laws enacted on child abuse, employment of older persons, and protection of tenants' rights. Currently, a comprehensive anti-discrimination bill was being discussed.

Advanced technology, including artificial intelligence (AI), should be used to advantage in politics and public administration to enhance institutional transparency and effectiveness, which would promote democracy by bridging the gap between people and government. The use of such technology for data collection and interactive communication would also facilitate citizens' direct participation in public affairs, complementing representative democracy and addressing marginalization created by unfair policies. For its part, the Korean Parliament livestreamed policy seminars and offered AI-generated subtitles for the hearing impaired. Intersecting interests and technology-driven social change meant that parliamentarians must advocate more than ever for policies serving minorities to ensure justice, fairness and peace, which were desperately needed, as the heart-breaking war between Israel and Hamas clearly indicated.

Mr. S. Rachkov (Belarus) said that the Belarusian Parliament recognized the need to adapt and revitalize lawmaking processes to address present and future challenges and specific needs in a rapidly changing world. It had therefore introduced new working methods in its interactions with the executive and regularly canvassed public and expert opinion in a range of settings, while in the Senate an expert council meticulously reviewed drafts of key normative legal acts to assess the political, financial, socioeconomic and other consequences of their adoption. The Senate also periodically invited citizens in each region to a one-day parliamentary meeting. Citizens' collective appeals were consistently considered by experts and the political functionality of public organizations had recently been expanded in scope under a new law.

The Belarusian Parliament had a youth council whose members actively participated in parliamentary events, made proposals and presented their lawmaking visions. Through such dialogue with promising young people, it was possible to build effective channels of communication and prepare them for public and political activities. The new arsenal of tools increased public engagement in decision-making and ensured wider representation of public opinion in parliament. Belarus monitored its progress towards achieving SDG 16 but was among the countries held hostage to growing international confrontation and an unwillingness to respect their chosen development paths. With the imposition of unilateral coercive measures further complicating that situation, he called on the IPU to stand against illegal sanctions policies to ensure international peace and progress in the implementation of the SDGs.

Ms. C. Cerqueira (Angola), President of the Assembly, resumed the Chair.

Mr. H. Arshakyan (Armenia), remarking that ongoing and new violent conflicts were derailing the global path to peace and the achievement of SDG 16, said that conflict-related civilian deaths had more than doubled in 2022 and that national economies were gravely affected by high levels of armed violence and insecurity. In the South Caucasus, in violation of international law, Azerbaijan had recently launched yet another large-scale aggression against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh in a bid to complete the ethnic cleansing of Armenians from that region and involve Armenia in a new war. Sadly, none of the related decisions, resolutions and appeals issued by international and European bodies had been able to prevent those events.

In a mark of its democracy, open economy and non-corrupt government, Armenia had provided shelter to over 100,000 Armenians forcibly displaced by the attack and was grateful to international partners for their assistance in that humanitarian crisis. Azerbaijan continued to occupy parts of Armenia, which had no territorial claims of its own and was committed to peaceful relations based on mutual recognition of sovereignty and territorial integrity. Both countries should open up their roads and borders to one another on a basis of reciprocity and equality, in line with Armenia's Crossroads for Peace project, in which international partners were welcome to participate. Such projects were important for Armenia, which had endured a 30-year blockade imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey. Armenia was resolutely committed to the path of democracy to achieve a stable and lasting peace, and looked forward to international support.

The sitting rose at 13:20.

Sitting of Wednesday, 25 October 2023

(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 14:30 with Ms. C. Cerqueira (Angola), President of the Assembly, in the Chair.

Item 3 of the agenda (continued)

General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)* (A/147/3-Inf.1)

Mr. L.-J. de Nicolay (France) said that parliaments had not been left unscathed by current threats to democracy, such as fake news and populist movements. Anti-parliament sentiment was rife and sought to drive a rift between citizens and their representatives. In response, it was necessary to increase citizens' involvement in the enactment of laws and in government oversight. The French Parliament had launched a series of ambitious reforms to that end. The Senate, for instance, regularly gathered opinions and proposals from the public through its website and had an online platform to facilitate consultations with locally elected officials. In addition, the Parliament had recently launched a new digital tool for the submission of parliamentary petitions. While parliaments' work was by its nature open and accessible to citizens, it was important to go further. Parliaments could only restore people's trust by fostering transparency and open governance.

Mr. E. Allahverdiyev (Azerbaijan) said that legislatures played an important role in the establishment of peace and justice thanks to their close ties with civil society, State institutions and citizens. Responding to comments made by a delegate from Armenia, he recalled that there was no administrative area known as Nagorno-Karabakh in Azerbaijan; instead the territory should be referred to as the Karabakh Economic Region of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Armenia had no moral right to speak about international law, and its allegations of ethnical cleansing and occupation were far-fetched. Azerbaijan was a multicultural country that welcomed ethnic Armenians from the Karabakh Economic Region and granted them full freedoms. Over the past three years, the Government of Azerbaijan had taken practical steps to reintegrate the local Armenian population into Azerbaijani society following the war, including by appointing an MP to conduct negotiations with Armenian residents living in the Karabakh Economic Region.

Despite those efforts, Armenia continued to prevent the two countries from co-existing and had failed to respond to the peace agreement recently proposed by Azerbaijan. In September 2023, regular military provocations by Armenia had forced his Government to conduct local, anti-terrorist operations with a view to neutralizing and disarming illegal military groups. Following those operations, which had lasted for less than 24 hours, many Armenians had chosen to leave the region voluntarily and freely, with assistance from the authorities of Azerbaijan. They were provided with water and food, and no violent methods were used against them, as confirmed by the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Armenia and by the two United Nations missions conducted in the region in October 2023. His Government hoped that a definitive peace agreement would be signed between the two countries.

Ms. P. Glover-Rolle (Bahamas) said that every step towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 was a step towards building a better society. To that end, her Government had launched a government training and employment programme that included persons with disabilities. As a next step, it would work to ensure that persons with disabilities had a seat at the decision-making table. Diversity was a sign of a healthy democracy and helped to make institutions stronger.

Developing countries required efficient and effective institutions that would enable them to address the most pressing challenges they faced. As the Minister of Labour and the Public Service, one of her objectives was to build institutional capacities by revamping government recruitment and onboarding processes, retooling existing training programmes and providing opportunities for on-the-job support and learning. However, further transformative efforts were needed. Her

Government was therefore in the process of conducting a national workforce audit to identify existing skills gaps and provide the data needed to map out long-term workforce development plans and to review government human resources policies and procedures. Data-driven solutions and policies would then be implemented on the basis of that analysis.

Such processes took time and were resource intensive. Political will was needed to ensure that the necessary resources were allocated. To build stronger institutions, the developing world required financial and technical support; there also needed to be a shift towards solutions that were driven by local data to enable developing countries to develop their own plans for institutional reform and capacity-building. Her Government looked forward to working with other countries in making real progress towards building effective and efficient institutions.

Mr. A. Gajadien (Suriname) said that peaceful and inclusive societies required access to justice for all and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Parliamentarians played an essential role in ensuring that every citizen lived in safety and was free from all forms of violence. The SDGs were an opportunity for parliamentarians to demonstrate their commitment to improving people's lives and the health of the planet. Reforms had been introduced in his country to improve governance and accountability and coordinate national implementation of the SDGs. In addition, his country's national policy framework focused on inclusion and ensuring that no one was left behind.

In the light of the increase in insecurity and instability around the world, governments, citizens, communities and other local and international actors needed to work together to foster a constructive dialogue to restore people's trust and, in turn, build resilience. Public institutions could also be strengthened through partnerships with other actors. Calls for a redoubling of efforts to implement the SDGs needed to be renewed, particularly given that progress on Goal 16 was uneven. As achievement of SDG 16 was strongly influenced by political priorities and power dynamics, the conflict between Israel and Palestine should not be allowed to escalate. All parties were urged to comply with international law and show respect for human rights. A ceasefire should be brokered with the support of the international community and steps should be taken towards a two-State solution.

Ms. P. Glover-Rolle (Bahamas) took the Chair.

Mr. Li Jinghai (China) said that addressing global challenges was the shared responsibility of all countries and required peace and justice, strong institutions and governance, and consensus and cooperation among legislators. As stated by President Xi Jinping of China, no global problem could be solved by one country alone. The international community should accelerate progress towards the SDGs by working systematically and respecting the diversity of civilizations around the world. Achievement of the SDGs was a complex process that required the integration of issues relating to society, the economy, industry, science and technology, and diversity. It was important to recognize and strengthen the role played by science in that process and the need to apply the most recent, consensus-based research findings, while also considering diversity and inclusion, respecting national differences, seeking common ground and working in solidarity. It was essential to promote scientific research and respond to challenges by identifying knowledge gaps and by developing solutions through knowledge production and sharing.

Such a science-based response to global challenges required consensus and cooperation among legislators. Parliamentarians should work together to promote the role of science in addressing global challenges; practice true multilateralism; create an international environment conducive to development; and strive to foster and safeguard world peace and justice. Steps should be taken to improve the global governance system and ensure its implementation through consultations.

The discharge of nuclear-contaminated water into the sea affected the common interests of all humanity, and countries that engaged in such practices should negotiate with other countries in a sincere manner before carrying out such actions. At the same time, the international community should work to promote the establishment of long-term, effective mechanisms to oversee the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water while ensuring the involvement of all stakeholders in such processes.

China would continue implementing a mutually beneficial strategy of opening up, providing more opportunities for cooperation among countries, and injecting more energy into the recovery and growth of the world economy. The National People's Congress of China would continue to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with the IPU and other parliaments and make every effort to build a global community with a shared future.

Ms. Z. Musa (Malaysia) expressed her deep concern at the recent escalation of violence in Gaza, a situation that endangered lives and undermined the principles of peace and justice that parliamentarians had committed to uphold. She reaffirmed her unwavering support and solidarity with the Palestinian people. Blatant hypocrisy in dealings with regimes that violated the principles of peace and justice should not be tolerated. Palestinians had a legal right to live within their internationally recognized borders, and members of the United Nations Security Council were implored to fulfil their duty by calling an emergency session with a view to ensuring that all parties honoured and safeguarded the lives of blameless citizens.

Fairness was a moral necessity and the foundation of justice and strong institutions. In that regard, Malaysia was committed to promoting non-discriminatory and inclusive laws in line with target 16.b of SDG 16. Trust was also a cornerstone of any democratic society, and parliamentarians played a crucial role in restoring trust by championing transparency, engaging in open dialogue and ensuring accountability. Capacity-building was also essential to building strong institutions and parliamentarians should spearhead initiatives for institutional reforms in that regard. Moreover, through legislative oversight, parliamentarians could ensure executive accountability and the consistent and fair application of the law. To address violence, which undermined social peace and good governance, parliamentarians should also launch community outreach programmes, support conflict resolution mechanisms and enact legislation that addressed the root causes of violence. Furthermore, parliamentary diplomacy was a key tool that enabled parliamentarians to engage in international forums, such as the IPU, in order to share best practices, collaborate on legislative initiatives and advocate for global governance reform. Parliamentarians should work collectively to build a sustainable, just, peaceful and inclusive world for all.

Mr. S.F. Sylla (Guinea), welcoming the theme under discussion, said that the lack of commitment to achieving SDG 16 was the fundamental reason why citizens no longer believed in their governments and was a determining factor in the repeated crises affecting many countries. Democracy was built on free and effective institutions, the separation of powers, free and transparent elections, freedom of the press, the existence of an opposition and the alternation of power. While such principles were easy to adopt, they were more difficult to implement; their ineffective implementation could hamper economic development and application of the rule of law. To achieve SDG 16, countries should strengthen their legal systems, particularly given that many conflicts stemmed from injustice. That was why the Transitional National Council of Guinea was focusing its efforts on ensuring that laws were aligned with people's needs and aspirations, and was working tirelessly to promote the establishment of a unified society without violence. Parliaments also needed to practise rigorous oversight of governments' activities to ensure that public policies were in line with the legitimate interests of the people.

Ms. H. Sverrisdóttir (Iceland) said that Iceland put a high premium on peace and was one of the safest countries in the world. The peace that her country enjoyed was protected by international law, by the international organizations that safeguarded that law and by allies who had promised to defend Iceland if needed. Global threats to peace appeared to be multiplying both in number and severity and it was vital for the international community to show that it could withstand those threats without breaking apart. It was therefore regrettable that Members had been unable to unite behind a message regarding the horrific events taking place in Palestine. MPs should fight for peace whatever the means, taking a long-term approach that considered how their actions would be viewed in future. The actions and responses of leaders and institutions made the difference between despair and hope.

Ms. D. Simeonova (Bulgaria), welcoming the membership of the African Union in the Group of 20, said that Africa had increased its geopolitical importance in the current fast-changing global context. African countries should make sure that their voices were heard and contributed to peace, security and the resolution of regional and global challenges.

Parliamentary action played a pivotal role in maintaining and strengthening global peace and justice. It was important to work diligently to strengthen institutions and the rule of law. Investing in education and training would help in the development of strong, independent institutions that guaranteed justice and equality. Moreover, parliaments should reflect public will and safeguard democratic values, in part by promoting open dialogue with citizens and involving them in decision-making processes. The establishment and maintenance of strong parliamentary institutions required both national and international commitment and cooperation, and the IPU was an important forum in that regard. All types of security – including energy, cyber, food and climate security – were strongly linked to the concepts of peace and stability.

Building strong multilateral institutions was in the interests of all States that prioritized peace, security and democracy. Failure to achieve the SDGs would further deepen global inequalities and disproportionately affect the most vulnerable groups. It was therefore essential to step up efforts to ensure the full and timely implementation of the SDGs. To address shortcomings in the current system, Bulgaria supported the United Nations reform efforts led by the United Nations Secretary-General and had made implementing the commitments under the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development a priority. Through parliamentary democracy and the united efforts of countries and their parliaments, peace, justice and strong institutions could be achieved.

Mr. S.V.D. Ram (India) said that the theme under discussion was extremely relevant given the many complex social, political and economic issues affecting people and governments around the world. SDG 16 was the backbone of all the SDGs and parliaments had the responsibility to ensure it was achieved. To that end, India had taken steps to empower its citizens through rights-based legislation that ensured people's social, economic and political well-being in all its forms. Legislative actions had also led to a substantial decline in violence against women, terrorism and left-wing extremism. A comprehensive multi-pronged strategy had been introduced to end all abuse, exploitation, trafficking and other forms of violence against and torture of children, and bilateral memorandums of understanding had been signed with a number of countries to address transnational human trafficking. Legislation also existed to ensure that all members of society had access to legal services.

Money-laundering had also become a serious concern in India, given that the country was one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. India had worked to build strong institutions and took a zero-tolerance approach to corruption. Anti-corruption measures included updating anti-corruption legislation in line with contemporary concerns, the establishment of a central commission to effectively and expeditiously investigate reported misconduct, the operationalization of the ombudsperson's office and the enactment of legislation to guarantee the right to information, which had contributed significantly to promoting transparency, accountability and citizens' participation in governance. As development assistance provided by developed countries was an important source of financing for developing countries, it was essential that developed countries honoured their commitments, particularly in the current unprecedented times.

Mr. Z. Zakarias (Romania) said that the crises facing the world underscored the need for effective parliaments and institutions that left no one behind and met people's needs equitably and sustainably. Romania was strongly committed to achieving the SDGs and had submitted its second voluntary national review in July 2023. It also had a national action plan and road map for implementation of all of the SDGs. The Romanian Parliament had hosted a number of events involving national and international stakeholders to promote the SDGs, and sustainable development hubs had been set up across government ministries to ensure policy coherence.

Turning specifically to SDG 16, he said that Romania was working to develop efficient and transparent institutions at all levels. As an MP representing a national minority in Romania, he said that, while steps had been taken to safeguard the rights of minorities in recent years, further work was needed, particularly in the area of implementation. He called on those present to take the time to foster a fair dialogue with minority communities as a way of preventing and avoiding conflict; the IPU should also play a key role in promoting such dialogue.

The war of aggression against Ukraine was threatening achievement of the SDGs. Romania was a strong supporter of the international rule of law and respect for the independence, sovereignty and integrity of States within internationally recognized borders. He also strongly condemned the terrorist attacks in Israel, reaffirming the determination of Romania to fight against terrorism in all its forms. Parliaments should remain united in that fight. The Parliament of Romania would continue to be part of global efforts to fight extreme poverty and support the development of sustainable, democratic institutions by sharing its own experiences.

Mr. V. Klein (Germany) said that parliaments served as grass-roots institutions that played a decisive role in achieving the targets of SDG 16, as well as in improving people's economic prospects and fighting poverty. Prosperity could only occur in a safe and reliable environment, free from conflict and terror. It was therefore important to consider security from a broader perspective that sought to safeguard the rule of law. Such an approach would help to ensure that countries had the huge investments they needed to tackle issues such as climate change. The private sector would only contribute to that funding if countries could demonstrate that they had a reliable and stable legal

framework and that the rule of law was permanently applied. Application of the international rule of law was also crucial. The Russian aggression against Ukraine had brought immense suffering to the Ukrainian people and to countless families in the Russian Federation, while many innocent people had been killed by both Hamas and Israel. Countries needed to work together to build peace and reconciliation through strong national and international parliamentary networks and by making better use of the IPU.

Ms. G. Burokiene (Lithuania) said that it was essential to create inclusive prosperity in all countries so that people could lead secure lives in fair societies and have confidence in public institutions. The primary aim of Lithuania in implementing SDG 16 was to improve the security of the population. Lithuania was one of the safest countries in the European Union in terms of locally occurring crime, violence and vandalism. The number of victims of human trafficking in the country had also decreased significantly. Yet despite that progress, it was important to remain vigilant. Belarus had been conducting a hybrid attack against Lithuania and other countries of the European Union by weaponizing illegal immigration. In addition, many refugees from Ukraine had arrived in Lithuania as a result of the brutal and unprovoked war by the Russian Federation. She questioned whether there could be trust in the public institutions of a country that had initiated a brutal war against another.

Building effective, responsible and inclusive institutions was crucial to achieve SDG 16, which often failed to receive the attention it required. To that end, and to ensure public security and the right of remedy for all, it was necessary to have a competent and efficient public sector that contributed efficiently to public administration and met public expectations. Lithuania had embarked on two major legislative packages aimed at improving the national institutional framework, building institutional capacities and enhancing public governance. It was also working to improve its local governance systems by enhancing the efficiency and openness of governance mechanisms, increasing public participation in decision-making and improving the accessibility and affordability of public services. In addition, anti-corruption measures had been implemented in education, and control and monitoring was being implemented in both the public sector and society at large. In implementing SDG 16, it was important to ensure equal access to justice for all, as guaranteed by her country's Constitution and legislation. Lastly, no efforts should be spared in sharing good practices on how to foster public confidence in public processes, administration and justice.

Mr. T.I. Mørland (Norway), highlighting the ongoing violence and wars in Ukraine, Israel and Palestine, and the Sahel, said that the billions that had been spent on deadly weapons and wars would have been better spent on achieving the SDGs. Instead of pooling resources to tackle the climate crisis, funds were being used to destroy lives and food supplies. Norway, for instance, would carry out one of the largest-ever increases in its defence budget in 2024. Strong national and international institutions with tools to help to resolve conflict without violence were needed to break the spiral of violence, war and ever-growing defence budgets. Yet despite the IPU's years of work in that area, that goal was still out of reach. It had been frustrating to see the United Nations Security Council's failure to act on the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. An aggressor that had violated international law should not be allowed to sit on the Security Council and to veto decisions, particularly when the United Nations General Assembly had voted by a huge majority to demand the immediate withdrawal of the Russian Federation from Ukraine. On a more positive note, countries such as Angola and Rwanda provided hope that peace, reconciliation and development could be achieved.

Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada) expressed concern at the low levels of trust in public institutions and the implications on achieving the SDGs by 2030. The world was experiencing war and conflict, competing truths, the absence of community, epidemics of loneliness and polarization — all in the context of widespread mistrust. Parliamentarians had a responsibility to restore people's hope. Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) required the reform and redesign of long-standing practices. In particular, parliamentarians needed to translate, communicate, implement and operationalize SDG 16, ensuring the involvement of citizens in that process. It was important to engage with partners to better understand the SDGs and, in turn, inspire the public. It was time to act; thanks to research, technology and communications the global community was well equipped to do so.

Mr. A.T. Gessesse (Ethiopia) said that the world continued to face a critical choice between the scourge of war and the blessing of peace, between fragility and resilience, and between cynicism and optimism. Parliaments played a key role in driving change by helping to build strong institutions, supporting peacebuilding and ensuring justice. Ethiopia had experienced enormous devastation,

colossal suffering and a huge humanitarian crisis as a result of armed rebellion. However, in November 2022, it had signed a cessation of hostilities agreement, choosing peace and political dialogue over war and devastating violence. Over the past year, rapid progress had been made towards a landscape of peace, which was essential for both progress and prosperity. The successful and rapid implementation of the cessation of hostilities agreement was a clear example of the political commitment of the Government of Ethiopia to resolve differences through diplomacy and discussion.

Given the importance of addressing the root causes of conflict and finding solutions to long-standing polarization, parliaments had a unique role to play in advancing peace and in supporting the active participation of women and young people in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Policies, legislation and programmes should take into consideration the important role that women played in delivering peace.

Climate change was also deeply linked to peace, security and development. With the devastating and disproportionate consequences of the climate crisis in countries in the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia took on a leading role in the fight against climate change through its *Green Legacy Initiative*. Emphasizing the importance of renewed parliamentary solidarity and unwavering political commitment, he reaffirmed his Government's readiness to work closely with the IPU to bring about peace, justice and strong institutions.

Mr. E. Teirumnieks (Latvia) recalled that the Global Peace Index had hit a 15-year low in 2022 and further deteriorated in 2023. Using brutal force to solve problems had become the norm but was not justifiable. Countries had to work harder to achieve peaceful co-existence and listen to all voices in society. To that end, Latvia had introduced a platform on which citizens could launch legislative initiatives covering a range of issues, from taxation and education to penal practices and vaccination issues. The platform was one of the most successful cases of internet activism in Latvia, with two initiatives submitted in 2023 already resulting in legislation.

Latvia had past experience of war, occupation and deportation and understood the evil and sufferings of war. It was important to remember that parliamentarians had a mandate to shape the present and the future and an obligation to do everything in their power to stop war. Nobody had the right to convince others of their culture, religion, race or world order using force, and nobody who did so should go unpunished. On a brighter note, the wisdom of women and innovation of young people in politics could not be overstated. Latvia was making progress in including women, particularly young women, in both Parliament and the Government.

Ms. D.-T. Avgerinopoulou (Greece) said that new and ongoing violent conflicts were derailing the global path towards peace and the achievement of SDG 16. Global governance institutions that failed to provide the basic foundations of sustainable, peaceful and inclusive societies were not fit for purpose. The IPU played a key role in building resilient and innovative institutions and helping parliaments to become more democratic, fair and sustainable. While progress was being made, the IPU needed to reposition itself as the global parliamentary organization that represented people around the world rather than simply benefiting parliaments themselves. It was important to develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions, but also to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels, including internationally. Such reshaping of the IPU was needed and should be embraced. Following the IPU's failure to agree on an accepted resolution on the emergency item concerning the Middle East, it was important to redefine the IPU's deliberative and decision-making process — there was no room for inaction and ineffectiveness in the face of humanitarian emergencies. The world needed a stronger IPU to tackle armed conflict, climate crisis and social injustice. Furthermore, the Organization's work should be made more visible both within parliaments and among the general public, a process that could be facilitated by social media and artificial intelligence tools, which could also be used to learn from people more directly. Lastly, the IPU's relationship with other entities within the United Nations system and other global intergovernmental organizations needed to be redefined and cooperation should be strengthened to ensure that the IPU filled the democratic gap that existed in global governance.

Mr. Nguyen Khac Dinh (Viet Nam) said that the many profound challenges currently facing humanity were derailing progress on the 2030 Agenda. Countries therefore needed to enhance their capacity to ensure a peaceful and stable environment. Strong institutions were essential, especially for countries affected by armed conflict, inequality and emerging challenges such as climate change, energy and food security, and water shortages. That, in turn, required the full and meaningful participation of the people, in particular by leveraging the roles of legislative and elected bodies.

Viet Nam had achieved significant milestones in sustainable development and poverty reduction, and the SDGs had been integrated into national and local development plans and strategies to promote the rule of law, ensure equal access to justice, enhance citizens' participation and build stronger institutions. A comprehensive reform process was also under way in the country. Viet Nam was committed to creating a truly just and equitable society in which no one was left behind and to including all groups in policymaking and social welfare processes. Notable achievements had also been made in the promotion of gender equality, the protection of women and children, the fight against gender-based violence, and enhancing the involvement of women and girls in building peace, justice and strong institutions.

His country also remained active in international efforts to address issues such as peace, security and the promotion of human rights. Effective and transparent support and collaboration among countries and international organizations were needed to uphold the supremacy of international law, particularly the Charter of the United Nations. It was also essential to ensure that developing countries participated equally in the global governance system. The proactive role played by the IPU in fostering dialogue and collaboration was appreciated, and Viet Nam stood ready to work with the IPU in that regard. In September 2023, for instance, it had partnered with the IPU to host the Ninth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, which had adopted a statement on the role of youth in accelerating implementation of the SDGs through digital transformation and innovation.

To accelerate progress towards the SDGs, he called on parliamentarians to prioritize the SDGs in national programmes and parliamentary agendas; continue to oversee the development of legislation and policies and ensure public participation in those processes; promote economic, social and political solutions that would ensure stability and security, including enhanced monitoring of budget allocations and spending and increased attention to vulnerable groups; and promote unity and enhance cooperation among countries to enable developing countries to access international financial and technological resources.

Mr. A. Suwanmongkol (Thailand) said that parliaments, as key oversight institutions, played an enabling role in upholding integrity and governance and promoting effective, transparent and accountable public administration that was conducive to the achievement of SDG 16. In recent years, Thailand had been pursuing a number of legislative initiatives to strengthen its anti-corruption legal framework and mechanisms. In 2018, an anti-corruption law had been passed that extended the scope of the financial disclosure system, in line with the United Nations Convention against Corruption. A code of conduct and other ethical standards had also been introduced for MPs. Furthermore, a specialized criminal court had been established to handle cases of corruption and misconduct involving public officials. Efforts had also been made to cut down on administrative red tape and streamline licencing processes.

The Parliament of Thailand had prioritized the strengthening of parliamentary oversight by establishing anti-corruption standing committees and budget implementation oversight committees; monitoring national corruption prevention policy and practices; scrutinizing the Government's budget spending on infrastructure and other public procurement projects; and promoting access to government open data and the active participation of relevant stakeholders. It had also increased its investment in digitalization and in information and communications technologies to ensure efficient, accountable and inclusive service delivery that would empower citizens by simplifying administrative procedures and adopting a more citizen-centric approach. He reaffirmed the full commitment of the Parliament of Thailand to continue working towards SDG 16 and underscored the central role that lawmakers played in championing integrity in public governance. Parliamentarians should lead by example by setting high standards for public officials and fostering a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of corruption.

Ms. A.A. Rodríguez Montero (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that the IPU needed to foster dialogue to build the parliamentary tools necessary to address the problems affecting the world. While progress had been made in her country in terms of women's empowerment, which had helped to strengthen social justice and bring peace and stability, further work was needed to fight corruption and ensure greater transparency within the Government. There were still cases of corruption, and the Parliament had been prevented from carrying out its oversight work as a result of government intervention in the judicial system. It was therefore important to analyse progress towards SDG 16 and build an objective democracy in which vulnerable groups could take decisions that would shape their future based on a policy of inclusion, participation and recognition of people's similarities and differences.

Mr. T. Hurter (Switzerland) said that measures needed to be taken to strengthen and restore trust in public institutions. To that end, it was important to engage the entire population in politics, particularly young people. Free elections were also an essential part of the democratic process, as was freedom of speech. People should be free to criticize politics and those in power, particularly during election campaigns. That was fundamental to building trust in institutions. To encourage citizens' participation, politicians needed to reach out to voters, especially young people, and attend events and discussions with constituents. Parliamentary elections had been held three days previously in Switzerland, and the turnout had reached 65% in his canton.

Upholding human rights was the cornerstone of the international system, which was based on universally recognized rules. Fighting corruption was also extremely important, and Switzerland had set up a new anti-corruption system with national and international scope. Switzerland was committed to ensuring international cooperation, safeguarding multilateralism and engaging with the United Nations Security Council. Parliamentarians should use the IPU as a platform for finding solutions to promote world peace and for exchanging ideas and good practices.

Mr. W.M. Aye (Myanmar) said that following the military coup in Myanmar in February 2021, the people of Myanmar were not at peace. There was no rule of law, and violence, arbitrary detention, torture and brutal oppression were rife. The illegal coup had created an escalating human rights and humanitarian disaster, with mass killings, the destruction of homes and buildings, and large-scale displacement. The support received from other countries was appreciated in that regard. The military's actions had also stifled progress towards the SDGs, and the brutal oppression of pro-democracy movements and human rights activists was damaging peace and justice in the country. Restoring the country's parliamentary system of democracy was the only way to achieve lasting peace, justice and strong institutions in Myanmar. He called on parliamentarians to raise concerns about the situation in Myanmar in their parliaments, to urge their governments to put pressure on the military junta to end their atrocities, and encourage their governments to provide financial and technical aid to democratic representatives in Myanmar.

Mr. M. Al-Ahbab (Qatar) said he was saddened by the levels of destruction and death taking place in the world. The dignity of men and women was being destroyed in disregard of United Nations resolutions and international conventions. To achieve peace and strong institutions, it was necessary to work to bring about equality before the law and not let corruption and other crimes go unpunished. Those living in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories, including women and children, had no electricity, medicines or basic services and were being brutally bombed in violation of their human rights. Many people had also been displaced.

Parliamentarians had to work together to achieve the SDGs and address the major challenges that the world faced. The SDGs were a pillar of his Government's vision for 2030. His Government was also deeply involved in the fight against terrorism and provided support to international organizations, in particular through the Qatar Fund for Development. Reconciliation was important to create peace and stability, and his Government spared no efforts in that area and in putting an end to conflict.

Ms. M. Riquelme (Chile) said that war affected all corners of the world. Civilians everywhere were caught up in attacks and exposed to international crimes. Yet even in times of war, there were limits that must not be exceeded. Parliamentarians had a duty to create space for dialogue in order to bring an end to conflicts and uphold international standards. If those standards were not fair, they should be reformed in a responsible manner. Parliamentarians also had a duty to speak out against war, particularly against the actions of Hamas and the indiscriminate attacks by Israel on the Palestinian people. The legitimate aspirations of the people of Palestine for self-determination had long been thwarted by violence. Condemning war was a step towards a more civilized, more peaceful and fairer world.

In Chile, citizens were free to express their views, had access to free health care, had a guaranteed minimum pension and a minimum wage. The working week had been reduced to 40 hours, and members of the lesbian, gay and bisexual community were free to marry. Profits from multinational mining companies were redirected to regional and local governments, and the country was moving towards carbon neutrality. Despite that progress, her country still faced challenges, such as attempts to overturn the Constitution; hate crimes against women and members of the lesbian, gay and bisexual community; an increase in fascism; and delays in reparation and justice for victims of the dictatorship. As the first lesbian MP in Chile, she welcomed the decriminalization of same-sex relationships in Angola in 2021.

Ms. M. Valente (Angola) said that promoting peace, justice and strong institutions was an essential part of her Government's strategy. Parliaments played a key role in building peace by enacting legislation, overseeing peace and reconciliation processes and ensuring that a diverse range of voices and opinions were heard. Parliaments should serve as a platform for reconciliation and dialogue between different groups. Peacekeeping also required new legislation and policies and adequate resources, particularly for education and awareness-raising. Angola had a rich experience of peacebuilding, stability and national reconciliation.

Internationally, there was a serious crisis of trust in institutions' ability to provide for their citizens. It was up to parliaments to draft laws and oversee the State's actions by approving budgets, protecting people's rights and guaranteeing public participation. Parliamentarians also had to make sure that public policies were designed to address people's concerns and problems and that different views were considered in decision-making processes.

Ms. I. Sviatenko (Russian Federation) said that the 2030 Agenda recognized the fundamental role that parliaments played in creating the conditions needed to achieve the SDGs. Thanks to the legislative efforts of her Parliament, progress had been made in the area of child security, with amendments to the Penal Code to strengthen accountability for crimes against minors. Legislation had also been enacted to ensure equal access to justice, reduce illegal financial flows and fight corruption. Furthermore, steps were being taken to expand electronic services and a quality assessment system was also being implemented. Ensuring that all layers of society, including civil society, were involved in decision-making was another priority in the Russian Federation. The human rights ombudsperson also worked to promote human rights and provided assistance to thousands of people each year.

Women's empowerment was another key focus for parliamentarians, and the number of women in the Parliament and in government agencies was on the rise in her country. The Eurasian Women's Forum was an important international platform for bringing women from over 100 countries together. All women parliamentarians were invited to take part in the Forum. To advance progress towards the SDGs and address global challenges, it was important to ensure the rule of law, fight against corruption, and promote openness through cooperation and the sharing of experiences within international parliamentary bodies.

Mr. F. Alazmi (Kuwait) said that the theme under discussion was a timely topic that underscored the IPU's long-standing commitment to establishing justice and peace based on international law. Current crises had weakened national institutions, undermined people's trust in public institutions and generated a culture of extremism and radicalization, all of which threatened international peace and security. The people of Gaza had courageously defended and protected their territory against the occupying entity, which had perpetrated heinous crimes under the watchful eye of the international community. The occupying entity had targeted women and children, cut off water, electricity and medical supplies and destroyed civilian infrastructure using weapons that were prohibited under international law. It was important to reiterate that the Palestinian people had the right to establish their own nation. The international community was urged to respect the will of the Palestinian people by lifting the blockade being imposed unfairly on them. That was the only pathway to peace and justice in the region.

Only through strong and effective institutions would it be possible to ensure transparency, accountability and cooperation between those who governed and those who were governed. Such an approach required measures to fight corruption and transnational crime and to ensure equal opportunities, thereby building a cohesive and strong society that refuted violence and extremism. Creating strong institutions was therefore the main pathway towards sustainable development, which should be underpinned by unified societies capable of overcoming their ethnic, racial and social differences. Parliamentary action had to focus on revitalizing national institutions by strengthening the necessary legal frameworks and building mutual understanding in order to protect basic rights and freedoms.

Mr. M.A. Nader (Iraq) said that peace contributed to building sustainable development at all levels. Citizens expected parliamentarians to develop good strategies and policies to address a range of challenges that hindered peace, prosperity and sustainable development. Countries therefore needed to abide by the principles of international law and focus on collective regional and international efforts to build a better, more prosperous and safer future. The repeated violations of human rights by certain countries prevented the world from achieving that common goal and undermined the very core of public institutions. Further international coordination was needed to improve governance through the sharing of good practices and lessons learned.

He called on the international community to stop its silence in the face of the unprecedented cycle of violence in the Gaza Strip. The Israeli occupying force was blatantly violating international law and resolutions, and committing war crimes with no human or moral deterrent. Peace, security and justice could not be achieved in the region while the occupying force continued to attack women, children and older persons. Western countries were allowing Israel to remain above the law and staying silent in the face of the killing of innocent civilians. Arab peoples had the right to defend themselves and liberate occupied territories. Parliaments and parliamentary diplomacy could make the difference in the fight against extremism, radicalization and violence and help to prevent double standards. Parliaments had a role to play in strengthening citizens' participation and dialogue regardless of racial, political, religious or ethnic affiliations. It was essential to rebuild confidence and trust in international organizations that worked towards implementation of international humanitarian law.

Mr. S. Yang (Cambodia) said that his country, in addition to implementing the SDGs, was working towards the goal of clearing landmines and the explosive remnants of Cambodia's war. In response to growing global instability and intolerance, political turbulence, extremism and geopolitical tensions, many countries had sought security through alliances. The theme under discussion was highly relevant given the lack of progress towards SDG 16, and parliamentarians had a very important and active role to play in promoting rule-based multilateralism. In July 2023, Cambodia had held a successful general election in accordance with the fundamental principle of multiparty democracy in a free, fair, credible, transparent and non-violent environment. Despite that progress, the path towards SDG 16 was still long and posed great challenges. Parliamentarians needed to put more pressure on the international community, particularly on the world's major powers, to redouble their efforts towards SDG 16. The Parliament of Cambodia called on the international community, particularly the United Nations and the IPU, to intensify their efforts, strengthen cooperation, rebuild trust and confidence, and end all conflicts.

Mr. M. Marinho (Brazil) said that more efforts were needed to protect and promote the rights of minorities and other vulnerable groups. To achieve the targets of SDG 16, it was essential to develop effective, inclusive, participative and transparent institutions, and adequate, representative decision-making processes. Parliamentarians must explore different ways of improving their processes, enhancing the inclusion of citizens and ensuring transparency. In Brazil, that was achieved in part through public hearings with representatives from civil society and other bodies aimed at discussing legislative matters and other issues of public interest. Brazil was home to a large number of minority communities, including that of the Quilombolas, who required the support of the State. Those minorities were included in decision-making processes, and social programmes had been developed to improve their living conditions and access to goods and services, with a focus on land ownership, infrastructure, quality of life, support for local development, production and economic autonomy, as well as on the increased participation of Quilombola representatives in collective spaces.

Violence against indigenous communities in Brazil had increased significantly in the past years. Those groups had been neglected by institutions, had their land illegally taken from them and had suffered as a result of illegal activities on their land. The Government of Brazil was taking steps to remedy the situation and had approved a raft of measures to support Indigenous communities, particularly in terms of land ownership, food security and health. Brazil was also successfully tackling the threats to biodiversity and the destruction of the rainforest, and was a pioneering global player when it came to clean energy. Furthermore, the National Congress had been advancing public policies to reduce violence, which mainly affected poor and Black populations. The country sought to participate in all international forums that promoted the rule of law, individual freedoms and the rights of minorities. Lastly, he expressed support for the candidacy of the United Republic of Tanzania for the presidency of the IPU.

Ms. S. Codina (Andorra) said that parliamentarians should work tirelessly to achieve peace, which was defined as a state in which society enjoyed justice, freedom and social equality without violence or war. Participative, robust parliaments that were representative of society were essential in achieving peace. However, more work was needed to ensure that citizens could identify with their parliaments and that parliaments had the requisite prestige and were guided by the interests of the people. The Parliament of Andorra had launched several initiatives to enhance citizens' participation, including an open parliament programme that sought to link people, and particularly young people, to politics. Young people were vectors of change, and her Parliament had always had a high proportion

of young politicians. Involving young people in politics helped to improve the country and prevent the creation of a disenchanted generation. Peace could only be fully attained if society firmly believed in its institutions and if those institutions were focused on the protection and well-being of citizens.

Ms. M. Saleh (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the world, and particularly Arab and Muslim countries, were experiencing very difficult times. The wars in her region demonstrated that the world was not properly addressing the existential challenges it faced. It was essential to comply with the rule of law and international law, and for peace to be achieved by strengthening institutions. The SDGs should help to bring about real change, with human dignity at their core. As the Syrian Arab Republic emerged from war, it was looking to return to prosperity through a plan of action that complied with international law and by creating a tolerant world in which rights were respected. However, there were many plots against her country. It was important to resist such plots without making concessions. The support of the United States of America for Israel was a catastrophe and had led to the tragedy that was unfolding in Palestine. That tragedy ran counter to international law and violated human rights: homes were being destroyed and innocent civilians were being massacred. Humanity could not stand divided. A Palestinian citizen had the same rights as a citizen of Ukraine or any other country. Given the number of deaths, there could be no political concessions. The Syrian Arab Republic would combat the Israeli enemy in response to the violations perpetrated by Israel in her country, which was against terrorism and all such forms of violence. The entire world had to move towards change and live up to the expectations of its people.

Mr. M. Sabbari (Morocco) said that the civilians in the occupied Palestinian territories were paying the price of unprecedented military action, violence and blockade. His Government had always supported the Palestinian people in their fight to obtain their rights under international law and resolutions. It was important to end their suffering and immediately stop the war, paving the way for parliamentary and political action. It was extremely important to set up a Palestinian State that was independent, with strong institutions and borders recognized by the international community.

The IPU had always guided modern parliamentary practices and supported parliaments in their democratic functions, promoting respect for political, social and cultural rights and the principles of freedom and consensus. Such an approach relied on legitimate and credible national and international laws, principles, conventions and treaties as well as binding material, ethical and symbolical values. The aim of SDG 16 was to strengthen the role of institutions and lay the groundwork for the other SDGs in order to build citizens' trust. Parliamentary action was at the heart of development, justice, peace, security and stability. His country had experienced difficult times as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the earthquake that had struck the country in September 2023. In those crises, Morocco had provided a tangible example of how to respond to disaster situations through rapid action, national mobilization and the adoption of laws. It had also demonstrated that countries could overcome adversity by building a strong State and active institutions, by establishing a national model for social and economic justice, and by taking a universal, rights-based approach to sustainable development.

Mr. M. Zolnouri (Islamic Republic of Iran) thanked the President of Angola for taking a stand against the killing of Palestinian and Gazan women and children. Those who promoted violence, killing, atrocities, occupation and exploitation of other countries could not claim to want peace. All countries that had been subject to a colonial system had suffered as a result. Colonial powers could not claim to protect human rights and should not be allowed to run international bodies and organizations. Their unilateralism had created a new era of colonialization in the world, generating wars and other tensions. The Zionist regime of Israel had been established with the support of such major powers and was illegitimate and illegal. The President of the IPU had not been granted the authority to issue resolutions and statements in support of the Israeli child-killing regime. There were no traces of peace and justice in Gaza where children were being killed, and schools and other civilian infrastructure were being bombarded. Gaza was an open prison. He asked how the Assembly could talk about peace and justice while the greatest oppressors in the world received the support of the world's major powers and while aircraft carriers from the United States of America amassed in the region. The IPU's goals should be to end unilateralism and eliminate the hypocrisy of major powers in the wars they controlled through new forms of colonialization.

Mr. C. Senamatmontry (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that the major challenges facing developing countries included increased poverty, external debt, an unjust international financial system, natural disasters and geopolitical rivalries. All parties involved in the current violent hostilities

between Israel and Palestine were urged to exercise the utmost restraint and jointly resolve the conflict by peaceful means. The IPU played a valuable role in encouraging and promoting creative solutions to such problems and in promoting the implementation of SDG 16 as a key enabler for the entire sustainable development framework. In addition to the SDGs, his country had adopted the goal of reducing the number of lives lost from unexploded ordnance. The SDGs had been integrated into the national planning framework, and the Parliament played an active role in enhancing social and public governance and administration. It had also strengthened its oversight functions, which had helped to maintain peace, justice and strong institutions in the country. The Lao People's Democratic Republic would continue to strengthen its national institutions by improving the coordination mechanisms between central and local authorities, strengthening State administration systems and promoting the rule of law nationally and internationally. Parliamentarians were urged to strengthen the IPU's role in promoting the rule of law, building peaceful and inclusive societies, ensuring equal access to justice and information, and protecting fundamental freedoms.

Mr. A. Karapet (Sweden) called for a moment of silence to remember the two innocent Swedish citizens who had been killed in Belgium earlier that week. As a first-generation Swede, he represented the new Sweden, where everyone, regardless of origin, could become a democratically elected representative.

It was important to remember that African countries had been neglected for too long. Even at the current Assembly, there had been no focus on Africa. Sweden had for a long time provided aid and capacity-building to Africa and was currently transforming that aid into trade. It was important to stop the brain drain from the continent and ensure that workers remained in their countries to help to rebuild them. The factors driving migration should be tackled through trade, democracy and capacity-building.

Mr. M. Hadid (Palestine) said that many heads of States had rushed to pledge their support to Israel when it had announced that it would lay siege to Gaza. Some had even flown to the occupying State aboard military aircraft loaded with weapons of destruction and murder. Certain not so innocent voices had subsequently called for humanitarian corridors to be opened with the aim of forcing the inhabitants of Gaza into the Sinai Peninsula. While no humanitarian corridors had been opened, air bridges had been created to transport weapons to the occupying entity. The right of Israel to defend itself was repeated daily. Yet, he asked, how was it possible to bestow that right on an entity that occupied other people's land and if self-defence could really be interpreted as a warrant to exterminate another people.

International law was drafted, manipulated and construed by those who held military power. The Palestinian people had been suffering at the hands of such double standards for over 100 years. The Palestinian people were being slaughtered under the watchful eye of the whole world; genocide and ethnic cleansing were being committed. He asked what kind of world accepted the bombing of hospitals, shelters and places of worship. Palestine had regularly warned the world of the danger of imminent explosion if the Palestinian people were not granted justice. Yet the international community had remained silent, giving an implicit green light to the occupying entity to pursue further crimes against innocent people.

Addressing the consequences of the war would not be enough. It was necessary to find a solution that would ensure that the Palestinian people could enjoy their full, inalienable rights. It was also necessary to tackle the root causes of the conflict by putting an end to the Israeli colonial occupation and guaranteeing freedom, justice and self-determination for the Palestinian people in accordance with international resolutions.

The Assembly had failed to issue a resolution on the emergency item at its current session. That failure provided an opportunity to strengthen the IPU's peacebuilding role beyond resolutions and statements. The IPU should immediately send a mission to the Middle East with the task of exerting diplomatic and political pressure, and demanding an immediate ceasefire and the urgent delivery of aid to those in dire need. It was also imperative to issue a statement indicating that the majority of Members had supported the call to end the war.

Mr. S.S. Njie (the Gambia) said that the theme under discussion had come at a time when thousands of civilians in Palestine were being killed as a result of the horrific, indiscriminate and barbaric airstrikes by Israel, in total disregard for international law and United Nations resolutions. Not all residents of Gaza were members of Hamas, and the Palestinian people should be allowed to live on their land as a sovereign nation and people. The United Nations continued to engage in futile diplomacy and politics while Israel murdered thousands of Palestinians and destroyed Gaza and

Palestine. The international community along with parliamentarians, as representatives of the people, were failing in their duty. The world must take decisive action to end the war in Palestine, stop the hypocrisy and politicization of the veto power of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, and act more responsibly to avert global disaster. All parties were urged to comply with international law, avoid further killings of civilians and uphold the relevant United Nations resolutions. Furthermore, the Assembly should pass a resolution condemning the actions of Israel and calling on Israel to immediately stop its barbarism.

Legislators had a duty to enact legislation and formulate policies to promote peace, justice and strong institutions. Such legislation would help to prevent conflict and injustice, and provide a solid foundation for building accountable and transparent institutions. In addition to conducting government oversight and accountability, it was essential to ensure that government actions were aligned with the principles of SDG 16. Budget allocation was another key tool that parliaments could use to promote SDG 16, by allocating funding to law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, anti-corruption efforts and institutions that promoted good governance.

Since coming to power in 2017, the President of the Gambia had worked to ensure that the Parliament had complete autonomy and financial and political independence. The Government was currently in the process of reforming the security sector with the aim of consolidating peace, stability, justice and democracy. It was also committed to providing legal aid where necessary and to ensuring a fair, independent and efficient judicial system for all citizens irrespective of political affiliation, socioeconomic status, gender, race, tribe or religion. In addition, anti-corruption legislation was being enacted and enforced to build a society in which everyone was held accountable for their actions. Protecting and promoting human rights was the cornerstone of SDG 16, and parliamentarians had the responsibility to advocate for the rights of all individuals, including those who were marginalized and vulnerable. Parliamentarians should work together across borders to ensure that their collective efforts brought the world closer to peace, justice and strong institutions.

Mr. P.F. Casini (Italy), highlighting the profound link between peace and justice, said that peace, justice and strong institutions should be seen not only as a means to achieving sustainable development but also as a desired outcome of that process. The widening health gap, numerous environmental disasters, the ongoing war in Ukraine and its impact on food and energy, and the tragic events that had followed the brutal aggression by Hamas against Israel, were challenges that had heightened insecurity globally. Parliaments had a duty to stand up and condemn what could not be accepted. The Palestinian State must exist, but that cause could not be advanced through violence. A two-State solution was the only solution, and the policy adopted by Israel of constantly building new settlements on Palestinian territory was illegal. Such issues could not be ignored or evaded.

It was estimated that 430 million people would be living in extreme poverty by 2030, with 75% of those living in highly violent countries. Those countries alone would not be able to develop regulatory and political instruments to effectively prevent and respond to the sheer size of such challenges. It was therefore essential for parliamentarians to listen to each other and develop a common stance. All those present were invited to attend the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope to be held in Rome. It would be an occasion to call for everyone to be responsible builders of a better world.

The sitting rose at 18:30.

Sitting of Thursday, 26 October 2023

(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 09:00 with Ms. C. Cerqueira (Angola), President of the Assembly, in the Chair.

Item 3 of the agenda (continued)

General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)* (A/147/3.Inf.1)

Ms. M. Bon Klanjscek (Slovenia) said that Slovenia had been among the first States to adopt a national development strategy that meaningfully incorporated the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and was ranked 13th of 166 countries in the Sustainable Development Report. Dedicated efforts had been made to strengthen the justice system and make it more child-friendly, with the establishment in 2022 of a children's house to provide expert support to child witnesses and victims of crime. Her country was also dedicated to digitalization and developing digital solutions using artificial intelligence. The strengthening of institutions was crucial to legal, political and economic stability and social progress, and was a long-term endeavour that required collaboration and investment in the future. An independent judiciary, effective parliament, campaign against corruption, effective public administration and a greater role for oversight bodies were needed to build trust in government institutions and the State. Her Government had adopted a programme for the period 2023–2026 to strengthen integrity and transparency in the public sector. Parliamentarians played an important role in establishing effective social systems and shaping the development of society.

Ms. M. Lauri (Estonia) said that it was easy to spread fear and hatred but hard to build trust and understanding. The collapse of a repressive regime did not in itself lead to an open society; that required a societal commitment to upholding personal freedoms and building accountable institutions. The world was increasingly interconnected and international terrorism was a problem that needed to be tackled by all, with solutions grounded in shared values. Contemporary political struggles were about the creation and destruction of credibility. There was a need not just to communicate but to create dialogue and trust, provide access to truthful information and make the case for open and tolerant societies. Members of parliament had a particularly important role in that regard and should demonstrate awareness of the realities of the interconnected and culturally diverse world. They should make every effort to involve the public in substantive discussions to help them become more open. The interconnected world called for the use of technology, which could be used to support openness and trust in societies and build trust between nations. The international institutional and normative framework that advanced human rights and created free and responsible societies should be strengthened.

Mr. F. Zon (Indonesia) said that most Asian and African countries had been occupied or colonized by Western powers and countries, including Indonesia, and thus had led a struggle against colonialism and for independence. The most pressing challenge for parliamentary action for peace and justice was to immediately stop the war against Palestinians, who continued to experience colonization and annexation by Israel. His delegation had submitted a resolution that addressed the war crimes against the Palestinian people and called for long-term solutions to create an independent and free Palestine. A neo-colonial mentality persisted in the context of Palestine, as Israel was committing ethnic cleansing. Upholding justice, peace and strong institutions, as set out in SDG 16, would not be possible if war crimes and human rights violations in Palestine were tolerated. He called on the world to put an end to double standards in assessing conflicts around the world, including in Palestine. It was unacceptable to call those who fought for their land and freedom terrorists. The Israeli military strikes must be stopped without delay and the blockade lifted for humanitarian access. The global community should impose sanctions and find a fair way to resolve the conflict with a mechanism that prioritized dialogue and a long-term resolution to hostilities. In addition, reform was needed to the international system to strengthen the United Nations (UN), including the Security Council, and the voice of the Global South should be fully incorporated in global peace-making.

processes. Global governance needed to be inclusive, neutral and able to engage all parties. The IPU should be made more democratic and accountable, remain neutral, and be more assertive in fostering global justice and resolving conflict around the world.

Ms. A. Erdoğan (Türkiye) said that she wished to draw attention to the plight of children in Gaza. Indiscriminate bombing in Gaza had forced innocent civilians to relocate. The dignity and value of Palestinian lives and the rights of the Palestinian people to demand liberation from colonial occupation must be protected. To deny a people's right to independence and freedom could only be explained by racism, which was behind the order to lay siege to the Gaza Strip. She strongly condemned the loss of civilian lives and called for the restoration of calm in the region as soon as possible. An unhindered flow of humanitarian assistance was urgently needed. Developments showed the importance of the two-State solution with pre-1967 borders and Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine. Mechanisms would be needed to monitor and enforce the obligations of the parties. Türkiye stood ready to assume a guarantor role, together with other regional countries.

Mr. M.A. Ba Sarra (Yemen) said that he wished to thank the President of Angola for his statement to the Assembly, which had been fair and in favour of the Palestinian people. The UN Secretary-General had stated that conflict around the world was holding back global progress towards peace and the achievement of SDG 16. In his country, the Houthis had staged a coup d'état. Women and children had been imprisoned and mistreated and human rights defenders had been subjected to sexual harassment and violence, and other mistreatment and torture in prison. Many lives had been lost due to the presence of anti-personnel mines. State income was extremely low and the State was unable to pay the salaries of civil servants.

Ms. V.E.M. Lemos Martins (Timor-Leste) said that Angola, like many countries, had shown solidarity and support for the march towards the freedom of Timor-Leste. Thousands of women, children and innocent persons were suffering in Myanmar. She called on the Assembly to issue a resolution or word of solidarity for the people of Myanmar, who were fighting for their fundamental rights. It was a moral duty and political obligation to respond to that people's desire for peace and justice. There could be no talk of justice when the public policies of rulers continuously benefited the strong and marginalized the weakest. Action by the international community would not just help the people of Myanmar, it would show tyrants that the IPU took action in response to the violation of rights. The world should live in peace and, as a young democracy, her country affirmed dialogue as the best way of resolving conflicts. Her country was taking action to attain peace, justice and strong institutions that upheld human rights, including marriage equality.

Mr. A. Almodobar (Spain) said that peace and justice were not just words on a page but fundamental rights to be defended and promoted by all parliamentarians. Impartial justice systems, the maintenance of peace and the preservation of democratic values were crucial. In an interconnected world, parliamentarians should promote global peace and justice through democratic values and cooperation to overcome the obstacles of political polarization, lack of resources and pressure from particular interests. Policies and laws that encouraged the peaceful resolution of conflicts and promoted reconciliation should be supported as well as international treaties. Security forces should be monitored to ensure respect for human rights. A further role of parliamentarians was to ensure equality before the law and access to an independent justice system that combated impunity and promoted transparency. The transparency and effectiveness of governmental institutions, including the promotion of anti-corruption measures through the executive and judicial branches, were other requirements in building a better and fairer future for all. Parliaments had a crucial role to play in creating and maintaining fair societies. Spain wished to express its full solidarity with those who were suffering due to wars and terrorism.

Mr. S. Tynkkynen (Finland) said that all were members of the same human race, yet too often the focus was on fighting each other, instead of fixing things within countries. Despite a history of colonialism, poverty, oppression and civil war, Finland was highly ranked in terms of development and happiness. A common thread among countries whose prosperity benefited all citizens was democratic government based on free elections with genuine competition and the possibility of change. Without accountability, money spent on development was too often wasted. Parliamentarians had the task of developing democracy in such a way that it was easy to replace them if they were not fulfilling their responsibilities. Strong, corruption-free democracies and institutions were needed for societies to thrive. Societies in which citizens felt that they were treated fairly were better able to avoid conflict,

and in the absence of autocratic leaders, wars of aggression were not started. When politicians saw injustice in their society, they should not outsource the responsibility but should rather look in the mirror and tell themselves to do better.

Mr. S.J.-C. Apithy (Benin) said that he wished to recall the words of Pope John Paul II on World Peace Day in 1984, when he noted that war was born in man's sinful heart, yet peace was born of a new heart. Parliamentarians should promote a culture of peace through democratic and inclusive elections. His country had amended the Constitution and established a new electoral code. That had improved women's political representation, which now stood at 26% of the legislature. Other measures taken in his country for peace included the ratification of conventions and adoption of legislation to tackle capital laundering, the funding of terrorism and corruption, and a law on the establishment of the Court of Audit, an independent electoral body and a court for financial crime and terrorism.

For global governance that strengthened peace and justice, he called for the realization of the UN Security Council reform. He advocated the bolstering of conflict prevention measures through intensified diplomacy and mediation, and the development of a culture of tolerance and negotiation to manage crises and potential conflicts. Lasting peace was the main driver of balanced, inclusive and harmonious development.

Ms. H. Fofana (Burkina Faso) said that climate change, terrorism, cyberattacks, the proliferation of weapons, the worsening of poverty and the desire by certain powers to impose their vision on the rest of the world threatened existence. Parliamentarians, as representatives of the people in all their diversity, with responsibility for democratic oversight of government action, should educate, promote peace and foster a culture of tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Certain great powers, through their statements and actions, undermined the multilateral system and international cooperation, while others did not abide by the rules or adopted a laissez-faire attitude, in some cases attacking the universal values of freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, national sovereignty and respect for nature. Parliamentarians needed to foster citizens' trust in institutions, ensure access to justice and fight poverty. Urgent action was needed to protect children and empower women and young people. She also drew attention to the increasing number of forcibly displaced persons. In order to attain SDG 16, measures were needed to re-establish trust and reinforce the ability of institutions to guarantee justice for all. Parliamentarians should give citizens courage and work to end conflict, foster global solidarity and fulfil their people's aspirations. The people of Burkina Faso wished to live in peace.

Ms. E. Nyirasafari (Rwanda) said that governance reforms in Rwanda had consolidated peace, built strong and accountable public institutions and a stable investment environment, and had incorporated the SDGs in the Government's programmes. The 2022 census had revealed that sustained economic growth had translated into improved well-being, including an 18-year increase in life expectancy since 2002. Homegrown solutions had drawn on Rwandan culture and had contributed to social cohesion. Following the genocide against the Tutsi in 1994, charter courts had been established as community-based dispute resolution mechanisms that also strengthened reconciliation. The governance model centred on citizens and their trust and satisfaction. Since the achievement of SDG 16 would have a positive effect on other SDGs, progress was vital. In her country Parliament played a significant role in the implementation and oversight of action to achieve the SDGs. Sustainable peace and effective institutions required strong leadership and synergy in the implementation of policies. The international community should join together to turn the SDGs into action, and to advocate for the representation of women and young people in conflict prevention and peace processes.

Mr. R. Lopatka (Austria) said that the global situation had worsened dramatically with the ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, the Hamas terror attack against Israeli civilians, and the war in Gaza. It was crucial that all parties should seek peaceful solutions and prioritize the safety and well-being of civilians. It was disappointing that the IPU had been unable to include an emergency agenda item on that topic. The terrorist attack by Hamas was a tragedy, not just for Israel but for Gaza. He noted that the UN Secretary-General had stated that even in the worst of times, it was vital to look to the long-term and avoid irreversible action that would embolden extremists and doom any prospect of lasting peace. Peace, justice and strong institutions were cornerstones of the broader framework for the SDGs. Robust parliaments, with parliamentarians as the voice of the people, were at the heart of functioning political systems and helped strengthen other State institutions, including an independent judiciary, and encouraged non-governmental organizations to play their part. Parliamentarians should make every effort to help achieve the SDGs. His country was ranked fifth of 166 countries in the Sustainable Development Report.

Mr. A. Al Hinai (Oman) said that the world faced challenges in a context of institutions and human rights organizations that lacked strength. Atrocities were taking place in many areas, notably in Palestine and the Gaza Strip where the most fundamental human rights were being violated. In dark times, the international community must work together and adopt all possible measures to put an end to human rights violations and massacres in Gaza and around the world, and to respect human rights so that all persons could live in dignity. Peace could not be achieved by force and force could only be gained by peace.

Mr. V. Vojtko (Czech Republic) said that no topic was more urgent than the outbreak of wars across the globe and the associated human rights violations and large-scale atrocities, such as the Russian aggression in Ukraine or the Hamas terrorist attack in Israel. The world seemed unable to prevent those acts or enforce justice. Without peace, the achievement of the SDGs was threatened and the cycle of harm caused by wars jeopardized the long-term future of humankind. Parliamentarians had an obligation to improve the situation domestically and internationally. The UN and international courts were not enough – further improvements to international law and systems were needed. Humans needed to work on themselves too, to overcome differences and put aside hatred and prejudice. The experience of Rwanda showed how a people could recover following genocide. The future president of the IPU, who would be from the Africa region, would help find better ways to end wars and recover humanity.

Mr. M.R. Ousahla (Algeria) said that he wondered how to talk of peace and justice when witnessing massacres and violence, and the violation of human rights and provisions of international law in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Arab territories. Parliaments needed, more than ever, to work for justice, peace and strong institutions. The IPU must insist on the link between the SDGs and peace and self-determination. Israeli aggression against Gaza made it difficult to attain the SDGs in the region; forced displacement and destruction undermined parliamentary efforts and the credibility of governments. Significant efforts were needed to resolve the situation.

He reiterated his country's national and international commitments to better serve its population through good governance and justice. The Constitution had been amended and Algeria had adopted a global approach to international challenges. Interference in the domestic affairs of countries was unacceptable. He advocated for international dialogue and reiterated his Government's support for the non-aligned movement. His Government did not distinguish between the fight against colonialism and the achievement of the SDGs. The Palestinian people had a right to their own State with a capital in East Jerusalem based on international resolutions. The Western Sahara was also an issue of colonialism that needed to be referred to the relevant UN committee. State terrorism – which his own country had suffered 30 years previously – was unacceptable. He asked how delegates could return to their countries and say that the IPU had not adopted a stance on the matter, given the violation of the human rights of Palestinians. The IPU Statutes should be reformed.

Mr. A. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates) said that all IPU Members had joined the Organization voluntarily and had subscribed to its Statutes, principles and values, which included the promotion of peace, democracy and dialogue as a means to resolve conflict. Unfortunately, Members spoke at the Assembly without concern for the consequences of their statements. Inherited crises and divisions had given rise to a resurgence of problems around the world that had led to an increase in hate speech and had exacerbated divisions among parliamentarians, which had affected their actions at the local, regional and international levels. Champions of peace who were willing to make sacrifices were needed; peace served the interests of all. He urged delegates to overcome differences and be part of the solution. Crises around the world – in Palestine and the Gaza Strip, and in Ukraine – should not cause parliamentarians to forget their responsibilities of ensuring peace and stability, and a more prosperous future of coexistence for the next generation. Hate speech had been voiced and religion desecrated; speeches had been made that were in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, of humanitarian law and human rights, and also of the rules of the house. Delegates were part of a single team at the IPU and should be able to return to their populations with a message that promoted peace.

Ms. A.M. Marí Machado (Cuba) said that parliamentarians should defend multilateralism and reject war, as well as attempts to impose a unipolar international order, the pillage of natural resources, the application of unilateral coercive measures, and of all forms of oppression and aggression, which undermined peace and stability and respect for the Charter of the United Nations. In Cuba, the people participated in the work of the Government. The main obstacles to well-being and attaining the SDGs were the economic blockade imposed by the United States Government and the imposition of coercive measures.

She supported the urgent call of the UN Secretary-General for an immediate global ceasefire and supported the rejection of sanctions that could undermine a country's ability to solve problems. Peace and justice could not be achieved while the most powerful nations reneged on their commitments to international instruments, militarized cyberspace and sought to undermine sovereign governments. A fair international order was needed. The causes of hunger and inequality should be eliminated and sustainable development should be promoted for all peoples. The loss of Israeli and Palestinian lives was painful to watch. She called for an end to warmongering rhetoric and supported a fair and lasting solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine. The gunfire and genocide must stop.

Mr. F. Salim (Libya) said that strong institutions required stability and the rule of law, and were necessary to achieving the SDGs. Wars and natural disasters made it essential to achieve SDG 16. Each country should be considered separately, since economic and social conditions and access to natural resources differed, and expertise should be shared. To tackle violence and the challenges emerging in the economic, social and cultural spheres, legislative, judicial and security reforms were needed. The rule of law should be restored and transparency of public and private institutions should be ensured. Tackling poverty was essential to the rule of law and media institutions should make a commitment not to disseminate hate speech. Education and the principles of democracy and accountability should be promoted, alongside the fight against corruption – including in the justice system – and a push for women in leadership positions. Parliamentary committees should submit periodic reports on progress. He applauded the courage and sacrifices of the Palestinian people in the face of war. Parliaments around the world should defend the principles that would put an immediate and definitive end to the war and ensure a two-State solution.

Ms. S. Carvajal Isunza (Mexico) said that peace was an inalienable right and shared value of all peoples. Her country was committed to a diplomacy that advocated dialogue and negotiations to achieve peace. Violence affected many parts of the world, including her country which suffered due to trafficking of drugs. Justice was the cornerstone of a fair and peaceful society, and freedom, equality and democracy were basic principles that should give rise to strong institutions that enabled the exercise of fundamental rights. No country was immune from problems like populism and extremism. Debate and pluralism should be fostered in parliaments and diversity encouraged. Majority consensus made for good global governance, and multilateralism and international cooperation were the means to tackle shared challenges and build a safer and fairer world. Since no country operated in isolation, shared problems should be addressed globally. The requisite global institutional architecture needed to be built to that end.

Ms. F. Benbadis (Algeria) took the Chair.

Mr. A.A. Paredes Gonzales (Peru) said that Benjamin Franklin had noted the need to work together towards peace or never find it. In their daily work, parliamentarians should promote laws for citizens' well-being, without discrimination, and work to ensure respect for human rights, including access to health care, education and decent work and housing. It was not possible to speak about human rights while populations took to the streets to demand better living conditions. Politicians should honour their electoral campaigns. There was a need to create trust in parliamentary institutions and ensure the accountability of leaders. Government policies should meet populations' basic requirements. The importance of health care had been revealed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the effects of climate change were visible. Parliamentarians should be self-critical to ensure that they protected their populations. Parliamentarians should commit to putting an end to trafficking in persons, particularly children, and bolster the position of women to offer them the same opportunities as men. The IPU was poised to lead by example and elect a female President. Attention was needed to the right to life, and parliamentarians should be brave and follow their own teachings to bring an end to aggression.

Ms. K. Bradley (United Kingdom) said that peace was the reason that parliamentarians stood for and were elected to parliament. Sustainable peace required a swift and transparent justice system, which in turn required strong institutions. Leaders should be held to account to ensure that they were delivering on their goals, including the SDGs. To be strong, parliaments should be fully representative of all parts of society, including women, the LGBT+ community and persons of different colours, religions, disabilities and ages. Institutions comprised of persons who were merely interested in power were weak; strong institutions required those who were there to serve. Leadership, statecraft and

compromise were the elements that, 25 years previously, had ended decades of troubles in Northern Ireland and had made possible power-sharing in a devolved assembly. The leaders involved had recognized that all sides were victorious if peace could be delivered. It was important to guard against absolutism, which was a danger to democracy. Nothing was absolute and parliamentarians should consider the range of views and viewpoints.

Ms. C.M. Mumma (Kenya) said that, in her country, the 2010 Constitution had introduced a focus on human rights, equity and equality and people-centred governance. Devolution had addressed regional imbalances and peace had been promoted through equitable resource distribution. Parliament had facilitated that process through oversight of the legal and policy framework for constitutional reforms. The Constitution contained provisions on peace and justice and provided for the incorporation in domestic law of ratified international treaties, which ensured that national plans were aligned with international obligations, including the SDGs. Challenges to parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions included political polarization, corruption, lack of expertise and capacity, and resource constraints. Efforts were being made in Kenya to ensure adequate funding and capacity-building for the effective functioning of Parliament. Engagement with civil society organizations and the general public were required under the Constitution. International cooperation should provide resources and expertise for conflict resolution and institution-building at the local and international levels. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms were needed to track progress and identify areas for improvement; corruption should be tackled and transparency and accountability in governance promoted. Parliamentarians were called on to act as ambassadors of peace and fully deploy parliamentary diplomacy for conflict resolution and peacebuilding in nations and communities afflicted by conflict. That onerous task was a service to humanity in every region engulfed in conflict.

Mr. O. Korniyenko (Ukraine) said that peace, justice and strong institutions were desired by all in an effort to spare their children from war, and see that rights were protected and that truth prevailed. Recent conflicts had undermined efforts for global peace. For 20 months, Russian missiles and bullets had been killing Ukrainian soldiers and civilians on Ukrainian soil, and Ukrainian children had been deported. In such dark times, he nonetheless had a message of hope. Each parliamentarian should recognize that aggression was a crime and should lobby for their countries to support the “peace formula” proposed by Ukrainian President Zelensky to address the fine line of international law, create a tribunal for the crime of aggression, and ensure the provision of compensation for damage, the exchange of prisoners, the protection of the environment and the safety of nuclear power plants. A meeting on the peace formula had been attended by more than 40 States, including China, India, Brazil and South Africa. All countries should join the Crimean Platform, a parliamentary platform for cooperation to bring attention to the Russian occupation of Ukrainian Crimea and discrimination against Muslims, Indigenous peoples and the Crimean Tatars. Parliamentarians were elected to stand up and defend the truth. He called for boldness in condemning crimes.

Ms. M. Brawer (Argentina) said that it was a historic moment for the IPU, which would elect its next President from four women candidates; there could be no social justice without gender equality. The world was facing difficult times, with poverty, forced displacement and war. Terrorist groups acted cruelly towards civilians, and State responses deepened conflicts instead of resolving them. The rules of international humanitarian law must be respected; humanitarian corridors should be guaranteed in Gaza. War had no winners, it aggravated inequality and poverty and caused the loss of human life and of economic resources that should be used for health, education and science. That was clear in the case of the Russian Federation and Ukraine conflict, a war which had plunged the world into crisis and food shortages. Her country promoted peace, territorial integrity and human rights. It had experience of the usurpation of land through armed force and continued to claim its sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands through peaceful means. Her Government was putting a stop to State terrorism through democratic means and the courts; perpetrators of genocide were currently facing prison. Strong democratic institutions were needed to prevent coups d'état. Parliamentarians must fight against hate speech and build independent justice systems. If governments were the architects of peace, parliamentarians were the artisans; their daily work of dialogue and seeking consensus gave them a fundamental role to play.

Mr. M. Mahamat Saleh (Chad) said that, alongside the work of adopting laws and overseeing government action and policies, parliamentarians must gain citizens' trust through their rhetoric and actions. Trust would help governments tackle the challenges brought about by climate change and an evolving labour market. His country's vision for 2030 sought to maintain peace and reinforce

international cooperation and tackle social divisions. The long-term aim was to build a united country based on social justice and the path of democracy. Good foundations had been laid by the transitional government for peace, security and national sovereignty. A peace agreement had been signed with the military and political groups; a national development plan and strategies to tackle poverty had been developed; and a national human rights institution and a standing committee to monitor efforts to achieve the SDGs had been established. Democracy must protect the weakest against arbitrary decisions. Good governance would lay the foundations for lasting peace and justice. The representation of all citizens would guard against threats to peace.

Mr. U. Fasi (Tonga) said that, according to a traditional saying in his country, when one member of a group was hurt it was felt by all; that was the case with war, the impact of which was felt across the world. His country called for peace through negotiation and a collective vision of peaceful coexistence. Peace was not merely the absence of war; any threat to livelihoods, homes and futures undermined peace and consequently fundamental freedoms. Failure to address those threats eroded trust in parliamentarians and parliamentary institutions. The Legislative Assembly of Tonga amplified the call of small and vulnerable States in the Pacific to address the threat from climate change and natural disasters. In August 2023, Tonga had hosted the Conference of the Pacific Islands Parliaments Group, which had adopted a declaration emphasizing that climate change and its irreversible effects undermined the realization of a peaceful, secure and sustainable future for the Pacific region. He echoed the call of the Pacific Islands States for the formal international recognition and definition of persons and communities displaced due to climate events. That would mobilize the support required to address climate injustice and alleviate the burden of uncertainty on populations at high risk of the permanent loss of their homes due to climate change.

Mr. I.A. Wase (Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)) said that developments in the war between Israel and Palestine were a cause of great concern. The ECOWAS Parliament appealed to the 147th Assembly to support any effort aimed at peacekeeping in that region. Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions was a topic of particular relevance to Africa. Legal measures and community action had been implemented to safeguard peace and justice in Africa, particularly in the West African region through the instruments and activities of ECOWAS, which had deployed ceasefire monitoring in four countries. The ECOWAS Vision 2050 comprised five pillars, the first of which was the quest for peace, security and stability in the region. Half of the 79 coups d'état or attempted coups d'état in Africa since 1998 had occurred in West Africa, and four democratically elected governments in the region had been overthrown. Parliamentarians should condemn coups d'état as a means of gaining power; it was a form of transition that led to incessant insecurity. In response to those developments, ECOWAS intended to increase the size of its standby force. Members of parliament must acknowledge that democracy could not prosper without peace and security, which should never be taken for granted. Parliaments must support public institutions and the promotion of democratic and representative political systems in order to prevent unrest and ensure sustainable development. The Assembly should enable parliamentarians to exchange good practices on building strong, democratic, representative, inclusive and resilient parliaments with the capacity for innovation and the resolution of national and international disputes.

Ms. T. Efua Asangono (President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP)) said that, in July 2023, the 12th Parliamentary Assembly of the CPLP had been convened with the theme of strengthening national laws to empower women and young people, and had adopted decisions on that theme. A permanent secretariat had been established and a call had been issued to maintain electoral observer missions within the Portuguese-speaking world. The nine countries of the CPLP represented a population of 300 million and they called for recognition of Portuguese as an official language of the IPU. Justice was the basis of respect for human rights and social equality and was key to maintaining peace. Frank dialogue, economic progress, strong institutions, social cohesion and good governance that fostered trust were also key. Speaking in Portuguese, she said that the work of the IPU over a century for parliaments across the world showed its significance to the struggle for global peace and justice.

Mr. R. Baptista-Leite (President, UNITE Parliamentarians Network for Global Health) said that there was no democracy, economy, justice or peace without health, yet the world moved from crisis to crisis without fixing structural problems. Although the COVID-19 pandemic had cost millions of lives and trillions of dollars, parliamentarians had the power to prevent the next pandemic. He called on all parliamentarians to convince their governments to support the pandemic accord at the World Health

Assembly in May 2024. The accord needed to contain a firm commitment to an equitable system that ensured pandemic countermeasures for all, including vaccines. Citizens of rich countries were receiving second or third doses of the vaccine while many African citizens had not had any. That was unacceptable. Financial instruments were needed to help governments prevent and respond to pandemics and ensure that the World Health Organization (WHO) had capacity for a global response. A functioning accountability mechanism with monitoring was needed to detect outbreaks and prevent pandemics. He called on all delegates to participate in the hearings of the negotiation procedures for the pandemic accord and to ensure that their parliaments ratified the accord once it had been approved.

Mr. G. Silberschmidt (Director of Health and Multilateral Partnerships, WHO) said that his organization's long-standing relationship with the IPU had recently been renewed through a memorandum of understanding. The WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region had been hit by crises such as floods, earthquakes and the hostilities in Israel and the Gaza Strip. The WHO was at the forefront of the response to those and other crises and worked closely with local health authorities to ensure the provision of essential health surveillance and services and medical supplies. The previous month, world leaders had adopted the Political Declaration of the United Nations General Assembly High-level Meeting on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response. Negotiations on the pandemic accord were intrinsically linked to the principles of equity and justice, and the accord had the potential to rectify health inequalities and create a world that was better prepared for when, not if, the next pandemic occurred. Keeping the world safe and serving the vulnerable required sustained and consistent financing. To that end, the WHO Member States had adopted a landmark decision to increase the organization's membership fee, known as assessed contributions. He called on parliamentarians to hold their governments to account to fulfil their commitments to the WHO and allocate the required budget.

Mr. M.R. Majidi (Secretary-General, Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA)) said that any peace that was not based on justice and supported by strong institutions would fail. Those concepts lost their meaning if not translated into action. He asked delegates whether they had travelled to Luanda merely to make eloquent statements while the massacre in Gaza of innocent persons, mostly women and children, continued. The IPU, as the global organization of parliaments – which were the voices of nations – should spare no effort to amplify the words of a voiceless people in the face of the great powers that supported Israel and had access to influential media outlets. Africa had also experienced colonialism and apartheid. The world expected the IPU not to restrict itself to conveying a message of peace and solidarity, but to go further and take measures to prevent ethnic cleansing in that enclave. The international community could not remain silent.

Mr. J.A. De Olivera Francisco (International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI)) said that the aims of SDG 16 were in keeping with the need for control of institutions to make them more accountable. Monitoring of public spending promoted good governance and boosted the population's trust in institutions. INTOSAI had recently established a tool to help audit institutions analyse governmental measures on climate change. Another initiative was the exchange of leadership between control or audit institutions. Participation in the general debate of the 147th Assembly indicated a commitment to building a world of justice, accountability and inclusion for all. His organization stood ready to cooperate with the IPU.

Mr. F. Zon (Vice-Chair, Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC)) said that SDG 16 was a crucial goal in times of crisis, due not just to the COVID-19 pandemic or a potential financial crisis, but to war and conflict, including in Palestine, where the situation had derailed the path to peace and the achievement of SDG 16. Wars and conflicts had become an arena for those with power to exercise their authority unchecked. As an inter-parliamentary network, GOPAC promoted good governance and anti-corruption measures. SDG 16 required action to combat corruption so that parliaments could act as the institution of checks and balances. Oversight of budgets, particularly of sensitive areas like defence and security, and the identification of choke points in legislation to address corruption were essential. The UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) was the guiding instrument in that regard and he invited delegates to use the GOPAC anti-corruption assessment tool for parliamentarians. The rule of law should be upheld at the national and international levels as an essential ingredient in rebuilding public trust, which would require effective justice systems that placed no one above the law. Parliaments should have a greater voice in global governance, such as through the participation of GOPAC at the Conference of the States Parties to UNCAC.

Ms. D. Bergamini (Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM)) said that, against a background of conflicts and of innocent Israeli and Palestinian civilians falling victim to a new cycle of violence in the Middle East, the role of parliamentarians in promoting regional and international cooperation and dialogue was more important than ever. At the IPU, parliamentarians should share their views, not contrast them. At the PAM, Israel and Palestine had seats on the political bureau and had equal rights as vice-presidents. Recently, the PAM had organized a mission to Jordan, Palestine and Israel to discuss how to support international efforts to resume negotiations for a two-State solution. It was time for the international community to come together to protect civilians and find a lasting solution. Attention was also needed to the war in Ukraine and persistent instability in the Sahel region. The PAM would continue to work with the IPU, the Arab Parliament and the G5 Sahel Interparliamentary Committee in that regard. Renewed global instability required legal frameworks that would allow governments to prevent and address emerging security threats. The PAM was working with the UN to draft a comprehensive report on the effects of the malicious use and inadequate regulation of cyberspace on international security and stability.

Mr. A. Savinykh (Deputy Chairman, Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and Russia) said that parliamentary debates reflected the political and economic processes that were transforming the world. Those processes were inevitable because the old systems of global wealth and globalization were not fair for at least two thirds of the global population. Even the UN and the IPU had been unable to achieve the Millenium Development Goals and overcome the fundamental injustice of the world order. A better, fairer future for global humanity would require change to the global financial and banking systems, the world trade system and institutions that created injustice and inequality. The transition to a multipolar world could appear difficult but there was no other way forward if the world cared about future generations.

Mr. B. Kalu (Nigeria), commencing the segment of the debate reserved for second speakers from national delegations, said that the international community had worked together to find a solution to the COVID-19 pandemic and should do the same to achieve world peace. Peace was not the absence of violence but rather the manifestation of human understanding and compassion anchored by justice and strong institutions, engendered by national parliaments and global bodies such as the IPU. The absence of peace and justice indicated the failure of governments and associated institutions, which led to scepticism and a lack of trust among the population. Violence in the Sudan had led to the destruction of a nation. The devastation of lives and property in Ukraine, Israel and Gaza was avoidable. Threats to democracy in Africa must be addressed.

Nigeria had experience of conflict and instability and was therefore deeply committed to SDG 16. In recent years, his country had experienced challenges including insurgencies, environmental degradation and underdevelopment. Steps taken to tackle those issues included the establishment of development commissions, reform to the oil and gas sector and improved integrity in the electoral process. The Climate Change Act would ensure that global standards on climate action were met, but developed countries must assist Africa in that regard. He encouraged delegates to work for better outcomes for their populations.

Ms. S. Hjemdal (Norway) said that she wished to draw attention to Ms. N. Mohammadi, the 2023 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize for her fight against the oppression of women and for human rights and freedoms in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Norwegian Nobel Committee was independent of the Norwegian Parliament, but the 2023 award decision enjoyed broad support among parliamentarians. The awarding of the Peace Prize was recognition of the hundreds of thousands of persons who struggled for democracy and stood against the Iranian regime's policies of discrimination and oppression that targeted women. Institutions should defend those who stood up for human rights and dignity and democracy. Ms. N. Mohammadi's struggle had come at a huge personal cost and she remained in prison. She called for the Iranian regime to free Ms. N. Mohammadi, its women and its people, and for the IPU President to make a similar statement.

Mr. K. Asao (Japan) said that gaining public credibility and trust was the most important mission of parliaments. Parliamentarians should demonstrate their accountability by improving transparency and gain trust by presenting a clear vision of the future. His goal as a politician was to make Japan a country where every person could achieve self-actualization. It was difficult to help individuals dream and make their dreams come true but role models could provide crucial inspiration. In Japan, in May 2023, the House of Councillors had conducted a survey using the IPU toolkit for gender sensitivity as a step towards broader representation. He welcomed the fact that the next IPU President

would be a woman from Africa. Challenges such as climate change, food and energy security, Russian aggression against Ukraine and the difficulties in Gaza called for the transcendence of differences in politics and ideology without the use of force. Parliamentarians needed to be good listeners. The ability to listen would strengthen public trust in parliaments and other government institutions, and lead to solutions to global challenges and a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada) said that, in Bahrain, the IPU Assembly had discussed the importance of peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies – a topic that was closely linked to SDG 16. Parliamentarians must persist in fighting against discriminatory laws and policies and must have the courage to have difficult conversations. That was part of her work as Chair of the Senate Committee on Human Rights in Canada, which had recently studied difficult topics including the human rights of prisoners, coerced and forced sterilization of Canadian citizens and Islamophobia in Canada. Parliamentarians had a responsibility to ask difficult questions of public officials to maintain trust and transparency in public institutions. Although Canada had a peaceful, inclusive and tolerant society, there was always room for improvement. She urged delegates to advocate for increased accountability of their governments and public institutions. She called on all to pray for the children of the Middle East.

Ms. L. Saint-Paul (France) said that the world was more fragmented than at any time since the Second World War. Parliamentarians must renew dialogue between governments that no longer spoke to one another and help their citizens to respect one another's views. The IPU was a unique forum for such dialogue, particularly since two of its founders had been Nobel Peace Prize laureates. Living in peace involved condemning terrorism and terrorist attacks like that carried out by Hamas in Israel on 7 October 2023, and also ensuring respect for international law, including international humanitarian law. France had recalled those principles during the recent presidential visit to Israel, Palestine, Jordan and Egypt – there was no doublespeak in that regard. Although all could agree on those principles, there had been a collective failure to agree on the adoption of an emergency agenda item on sustainable peace in the Middle East, based on a two-State solution that would enable Palestinians and Israelis to live side by side in peace and security. That failure indicated that it was time to renew dialogue, overcome differences and listen to and respect one another.

Mr. J. Barreto (Portugal) said that the strengthening of trust between citizens and their institutions was an essential and timely topic, and suggested six key actions to take in that regard. The principles of transparency and accountability should be followed, since open communication between elected representatives and citizens would promote trust. Investment in training and new technologies for public institutions was needed to improve the efficiency of services. Respect for the rule of law and equity, and justice for citizens should be guaranteed. Fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression and of association, were vital to a prosperous democracy and should be protected by public institutions to enable civic participation and defend citizens' rights. Public institutions should reflect the diverse communities that they served and violence must be prevented.

Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia) said that she spoke in her capacity as an Australian delegate and as co-Rapporteur on orphanage trafficking to the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights. With reference to SDG 16, it should be remembered that more than 50 million persons had been trafficked into slavery globally, more than at any other time in human history. Up to 8 million of the world's most vulnerable children had been trafficked into group homes, often referred to as orphanages. Delegates had joined together to tackle that form of trafficking in persons and 30 nations had spoken during the 147th Assembly debate on the draft resolution entitled *Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliamentarians in reducing harm*, all of them in support of the resolution. In total, 195 amendments to the draft resolution had been submitted by 27 nations. She called on all delegates to support the draft resolution when presented for adoption as the next step in tackling the scourge of trafficking in persons, particularly vulnerable children.

Ms. F. Öncü (Türkiye) said that, as a mother with disabilities and a parliamentarian, she wished to draw attention to the one billion persons with disabilities around the world, including those who had been disabled as a result of war. The destructive impact of war was not limited to immediate economic and humanitarian crises but could also affect mental and physical health and lead to disablement and decreased quality of life for soldiers and civilians alike. The number of persons with disabilities across the world made them the largest global minority and persons who had been disabled by war were one of the most vulnerable groups within that minority. Their needs were often overlooked in the

post-conflict rebuilding of societies. Inclusive societies could be created by establishing a legal framework for the rights of persons with disabilities and programmes that took their needs into account. Greater prominence should be given to parliamentarians with disabilities within the IPU and national parliaments should introduce quotas for parliamentarians with disabilities.

Ms. S. Mikayilova (Azerbaijan) said that peace had never been so fragile; bloody conflicts, wars and extremism were destroying the international peace architecture. Azerbaijan had suffered from occupation and armed separatism for 30 years, had lost 20% of its internationally recognized territory, and had experienced ecocide and genocide. In the previous three years, Azerbaijan had faced provocations and deaths of civilians. Anti-terror measures had been taken in September 2023 to restore sovereignty across the country, illegal armed groups had been defeated and civilians were starting a new life. The Azerbaijani Government was making every effort for the reintegration of the Armenian population. Parliaments should increase activities to respond to all challenges through legislation and on the ground.

Ms. H. Sverrisdóttir (Iceland) said that SDG 16 and countries' full potentials could not be achieved without the full democratic participation of women at all levels of society and in legislative assemblies. Women belonged in the public sphere and should not be consigned to the margins of society. Parliamentarians should place the plight of women's rights at the forefront of their politics. In Iceland, on 24 October 2023, one quarter of the population had participated in a one-day women's strike to demonstrate women's power and solidarity, demand income equality and protest against violence against women.

In the light of discussion on the plight of the Palestinian people and the terrorist attacks in Israel, she wished to draw attention to the importance of UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security. Women were essential to conflict resolution and peacebuilding; without women at the table there would be no peace, no security and no development.

Ms. A.L. Ticona Quispe (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that SDG 16 was particularly relevant to her country, which had a plan for economic development that promoted an inclusive society and social justice. It was also crucial to achieving the other SDGs, since development required peace and justice. The Bolivian Constitution of 2009 had established that advocacy for peace and dialogue was the only mechanism for resolving conflicts. In any conflict, the parties should be able to sit at the negotiating table to address their differences in line with the Charter of the United Nations. The increase in armed conflict and inequality around the world in recent years jeopardized international peace and security, and respect for individual rights. She condemned the situation in the Middle East and the genocide that Israel was perpetrating as an occupying power of Palestine. She called for a wide-ranging, fair and lasting solution to the conflict based on a two-State solution that would bring an end to the occupation of Palestinian territory and would enable Palestine to exercise its right to self-determination.

Ms. L. Zepeda Martínez (Mexico) said that, where there was conflict, there was insecurity, weak institutions and poor access to justice. According to UN data, in 2022 the number of civilian deaths due to conflict had increased by more than 50% and 108 million persons had been forcibly displaced – an increase of 90 million compared to 2021. In her country, despite efforts to strengthen institutions, access to justice, transparency and the fight against corruption remained an aspiration for much of the population, particularly women and children. Structural inequalities could not be allowed to persist and challenges to respect for human rights needed to be tackled. As stated by former Mexican President Benito Juárez, respect for the rights of others was peace.

Mr. B. Griffin (Bahamas) said that, as Vice-President of the Senate and Deputy Chair of the Bahamas Trade Commission, he was particularly aware of the importance of representative leadership. Leadership in the Bahamas was more diverse than ever since the appointment of an unprecedented number of young leaders and women in leadership roles. He noted the efforts of the IPU in that regard, the impact of which was visible among participants in the 147th Assembly. Diversity was an asset and representative government was a cornerstone of democracy. The IPU was a beacon of progress and as its newest member, the Bahamas stood with the IPU and its commitment to developing more effective parliaments, increasing the participation of women and young people in parliaments, and promoting peace, democracy and sustainable development. Global threats such as climate change required decisive action to save lives and livelihoods. Global organizations like the IPU could take coordinated action to ensure that all could survive and thrive. There was no challenge that could not be overcome through unity.

Ms. F. Belhirsch (Netherlands) said that, in the words of Nelson Mandela, to be free was not merely to cast off one's chains but to live in a way that respected and enhanced the freedom of others. SDG 16 called for faith in governments; open dialogue would strengthen the bonds between the people, parliamentarians and governments to shore up the trust that fuelled democracy. Capacity-building for lawmakers and broad representation in parliaments would ensure that leaders made informed decisions, upheld the rule of law, protected fundamental rights and an independent judicial system, in order to provide a solid foundation for justice and strong institutions. The prevention of violence and promotion of equal gender representation were also crucial. SDG 16 served as a reminder that true development was rooted in peace, justice and strong institutions and called on parliamentarians to gain the trust of citizens, ensure transparent and equitable governance, and to cultivate a civic space in which voices were heard. Parliamentarians had the responsibility to build a just, peaceful world, guided by the principles of good governance and with trust as the driving force of democracy, peace, prosperity and the realization of the SDGs.

The sitting rose at 13:00.

Sitting of Thursday, 26 October 2023

(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 14:30 with Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada), in the Chair.

Item 3 of the agenda
(continued)

General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)*
(A/147/3-Inf.1)

Mr. A.O. Abshir (Somalia) said that the Government of Somalia remained steadfast in its commitment to promoting global peace and justice, and was working tirelessly towards a Somalia free from terrorism. Recently, a Somali member of parliament held by Al-Shabaab had been liberated. The goal was for Somalia to eradicate terrorism by the end of the year. In addition, the Parliament of Somalia was engaging actively with the Government to mediate conflict in the region.

Somalia recognized the significance of strengthening national legal and justice systems, and was working on a robust legal framework that could serve as a model for justice and the rule of law both nationally and regionally.

The country remained dedicated to addressing the root causes of conflict and injustice by fostering economic development and addressing social issues. Sustainable peace could not be achieved without addressing those underlying factors. His Parliament had passed several laws that protected human rights and promoted peace and prosperity, and would continue to pass more as it moved forward. Somalia acknowledged its important role in international peacekeeping missions and would strive to be a force for global peace, justice and stability.

Ms. V. Braz (Portugal), opening the special segment reserved for young parliamentarians, said that it was difficult to achieve peaceful, inclusive societies and strong institutions in a global context of armed conflicts, human rights violations, poverty, discrimination, violence and inequality. Vulnerable groups, including children and young people, were suffering the most, with no opportunities and a doomed future ahead. The world could not expect children and young people to be the new hope for a better world when their environment was rife with so many challenges.

Parliamentarians had a key role to play in improving the lives of children and young people. Above all, they must introduce public policies that broke the cycle of poverty and promoted education. Schools were the most important public institutions for young people. At school, children and young people had opportunities for personal development. It was there that they could discover their voices and start to make a difference. Schools also taught children and young people to give back to their communities as well as to show empathy, solidarity and mutual understanding for others (key traits for fighting violence). Parliamentarians must build the capacities of children and young people, thus allowing them to become the changemakers and peacebuilders they truly were.

Ms. S. Unnopporn (Thailand) said that the digital transformation could be a gamechanger in strengthening good governance, transparency and public trust in parliament. Some examples of beneficial parliamentary technologies included electronic public procurement and bidding systems, online platforms handling citizens petitions and complaints as well as online consultation systems. Those technologies promoted a more open, candid and inclusive way of executing parliamentary functions and provided greater access to information.

Thailand had introduced a mobile open database application called TH Parliament which disclosed records of voting and proceedings, and allowed the public to track the progress of draft bills. There was also an online solution allowing citizens to propose bills and thus meaningfully engage with the legislative process.

Mr. R. De Battista (Malta) said that, to regain public trust, leaders must serve all of the people and not just the majority or the ones who agreed with them. The IPU must work harder to defend the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) parliamentarians. Delegates were encouraged to watch a new film entitled *Who I Am Not* which followed the experiences of two intersex young people from South Africa.

The efforts of parliamentarians should be focused on one goal only: the pursuit of peace. There must be less weapons and less weapons financing. There must be less tactical voting and greater will to find common ground. Only then would the people of Palestine and Israel be able to live next to each other without fear of violence and intimidation.

He dreamt of a world where emergency item proposals on violent conflicts would no longer be needed at the IPU. He dreamt of a world based on mutual respect where faith was used to spread love rather than hatred and where diversity was considered something to embrace rather than fear. Parliamentarians should have the audacity to dream of world peace.

The people would never trust politicians who continued to ignore major issues. Focusing on winning would only yield the same result: a situation in which everyone lost.

Mr. M. Rezakhah (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that young people were taking to the streets and to social media to protest against the illegal occupation and genocide of Palestinians. Yet world leaders were responding by violently cracking down on protests, shutting down youth organizations and even putting young people in prison. In a world where freedom of speech against the Israeli occupation was not allowed, the young people involved had displayed nothing but leadership skills, risking their lives, their social media pages, their higher education and their freedom to stand up for what was right. As demonstrated by the debate on the emergency item, the majority voice could not prevail even within democratic organizations such as the IPU if that voice stood against Israeli war crimes. Before planting the seeds of youth leadership, it was vital to prepare the ground. Young people could not be told that the sky was the limit only to be uprooted when they expressed political views that others did not like.

Ms. F. Diarra (Finland) said that there was no democracy without participation and no participation without the involvement of everyone. Parliamentarians must be aware of the voices they were representing in the decision-making process.

Finland had been celebrated as a champion of equality during its last Government — a government led by five women from different parties with a young woman Prime Minister at the helm. However, the Government could not be described as representing true equality as all five women were highly educated white women from very similar backgrounds. Finland must do better. True equality meant ensuring that people from all backgrounds could participate in politics, including people with disabilities, people from migrant families, people living in poverty, people with mental health problems, people from sexual minorities and people from all genders. Parliaments were failing their people and failing democracy if anyone was excluded.

She called on the Islamic Republic of Iran to release activist, Narges Mohammadi, whose only crime had been defending women's rights. Finland stood in support of all Iranian women.

Mr. H. Aoyagi (Japan) said that the recent armed attacks on Israel carried out by Hamas had created an intolerable humanitarian crisis affecting thousands of innocent civilians. He strongly condemned the attacks and called on Hamas to withdraw and release the hostages immediately. Israel's complete blockade of Gaza was equally distressing. Cutting off the supply of electricity, water and food to the region was putting two million people at risk. Propaganda and fake news had made it difficult to determine the truth, and a chain reaction of violence on the ground had triggered a continuous escalation of the conflict. Those events were far removed from the ideal of peace and justice for all set out under Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG 16). Both parties should exercise maximum restraint, enter into passionate dialogue and take action toward achieving a peaceful resolution that assigned the highest priority to the life and safety of the people. The international community should recognize the situation as a common risk and work together toward developing and implementing a lasting peace agreement.

Mr. K. Kabre (Burkina Faso) said that, since 2016, Burkina Faso, along with other Sahel countries, had been facing a terrorist war which had resulted in a security, humanitarian and political crisis. The war had shaken the very foundations of Burkina Faso, killing thousands of people and displacing many more, with women, children and young people particularly affected. Burkina Faso was doing its utmost to extract itself from the deadly cycles of a war that was causing unthinkable suffering and compromising the future of its young people. Quoting the former President of Burkina Faso, Thomas Sankara, he said that young people were a powerful force and the only way forward was to support them. He called on the international community to show solidarity for Burkina Faso and other Sahel countries by putting their words into action and fighting for peace.

Mr. S. Patra (India) said that a divided world could not provide solutions to the major challenges faced by humanity. There was a need to overcome the global trust deficit and move forward with human-centric thinking. All countries must embody the principle of “One Earth, One Family, One Future”. In that spirit, the Prime Minister of India had proposed that the African Union become a permanent member of the G20 — a proposal that had been accepted. India was pleased to see the participation of the Pan-African Parliament in the most recent P20.

India had been adversely affected by terrorism for decades. He regretted the lack of consensus on the definition of terrorism and warned that terrorists were taking advantage. Parliamentarians across the world, including young parliamentarians, must work together to fight terrorism.

India believed that governments were formed by the majority, but countries were run by consensus. It was possible to make the world a better place by holding debates and deliberations in parliament and at the IPU. Parliamentarians must unite in the name of peace, justice and strong institutions, taking inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi’s philosophy of non-violence and the two mantras of Vasudeva, namely “the world is one family” and “respect for all religions”.

Ms. H.Y. Shin (Republic of Korea) said that the objective of politics was to bridge diverse interests and pursue social integration, yet the world continued to see violence and war. She called on parliamentarians to consider what they were doing wrong. Unfortunately, politics could currently be described as a confrontation between fanatics from the far right and the far left. In the Republic of Korea, resentment and hatred still lingered as a result of the ideological clashes between the North and South. The situation was hindering the development of democracy.

With the growth of the mass media, politics was growing increasingly violent, with more and more instances of fake news, cyberattacks and deepfake technology. The world was in desperate need of non-violence and peace as well as strong, democratic institutions and policies that supported reconciliation and compromise. IPU meetings should be a space to share ideas, learn and overcome political violence.

Mr. Z. Beleniuk (Ukraine) drew attention to the similarities between Ukraine and Africa both of which had experienced colonial injustice and war. The Russian Federation was a colonial empire that had captured Ukraine, taken away its autonomy and killed thousands of Ukrainians. The international community should not believe the lie that the Russian Federation was fighting the West in Ukraine. The Russian aggression against Ukraine was not about the East and the West, or the North and the South, but about colonization and suppression. He called on delegates to stand with Ukraine and help build a just world free of imperialism and oppression.

Mr. K. Ait Mik (Morocco) said that SDG 16 could only be achieved by building just, democratic societies inclusive of everyone, especially young women, the elderly and persons with disabilities. Peace and justice were not possible without involving young people in all areas. Above all, young people must be economically empowered and permitted to take part in decision-making processes, thus helping to eradicate youth unemployment and violence. There were many vibrant and dynamic young parliamentarians in Morocco who were eager to use their experiences towards achieving SDG 16. Young parliamentarians must be at the heart of any crisis response.

Mr. A. Torosyan (Armenia) said that the role of democratically and transparently elected parliaments was crucial in turbulent times where democracy and the rule of law were under threat. Parliaments should serve as shock absorbers whenever any major crisis emerged. If democratically elected, parliaments could increase national resilience.

For the past three years, the Parliament of Armenia had been playing a pivotal role in maintaining peace and stability in the face of external and internal threats to the country’s sovereignty and statehood. After the recent ceasefire agreement had been reached between Armenia and Azerbaijan, different external and internal players had attempted to illegally seize power in Armenia. However, the democratically elected Parliament had been able to absorb the enormous shock, thus rescuing the country from chaos and civil war. The Parliament was also supporting peace talks with Azerbaijan. The involvement of elected parliamentarians in peace negotiations would help to achieve a long-lasting deal while their exclusion would result in a fragile, short-term deal.

Ms. O. Bakkali (Italy) said that parliamentarians had a moral imperative to stand on the side of peace, justice and democracy. They had a duty to give a voice to the people who voted for them, including marginalized groups, and advocate for human rights and social justice. They must consider the kind of role they wished to play in a world marked by multiple crises as well as the common path they would pursue together globally.

Conflicts around the world were derailing the global path to peace. The global community should find common ground by coordinating policies on issues such as climate change and poverty. Parliaments must work for a more inclusive and peaceful society and create real, credible prospects for the younger generation.

The abovementioned common ground was the rule of law. Defending international humanitarian law was vital in a world full of violence and war. It was necessary to clearly define the difference between war and terrorism, war and revenge, and soldiers and civilians.

Transnational communities and diasporas around the world had a major role to play in sustainable development and peacebuilding. The younger generation must also be involved both globally and locally. The desire of young people to build bridges instead of bombing them, as well as to create a world respectful of diversities and of the environment was very much needed.

Mr. M. Green (Canada) said that, to improve the material conditions of people around the world, it was necessary to build peaceful and sustainable communities and establish effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Yet, in practice, efforts to promote good governance had stalled globally. Good governance had been challenged by eroding trust in public institutions, regression in respect of human rights, a weakening of efforts to improve social inclusion, and stagnation on a number of SDG targets related to justice, including timely and affordable access to justice.

Parliamentarians must restore public trust by addressing structural and economic inequalities in society. They must strengthen the capacities of institutions to secure justice for all and take action to enhance government transparency and accountability.

Despite making up the majority of the world's population, young people under 30 were represented by fewer than 3% of parliamentarians. Increasing the number of young parliamentarians was one way to accelerate representative decision-making and thus make progress on SDG 16.

The only way forward was to take bold action and embrace transformation towards climate and economic justice. No country could tackle global challenges alone.

Ms. C. Cerqueira (Angola), President of the Assembly, took the Chair.

Mr. K. Bayramov (Azerbaijan) said that sustainable peace and development were fundamental for the future of the planet and humanity. The effective implementation of peacebuilding, conflict resolution and reconciliation initiatives required proactive engagement and collaboration by parliaments both nationally and globally. Parliamentarians could advocate for peace through their legislative, oversight and representative functions. They must make greater use of their legislative power, monitor the activity of the government, and serve as a liaison between the people and the authorities. Parliamentarians were also encouraged to promote a more holistic understanding of peace, security and stability as well as to actively engage with relevant stakeholders such as government agencies, civil society organizations and local communities. Fostering dialogue and collaboration on peace could facilitate coordination among different actors, help address implementation challenges, and ensure that diverse perspectives were considered.

Members of parliament must demonstrate a long-term commitment to peace initiatives. Peacebuilding was often a complex and time-consuming process requiring sustained efforts over an extended period of time. Parliamentarians should advocate for the continuity of peace programmes beyond political cycles and ensure that commitments were upheld over time. By actively engaging in oversight, collaboration and advocacy, members of parliament could contribute to lasting peace and stability.

Mr. K.J. Skriver (Denmark) said that it was important to gain the trust and confidence of the new generation. He was optimistic at the strong engagement of young people on issues such as climate change and human rights but concerned that many political parties were unable to attract young people. Denmark usually had a very high voter turnout in parliamentary elections — approximately 85% — yet only 3% of the population was a member of a political party. His Parliament must make politics more relevant for the younger generation and boost cooperation with international organizations.

Denmark understood the value of an international order where all countries, large and small, had an equal voice, based on the principle of sovereign equality. The country was running for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the period 2025–2026 and was committed to inclusive multilateralism and an international rule of law. The United Nations (UN) should promote shared solutions to joint problems.

One of the basic challenges for representative democracy was the imprisonment of hundreds of parliamentarians and human rights defenders around the world. One such person was the Danish citizen, Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, who had been imprisoned in Bahrain for more than 12 years on the basis of arbitrary accusations. The Danish IPU delegation appealed for his immediate release.

Parliaments must listen to the younger generation, inspiring them to take part in democracy. They must do so not only through words but also through action.

Presentation of the IPU Cremer-Passy Prize

Mr. D. Pacheco (President of the IPU) said that the Cremer-Passy Prize was named after the two founding fathers of the IPU, William Randal Cremer and Frédéric Passy, whose vision of tolerance, diplomacy and peace was needed more than ever today. The Prize was awarded every year to one parliamentarian who had made an outstanding contribution to the promotion of IPU objectives. In 2023, in view of the recent launch of the climate campaign, *Parliaments for the Planet*, the Prize would be awarded to a parliamentarian who had made an outstanding contribution to climate action.

Each of the geopolitical groups had been asked to submit one nomination from their region and a second nomination as an alternative. The winner had been selected according to the Prize Rules by a selection board made up of honorary IPU Presidents and prominent members of parliaments. He was delighted to announce that the winner of the 2023 Cremer-Passy Prize was Mr. Samuelu Penitala Teo, Speaker of Parliament of Tuvalu.

Mr. M. Dick (Australia), Chair of the Asia-Pacific Group, said that it was with great pleasure that Australia had put forward the nomination of Mr. Teo. Mr. Teo had been a strong advocate on climate change action over his long parliamentary career having been appointed Minister of Natural Resources of Tuvalu in 2001, Special Envoy on Climate Change in 2015, Special Envoy for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2018 and Speaker of Parliament in 2019. As part of those roles, Mr. Teo had travelled the world to raise awareness of sea level rise and to advocate for climate action.

Tuvalu's three reef islands and six atolls sat less than five metres above sea level, making it the world's second lowest lying country and highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. As well as rising sea levels, the nation faced other climate threats, including cyclones, droughts and coastal erosion. With the impact of climate change surfacing as an unprecedented threat to the nationhood of Tuvalu, Mr. Teo had been tireless in his efforts to secure international support for climate action. He thanked Mr. Teo for his efforts and offered him his congratulations.

A short video about the winner of the 2023 Cremer-Passy Prize was played.

Mr. S.P. Teo (Tuvalu) thanked the IPU for recognizing his work. Tuvalu was doing its utmost to beat climate change, particularly sea level rise. He was sure that it could be done and that the planet would be saved as a result.

Mr. D. Pacheco (President of the IPU) wished to express his solidarity with the countries suffering as a result of climate change. Although Tuvalu was a small country, it had the same relevance as any other country within the IPU.

Report on youth participation in national parliaments: 2023

Mr. M. Chungong (Secretary General of the IPU) said that the youth movement within the IPU had started in 2010 at a time when young people had been expressing discontent with the way their countries were being governed. Parliamentarians at the time had felt it important to bring youth voices into the mainstream. As such, the IPU had made it its mission to encourage young people around the world to participate in political processes and thus restore trust in public institutions. In that context, at the 122nd IPU Assembly in 2010, Members had adopted a resolution entitled *Youth Participation in the Democratic Process* which had set the stage for the establishment of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

Prior to the IPU youth movement, no data had existed on the ages of parliamentarians around the world nor had anyone compiled a list of good practices to promote youth in parliament. For that reason, one of the key recommendations of the abovementioned resolution was to collect data on youth in parliament. It was thus that the IPU report on youth participation in national parliaments had been born. In 2023, the IPU was launching its fifth edition of the report which had become an

authoritative source of information on youth in parliament. Indeed, the report had been cited by international organizations, academics and global media outlets, and served as an official reference point for SDG 16.

Ms. E.T. Muteka (Namibia), Member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that the IPU report on youth participation in national parliaments was loaded with data, rankings and trends. The findings showed that only 2.8% of parliamentarians worldwide were under 30, only 1.4% were young women under 30, as much as 39% of parliaments did not have a single parliamentarian under 30, and just 15 Speakers of Parliament were under 40, of which only 5 were women.

A short video about the report [Youth participation in national parliaments: 2023](#) was played.

Ms. E.T. Muteka (Namibia), Member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, said that, although facts and figures were important, the 2023 edition of the report went even further and called for action. Indeed, a new section had been added which delved deep into each of the pledges of the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign and described how parliaments were implementing them. The result was a compilation of key takeaways, lessons learned and good practices that could guide the work of all parliamentarians, both young and old. She invited a number of young parliamentarians to present the ways in which their national parliaments were implementing the said pledges.

Ms. S. Mwamba (Zambia) said, that after its launch in 2022, the youth caucus in the Zambian Parliament had developed a strategic plan for the year 2023–27 which included an objective to build the capacities of young parliamentarians and aspiring youth. In that context, the youth caucus had taken part in a number of engagements, including the *What Young People Want* campaign, and had conducted a consultative meeting that had called for legislative reforms on climate change. In addition, Zambia had hosted a summit for young women leaders in Africa and established a collaborative relationship with youth researchers. The researchers provided youth caucus members with information, thus enabling them to undertake their functions more effectively.

Mr. M. Green (Canada) called on parliamentarians to use the findings of the report as motivation to take urgent action. The report showed that young people represented only 2.8% of parliamentarians. The population of young people was growing but their representation was shrinking. It was vital to identify, engage and enrol young people in national political systems. The older generation should consider capping its time in power to create space for young people in politics, including within the IPU.

Mr. P. Udompipatskul (Thailand) said that, in recent years, many young people in Thailand had been recruited by political parties and other vibrant political movements, and were more involved in politics thanks to social media. Those were crucial factors in how Thailand had managed to elect a record number of young parliamentarians under 45 in the latest election (42%) and appoint nine young parliamentarians as chairs of parliamentary committees. With the youth caucus and the parliamentary committee on youth engagement at the forefront of the agenda, he was certain that the voices of young people in Thailand would be heard, their rights guaranteed, and their concerns addressed. The Parliament of Thailand was determined to foster a nurturing ecosystem for youth, allowing them to shape the future.

Mr. K. Ait Mik (Morocco) welcomed the report on youth participation in national parliaments: an important tool that would help promote the inclusion of young people in politics. All parliamentarians should draw on the report to boost the representation of young people in political institutions, particularly parliaments. A great deal of progress had been achieved since the launch of the youth movement in the IPU in 2010 but more remained to be done to achieve full equity.

Morocco had taken many diverse measures to promote the representation of young people in Parliament, such as introducing youth quotas. A satisfactory level of youth participation could be observed in both the lower and higher chamber. He believed that youth participation could only bring positive results.

Mr. D. Pacheco (President of the IPU) said that, as indicated in the report, young people were a huge part of society but did not have enough representation in parliament. Democracy would not be inclusive if young people did not feel represented.

Item 4 of the agenda**Special accountability segment on the implementation of IPU resolutions and other decisions**

Ms. A. Filip (IPU Director of the Division for Member Parliaments and External Relations), accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation, drew attention to the annual reporting exercise by the IPU Members on actions taken to follow up on IPU resolutions, Assemblies and other initiatives. The report, which was very comprehensive, provided a wealth of good practices and examples.

A standardized survey to facilitate the reporting exercise had been sent to all IPU Members in March 2023. A total of 45 Members had been scheduled to complete the survey on the basis of a rotational system while all other Members had been invited to take part voluntarily. Over 70% of those scheduled to complete the survey had indeed done so and several countries had submitted voluntary reports. Two geopolitical groups had a response rate of 100%, three had a response rate of 60 to 67%, and one had a response rate of 35%.

The survey had revealed that a total of 85% of Members shared IPU Assembly outcomes widely within their respective parliaments and that over 50% of those countries took additional measures, such as drafting new legislation or revising existing legislation. There had been positive engagement across all regions on the two IPU priority areas for 2023, namely climate change and gender equality. Some good examples of implementation included the establishment of a special programme by Germany to defend the human rights of parliamentarians, the formation of the African Parliamentary Network for Climate Action by Ghana and the holding of debates in Latvia to follow up on IPU resolutions.

The IPU Members were ultimately in the driving seat for implementing IPU outcomes and were encouraged to: (1) submit Assembly reports to Parliament; (2) share copies of Assembly declarations and resolutions with other parliamentarians; (3) promote debates in specialized committees or in the plenary on IPU outcomes; (4) draft legislation or amendments aligned with the commitments made in IPU resolutions and recommendations; and (5) systematically engage in the yearly IPU reporting exercise.

She drew attention to the countries scheduled to complete the survey in 2024 and invited any other interested Members to also take part.

Mr. P.S. Rudana (Indonesia) said that Indonesia had an unwavering commitment to IPU resolutions and was working hard to implement them. In response to the Kigali Declaration on *Gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments as drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful world*, the House of Representatives of Indonesia was considering a bill on the welfare of women and children, which would, among other things, improve women's rights in the workplace, including by extending maternity leave. He himself was a male ally pushing for gender equality to be mainstreamed throughout the world and advocating for laws and policies that benefitted women.

In line with the IPU resolution entitled *Parliamentary efforts in achieving negative carbon emission balances of forests*, Indonesia was supporting the transition to a green economy, including the energy transition, and was working to implement its own white paper on the topic. It also continued to prioritize discussions on a new renewable energy bill, to phase out fossil fuel subsidies while also putting a carbon markets scheme into effect and to strive for its Forestry and Other Land Uses Net Sink 2030.

Ms. S. Atallahjan (Canada) said that important strides had been made in Canada towards implementing the Kigali Declaration. For example, the Senate currently had more women members than men and had recently appointed a woman Speaker – the third woman to ever serve in the role. However, gender equality in parliament was not solely a numbers game but required long-standing structural inequalities to be addressed. Since assuming office in 2010, she herself had been a staunch advocate for gender equality in Canada and abroad. Presently, she chaired the Senate's committee on human rights and, in 2020, had proposed a study on how to increase women's participation in Afghan society.

Canada was making progress towards the 10-year plan of action on gender equality outlined in the Kigali Declaration. For example, a committee on the status of women had been set up in the House of Commons and gender issues were being incorporated into the budgeting process. Furthermore, the research team at the Library of the Canadian Parliament supported parliamentarians in conducting gender-based analysis of government legislation and other initiatives.

Mr. K.P. Tasa (India) said that India had a long history of following up on IPU decisions. Under Rule 377 of the Rules of Procedure of the Lok Sabha, parliamentarians were permitted to raise matters of public importance not raised during sessions which were then followed up upon by the relevant ministries. Efforts were being made to ensure early replies and the rate of reply had increased significantly.

India was not only focusing on women in parliament but also promoting woman-led development. The Women's Reservation Bill had recently been passed which reserved one third of parliamentary seats to women. It was a landmark law that would go a long way in empowering women.

In its nationally determined contributions, India had called for the mindful and deliberate utilization of resources instead of mindless and destructive consumption, and reinforced India's long-term goal of reaching net zero emissions by 2070. The country had recently hosted the P20 and G20 summits which reflected India's commitment to democratic values, international cooperation and joint parliamentary approaches to global challenges such as climate change.

India was committed to enhancing accountability, transparency and follow-up within the IPU so that the IPU's work could make a meaningful impact around the world.

Mr. I. Seruiratu (Fiji) said that the Fijian Parliament had taken legislative action to address cybercrime and provide redress and legal protection to victims. In 2018, the Parliament had passed the Online Safety Act which established the Online Safety Commission. The Commission was an avenue for citizens to raise concerns and complaints with respect to electronic communications. In 2021, the Parliament had enacted the Cybercrime Act, which set out computer- and content-related offences, such as computer-related forgery and extortion, and provided procedural requirements and remedies for cybercrime. Fiji was a signatory to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime and had been invited to accede. In June 2023, the parliamentary Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee had tabled a review report on the Convention based on extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including government agencies, law enforcement, non-governmental organizations and private Information and Communication Technology (ICT) companies. In its report, the Committee had strongly recommended that Parliament ratify the Convention without reservations. It had also called for more resources for implementing agencies and more advocacy and education for the general public, including students.

Mr. C. Pereira (Portugal) said that Portugal had been vocal in condemning the unjustified invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation and in supporting the Ukrainian people. It was vital to investigate the atrocities committed against civilians, including the rape, torture and killing of women and children, as well as to convict perpetrators. He condemned, in particular, the massacre in Bucha, the attacks on the Kakhovka dam and power plant, which had had immense environmental consequences, and the regional elections held by the Russian Federation on Ukrainian territory.

The position of Portugal in relation to the Russian aggression had been clear from the beginning. Portugal had expressed concern as early as 2018 when tensions had escalated near the Sea of Azov, calling for dialogue and diplomacy, and the reinstatement of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In 2021, one year prior to the invasion, Portugal had objected to the concentration of Russian military forces near the eastern border of Ukraine, calling for disarmament and warning of potential conflict in the future.

He congratulated the Ukrainian people on their resistance which was a fight for human rights, the rule of law and democracy. Parliamentarians should show solidarity with Ukraine and support their sacred right to decide on their destiny within Europe.

Mr. J. Fakhro (Bahrain) said that the Shura Council and the Council of Representatives worked together to mainstream gender equality into all legislation. They had established parliamentary committees fully dedicated to gender parity and had a strong relationship with the Supreme Council for Women. Recently, the number of women parliamentarians had reached 25% in the Shura Council and 20% in the House of Representatives.

For many years, Bahrain had been striving to cultivate peaceful coexistence in its society. Freedom of belief was enshrined in the Constitution, allowing people to practise any religion equally and without restrictions. In addition, the Parliament was working on a law that criminalized blasphemy against any religion and had set up the King Hamad Global Centre for Peaceful Coexistence.

Bahrain assigned a great deal of importance to fighting cybercrime. It had established a national cybersecurity centre and devised a national strategy for cybersecurity. A number of laws had also been passed, including a law on the protection of personal data.

His Parliament had recently established a ministry dedicated specifically to the environment, established a national policy to achieve zero emissions and carbon neutrality by 2060 and passed a new law on protecting the environment.

Mr. M.F. Balde (Guinea) said that the Parliament of Guinea drafted a report after every IPU Assembly which was then sent to the National Transitional Council and read out loud in plenary. In addition, a committee had recently been set up responsible for implementing IPU decisions and resolutions.

During the current period of transition, Guinea hoped to establish gender equality as a key principle in law, including in the Constitution. As such, it was holding consultations with women's groups and other non-governmental organizations with a view to drafting new gender-sensitive bills. A great deal remained to be addressed, including the high number of out-of-school girls.

In response to the resolution adopted at the 145th IPU Assembly in Kigali entitled *Parliamentary impetus to local and regional development of countries with high levels of international migration and to stopping all forms, including state-sponsored, of human-trafficking and human rights abuses*, Guinea — which was among the top five countries of origin of asylum-seekers — would work with international organizations to dissuade young people from migrating, for instance, by creating revenue-generating schemes in urban and rural areas. Guinea would use its national budget to finance youth projects and incorporate clauses on the topic in its national legislation.

To ensure more effective implementation of IPU decisions and resolutions, it was important to give technical and financial support to African parliaments. Indeed, many parliaments did not have the resources necessary to take action.

Ms. L. Crexell (Argentina) said that Argentina lacked the institutional mechanisms needed to implement international policies, such as those issued at the IPU, at the domestic level. Parliamentarians who attended IPU meetings must make up for the above lack by becoming the spokespeople for IPU initiatives. She had personally presented to her Parliament the issues discussed at the 146th IPU Assembly and was working on the cases of parliamentarians facing human rights violations, particularly those from Afghanistan. Her Parliament was also considering introducing humanitarian visas for displaced persons. Overall, the work of implementing IPU decisions and resolutions nationally would involve incorporating new clauses into domestic legislation and carrying out a greater range of activities.

Mr. U. Lechte (Germany) drew attention to the *Parliamentarians Protect Parliamentarians* programme launched by the German Bundestag in 2003. The programme was based on the premise that parliamentarians who could exercise their mandate in safety had colleagues in other countries who were at risk and should therefore use their network of international contacts to support them. The programme was a strong sign of solidarity between German and foreign politicians and an important contribution to a credible human rights policy in Germany. A total of 95 members of the German Parliament were currently involved in the programme sponsoring a total of 187 people from 43 countries.

Human rights were nothing less than a foundation for peace. Thus, parliamentarians had a special obligation to protect those who stood up for them. He called on every IPU Member Parliament to establish a mechanism to systematically monitor human rights violations and take action where needed. Human rights could only be achieved together.

Mr. A. Suwanmongkol (Thailand) said that Thailand had taken important steps to implement the IPU recommendation on the parliamentary road to support the implementation of the latest UN Human Rights Council recommendation under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. Upon receiving the recommendation, the matter had been immediately referred to the foreign affairs and human rights committees of both houses. The Foreign Affairs Committee of the lower house had then launched an inquiry to investigate the matter by summoning relevant authorities including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and the National Human Rights Commission. A number of key suggestions had come out of the inquiry, including the need to come up with a concrete UPR national action plan, and draft a specific law ensuring more robust preparation and follow-up in the UPR process. In addition, the Thai Government had been requested to provide an update on the progress made towards implementing UPR recommendations as well as to meaningfully and systematically engage all relevant stakeholders, including the Parliament, in all stages of national UPR consultations. Lastly, an official communication had been sent to the IPU Secretary General providing updates on Thailand's parliamentary contribution to the UPR process.

Ms. L. Crexell (Argentina) took the Chair.

Ms. K. Slassi (Morocco) said that the recommendations and resolutions of the 144th IPU Assembly on gender equality were fully in line with Morocco's approach to the issue and had therefore been turned into national legislation. Additionally, Morocco had launched a cybersecurity programme aiming to improve the country's capacities in the area and introduced penalties for perpetrators of cybercrime. Laws and policies had also been passed on achieving negative carbon balances of forests, ensuring forest protection and rationing water. Morocco was not only a country of transit for migrants but had now become a country of destination thanks to the wide range of services it offered to migrant workers, including health care and education. A law on countering human trafficking had also been enacted. Lastly, as the land of plurality and tolerance, Morocco had hosted the most recent Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue in Marrakech.

Mr. M. Nadir (Guyana) said that Guyana had come a long way in reforming its Parliament and had advanced on many IPU resolutions, even before they had been passed. For example, it had been 20 years ago that Guyana had first required one third of candidates to be women. As such, women now represented 30% of parliamentarians. Similarly, a women's caucus had already existed in Guyana prior to joining the IPU and had now been reactivated. Guyana was also at the forefront of climate action having put in place a low carbon development strategy.

Implementation of IPU outcomes depended on parliamentarians putting forward initiatives. However, in the Westminster system, which was the system in Guyana, it was the government that usually put forward initiatives. To overcome the problem, Guyana had set up a parliamentary management committee which accepted initiatives from parliamentarians and the government in equal measure. One initiative being discussed currently was the need to make space for women parliamentarians and staff to bring their children to Parliament.

He, as Speaker of the National Assembly, made an announcement to the National Assembly after every IPU Assembly drawing attention to the resolutions and decisions passed, and encouraging parliamentarians to take them as guidance. The resolutions and decisions were then circulated in the National Assembly.

Mr. M. Pramanik (Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)) said that the importance of prioritizing the health of women, children and adolescents as matters of social development rested squarely with parliaments in their legislative, oversight and budgetary capacities. He drew attention to a number of IPU outcomes of particular significance, such as the resolutions entitled *Access to health as a basic right: The role of parliaments in addressing key challenges to securing the health of women and children* and *Achieving universal health coverage by 2030: The role of parliaments in ensuring the right to health*. Those resolutions were very much in accordance with the principles of the *Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016-2030)*, which recognized parliaments as key actors in sustainable development.

The PMNCH had developed, and was now implementing, a country-led process of identifying and assessing the status of government commitments towards improving the health of women, children and adolescents. The process was a multistakeholder consultative process that involved parliamentarians.

The IPU Member Parliaments should discuss the abovementioned resolutions in their legislative bodies and take action accordingly. He supported the IPU recommendation to facilitate information sharing and exchange of best practices across parliamentary committees and parliaments, as well as the recommendation to promote debates in parliament and revisit IPU resolutions if necessary. There was also a need to strengthen existing laws and policies or to draft new ones.

Item 3 of the agenda
(continued)

General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)*
(A/147/3-Inf.1)

Mr. W. Soto Palacios (Peru), resuming the special segment of the General Debate reserved for young parliamentarians, said that Peru was facing growing insecurity and terror and had therefore declared a state of emergency in some areas of its capital. To address the problem, some were in favour of eradicating delinquency while others of pursuing prevention efforts. Whatever the solution,

parliamentarians must be involved given their role in passing laws that regulated the behaviour of citizens, thus creating a fairer and more peaceful society. It was not possible to achieve peace if people were not given justice. Parliamentarians were the ones passing the laws that allowed for justice and were therefore key players.

The people of Peru were largely disillusioned with the judicial power given its involvement in corrupt practices, including the impunity it granted to people with economic or political power. It was also common for politicians to engage in personal or political bargaining that served their own interests. The system was in dire need of reform. Having strong institutions meant having model politicians with a high level of ethical integrity.

Mr. K.U. Ritter Ocampo (Mexico) said that Mexico was currently undergoing a transformation led by young people. Young people were speaking up against climate change and war, fighting for human rights and condemning social injustices. The number of young people in government positions or serving as legislators was also increasing. In Mexico, 13 parliamentarians were aged 29 or less and the person with the second highest ranking in the Federal Government was a woman of only 36 years of age. In 2024, the country was also expected to elect a female President. The Parliament had recently approved a reform allowing Mexican citizens aged 18 years or over to serve as deputies. The reform was evidence of Mexico's commitment to putting more young people in representative and decision-making positions. The world needed the new ideas and perspectives of young people to tackle global challenges.

Ms. F. Muyumba Furaha (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that Angola, a country once ravaged by war, had transformed into a beacon of stability. It gave her hope that her country would one day enjoy development and good governance too.

Due to the ongoing conflict, millions of Congolese people had been internally displaced without access to humanitarian aid and subjected to human rights violations, such as rape. Vulnerable women and children were amongst those displaced. It was vital to end the suffering and impose penalties on the aggressors.

The conflict between Israel and Palestine had cost thousands of lives, including those of innocent children. She called on the international community to implement all relevant UN resolutions and urged the parties to the conflict to prioritize peace over violence.

Many populations, including hers, had lost confidence in their governing institutions. Yet, having effective institutions was a precondition to development. A holistic approach to reforming the public sector was needed, in which public finances and public procurement were managed effectively.

All countries must act within the limits of the rule of law. The rule of law referred to a system of laws developed on the basis of transparency, democracy, pluralism and accountability. It went hand in hand with the establishment of judicial protection, including access to justice, an independent and impartial judiciary and a separation of powers. Individuals should enjoy equal protection under the rule of law with no arbitrary use of power by the authorities. Nobody should be above law.

Mr. M. Ramírez (Chile), quoting Salvador Allende, said that to be young and not a revolutionary was a biological contradiction. Youth was not just a stage of life but a socio-political construct. It went hand in hand with profound, revolutionary social change and should be harnessed by international organizations.

The concept of peace and justice was much more complex and wide-ranging than many wished to recognize. It was vital to take action against the use of embargos, such as those imposed on Cuba and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, which was a way of exerting pressure on countries. It was also vital to stand against the illegal occupation of territories, as was happening in Palestine. Young people were the ones calling such measures into question. Parliamentarians must take decisions that fostered peace and justice internationally always keeping the wellbeing of the people in mind.

Mr. M.A. Bouchouit (Algeria) called on the international community to fight for peace in Palestine, speak out in favour of the Palestinian people, including women and children, and guarantee their rights to life and land. It was vital to stop the killings and destruction, and to end the impunity enjoyed by the perpetrators. Unfortunately, however, many countries did not want peace. He asked for forgiveness from the Palestinian people for not being able to defend them.

Ms. B. Lasi (Socialist International) said that international cooperation must be strengthened to address global challenges and reform the global governance system. The challenges of today were more complex, interlinked and daunting than ever before. Inequalities persisted, thus threatening the

fabric of society. Climate change was an existential crisis that demanded global solidarity. The ongoing disregard for human rights remained a stain on the collective conscience. The war in Ukraine, the escalating conflict in Gaza and the democratic crisis in the Sahel were just some examples of the suffering endured. In the face of those challenges, the global governance system was showing signs of strain and inadequacy. It was vital to commit to the principles underpinning the UN, such as cooperation, diplomacy and multilateralism.

The global governance system itself required reform. It must become more inclusive, transparent and responsive. Global institutions must reflect the diversity of the world, allowing all nations, large or small, to have a meaningful say in shaping global policies. The voice of the Global South must be amplified and its interests upheld. Global challenges did not recognize boundaries or party lines and required the international community to work together. Parliamentarians must keep their constituents at heart, become the voice of reason and compassion, and advocate for a world where dignity, opportunity and justice were accessible to all. Reforming the global governance system and strengthening international cooperation was not an option but a necessity.

Mr. L. Wehrli (Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie (APF)) said that the number of acute political crises occurring in francophone countries, particularly in Africa, had multiplied in recent years. Measures must be taken to ensure that parliamentary democracy was not called into question, particularly by young people many of whom lacked economic and social prospects.

The APF was focusing on three areas of action: (1) maintaining channels of communication with parliaments in transition; (2) engaging in parliamentary cooperation; and (3) strengthening its contribution to parliamentary democracy.

A number of Member Parliaments had been suspended from the APF following coups d'état. The APF, however, continued to support those parliaments, facilitating their return to constitutional order. Suspended parliaments were invited to regional meetings, supported with capacity building programmes and received financing to organize events for high-level civil servants. Given the continuity that existed between parliamentary administrations, improving the skills of civil servants in transition periods prepared them to face the challenges of the future, democratically elected parliament.

The APF was working on becoming more engaged on the diplomatic scene. It had great potential to provide added value given its French-speaking and parliamentary nature. Parliamentarians must defend their legitimate right to engage in diplomacy alongside the executive — a right they were often denied.

He called for stronger cooperation between the IPU, the APF and other regional and subregional parliamentary organizations with a view to creating a common strategy on parliamentary diplomacy. Parliaments should pool their efforts so that they carried more weight geopolitically.

Mr. R.H. Langhoff (Denmark) underscored the need for parliamentary action to promote peace, justice and strong institutions. The world was facing many overwhelming challenges, such as climate change, war and terrorism, which were manmade. The time for action was now. Parliamentarians must do their homework within their national parliaments while also engaging in international cooperation.

Denmark understood the value of an international order where all countries, large and small, had an equal voice based on the principle of sovereign equality. The country was running for a non-permanent seat in the UN Security Council for the period 2025–26. If elected, it would be a strong voice for the meaningful engagement of non-permanent members and would continue advocating for reform towards a more accountable, coherent, transparent and effective Security Council. Denmark was committed to inclusive multilateralism and an international rule of law and called on the UN to promote shared solutions to joint problems. The country was prioritizing climate solidarity and striving to reduce its own carbon footprint.

Hundreds of parliamentarians and human rights defenders around the world had been imprisoned or otherwise obstructed from doing their work. One such person was Danish citizen, Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, who had been imprisoned in Bahrain for more than 12 years. Similarly, Narges Mohammadi, a human rights activist, who had struggled against the oppression of women in the Islamic Republic of Iran, had been sentenced to a total of 31 years in prison. He appealed for the immediate release of the two abovementioned people.

Lastly, Denmark expressed its full support for the Ukrainian people and urged the Russian Federation to withdraw its troops from Ukraine.

Mr. M. Nandlall (Guyana) said that justice, including legal, social and ecological justice, was a prerequisite for world peace. Justice was guaranteed by the rule of law while strong institutions ensured the maintenance of the rule of law. The alternative was anarchy, war and human degradation.

The rule of law was maintained through strong legal frameworks, transparent and accountable governance, vibrant democratic institutions, robust parliaments and independent judicial systems at the national level and through compliance with international law at the global level. Public institutions must be adequately resourced and those who managed them must discharge their functions faithfully and fairly. Only then would it be possible to attract public trust. Public officials should be elected or appointed in processes that were lawful, democratic and transparent.

Nationally, governments and parliaments alike must ensure access to justice. Justice must not only be available to the rich and the powerful but also to the poor and indigent. The justice system itself must not be cumbersome but simple to engage with. It must not be a cloistered virtue but subjected to the scrutiny and fair criticism of the ordinary man. Globally, States must comply with international law and be bound by the decisions and processes of international organizations such as the UN and the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was proposing to hold an illegal referendum seeking to annex more than two thirds of Guyana's sovereign territory. The issue was before the ICJ, yet the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela continued with its illegal conduct. Such actions undermined public institutions, engendered conflicts and violated the principles of peace and justice. He called on the IPU to condemn the actions of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and demand respect for the legal process before the ICJ.

A delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran delivered a statement in exercise of the right of reply.

The sitting rose at 17:55.

Hearing with candidates for IPU President

SITTING OF THURSDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2023

(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 17:00 with Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), President of the IPU, in the Chair.

The President said that the attendees' presence demonstrated genuine commitment to the IPU's future because they wanted to make an informed decision about their vote. It was an honour to be involved in the session with four strong women from Africa running for IPU President. He thanked the four candidates for their willingness to serve those they represented and parliaments worldwide. With their work ethic, knowledge and intelligence, the IPU would be in safe hands.

Ms. C. Cerqueira (Angola), President of the Assembly, thanking the four candidates and attendees, said that the meeting would be a platform for mutual understanding and that different topics would be tackled.

The President said that he had agreed with the candidates on the order in which they would speak.

Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal) said that she had been elected as a deputy in the National Assembly of Senegal in 2017 and 2022. She was Vice-President of the Presidential Majority Group and she worked on women's and children's issues. She had studied business communication and project management. Within the IPU, she had been a member and Vice-President of the Executive Committee, member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and member of the Sub-Committee on Finance, as well as Vice-President of the IPU. She had worked with the current IPU President to increase the IPU's visibility. Her experience had provided her with an understanding of the IPU's functioning and she could therefore start presidential work immediately, which was essential given that the mandate was for three years only.

She supported the core values of the IPU, including parliamentary diplomacy for peace and democracy, and would continue to do so. Her experience within the IPU would be put at the service of parliamentarians worldwide. Given that she was not the Speaker of the National Assembly of Senegal and that she had rejected high-level positions within her country, she had the time, energy, commitment and determination to dedicate herself exclusively to the IPU. She would pursue her priorities, particularly the holding of public meetings, which would ensure that political action impacted the general public. She would work alongside national parliaments to ensure that IPU resolutions impacted them. She would strengthen the work of the IPU regional bureaux and would establish more. She would continue the President's work within the Executive Committee to increase youth representation in parliaments. In Senegal, work to achieve absolute gender parity had been carried out and would be replicated in other parliaments. She would also prioritize religious tolerance. The Working Group on Transparency, Accountability and Openness would receive significant resources to strengthen and ensure the relevance of its work, particularly on transparency. She wanted to bridge the divide between nations and to be a parliamentarian for the world.

Ms. C. Gotani Hara (Malawi) said that she was the first female Speaker of the National Assembly of Malawi. She had 15 years of leadership experience and had worked as Minister of Natural Resources and Climate Change, Minister of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, Minister of Transport and Public Works, and Minister of Health. Those positions overlapped with IPU strategic objectives and qualified her to be IPU President. If elected, she would focus on climate change in particular. Parliamentarians were responsible for overseeing climate spending and the IPU President should liaise with those parties that were supposed to contribute resources to fight climate change. Although targets for women's representation were being achieved, it was necessary to empower women parliamentarians and ensure that they were the best possible representatives of women. Having chaired the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, she knew resources were available and the IPU should ensure that women parliamentarians received them. She would ensure that the percentage of young parliamentarians – currently at 2.8% – increased, including on the IPU Executive Committee, which should have three representatives (a man, a woman and a young parliamentarian) instead of two from each region. Young parliamentarians who were trained impacted other parliamentarians and she would therefore use her lobbying skills to access resources to establish an academy.

The world was facing many crises, including wars, conflict, high cost of living and pandemics, all of which required a rapid response. However, the IPU 2022-2026 Strategy was merely a statement of intent. In the past, some IPU deliberations had become protracted and irrelevant, but ordinary people required immediate responses to crises. As IPU President, she would advocate to change the Statutes and create a rapid response team, similar to the United Nations (UN) Security Council. The Executive Committee could carry out the duties of that team or a new body could be established. The IPU should strive to be globally relevant and proactive; its leader should be responsive, fearless, decisive and proactive. She was determined, dynamic and always stood firm in her beliefs. It was not possible to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and maintain economic growth without peace. Every life mattered, regardless of religion or race, and citizens needed rapid solutions.

Ms. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania) said that she appreciated the President's efforts to achieve universal IPU membership, which she would continue. She had trained as a lawyer, obtained a doctorate in law and, at the age of 38, had been appointed Deputy Attorney General and Deputy Speaker of the Tanzanian National Assembly. The endorsements of the East African Community and the Southern African Development Community for her candidacy were humbling. She was acutely aware of the great responsibilities of the IPU President, particularly since both developed and developing countries faced many challenges, such as the effects of climate change, interstate conflicts, poverty, and threats to peace and security. However, she was confident that, if elected, she would have her colleagues' support. She had collaborated with them to uphold the shared IPU values of peace, justice, tolerance, respect and solidarity. Participating in IPU meetings and activities had provided her with a deep and clear understanding of the IPU's vision, mission and global role. Until very recently, she had been the President of the IPU African Group and she was proud of the Group's contribution to achieving IPU objectives, particularly with regard to addressing global challenges and ensuring sustainable development. The knowledge and experience she had gained over the years had improved her leadership skills and prompted her to run for the IPU presidency.

As President, she would work with all Member Parliaments to keep pace with global developments. Transparency and accountability would be at the forefront of her leadership. It was imperative that the IPU remained relevant and it would therefore work with Members to initiate reforms that would contribute to peaceful coexistence and global prosperity. To realize that vision, it would be necessary to undertake regular consultations within the IPU geopolitical groups to ensure their effective participation and representation within IPU organs. No organization could remain efficient and relevant without inclusivity. She would champion equitable representation in national parliaments, focusing particularly on women, youth and other marginalized groups. Discussions would focus on artificial intelligence (AI) and its impact on democracy, human rights and good governance. Her leadership would work tirelessly to ensure a more inclusive, sustainable and peaceful world. Other global and regional institutions shared IPU objectives and values. She would therefore strengthen cooperation with the UN, regional interparliamentary organizations and other stakeholders. She would always be guided by IPU decisions and resolutions, which were critical to ensuring that the IPU achieved its objectives, remained on the course envisioned by its Members, and that it implemented the IPU 2022-2026 Strategy. IPU finances should remain in good hands and efforts should be made to oversee contributors' finances.

Ms. M. Abdibashir Hagi (Somalia) said that she was still running in the election for IPU President despite the claim that she had withdrawn, which the Speaker of the Parliament of Somalia had made without her consent. Some elders had consulted with the Speaker and he had since apologized. Somalia had a deeply entrenched patriarchal culture and there was a reluctance to allow women to assume leadership positions.

She had worked in public relations, communications, marketing and the petroleum industry in various capacities, including as a project manager. She was passionate about eradicating poverty and she had helped women to access microfinancing. She was one of the few people who could help countries in that area. She would initiate discussions that promoted peace and prosperity for both developing and developed countries, with a focus on achieving the SDGs. Climate change posed an imminent threat but she had already planned how she could help and she had participated in forums such as the Africa Climate Summit. International peace and security were also priorities and serious discussions should be held to save millions of lives. Efforts should be made to address conflict, war and crime, and to reach resolutions that fostered peace for all. Terrorism was an ever-present danger and the world should unite to combat it. Having witnessed terrorist acts, she stood against terrorism and would use various methods to combat it. As President, she would ensure that the IPU collaborated with parliamentarians who advocated for humanity, regardless of one's origin, religion,

gender, race or politics. Women's political participation was crucial and many African countries experienced problems because women were oppressed. Unity and solidarity between youth parliaments and geopolitical groups were essential to ensuring change and freedoms. She was committed to supporting their work for a better future.

Votes in her favour would enable her to respond to needs and her supporters would not regret voting for her. She was a humble person. She encouraged votes based on her ideas and in support of women who came from countries that neglected women leaders. A vote for her represented hope.

The President opened the floor for the first round of questions, which could be addressed to all four candidates or to one in particular.

A delegate from Uganda, noting the IPU's principle of rotation, said that the IPU had had a President from western Africa (Senegal) and southern Africa (Namibia) and asked whether it was truly committed to helping marginalized groups. Eastern Africa had few countries and it should be given an opportunity through the election of Ms. Ackson from the United Republic of Tanzania.

The President reminded speakers that the purpose of the meeting was to ask candidates questions rather than express support for them.

A delegate from Uganda asked whether the IPU was genuinely rotating the region of its leadership.

The President said that rotation was an issue for the Secretariat, the President or all attendees. However, the current session was for questions to candidates.

A delegate from Uganda said that western Africa was already represented within the IPU by the Secretary General. As one of the presidential candidates was from the same region, that should be taken into account.

A delegate from Nigeria said that she appreciated that a woman would be the next IPU President. Addressing Ms. Ackson's comments about rapid responses, she asked what her strategies were for repositioning and improving the IPU so that other countries would be encouraged to seek IPU membership.

A delegate from Bahrain asked what the four candidates thought about the war in Gaza and how the Arab-Israeli conflict could be solved.

Ms. C. Gotani Hara (Malawi) said that the IPU was currently changing its Statutes, which would encourage change where necessary. As President, she would prioritize issues concerning resolution accountability and finances. Parliamentarians wanted to know how much was spent on them. It was also necessary to hold meetings and Assemblies in different geopolitical regions. The IPU should be brought closer to the public and every geopolitical region should hold an assembly to discuss different issues. She was aware of smaller countries' concern that they were overlooked, and suggested it might be preferable to consider them as one unit. Benchmarking exercises, similar to those held within the Commonwealth, should be held to facilitate the sharing of best practices. As she had mentioned earlier, it was also important to establish a rapid response team.

Regarding the conflict in Gaza, we should not look to blame one another. Instead, we should acknowledge that we were all partly responsible for global problems by not respecting each other's space. There were some who did not want to live in harmony. Those realizations were the first step to healing. As IPU President, she would lobby and promote dialogue between countries. The IPU represented the public. When the conflict in Ukraine had begun, the President had dispatched a team there because he realized that parliamentarians encouraged countries to return to the negotiating table. A rapid response team would help to provide a similar response to future conflicts.

Ms. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania) said that she would fully implement the IPU 2022-2026 Strategy, of which one of the five objectives was to promote inclusive and representative parliaments. That principle of inclusivity within the IPU should trickle down into national parliaments, and all groups within communities should be represented in decision-making processes. Following on from the progress made in representing women and youth, it was important to represent marginalized groups, including people with disabilities. National parliaments should learn from each other and

increase representation of those groups. Regarding financial transparency and accountability, the IPU was funded by subscriptions as well as by other contributions, and donors wanted to know how the IPU prioritized issues. As IPU President, she would ensure IPU finances were used to tackle priority issues. IPU resolutions and decisions should be implemented in national parliaments. The IPU was undergoing legal reforms that she would oversee, and she would ensure that when speakers took the floor, they presented the decisions and actions implemented in their respective countries. Regarding Gaza, parliamentarians should ensure that all parties to the conflict respected international law. Every life was equal and should be protected. International law and humanitarian principles should be observed at all times. Parliamentarians often decided that their country should go to war and they should therefore take responsibility for their decisions.

Ms. M. Abdibashir Hagi (Somalia) said that the IPU needed new ideas and innovation. It should help ensure effective and empowered parliamentarians by promoting inclusivity and greater representation in order to leave no one behind. Friendships should be developed and representatives of geopolitical regions should visit each other to share best practices and resolve issues. Accountability and transparency should be strengthened, and finance should be straightforward. Given her background as a computer programmer and software developer, she would create a piece of software for all to view IPU activities. She was the only candidate to have experienced war and seen the destruction it could cause. Therefore, she was well placed to handle the Arab-Israeli conflict. She had experience in mediation and she could foster dialogue, negotiations and consensus, and she would appoint people with the ability to bring others together.

Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal) said that she condemned all forms of violence and terrorism. She maintained that position in line with her belief in UN ideals and the principles expressed through IPU statements. In that vein, Palestinians' inalienable rights should be respected. Tensions should decrease and dialogue should be restored. The solution was political, not military, and should be reached by negotiating, respecting the fundamental rights of all parties, and upholding justice. Regarding the first question, she remained committed to exclusively serving the IPU and her parliamentary colleagues. She had experience in IPU governance and she had the necessary availability to serve as President.

The President opened the floor for the second round of questions.

A delegate from Kenya said that the vote would be historic because an African woman would become President of the IPU. Speaking in the spirit of the IPU principle of respect for international humanitarian law, he asked Ms. Abdibashir Hagi what specific efforts she had made, and what parliamentary action she had taken, to ensure that civilians were protected from political violence and that the violence did not spread to neighbouring countries. Over the previous year alone, there had been some 375 incidents of political violence and over 1,500 fatalities in Somalia. He then asked all candidates to disclose the subscription status of their parliament. All presidential candidates should be able to lobby and mobilize their own parliament to honour its IPU contribution.

Mr. P.F. Casini (Italy) said that the United States of America was not a Member of the IPU, despite years of efforts to extend membership to it. He asked the presidential candidates whether they thought it was important for the United States Congress to be represented within the IPU. He believed that it was essential for countries such as China, the Russian Federation and the United States of America to be IPU Members. What would the candidates do to compel the United States of America back to the IPU?

A delegate from Botswana said that the election of an African woman as IPU President would be a wonderful milestone. He asked candidates how well they thought the IPU had represented women, young people, people with disabilities and opposition members of parliament in IPU decision-making structures; and how would candidates ensure equitable and fair representation.

The President invited the candidates to answer the second round of questions.

Ms. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania) said that her country was up to date in its IPU subscription payments. Although the question from the delegate from Kenya was specific to the context in Somalia, it was important to note that parliaments advised governments and oversaw governmental activities, and they should therefore ensure governments adhered to international law.

There were 13 countries that were not IPU Members and her goal was to achieve IPU membership for all parliaments worldwide. The IPU prided itself on fostering dialogue and she would therefore continue the work of Mr. Casini and the current President to reach out to the United States of America. She was confident that her skills as a lawyer would persuade the United States of America and the remaining non-Member countries to join the IPU.

Work to ensure that youth and members of parliament from opposition parties were represented would begin in national parliaments. In some cases, the IPU had set quotas for women and youth, and it could do so for other groups. That would benefit opposition members of parliament, which was important because the IPU stood for democracy for all. Respect for democratic principles would ensure that youth and opposition members of parliament participated in decision-making.

Ms. M. Abdibashir Hagi (Somalia) said that it was important to be honest and frank, and the IPU needed a hard-working President. She was the only candidate from eastern Africa, which was the reason for the question from the delegate from Kenya. The previous months, the President of Somalia had been fighting terrorism, which was a global issue that also affected Kenya. Somalia had passed laws to try to prevent it. It was only the Speaker of the Parliament of Somalia, and not the Government or Parliament of Somalia, that did not want her to run for IPU President. The 329 members of the Somali Federal Parliament had supported her candidacy. Despite the earlier comment about the support of the East African Community, it was important to remember that she was east African.

She would travel to the United States of America to discuss and convince the United States Congress to return to the IPU. She would also find funding for programmes to help women, youth and people with disabilities, and uphold the IPU belief that no one should be left behind.

A delegate requested to know Somalia's IPU membership status.

The Secretary-General said that, as the custodian of that information, it was up to him to confirm the candidates' membership status. The United Republic of Tanzania and Malawi were not in arrears, Somalia had been in arrears for half a year, and Senegal was in the process of paying the current year's membership fees.

Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal) said that former IPU presidents had worked to return the United States Congress to the IPU and, as Vice-President of the Executive Committee, she had worked on that issue with President Pacheco. That work would continue because the United States of America needed the IPU and the IPU wished to bring it back into the fold.

The IPU had initiated a programme to improve youth participation in national parliaments and she would continue that work. Once she had gained the IPU Members' trust, she would leverage her availability, energy and commitment to discuss youth quotas with national parliaments. She would also ensure that young parliamentarians had greater responsibility and she would establish a network of young parliamentarians. It was important that all national parliaments had a youth caucus, culture and network in order to work in synergy with young parliamentarians. She was not the President of the National Parliament of Senegal and could therefore dedicate herself entirely to the IPU and to increasing youth representation within national parliaments.

Ms. C. Gotani Hara (Malawi) said that only 2.8% of parliamentarians in the world were youth and a youth academy could build capacity and provide tools to help young parliamentarians perform to the best of their ability. Specific caucuses and youth programmes would help, as would rewards for countries with more young and women parliamentarians. Countries with high percentages of women parliamentarians often had enabling legislation. Advocacy should begin gradually in order for such legislation to be introduced in national parliaments. Parliaments should be encouraged to have at least one representative at the IPU from an opposition political party.

She would continue the current President's work to convince the United States Congress to re-join the IPU. Referring to the records of the discussions that had been held during Mr. Pacheco's recent visit to the United States of America, she would identify actions that the IPU could take to encourage the United States of America to become an IPU Member once again. The IPU believed in inclusivity and its aim was for all countries to be Members of the Organization.

The President opened the floor for the third round of questions.

A delegate from Senegal asked whether it was possible for presidents of national parliaments to adequately combine their duties with those of the IPU President, and whether the candidates would be willing to give up their national positions in order to better serve the IPU. He asked Ms. Mergane Kanouté what new work she would carry out as IPU President.

A delegate from Pakistan said that it was heartening to see four women running for IPU President and it was a testament to the success of Africa. Islamophobia, which was rooted in bigotry, hate and racism, created a divide between the western and Islamic worlds and destabilized societies. He asked what specific steps candidates would take to close that divide.

A delegate from South Africa asked Ms. Ackson how she would leverage the IPU's ability to rally parliaments worldwide to address the challenges affecting young people, particularly poverty and unemployment.

The President invited the candidates to answer the third round of questions.

Ms. M. Abdibashir Hagi (Somalia) said that she was not the Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament and did not have family commitments. She could therefore dedicate herself entirely to serving the IPU for the upcoming three years. The Deputy Speaker of the Somalian lower house of Parliament, the House of the People, had decided not to run because she did not feel able to balance the responsibilities of the IPU presidency with her national duties.

As a Muslim who wore the hijab, she respected Islam and all other religions. As IPU President, she would close the divide between Muslims and non-Muslims, demonstrate that Muslims were peaceful, and launch an outreach campaign.

She had many ideas about how she could reduce poverty, especially among women and youth, and she had experience providing micro-financing solutions.

Ms. A. D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal) said that diversity was essential because, alongside multiculturalism, it fostered tolerance. In particular, she wanted to promote religious tolerance and respect for diversity. She wanted to bridge divides between nations and to be an IPU President who promoted humanity.

In response to the question from the delegate from Senegal, she would assist national parliaments in organizing public meetings to put the public at the heart of politics, ascertain the public's expectations and identify changes that could be made.

She would engage in parliamentary diplomacy in order to bridge divides. She would promote peace and true democracy, which she believed were achievable but would require teamwork.

Ms. C. Gotani Hara (Malawi) said that the National Assembly of Malawi sat for only 17 weeks per year so she would have time to carry out IPU activities. There were two other Speakers within the Parliament, to whom she could delegate, and there were only two days per year when she had to be available at the National Assembly.

Islamophobia created many conflicts and, as President, she would engage in dialogue and advocacy. Discussions should continue in order to produce resolutions that were agreeable to all. She would encourage every geopolitical region to present a resolution that would lead to discussions on issues related to conflict and Islamophobia. There should be a special committee that responded immediately to instances of Islamophobia and other forms of hate, and that did not need to wait for a resolution to make a statement. Currently, IPU responses took too long and, in the meantime, situations could escalate. Timely responses could prevent the outbreak of conflict.

Activities should be created to promote youth empowerment. Although some countries were considering providing resources to young people, education was also very important and should be promoted.

Ms. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania) said that Africa had only ever produced male IPU Presidents, one of whom had served as the President of the National Assembly of Senegal. As the Speaker of the Tanzanian National Assembly, she had a Deputy Speaker and three presiding officers. The Speaker should only be present when the national budget was read and voted upon. Leadership should not be judged on availability but on the ability to deliver.

All parliamentarians should advocate for tolerance, peace, and respect for different faiths and beliefs. Given the IPU principle of mutual respect, it was important that parliamentarians represented victims of intolerance. Mutual respect ensured peace and welcomed all to the decision-making process.

She would continue to implement the IPU 2022-2026 Strategy, which stressed the importance of including youth in decision-making. That would enable young people to communicate the challenges that they faced and to increase parliamentarians' understanding of their situation.

The President invited candidates to deliver a final message.

Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal) said that it was time that an African woman became IPU President. Although she could have mobilized the room, she had chosen not to because that was unimportant. The candidates were sisters and their competition was healthy. It was important to focus on what she could contribute to the IPU. The presidency required time and energy; it was not possible to be IPU President and to lead a national parliament. She was passionate about the IPU, had experience in its governance, and would continue the work that had begun.

Ms. C. Gotani Hara (Malawi) said that her leadership would be resilient, fearless and decisive. She would embody the bravery of the people of Malawi who stood for justice even when larger and stronger nations committed injustices. She had spent her life advocating for marginalized groups and had a wealth of experience navigating political complexities. As a political scientist, she was qualified to lead the IPU.

Ms. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania) said that she appreciated the issues that the world currently faced, particularly regarding peace and security. She had the energy to occupy the role of President. She would ensure that the IPU 2022-2026 Strategy was implemented.

Ms. M. Abdibashir Hagi (Somalia) said that she put her words into action. By voting for her, parliamentarians were supporting new ideas, hope and democracy, as well as a woman who came from a country that neglected female leadership.

The sitting rose at 19:00.

Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

SITTING OF TUESDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2023

(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 9:00 with Mr. A. Gajadien (Suriname), President of the Standing Committee, in the Chair.

Adoption of the agenda (C-III/147/A.1)

The agenda was adopted.

Approval of the summary record of the Committee's session held during the 146th IPU Assembly in Manama (March 2023)

The summary records were approved.

The President said that preparations for future Assemblies would be discussed by the Bureau of the Standing Committee at its meeting on 26 October. Delegates were invited to propose themes for future resolutions or debates. The Committee had adopted three focus areas for the coming years in order to strengthen its contribution to the overall IPU strategy. They were: (1) improvements to the functioning of parliaments; (2) democracy and human rights in the digital era; and (3) a more inclusive, fairer world. Themes for resolutions or debates should fall under those focus areas.

He drew attention to a number of new IPU publications, namely a report on youth participation in national parliaments, a self-assessment toolkit on parliaments and human rights, a guide to digital transformation in parliament, and a set of indicators for democratic parliaments aiming to support parliamentary learning and development.

Preparation of a resolution entitled *Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm*

(a) Presentation of the draft resolution and explanatory memorandum by the co-Rapporteurs

The President invited one of the co-Rapporteurs, Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia), to present the draft resolution, the other co-Rapporteur, Mr. E. Bustamante (Peru) not having been able to travel to Luanda to participate in the Assembly. A debate would then take place followed by a discussion on the proposed amendments. A total of 194 amendments from 26 IPU Members and 2 amendments from the Forum of Women Parliamentarians had been received.

Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia), co-Rapporteur, said that today more than 50 million human beings had been trafficked into slavery which was more than at any other time in history. The causes of human trafficking, such as war, poverty and climate change, were complex and difficult to solve and the only way forward was to work together. The resolution placed a particular focus on orphanage trafficking which was not very well known but affected at least eight million children worldwide.

Orphanage trafficking was a very discreet form of trafficking in which children were transferred into so-called “orphanages” – although the orphanages sometimes had other names, such as “boarding houses”. As many as 80% of the children affected were not orphans at all and had in fact been taken away from their families by traffickers wishing to make money from generous donors and volunteers. It was a multibillion dollar business and a perfect scam that took advantage of kind-hearted people who were unaware that the children they thought they were helping were in fact being exploited. There were two main groups of countries involved: (1) countries that, in good faith, provided money and volunteers; and (2) countries housing the facilities to which the children were being trafficked.

Orphanage trafficking was a different form of trafficking to the forcible removal of children by state actors. The children trafficked to orphanages were often abused, sold to paedophiles, or trafficked onwards for other criminal purposes. Children with fake papers were often put up for intercountry adoptions.

A video about orphanage trafficking was played.

Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia), co-Rapporteur, invited delegates to consult the information pages circulated about how to educate, legislate and advocate to stop orphanage trafficking. They were also encouraged to sign and share the petition to end orphanage trafficking set up by the organization Global Citizen.

The preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution brought together a wide range of United Nations (UN) instruments, protocols and other documents under which orphanage trafficking was covered. However, the resolution was the first time that the international community had come together to tackle the issue of orphanage trafficking specifically. The United Nations Special Rapporteur of the Human Rights Council on the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children had recently released a paper on the topic which would also be mentioned in the resolution.

(b) Debate on the draft resolution

Ms. M. Bon Klanjscek (Slovenia) said that, in her country, child protection was governed by the Slovenian Constitution and the rights of children were further defined in the family code. The authorities stepped in to protect the child only when the parents did not exercise their rights and obligations. One positive aspect of the Slovenian system was that due to the lack of orphanages or children's homes, childcare was provided through foster care, adoption and guardianship with decisions on such matters made by the courts.

While Slovenia was often a target for victims trafficked for sexual exploitation, it did not experience orphanage trafficking. Regardless, the country was well aware of the risks associated with inadequate control and protection mechanisms. It was particularly important to exercise special vigilance over adoption, especially intercountry adoption.

Since the start of the war in Ukraine, Slovenia had accepted 20 Ukrainian orphans who would stay in Slovenia until the end of hostilities. Temporary guardians had applied for temporary protection status on the children's behalf and the Government had signed letters of guarantee prohibiting the adoption of the children.

Slovenia supported all measures to eradicate and prevent orphanage trafficking both in its immediate neighbourhood and in the wider international community.

A delegate from Kuwait said that orphanage trafficking required urgent attention. Parliamentarians were encouraged to pass laws that protected children and restricted voluntourism, as well as to implement those laws and monitor their effectiveness. Indeed, the absence of legislation and implementation guarantees allowed for traffickers to deceive families and children, as well as donors and volunteers. The institutions in question must be shut down and the international community, including state actors and international organizations, should take joint action.

Kuwait had set up a number of charity groups that protected orphans and passed laws that required transparency on child protection. It had also ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Mr. M. Seroor (Bahrain) said that parliaments had a duty to combat orphanage trafficking and should put in place policies and laws in that regard. Bahrain placed a great deal of importance on protecting orphans and had passed a regulation which provided orphans with access to basic services, such as education and health care.

Mr. S. Al Khateeb (Syrian Arab Republic) said that orphanage trafficking was a form of slavery that had disastrous impacts on victims. Parliamentarians must tackle the root causes of the scourge, including, family problems, natural disasters, lack of education, poverty and war. It was particularly important to bring wars to an end given the socioeconomic impact they had on the people.

The Syrian Arab Republic had been experiencing war, terrorism, economic sanctions and earthquakes that had had a disastrous impact on its people, especially children. He called on the international community to lift the economic sanctions against his country and alleviate the suffering of children. His Parliament had ratified many international agreements and passed legislation on the rights of the child, including a law to stop the recruitment and use of children by armed groups.

The resolution should emphasize the need to: (1) pass strict legislation to stop orphanage trafficking; (2) monitor the orphanages in question; and (3) raise awareness in the media.

Mr. A. Denisov (Russian Federation) said that children's rights were protected under the Russian Constitution. The Parliament was currently discussing a law aiming to protect families from excessive interference and keep children with their families wherever possible. Where it was not possible, everything would be done to put orphans in foster care rather than orphanages. There were

also laws that regulated adoption procedures making it a criminal offence to adopt children for corrupt practices. Child trafficking was also classified as a criminal offence. Other measures taken included banning surrogacy for foreigners and working to improve the livelihoods and wellbeing of families. The Russian Federation respected international law, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and was doing its utmost to protect children within its borders and beyond. Ending child trafficking would require countries to raise awareness among children and pass strict laws against the crime.

Some countries were taking every opportunity to denigrate the Russian Federation for their own political purposes. The discussions on the present resolution were no different, as demonstrated by the amendments, many of which accused the Russian Federation of acts it had not committed. Such behaviour hindered efforts to resolve the problem in question.

Mr. B. Noumjerm (Thailand) said that his Parliament was doing its utmost to ensure that Thailand was not used as a safe haven or channel for the exploitation and abuse of children. He wished to make five points related to the draft resolution. First, adequate investment was needed into creating a comprehensive, systematic and reliable database on orphanage tourism. The database should contain disaggregated data. Second, parliaments should allocate sufficient funding for the necessary technologies, mechanisms and tools to be installed as well as for capacity building and training programmes that would help law enforcement and child protection officers tackle the issue more effectively. Third, increasing multilateral, multistakeholder and multisectoral collaboration in both source and destination countries was key. It was especially important to foster meaningful engagement with private businesses in the travel and tourism industry. Fourth, parliamentarians should support social policy that worked towards the deinstitutionalization of children and promoted a family- and community-based approach to alternative care. Fifth, there was a need to address, in a sustainable manner, the root causes of orphanage trafficking, such as poverty, inequality, climate change and conflict.

Ms. C.M. Mumma (Kenya) said that trafficking was a form of modern slavery which exposed children to forced domestic labour and sexual exploitation. Some forms of trafficking were inherently racist with children being taken from poorer countries, including from Africa, for the purposes of cheap labour.

In Kenya, the number of child trafficking cases had risen from 808 in 2017 to more than 2,500 in the 2020s. The main reasons for the rise were poverty and inadequate legislation, particularly in the recipient countries. Many recipient countries were developed countries claiming to be protectors of human rights. Yet, their legislation left children vulnerable to trafficking. Every country, both source and recipient countries, should be obliged to put in place strong laws that prohibited child trafficking from all over the world. Budgetary resources were also needed to protect children.

She reminded delegates that the responsibility to provide protection for children was at the centre of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which was the most widely ratified convention in the world.

Mr. M. Ramírez (Chile) said that his country had recently commemorated the 50th anniversary of the military coup which had led to 17 years of dictatorship. During the dictatorship, many children had been taken away to foreign countries for adoption. To date, the people responsible continued to enjoy impunity and victims had been denied justice.

He drew attention to the current migration situation in Latin America where criminal gangs were trafficking migrants for money and in doing so separating families, including children from their parents. The Parliament of Chile had passed a human trafficking regulation condemning such acts, but the regulation would not be effective without international collaboration in a number of areas. First, the international community was encouraged to conduct a joint investigation into the criminal trafficking gangs whose transnational presence was making it difficult to locate and penalize them. Second, it must ensure the free flow of migrant data between countries so that the authorities could determine the identity of migrants, especially children and accompanying adults. It would thus be possible to work out whether children were travelling with parents or with people outside of their families. Currently, Chile was unable to determine the above information which meant that children were entering the country with their aggressors, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation. In addition, it was important to introduce family reunification policies, which could prevent children from being institutionalized, and pass legislation to ensure safe and legal migration and to combat human trafficking.

Ms. S.E. Lucas (South Africa) said that orphanage trafficking and child exploitation were systemic issues. She drew attention to a recent case in South Africa whereby a volunteer in the peace corps had sexually molested four orphan girls. The system must be able to support and protect the vulnerable.

The resolution should send a strong message that parliamentarians were committed to safeguarding the rights and the dignity of children and to preventing all forms of trafficking, including orphanage trafficking. It should provide a framework that guided the legislative and policy efforts of parliamentarians to prevent, protect against and prosecute the crime. It should recognize the important role of parliaments in addressing the root causes and underlying factors driving orphanage trafficking. It must urge parliaments to enact and enforce stricter regulations and legislation. It would thus be possible to break the cycle and prevent further harm to children.

Highlighting the need for international cooperation, South Africa was ready to share best practices, exchange information and collectively fight against all forms of trafficking. It was imperative to work with international organizations and civil society to tackle the crime effectively. Parliaments must provide support and resources, promote education, raise awareness and build capacities, thus empowering individuals and communities to identify and report suspected cases of orphanage trafficking. There was also a need to address poverty and inequality which rendered people vulnerable to the crime.

Ms. A. Al Darmkai (Oman) said that, to prevent orphanage trafficking, parliaments must pass legislation that made education obligatory and child labour illegal. It was important to screen foster families and offer them financial support. Oman provided orphans with basic education thus giving them an equal start in life.

Mr. F. Zon (Indonesia) said that orphanage trafficking was a violent crime and attack against humanity that exposed victims to child labour, sexual exploitation and difficult living conditions. The impacts of child trafficking were devastating, adversely impacting the physical and mental health and development of children. The resolution was therefore crucial.

The draft resolution urged parliaments to implement international commitments and ensure the necessary measures on orphanage trafficking were in place. To that end, Indonesia had enacted several laws, including the law on the elimination of human trafficking and a law on child protection. International cooperation was also necessary, particularly between source countries and recipient countries. He agreed that the root causes of trafficking, such as poverty, must be tackled.

He drew attention to the human rights violations occurring in Gaza where children were being killed, tortured and denied access to food, water and electricity. The situation increased the vulnerability of the children to trafficking and could result in the establishment of more orphanages. The international community must stop the illegal and inhumane bombardment of Gaza by Israel and save Palestinian children from suffering. According to the US 2023 Trafficking in Persons Report, Palestinian children had been fraudulently recruited for agricultural work on Israeli settlements in the West Bank and were experiencing conditions amounting to labour trafficking, including dangerous work without adequate safety equipment and insufficient pay.

The resolution should emphasize the right to access to remedies, including medical care and legal assistance, and should touch on the importance of building synergies between governments and parliaments. Alternatives to orphanages should be created for orphans and non-orphans.

Mr. S.V.D. Ram (India) said that basic human values such as freedom, equality and human rights for all were clearly enshrined in the Constitution of India. India had put in place a robust system of childcare homes and institutions which was strictly monitored by government agencies and regulated by law in order to support children in need of care and protection, including those rescued from trafficking. India made every effort to provide children with the best quality of life, including free education, food and shelter.

The Indian delegation was broadly in agreement with the draft resolution but wished to make a number of suggestions. First, preambular paragraph 19 referenced an initiative by the United States of America to monitor the progress of nations on human trafficking. IPU documents should not refer to initiatives by individual countries and the paragraph should therefore be deleted. Second, preambular paragraph 21, which called for forced marriage and illegal adoption to be recognized as explicit types of exploitation – as expressed in a European Union decision of 9 June 2023 – should be deleted as there was no internationally agreed definition of those concepts. Third, there was also a need to delete preambular paragraph 22 which raised concerns about institutional models of care. India had in fact had a very positive experience of childcare institutions having put in place a very robust system which

received every possible support, including financial support, and protection under law. Fourth, he called for preambular paragraph 24.2 to be rephrased. The words “for States formalizing” and “a clear legislative framework” should be removed to make the model law into a guidance document rather than an enforceable instrument.

Mr. V. Vojtko (Czech Republic) said that the best way to raise children was with their families. His Parliament had submitted amendments that expressed concern about the security situation around the world, particularly in war-torn areas, such as Ukraine. One such amendment extended the scope of the resolution to include political actions carried out by States (in addition to the commercial acts already mentioned) in order to cover the State violence perpetrated not only in Ukraine by the Russian Federation but also in other parts of the world. There were also a number of more general amendments stressing the importance of prevention, provision of assistance and online safety, for example.

Mr. A. Torosyan (Armenia) fully supported the draft resolution on orphanage trafficking which was a major human rights problem. Given the transnational nature of the crime, all countries should address the issue of orphanage trafficking and human trafficking in general, regardless of how dire or mild the situation was at home. He urged delegates to adapt their national legislation to the spirit and text of the resolution in order to make its impact more tangible.

He wished to make a number of changes to the draft resolution. First, the reference to the European Union decision in preambular paragraph 21 should be removed so that the paragraph read as follows: “highlighting the importance of preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims and the importance of including forced marriage and illegal adoption as explicit types of exploitation”. Indeed, European Union decisions were not relevant for Armenia nor for other non-members. Second, preambular paragraph 24.10(c) should be deleted given that the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children and United Nations General Assembly resolution 74/133 did not prescribe extraterritorial jurisdiction for the crimes.

Mr. C.H. Arrien Cronembold (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that human trafficking was one of the cruellest forms of violence that disproportionately affected women and children and violated basic human rights, such as the right to freedom, dignity, and physical, psychological and mental integrity. There was a need to prioritize the prosecution of the crime and sentence the perpetrators. It was the responsibility of the State to identify victims of trafficking, including those experiencing forced labour, and refer them to social services. The State must provide financing to tackle the problem and work with civil society organizations to provide specialized support to victims. Support should be available nationally and internationally.

The Plurinational State of Bolivia had passed a law on human trafficking which made it a crime to traffic people for the purposes of forced labour and sexual exploitation. Perpetrators of the crime were required to serve 10 to 20 years in prison. In his view, they should serve maximum sentences without the option of parole. The number of human trafficking cases in Bolivia had gone from 522 between January and July 2022 to 776 between January and July 2023. It was therefore vital for Bolivia to redouble its efforts. He called on the international community to work harder to end the trafficking of children and impose stringent penalties upon perpetrators. The world had a duty to protect children.

Ms. A. Santana Bello (Cuba) expressed her support for the draft resolution. While Cuba did not experience trafficking of children, it was in favour of combatting the phenomenon around the world because children were the future and must be protected.

In Cuba, nothing was more important than a child. The Constitution recognized the rights of children, adolescents and young people, and the new family code further extended those rights. Cuba had put in place institutions for children who were unable to be in the care of their parents and it was the responsibility of the Government to guarantee the rights of those children. The institutions were pleasant places to be. If anything was hurting the children of Cuba, it was the blockade to which Cuba had been subjected for more than 60 years. She called on the international community to abolish the blockade.

Mr. M. Agha Tehrani (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that children were some of the most vulnerable people in society and must be taken care of. The future of children could be protected by strengthening families. The Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran had passed a resolution on securing the welfare of children and stopping abortion.

He drew attention to the situation in Gaza where thousands of children had been senselessly killed or orphaned. He expressed concern that the situation in Gaza set a terrible precedent, paving the way for further human rights violations or perhaps even making them the norm. The international community must collectively condemn the attacks against Gaza.

Mr. C. Lohr (Switzerland) welcomed the draft resolution on orphanage trafficking which would help advance children's rights internationally and raise awareness of the issue among politicians. Switzerland was a strong advocate for the rights and interests of minors who often lacked the knowledge and means to defend themselves. Children and adolescents living outside their families of origin were particularly vulnerable and deserved special attention from the authorities. There was a need to address the issue at different levels and with different partners, taking into account the circumstances of each country. He urged parliaments affected by orphanage trafficking to establish a clear legal framework that criminalized such practices. Countries whose nationals were involved in child trafficking in other countries must take all measures, whether legislative or through prevention campaigns, to combat the crime. While volunteers should not be discouraged, they must not be brought into a structure designed to exploit or profit from children.

Mr. M. de Maegd (Belgium) said that the resolution should cover illegal intercountry adoptions since it was closely related to orphanage trafficking. Illegal intercountry adoption affected thousands of children around the world, causing great pain to the children themselves, their biological parents and adoptive parents. He had suggested a series of amendments to shed light on the issue.

Belgium had recently adopted a resolution obliging the Government to conduct an investigation into cases of illegal intercountry adoptions, particularly the processes by which such adoptions had been validated. In addition, the Department of Justice had decided to give Belgian nationality to the victims, guarantee their civil rights and declare their adoptions as void. The victims, who came from all over the world, including South America, Africa and the Asia-Pacific region, had had the opportunity to appear before Parliament where they had expressed how important the abovementioned resolution was, particularly for their recovery.

He urged delegates to support his amendments, including those calling for other parliaments to carry out their own investigations and to take measures to prevent illegal intercountry adoptions. It was vital that the people affected were recognized as victims and provided with support.

Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche (Algeria) said that child trafficking was a consequence of security threats such as terrorism which were increasing the number of migrants and refugees and facilitating the exploitation of vulnerable groups. Algeria had passed child protection legislation and established a special child protection committee. There was also a law on human trafficking which criminalized the phenomenon and set out penalties for perpetrators.

It was important to raise awareness about child trafficking and how to prevent it, strengthen laws and implementation mechanisms, introduce strict penalties for perpetrators, allocate resources and provide caretakers with training.

He called on the international community to stop the human rights violations taking place in Gaza which were causing great suffering to Palestinian children.

Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah (Egypt) said that orphanage trafficking was a transnational organized crime which had become more prevalent as a result of war, political instability and economic strife around the world. Urgent action was needed. It was important to put in place policies for orphanages and provide training to child protection officials so that they could take care of orphans more effectively, particularly girls, who were even more vulnerable.

Egypt had signed various international instruments on human trafficking and harmonized them into national law. In fact, it had been one of the first countries to criminalize the scourge. The Constitution of Egypt offered special protection to women and children from all forms of abuse, including sexual abuse. The country was also looking to expand the legal definition of "orphan" to include street children and illegal immigrant children. Taking care of children, especially girls, was key to the advancement and development of society.

Ms. M. Vasilevich (Belarus) said that orphanage trafficking was a transnational crime therefore a single, coordinated international strategy was needed. Collaboration between countries of origin, transit and destination was vital. Governments must bring to justice all those who participated in the crime, whether recruiters, intermediaries or users.

Parliamentarians should take a number of steps to solve the problem. First, they should strengthen national legislation in accordance with international legal standards. Offences and penalties must be clearly defined in law. Related laws and policies, such as those on immigration, labour and adoption, should also be strengthened. Second, it was important to foster a broad discussion about child trafficking, including with the tourism industry. Parliamentarians should raise awareness through regular briefings and promote accurate data collection and distribution. Third, there was a need to provide assistance to victims of child trafficking, including medical care, counselling, safe accommodation, protection, legal support and temporary humanitarian visas.

Ms. A. Alshaman (Saudi Arabia) said that, according to United Nations reports, 50 million people worldwide were experiencing modern day slavery and trafficking. Among the issues exacerbating the problem were war and climate change. Children were particularly vulnerable to being trafficked for the purposes of the organ trade, sexual exploitation and cheap labour. Orphanages were often overcrowded and staffed by people who exploited children. A large percentage of children who committed suicide before the age of 18 had been affected by human trafficking and organized crime.

The international community must come together to fight human trafficking and acknowledge that the crime was on the rise. It was vital to have laws and regulations in place that were regularly reviewed as well as to reinforce penalties against perpetrators. There was a need to screen orphanage workers and scrutinize any donations made. Parliaments should raise awareness amongst the population and support their governments in fighting the crime.

Saudi Arabia had issued many laws to protect children, including anti-harassment, anti-begging and online safety laws, and strengthened penalties against perpetrators. It had allocated resources for awareness raising campaigns which encouraged people to refrain from making donations to any untrusted sources. A list of certified organizations collecting funds had also been published.

Ms. O. Aymadji (Chad) said that one of the main causes of orphanage trafficking was poverty with less developed countries particularly affected. Chad was also experiencing unwanted pregnancies, disease, conflict and lack of education for girls which were contributing to the problem. Her Government had created rehabilitation centres for children and passed a child protection decree that prohibited child begging. However, those actions were not enough. It was vital to introduce strong laws and foster cooperation between parliamentarians and other stakeholders. The IPU should create a network of parliamentarians to fight against orphanage trafficking and work towards implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. In a developed society, children were less likely to be trafficked or abandoned in orphanages. Lastly, there was a need to reform the orphanage system as a whole which currently did not take care of children properly, especially girls. Orphans were often perceived as less than human.

Mr. Chenghua Jiang (China) supported IPU efforts to take action on orphanage trafficking. China had passed several laws against trafficking and smuggling and introduced severe penalties for the crime, ranging from five years imprisonment to the death penalty. The country had ratified the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and had harmonized it into national law.

China supported most of the provisions of the draft resolution but called for preambular paragraph 19 to be deleted for the following reasons. First, the IPU was, by nature, a multilateral organization and should not refer to the domestic actions of one specific country in its resolutions. Otherwise, it would only be fair for other countries to add their own practices to the text too. Second, the reports of the United States of America on the progress of nations in their fight against human trafficking and modern slavery were biased and factually incorrect. They used a tiered approach that divided countries into those that met United States standards and those that did not, making conclusions that did not reflect the realities or efforts of the countries concerned, including China. The amendments to preambular paragraph 21 proposed by Canada posed similar problems and should also be rejected.

Ms. M.F. Mba Obono (Equatorial Guinea) said that respect for human rights and freedoms, including for children, was one of the foundations on which her country was built. Her country had set up institutions that took care of and protected children who had lost one or both of their parents. The institutions were monitored by the Government through the Ministry of Social Affairs and Gender Equality and allowed relatives to visit the children during the weekends. Although orphanage trafficking had not been detected in her country, there had been cases of missing children. It was vital to condemn all forms of trafficking and deter perpetrators. She strongly supported the draft resolution as children were the future of society.

Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine) said that, in the past 600 days, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine had killed 500 children and orphaned even more. The measures described by the Russian Federation to supposedly tackle child trafficking were in fact breeding child trafficking. Indeed, the Russian Federation was pursuing a policy of deportation, removing Ukrainian children from their own homes, families and communities, taking them across the border to a foreign land and placing them in institutions where their fate was unknown. To date, there had been 19,549 cases of child deportation from Ukraine to the Russian Federation. It took tremendous effort and long investigations to identify and return the children to their families, especially when both of their parents had been killed by the deporting State.

Child deportation and institutionalization was a whole new form of child trafficking meriting attention from the international community. It was paramount to punish the ideologists and Heads of State perpetrating the crime. She thanked the countries helping to negotiate the return of Ukrainian children, including Qatar and the Baltic States, and drew attention to the amendments proposed by Ukraine and other countries regarding the deportation of Ukrainian children to the Russian Federation.

Ms. K. Daugaard (Denmark) said that many children had been adopted and some under false premises. Adopted children were not always entitled to all the information surrounding their cases, including forms showing consent to adoption by their biological parents or police reports related to missing children or foundlings. Every adopted child should have the right to access their own papers. Adoption companies should be obliged to release all adoption documentation, including for overseas adoptions, upon request.

Mr. Abdus Shahid (Bangladesh) said that violence against children was of great concern to Bangladesh. His country had passed several child welfare and protection laws and issued a directive banning sexual harassment. However, current laws related to sexual crimes against children focused on punishing the offender rather than protecting the child.

Corporal punishment was rampant in many education institutions in Bangladesh. In January 2011, the High Court had declared corporal punishment of children in education institutions as illegal and issued guidelines on how to implement the ban. An awareness raising campaign on the topic had also been launched in all education institutions.

Bangladesh had taken some positive steps to combat trafficking. For example, it had enacted the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, which addressed legislative gaps, such as the absence of a prohibition on the trafficking of men. A national plan of action on combating human trafficking had also been adopted to ensure adequate awareness, capacity and accountability in implementing human trafficking laws and to coordinate action.

All necessary measures had been taken to increase access to free primary health care services for children in Bangladesh with particular attention to prenatal and postnatal care for children and their mothers. Significant progress had also been made towards ensuring education for all and thus ensuring gender parity. The Integrated Education Act was expected to be passed by 2030 which would enshrine the right to primary education in law and make it compulsory. Lastly, his country had scaled up mother and child benefit programmes and was encouraging the private sector to invest in children.

Ms. H. Ramzy Fayeze (Bahrain) said that laws and regulations on orphanage trafficking might help to protect children in countries with strong institutions but were not enough in countries affected by conflict. Children in war-torn countries were often exposed to radical groups and were therefore even more vulnerable. Those realities should be considered in the drafting of the resolution.

Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia), co-Rapporteur, said that all issues raised by delegates would be addressed in the discussion on the amendments. It was important to consider the scope of the resolution. Delegates might be more inclined to accept references to international instruments but leave out regional or national ones. There were also a number of related intersectional issues which delegates might wish to incorporate into the text, including intercountry adoptions and protection of genuine orphans affected by natural disaster or conflict.

(c) Drafting and adoption of the draft resolution in plenary

The President announced that the Committee would proceed to discuss the proposed amendments in plenary.

The discussion continued from 11:25 to 12:40. The sitting then rose.

SITTING OF THURSDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2023

(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 17:00 with Mr. A. Gajadien (Suriname), President of the Standing Committee, in the Chair.

**Preparation of a resolution entitled *Orphanage trafficking:*
*The role of parliaments in reducing harm***
(continued)

(c) Drafting and adoption of the draft resolution in plenary
(continued)

The President said that the draft resolution had been revised in the light of the amendments discussed in the plenary drafting meetings on 24 October 2023. A total of 194 amendments from 26 delegations and 2 from the Forum of Women Parliamentarians had been received and discussed.

Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia), co-Rapporteur, thanked delegates for their hard work, good will and flexibility in considering the amendments and finalizing the resolution. The resolution was the first time that a coordinated global response had been made on the issue of orphanage trafficking. Many related issues also existed, some of which had been incorporated into the text, such as the issue of illegal intercountry adoptions.

The resolution contained some very good recommendations on how to support each other on the issue of orphanage trafficking. There was a long journey ahead for many countries. It was vital to convince populations of the harm caused by voluntourism and support children who had been trafficked.

Orphanage trafficking was a new form of trafficking which could be fixed by redirecting the billions of dollars that went into the orphanages and instead putting the money into State-sponsored programmes that encouraged families to stay together or looked for new families for children who did not have parental support. She presented the draft resolution to the Standing Committee for endorsement and approval.

A delegate from South Africa called on the Committee to adopt the draft resolution.

A delegate from India complimented the co-Rapporteurs for the good work done on the resolution but wished to raise one reservation. The resolution should make clear that the model law referred to under operative paragraph 38.4 would be a guideline or recommendation rather than a parameter to which States would need to measure up.

Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia), co-Rapporteur, took note of the reservation. The idea was that the model law would not be compulsory.

A delegate from India said that the language should be changed from “law” to “guideline” in order to emphasize that it was recommendatory rather than compulsory in nature. The term “law” suggested some level of regulation.

Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia), co-Rapporteur, took note of the reservation and would keep it in mind when putting together the model text.

A delegate from India wished to dissociate India from operative paragraph 38.4 and asked for his reservation to be reflected in a footnote.

The President noted the reservation and pointed out that changes to the text could no longer be made since the drafting process had finished.

The Standing Committee adopted the resolution by acclamation.

(d) Appointment of a rapporteur to the 147th IPU Assembly

The President proposed that Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia), co-Rapporteur, present the resolution to the 147th IPU Assembly on behalf of the Committee.

It was so decided.

Preparations for future Assemblies**(a) Subject of the next resolution to be prepared by the Committee**

The President said that two proposals had been received regarding the subject of the next resolution. The first proposal was from the delegation of Morocco on the theme *The contribution of parliaments to the protection of children who are victims of grave violations during armed conflicts and in particular to ending child military recruitment*. The second proposal was a joint one from the delegations of Canada and the United Republic of Tanzania on the theme *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*. After considering the proposals, the Bureau had decided to recommend the second one.

Ms. N. Lugangira (United Republic of Tanzania) said that artificial intelligence had become an issue of global concern that had come to the attention of the United Nations and Global North countries in particular. There were pros and cons to artificial intelligence. It was positive in that it could help support decisions on budgeting and planning for example but could also negatively impact democracy. Amongst other things, the use of artificial intelligence could amplify online abuse of women and facilitate the spread of misinformation.

The IPU was missing from global discussions on artificial intelligence but would now have the opportunity to build the capacities of parliamentarians in the field, thus supporting them in their legislative efforts. The proposal was unique in that it brought together the voices of the Global North and the Global South.

Ms. M. Rempel Garner (Canada) said that it was vital to look at artificial intelligence through the lens of democracy and human rights. Experts around the world had warned of a potential extinction-level event if legislators did not take adequate action to regulate the development and large-scale deployment of artificial intelligence technologies. It was not a futuristic principle but a phenomenon that was happening at present.

Artificial intelligence was facilitating the extreme exploitation of women and children and had the potential to cause huge disruption to elections and other democratic processes. The world had seen the rise of deepfakes in which people's faces were superimposed onto pornographic videos and spread around the internet. Chatbots were instructing people with mental health issues to undertake suicidal behaviours and radicalizing others. There was also an issue related to data ownership with large, multinational corporations stealing data, particularly from people in the Global South, without compensation or an ethical framework.

The resolution would be an incredible opportunity for the IPU to build the capacities of parliamentarians in the area at hand. Artificial intelligence was a human rights issue that required the engagement of parliamentarians.

Mr. D. Naughten (Ireland), Chair of the IPU Working Group on Science and Technology, said that the Working Group had endorsed the proposal by Canada and the United Republic of Tanzania and would work with the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights to develop a resolution that met the needs of the electorate. Artificial intelligence must be regulated in a robust manner, but, to date, parliamentarians had been excluded from the debate. It was crucial that the voices of the Global South were heard in addition to those of the Global North so as not to discriminate. The idea was to create a set of ethical standards based on human rights and dignity.

The President took it that the Committee wished to approve the proposal of Canada and the United Republic of Tanzania to prepare a resolution on the theme, *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*.

It was so decided.

The President said that a debate on the resolution would be held at the 148th IPU Assembly in March 2024. The resolution itself would be adopted at the 149th IPU Assembly in October 2024. Ms. Rempel Garner (Canada) and Ms. Lugangira (United Republic of Tanzania) had been nominated as co-Rapporteurs. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the nominations.

It was so decided.

(b) Other items for the Committee's agenda at the 148th IPU Assembly

The President said that the Bureau had also recommended that the Committee hold a debate on the theme, *Sustainable actions to improve the life conditions of people with disabilities, including their chances for education and work opportunities*, at the next Assembly. The debate would not lead to a resolution. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the recommendation.

It was so decided.

Elections to the Bureau of the Standing Committee

The President said that the Committee was requested to fill two vacancies for the Eurasia Group, one vacancy for the Twelve Plus Group, one vacancy for the Asia-Pacific Group. The Eurasia Group had nominated Ms. A. Aghazada (Azerbaijan) and Mr. A. Torosyan (Armenia). The Twelve Plus Group had nominated Mr. M. de Maegd (Belgium). The Asia-Pacific Group had nominated Mr. G. Dhielafararez (Indonesia).

The nominations were approved.

The President said that the Committee was also requested to elect its next President and Vice-President. The geopolitical groups had reached an agreement regarding the rotation of the President and Vice-President of the Standing Committee requiring there to be a fair distribution between regions and between men and women. For the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, the next President should be a woman from the Asia-Pacific Group and the next Vice-President should be a man from the Eurasia Group. The Asia-Pacific Group had nominated Ms. J. Mahmood (Maldives) for President while the Eurasia Group had nominated Mr. A. Torosyan (Armenia) for Vice-President.

The nominations were approved.

A delegate of Australia wished to acknowledge her colleague, Ms. Reynolds, for her leadership on the resolution.

The President thanked delegates for their support during his two-year term as President of the Standing Committee.

The sitting rose at 17:35.

Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

SITTING OF TUESDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2023

(Morning)

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

Adoption of the agenda (C-I/147/A.1)

The agenda was adopted.

Approval of the summary records of the Committee's session held at the 146th IPU Assembly in Manama (March 2023)

The summary records were approved.

The Chair made several announcements. Given the links between climate change and violent extremism and terrorism, those present were encouraged to attend two other meetings during the Assembly: the Second Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism and Prevention of Violent Extremism and the open session of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law on the theme *The role of parliaments in tackling the humanitarian impacts of climate-related displacement*. On the topic of climate change, the IPU's *Parliaments for the Planet* campaign was progressing well, and there had been much positive feedback on steps that parliaments could take to make their actions greener. He invited those present to continue sharing their experiences with the IPU Secretariat. The Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in the United Arab Emirates in December 2023 would also be an important event in that regard.

In addition, parliamentarians were encouraged to share their best practices and experiences concerning gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments in the parity debate that would take place the following day. Under the IPU's *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* Campaign, six ways of enhancing the inclusion of youth in parliaments had been identified. Participants were invited to visit the campaign platform on the IPU website to learn more about ways of promoting youth inclusion in parliaments.

The year 2024 would mark the tenth anniversary of the IPU's *Common Principles for Support to Parliaments*, and he urged those parliaments that had not already done so to endorse the Principles. He congratulated those parliaments that had, in 2023, implemented IPU resolutions on disarmament and ratified related international conventions and treaties, which were important to protect diversity and build trust to ensure a safer and more peaceful world.

Expert hearing on the theme *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence*

The Chair said that the aim of the expert hearing and the forthcoming resolution was to raise awareness of the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence (AI). It was also an opportunity to share experiences and best practices to ensure that automated weapons and AI were used in a positive, rather than a destructive, manner. The present discussion would guide the co-Rapporteurs in their work to draft the resolution; parliamentarians could also submit their recommendations in writing to the IPU Secretariat.

Ms. I. Nakamitsu (United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs), guest speaker, said, in a pre-recorded video message, that the discussion on the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and AI had come at the right time, given that the technology was advancing much faster than States' ability to effectively govern the opportunities and risks that it presented for international peace and security. Sharing the concerns

raised by the United Nations Secretary-General regarding the increasing availability and accessibility of sophisticated new and emerging technologies, particularly in the military domain, she said that urgent action by political leaders was needed to prohibit and regulate autonomous weapon systems and address the potentially disruptive impact of AI.

Key concerns included the predictability and reliability of AI-enabled systems, and the potential for algorithm, data and even institutional bias within such systems. Integrating AI into autonomous weapon systems could exponentially expand their autonomy, thereby increasing their unreliability and unpredictability. That could, in turn, negatively impact crucial decision-making processes, such as target recognition and the use of force. As such, it was fundamental that AI-enabled outputs were explainable to human operators and decision makers. Such issues also raised serious questions about States' ability to comply with international law – including international humanitarian law and international human rights law – when developing, deploying and using increasingly autonomous weapon systems. Ultimately, AI applications should do what humans expected them to do, with a clear explanation of the decisions taken, and AI should never be put in charge of making life and death decisions. The autonomous targeting of humans by machines was a moral line that must not be crossed; machines with the power and discretion to take lives without human involvement should be prohibited under international law.

States therefore needed to agree on prohibitions and regulations governing lethal autonomous weapon systems and develop normative frameworks for AI to ensure that it was used responsibly in the military domain. However, any potential regulation of autonomous weapon systems should not seek to hamper access to and development of peaceful uses of emerging technologies and AI.

Moreover, armed uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs) were increasingly being used in armed conflict, which posed ethical, humanitarian and legal concerns, particularly as armed UAVs were often used to attack civilian targets. She urged parliamentarians to hold governments accountable in that regard and to call on them to improve transparency, oversight and accountability on the acquisition and use of armed UAVs.

There needed to be complementarity in the discussions on autonomous weapon systems and on AI to ensure that the two areas were mutually reinforcing. States should also work with relevant stakeholders, including the defence industry, to understand, evaluate and create safeguards in relation to both AI and autonomous weapon systems. They also needed to agree on a legally binding instrument to prohibit autonomous weapon systems that functioned without human involvement and that therefore could not comply with international humanitarian law, and to properly regulate all others. The year 2026 had been set as the deadline for concluding that instrument, and urgent action was needed to ensure that the deadline was met, requiring sustained efforts from all stakeholders including the academic world, industry and civil society. Parliamentarians would play a crucial role in holding governments accountable, in ensuring transparency in governance and in triggering concrete action by governments and societies more broadly.

Ms. P. Peraza Aguilar (Minister-Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Costa Rica to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva), speaking remotely by video link, said that supporting efforts to address the issue of autonomous weapon systems and their regulation and compliance with international law – particularly international humanitarian law and international human rights law – was a priority for her country. The ongoing dialogue within the IPU demonstrated that the international community was capable of implementing concrete actions to regulate the use of technology and AI within the military sphere. Discussions should focus not on whether such technologies were beneficial but rather on how new technologies could be adapted to ensure that related risks were mitigated. A proactive approach was needed to ensure accountability, with a requirement for developers and States to integrate the necessary safeguards into their autonomous weapon systems.

Furthermore, there needed to be an international commitment to uphold the principles of predictability and proportionality set forth in international humanitarian law, as AI could hinder States' ability to comply with those principles. It was also important to establish universally binding standards for developers, exporters and importers in order to ensure that the pre-programmed algorithms used in autonomous weapon systems did not prolong or exacerbate discrimination. The responsibilities of the private sector, governments and civil society should be clearly defined, and there also needed to be regulations to ensure that autonomous weapon systems did not fall into criminal hands or into the hands of non-State groups that operated outside the law.

To effectively control autonomous weapon systems, it would be necessary to prohibit weapons that did not comply with international humanitarian law and to regulate all other weapon systems based on their level of autonomy. It was morally imperative to maintain meaningful human control

throughout the lifecycle of autonomous systems. Urgent, concrete action was needed to develop an international, legally binding instrument, particularly given that autonomous systems were already in use in places such as Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Ukraine, at the expense of people's lives; the development and use of those systems would only increase with time. The longer States waited to regulate the development, production, deployment and transfer of autonomous weapon systems, the more likely it was that they would circulate on an unregulated market. The lack of regulation was a threat both to international humanitarian law and to international human rights law.

Costa Rica was strongly committed to the process of developing an international, legally binding instrument for the regulation of autonomous weapon systems. In July 2022, Costa Rica had presented, alongside the Governments of Argentina, Panama and the Philippines, an initial draft for a Protocol VI under the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to the Group of Governmental Experts related to emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapon systems. In June 2023, it had presented a second draft, along with 10 other countries. Her country was also fostering dialogue on the issue in a range of spaces in order to raise awareness and garner support. Costa Rica had discussed the issue at the REAIM 2023 conference held in the Netherlands and had hosted the Latin American and the Caribbean Conference on the Social and Humanitarian Impact of Autonomous Weapons in February 2023, at which Latin American and Caribbean States had agreed on the urgent need to negotiate a legally binding instrument, with prohibitions and regulations, on autonomy in weapon systems in order to guarantee meaningful human control. At the Conference, States also underscored not only the security risks posed by the use of AI in military systems and processes but also the risk of malicious use of that technology by State and non-State agents. The communiqué resulting from the Conference was the first consensus-based outcome on the issue in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Costa Rica had continued its efforts following the Conference, including within the Central American Integration System and the Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM), as well as at the XXVIII Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government and the Luxembourg Autonomous Weapons System Conference, where emphasis had been placed on the importance of ensuring meaningful human control throughout the lifecycle of autonomous weapon systems and on the urgent need for more regions to hold discussions on the international regulation of autonomous weapon systems.

Ms. G. Hinds (Legal Adviser, International Committee of the Red Cross), speaking remotely by video link, said that her organization's focus was on the legal aspects of new technologies of warfare, assessing their compatibility with existing international law, particularly international humanitarian law, as well as on the humanitarian consequences for both civilians caught up in armed conflict and the combatants themselves. The use of AI and autonomous weapon systems in armed conflict posed risks and challenges primarily because of the heightened dangers they posed; their negative impact on, and influence over, human decision-making in armed conflict; and their adverse impact on cyberoperations and information warfare. Generally speaking, the use of AI in weapon systems should be approached with extreme caution. As such, a new international convention that combined prohibitions and restrictions was urgently needed.

While there was no internationally agreed definition of an autonomous weapon, it was commonly understood to refer to any system that, once activated or deployed, could select and apply force to targets without human intervention. That definition related to how such systems functioned rather than the technology used and covered both AI-based autonomous weapon systems and more rudimentary, rules-based autonomous weapons, such as landmines. Such systems involved no human decision-making concerning the specific target or timing of an attack, which raised major ethical and legal concerns, particularly where targets were based on pre-programmed profiles. The integration of AI and machine learning techniques in autonomous weapon systems could produce a "blackbox effect" that led to unpredictable behaviours. If their functioning could not be predicted or explained, such systems should be prohibited. Autonomous weapons designed to target people rather than objects should also be prohibited given the significant legal and ethical implications and the need to maintain human agency in the use of force.

In addition to prohibiting certain types of autonomous weapons, there needed to be strict operational constraints on other types of autonomous weapons in order to control their environmental unpredictability. There should be restrictions on their duration of use and on the locations and situations in which they could be deployed, and some human-machine interaction requirements should also be built in. Restrictions needed to be enshrined in a binding international law to create a common understanding that could then be implemented nationally. Parliamentarians could play a key role in that regard, using parliamentary procedures to call on governments to support international efforts and discussions and to develop and publicize strong national positions. Examples of parliamentarians

engaging on those issues included the work of the House of Lords in the United Kingdom on AI and weapon systems, the hearings held by the Belgian National Defence Committee, and the resolutions calling for a treaty on autonomous weapons passed by the European Parliament.

Moreover, computerized tools were increasingly being used to inform human decision-making in armed conflict, with large amounts of data collected and analysed to produce assessments concerning, among others, threats and patterns of life. AI was also being used to produce recommendations and predictions about future behaviours and events. While such systems did not make decisions, they could significantly influence decision-making processes. Risks included the inherent biases of AI, the unpredictability of machine learning algorithms, and the opaque nature of outputs that could not be reverse engineered or necessarily understood. In terms of human-machine interaction, automation bias was a key challenge. The meaningfulness of the interaction was also a concern: could human-machine interaction truly be effective if AI processing was so rapid that humans were unable to engage with it or exercise proper judgement in their decision-making? In that regard, the potential for harm was greatest in decisions that affected the lives and dignity of people in conflict settings. As such, specific attention should be paid to the use of AI in targeting and detention-related decisions. AI needed to remain a tool that supported human decision-making rather than hindering or negatively affecting the exercise of human judgement. Consequently, specific design and cross-checking requirements would be needed for decision-making support systems, with measures to enable humans to engage with the inherent uncertainties and biases.

Dr. C. Connolly (Manager, Automated Decision Research), speaking remotely by video link, said that *Stop Killer Robots* was a global coalition of more than 250 civil society and academic organizations around the world calling for a new international law on autonomous weapon systems. Discussions had been under way for the past 10 years on the issue of autonomous weapon systems within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Discussions had also begun within the United Nations General Assembly, including among States that were not Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. Support was growing for a legally binding instrument, and a first United Nations General Assembly resolution had been tabled by Austria and sponsored by a long list of States from across regional groups. That resolution would provide an inclusive and accessible forum in which States from all regions could share their views and suggest pathways towards the launch of international negotiations. All States were therefore encouraged to support the resolution. The United Nations Human Rights Council was also working on a report on the use of new technologies in the military sphere.

There was already widespread recognition of some of the challenges posed by automated decision-making and AI technologies, particularly with regard to their trustworthiness, predictability, reliability, transparency and explainability, as well as in terms of responsibility and accountability. The opaque nature of the algorithmic processing and targeting used in autonomous weapons made those concerns all the more prominent, while the ethical, legal, humanitarian and moral implications of AI and autonomous weapon systems posed unprecedented challenges to the meaningful implementation of international human rights law and international humanitarian law. There were worries about the lack of effective accountability and responsibility for decisions made by autonomous weapon systems, and about automation bias and the lack of human judgement and understanding within such systems. Other concerns included the unpredictability and unreliability of autonomous weapon systems, as well as the risk of force multiplication, arms races, conflict escalation and reprisals.

As autonomous weapon systems applied force to targets based on sensor data and generalized target profiles without human intervention, they were qualitatively different from other weapon systems – individuals were sensed, processed and targeted as patterns of data and objects rather than as human beings. Furthermore, advances in AI and sensor technologies meant that target profiles could become more complex, making it harder to understand what was included in a target profile and when a system would use force. In recent years, there had been advances in the capabilities of autonomous weapon systems in terms of the potential duration and area of operation, the types of targets the systems could be programmed to identify and engage, the number of systems that could operate together and the types of tasks that could be performed without human involvement. While humans maintained some level of control over the critical functions of most autonomous weapon systems, numerous defence industry representatives had stated that autonomous engagement was already a possibility for a variety of systems and had called for more guidance and legislation on the issue. States needed to take the lead in launching negotiations to establish the necessary prohibitions and regulations.

Life and death decisions and actions should not be delegated to machines. A two-tier approach was needed, with prohibitions on systems that could not be used with meaningful human control and that were designed to target humans, and regulations on all other systems to ensure that they were used with meaningful human control. She urged parliamentarians to support the negotiation of a legally binding instrument and encourage governments to vocally support that process.

Ms. M. Stolbizer (Argentina), co-Rapporteur, recalling that the issue of AI and autonomous weapon systems had been chosen as the subject item by the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security at the 146th Assembly, said that the experts' contributions would help to guide participants' deliberations on the drafting of the related resolution. Those present were invited to make contributions at the present sitting or in writing to the IPU Secretariat, with the aim of submitting a draft resolution for adoption at the 148th Assembly in March 2024.

It was essential to address the multiplication of conflicts, armed violence and violent extremism around the world from a more modern perspective that took into account technological advances relating to weapon systems and AI. While technological progress could bring benefits to the humanitarian sector and promote peace and international security, the militarization of AI also brought major risks and challenges. Addressing the issue of autonomous weapon systems was an ethical and humanitarian priority – machines lacked empathy, intuition and other human characteristics and must not make life or death decisions. Human involvement in decision-making must be maintained at all times. Recalling that the use of means of war could not be unlimited, she stressed the importance of ensuring compliance with international humanitarian law, and particularly the principles of proportionality, responsibility, transparency and accountability, throughout the lifecycle of autonomous weapons.

Parliamentarians had a cross-cutting role to play and should use their representative function to safeguard and realize people's rights while also ensuring that States were held accountable and participated in international negotiations. In that regard, the draft resolution would call for parliamentarians to participate actively in discussions on lethal autonomous weapon systems; to take steps to prohibit and regulate those systems nationally; to set aside financial resources for capacity-building and awareness-raising initiatives; and to establish ad hoc committees to consider the risks posed by autonomous weapon systems. The draft resolution would also call on governments to negotiate a legally binding instrument that included prohibitions and regulations and to adopt an intersectional, gender-based perspective in their discussions.

The Chair said that emerging technologies and weapons created an ethical grey area that could threaten international peace, human rights and trust in international conventions. It was important to consider ways to ensure that such autonomous weapon systems made the right target decisions, used equitable force, protected civilians and distinguished between civilian and military targets. It was also important to reflect on the issue of accountability, in the event that errors were made by such systems.

Mr. Z. Mojskerc (Slovenia) said that effective multilateralism and the central role of the United Nations were key in ensuring international peace and security; addressing the diverse array of challenges and threats to international peace and security was beyond the capacity of any single nation. Slovenia remained committed to being a unifying and constructive participant in related efforts. When it took up its position as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in 2024, Slovenia would promote mediation as an effective tool for conflict prevention and peacebuilding and focus on both peacebuilding and peacekeeping efforts. His country was a strong supporter of peacekeeping missions and operations designed to prevent the devastating civilian suffering brought about by armed conflicts in urban areas, and was actively involved in international humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts, particularly in the countries of the Western Balkans, as well as in the Middle East, Africa and South America. It had established the Peace Operations Training Centre in 2019, providing certified national and international training for military police and civilian personnel deployed in peacekeeping operations, along with training in international humanitarian law, gender equality in crisis management, the protection of civilians, and climate change, peace and security.

Mr. A. Oshima (Japan) said that the debate on the regulation of autonomous weapon systems was no longer simply a matter of security; it had become a complex philosophical and ethical question. As such, parliamentarians must not remain on the sidelines and needed to take a proactive approach. Autonomous weapon systems that did not involve human intervention should be widely banned, as

placing life and death in the hands of machines represented a great threat to humanity. As a key political forum for multilateral negotiations, the IPU should play a significant role in forming and developing international public opinion on the issue.

Mr. J. Granoff (Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament), citing Eliezer Yudkowsky and Geoffrey Hinton on the threats posed by AI, said that large numbers of lives could be lost if humans relied too heavily on machines at the expense of human understanding. Parliamentarians should therefore work towards the creation of international legislation to address that critical, existential issue.

Mr. F. Alazmi (Kuwait) said that cyberattacks threatened both national and international security, and the accumulation of fast-paced crises had spread fear and harmed people's trust in governments. Both national and international authorities were lagging behind in their duty to protect human rights, and their failure had spread corruption and illness, increased crime and heightened food and water insecurity. That, in turn, affected national and international security. Countries needed to put people's well-being above all else. Fighting corruption required political will in order to build strong economic institutions that were based on transparency and accountability. In that regard, a comprehensive monitoring system to assess governments' progress was needed. More efforts were needed to reduce corruption by monitoring money transfer and fighting money-laundering and weapons- and drugs-trafficking. To address the issue of transnational crimes, there needed to be international efforts to implement realistic and effective strategies to promote international, human rights-based policies.

Mr. S. Ty (Cambodia) said that, historically, his country had been a victim of various weapon systems but had since achieved peace and had shared its experience with the international community on numerous occasions, including through peacekeeping operations. While his country had not yet adopted specific legislation on autonomous weapon systems, it had passed legislation on armed explosives and munitions and ratified several weapons conventions. It was important to underscore that the long-term consequences of lethal autonomous weapon systems outweighed their short-term benefits. Machines and algorithms alone should not be making life and death decisions, and a strong resolution was needed to address the impact of autonomous weapon systems and AI.

Ms. A. Lotriet (South Africa) said that parliamentarians had the responsibility to protect and uphold the values of human rights law and international humanitarian law. The potential dangers posed by autonomous weapon systems that had the capability to operate without direct human control or supervision could not be ignored. Those weapons could lead to violations of international human rights law and posed a significant threat to international peace and security. Enabling machines to make life or death decisions could lead to human responsibility and accountability being relinquished, which would undermine the fundamental principles governing societies and further weaken the multilateral system.

The potential consequences of lethal autonomous weapons were alarming: without the necessary human judgement and empathy, such systems could make tragic errors. That would lead to civilian casualties and widespread humanitarian harm and put international human rights – including the right to life, the prohibition of torture and the principle of distinction – at stake. Parliamentarians had a duty to prevent the erosion of those principles and protect the dignity and well-being of all individuals even in times of conflict. Parliaments must work closely with governments to champion the establishment of a legally binding instrument that unequivocally banned the development, production and deployment of autonomous weapon systems not under human control or supervision. Such an instrument must be firmly grounded in the principles of international humanitarian law, fundamental human rights and other ethical considerations.

Mr. M. Almuhi (United Arab Emirates) said that AI was a fast-growing field that had many positive impacts in areas such as security and the military field; increased use of AI would help countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and address other key challenges. AI and autonomous systems could be used to substitute humans in dangerous situations and improve efficiency in, and responses to, emergency situations. While the huge capabilities of that field brought major opportunities to serve and protect humanity, they also brought significant threats and dangers requiring international cooperation and the involvement of the private sector, governments and all other stakeholders, with a view to regulating the use of AI and autonomous weapons. Parliaments should enact national laws and legislation to govern the use of AI and autonomous weapon systems

and develop supervisory mechanisms to ensure the ethical use of AI systems, while also encouraging innovation in that field. It would be useful for the IPU to publish a guide setting out standards for the use of AI by parliaments and governments, especially in the security and military sectors. His country was working to keep abreast of the technology and minimize the threat to peace and security.

Mr. H. Ebrahim (Bahrain) said that lethal autonomous weapon systems raised a number of ethical and technical questions and posed a threat to international peace and security. They should therefore be developed in compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law. While it might be acceptable to use AI in the development of drones and automated weapons, it was dangerous for such weapons to be able to take decisions on behalf of humans. Such weapons could also be targeted by hackers, which could lead to unprecedented destruction. To prevent disasters, safeguards needed to be integrated into the development of autonomous weapon systems. Parliaments should work to promote legislation and discussions on all aspects of autonomous weapon systems and prevent the killing of civilians in wars and conflicts.

Mr. A. Barakat (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the techniques, weapons and technologies used in war were constantly evolving. The protection of civilians was a primary focus of international humanitarian law, and certain weapons were prohibited under international law because of the destruction they caused. Israel was violating international principles and standards in Gaza by attacking rescue workers, medical staff and civil defence workers, using internationally prohibited weapons and targeting hospitals, mosques, churches and homes. A large number of civilians, including many children, had lost their lives as a result. Parliamentarians had an obligation to condemn such actions, which violated international law and threatened international peace and security. It was hoped that strict legislation would be enacted to prohibit the use of all weapons that caused such destruction.

Mr. S. Mantamiharja (Indonesia) said that the world was witnessing a crime against humanity in Gaza, with military strikes killing thousands of civilians, including women, children and the elderly, targeting houses, hospitals, schools and places of prayer, and cutting off electricity, water and energy supplies. Parliamentarians needed to assess the situation in Palestine more fairly and objectively. While the international community worked towards peace, some countries were committed to neo-colonialist behaviour. Regrettably, those countries had been supported unconditionally without any sanctions and in the name of self-defence. It should be made clear that those who faced occupation and displacement also had the right to defend themselves. Such neo-colonialism and occupation went against human rights and justice and should be eradicated.

Regarding the issue of lethal autonomous weapon systems, it was important to build consensus on the definition and categorization of related legislation, which should emphasize not only ethical and legal standards, but also the social impact of such systems. Moreover, there needed to be a commitment to maintaining a certain degree of human control over AI in military systems. He called for better and strict regulations, both nationally and internationally, and stronger international cooperation to ensure that knowledge was shared and risks were managed.

Mr. L.-J. de Nicolaÿ (France) said that, very early on, France had affirmed that it would not develop autonomous weapon systems because it was ethically unacceptable for machines to make life or death decisions. France had been promoting the issue internationally for some time and had, with Germany, launched the discussions within the framework of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, with a view to adopting principles to govern the development and use of lethal autonomous weapon systems and ensure that international humanitarian law was applied. Progress had been made since 2019, and he would have liked to have heard more from the experts in that regard.

Mr. J. Hill (Australia) said that many countries were already working multilaterally to build a common understanding of the risks of autonomous weapon systems, as well as the potential benefits of well-designed AI military systems. There was some evidence that limited, well-designed systems could reduce destruction, as well as military and civilian casualties. However, those benefits should not overshadow the dehumanizing aspects of such systems, or the risk of error and the issue of accountability. Australia had been part of the ongoing discussions since 2017, and the question was not whether to address such issues but rather how best to do so.

International humanitarian law was clearly the key applicable legal framework for regulating all weapons, including those with autonomous functions, and it was important to ensure that ethical perspectives were integrated into the design and development of any weapon system. The Group of Governmental Experts was a useful forum in which to discuss national practices in the implementation of international humanitarian law with respect to those systems. However, while many States and experts were calling for work to commence on a legally binding instrument on autonomous weapon systems, more work and consensus-building were needed to ensure that all countries were on board. If work began before international consensus was achieved, there was a risk that certain military uses of AI would be excluded from the process. He drew attention to the recent political declaration on responsible military use of AI and autonomy of the United States Department of State and the need for a human chain of command and control.

Mr. Minh Hieu Hoang (Viet Nam) expressed concern about recent conflicts and the potential for escalation, which would inflict further harm on innocent civilians and have major implications for global peace, stability and development. Parliaments were a symbol of unity and solidarity in the collective endeavour for peace, and international law was the cornerstone of the global order underpinning world peace. As such, parliaments should actively contribute to the ongoing development of the international legal framework, uphold the rule of law, strengthen agreements setting out territorial boundaries and establish a common code of conduct to mitigate potential conflict between countries. In addition, inequality among people and among countries was a key cause of conflict; such gaps needed to be addressed both nationally and internationally in order to mitigate potential threats to security and peace.

Mr. A. Touizi (Morocco) said that parliamentarians should defend peace and security and prevent unethical killing by both soldiers and machines. The development of AI had had a major impact on people's lives in recent years, and it was therefore important to develop a legal framework to regulate its use. Concerning lethal autonomous weapon systems and intelligent weapons, it was important to ensure that any such system remained under human control. In addition to establishing laws in that regard, it was important to ensure that they were implemented. Many international conventions existed that prohibited certain weapons, but those weapons continued to be manufactured and used. In Afghanistan, for instance, people, including children, had been killed by drones. Parliamentarians needed to work to safeguard people's rights and spread awareness of those weapons and their harmful use, particularly within the parliaments of large, powerful countries. Parliamentarians had a duty to consider human dignity when enacting laws.

Mr. J.G. Nyuot Yoh (South Sudan) welcomed the ongoing global consultations on how to address lethal autonomous weapon systems. It was clear that consensus was needed in that regard, given the ethical concerns that such systems raised. Humans had created systems that they could no longer control, and technology had become a new enemy. As such, it was important to distinguish between technologies that were useful and those that were not. Parliamentarians should play a critical role by building consensus on how to create an inclusive, comprehensive legal framework to regulate AI systems. Parliamentarians also needed to work to convince the defence sector, and particularly military intelligence actors, of the need to take back control before it was too late.

Mr. O. Merezkhko (Ukraine), reiterating calls for neo-colonialism to be eradicated, said that the Russian Federation was a brutal example of that practice. As it would be difficult to slow military technological advances and ban the use of AI-integrated systems such as drones, it was important to consider how best to regulate the use of such systems in order to guarantee compliance with international humanitarian law. That would require effective international institutions. It was necessary to prevent autonomous weapon systems from being used and supplied by totalitarian or terrorist regimes, such as the Russian Federation, which was already using drones to deliberately target Ukrainian civilians and civilian objects. Humankind should do everything in its power to prevent the use of new types of weapons by terrorists.

Mr. M. Rezakhah (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that advances in military technology only exacerbated the dehumanizing effects of war. One of the forces that made greatest use of that technology was the Israeli occupation force, which had committed heinous war crimes with its recent bombing of homes, schools, hospitals and places of worship. AI military programmes had worsened the crisis, and the assault on Gaza had become the world's first AI war – computers were deciding whether Palestinian women and children deserved to live. It was important to consider why the use of

AI in military operations should be permitted when the full humanitarian implications were still unknown. He asked what the international community intended to do to prevent Zionist military officials from using AI in their plot to wipe out the Palestinian population.

The Chair, thanking participants for their valuable contributions, said that it was important to work together to protect humanity.

Panel discussion on the theme *Inventory of tools for MPs to engage in dialogue, legislation, oversight and prevention in the pursuit of peace*

The Chair recalled that the resolution on *Rethinking and reframing the approach to peace processes with a view to fostering lasting peace*, adopted at the 144th IPU Assembly, had tasked the IPU with establishing an inventory of tools to support parliamentarians in their work to promote peace. The current panel discussion would inform that process.

Mr. P. Dziatkowiec (Director of Mediation and Peace Support, Geneva Centre for Security Policy), panellist, recognizing the unique strengths of the IPU in conflict resolution and peace promotion, explained that the changing nature of conflict required ever-more creative responses and an expanded inventory of tools. In recent years, there had been a resurgence in interstate wars that threatened to spiral into regional conflagration. Many conflicts that appeared to be local or regional had an important geopolitical layer and sometimes even geopolitical motives, with proxy conflicts in which outside actors sponsored certain local allies. Examples included the conflicts in Yemen, the Syrian Arab Republic and Libya. Another key factor in modern-day conflict was the impact of new innovations, with the growing use of cyberattacks, AI, hybrid methods of warfare and increasingly sophisticated information warfare. There was also a growing nexus between climate change and security, owing to the serious impact of climate change on natural resources, food security, energy security and human health, which had the potential to trigger violence.

Parliamentary diplomacy was a vital, yet underutilized, peacemaking tool. Parliaments had credibility because they represented entire populations; they also had reach, access, influence and visibility, which were key ingredients for peacemaking that traditional mediators could take years to acquire. The IPU was a unique forum for dialogue because it was one of the few channels left for countries in conflict to speak to one another in a discrete manner. Furthermore, peace agreements were more sustainable when they were more inclusive, and the IPU could help to promote inclusion by drawing on parliaments' connections with all sectors of society. The IPU also had the ability to tap into an entire country's worth of ideas, had contacts with governments and international organizations, and good relations and long-standing ties with other influential actors, all of which were critically important in building trust, which was essential to the peacemaking process. Moreover, the IPU was uniquely positioned to access the invaluable pool of knowledge, experience and expertise that parliamentarians had built up. Parliaments could open doors and help to remove political obstacles to peace by providing frameworks for talks, leveraging interpersonal relationships across parliaments and working with other countries that could influence the parties to a conflict. That made parliamentarians' work complementary to that of traditional types of mediators, who often struggled to secure political will. Parliaments were a natural and regular setting for bringing serious players together, and the IPU could, through creative diplomacy, offer solutions that removed some of the political risk for conflicting parties by establishing parallel agreements between each State and the IPU rather than direct, bilateral agreements between the two parties.

In addition, parliaments played a primary role in helping to address the root causes of conflict through their oversight of important State entities and through the development of laws to address issues such as inequality, exclusion, the lack of rule of law, injustice, hate speech, incitement to violence, corruption and the unfair allocation of financial resources. As indicated in the resolution passed at the 144th Assembly, it was important to give societies a reason to choose alternatives to violence through economic opportunity. Lastly, in violent conflicts, it was critical to establish and maintain channels of communication even when a resolution to a conflict was not in sight; preparing ideas in advance with patience and staying power would ultimately ensure meaningful results.

The Chair, thanking the guest speaker for his presentation, said that it was important to make better use of existing tools for parliamentarians in addition to creating new ones. The inventory included a variety of good practices around the functions of legislation, oversight, budget-setting and representation, with parliamentary diplomacy added as a fifth function. Three approaches that were conducive to peace had also been identified – common security, human security and the Principles for Peace – and would be discussed further by the panellists.

Ms. H. Qasas (Executive Director, Principles for Peace Foundation), panellist, speaking remotely via video link, said that her organization's Principles for Peace, which were included in the inventory of tools under discussion, were the result of a three-year global process led by leaders and experts from across the globe. Over 120 organizations had helped to gather evidence from more than 61 countries, with a view to harnessing learning and sharing success stories in order to influence policy, practice and financing to ensure legitimate, lasting peace. Conflicts were currently becoming more protracted and more internationalized, exacerbated by climate risks, polarization, misinformation and competition for power. Conflict cost the global economy around 17% of gross domestic product. Many of the stabilization efforts over the past two decades had not yielded successful results. In many long-standing situations of conflict, violence and the intricacies of realpolitik often blurred the tenets of international law. That would undoubtedly lead to further divisions within the already divided international community.

Existing approaches were therefore not fit for purpose, and a whole-of-society approach was needed to build sustainable and legitimate peace. The role of parliamentarians was fundamental in that regard. Peace efforts often broke down because they were not broadly legitimate or sufficiently inclusive and failed to address the cultural and underlying structural drivers of conflict. It was essential to recalibrate how peace was approached and practised and the partnerships involved. There needed to be a common set of standards for peace, similar to the principles applicable in times of war.

Her organization promoted eight such principles that should guide actions, legislation, financing, diplomacy and oversight relating to peace. Those principles were: dignity, solidarity, humility, enhancing legitimacy, accountable security, promoting pluralism, adopting subsidiarity, and integrated and hybrid solutions. Parliamentarians could be initiators and drivers of the required shifts in approaches to peace and help to support a new paradigm for peacemaking. In that regard, parliamentarians' main functions were to ensure oversight and accountability in relation to the implementation of peace agreements; promote social contracts through representation; enact the necessary legislation to shape the implementation of peace and peace agreements; create incentives for peace through resource allocation; and foster parliamentary diplomacy. She expressed hope that the tools provided would help to establish a common set of standards to drive peace efforts forward. She looked forward to engaging with more parliamentarians on the issue.

Mr. D. Kiniger-Passigli (Vice-President, World Academy of Art and Science), panellist, speaking remotely by video link, explained that the concept of human security focused on people rather than borders. Safety, social well-being and respect for human dignity and worth and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms were the cornerstone of the concept. Through the *Human Security for All* campaign, the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security and the World Academy of Art and Science were promoting greater awareness, understanding and acceptance of human security principles. Human security was a comprehensive approach that recognized the common root causes of insecurity and encompassed both protection and empowerment. It was a framework for action that highlighted the interdependence between peace, security, sustainable development and human rights, focusing on interconnections between economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political aspects.

Human security frameworks had been adopted by a growing number of national, regional and international institutions. They were also being applied by some parliaments and lawmakers. The *Human Security for All* campaign had been launched to galvanize organizations in their promotion of human security, proposing collective action that placed people at the centre through advocacy and consultation processes. Partners included community leaders, educators, youth groups, youth networks, non-governmental organizations and parliamentarians. He called on those present to join the initiative.

Dr. A.M. Chenoy (International Peace Bureau), panellist, speaking remotely by video link, said that ongoing conflicts threatened to jeopardize people's lives, the climate and already fragile economies. Those conflicts shared several commonalities, including the threat to security. Ukraine, for instance, wanted security by joining NATO, but the Russian Federation viewed that as a threat to its own security; the United States of America felt that its security was threatened by the rise of China, and, in turn, China was taking steps to safeguard its own security. That insecurity led to unmanaged threat perceptions and tensions that were often disproportionate and did not represent reality, which further aggravated tensions and prompted States to increase their defence capabilities. The increased militarization trickled down into society and into interpersonal and intercommunity relations, and increased levels of violence.

It was clear that the security-insecurity spiral led to wars rather than peace; security could not be achieved until the root causes of insecurity were addressed through collective and common security. Common security focused on joint survival rather than mutual destruction, taking an inclusive approach to strengthen the peace and security architecture through tolerance, anti-racism, pluralism and coexistence. Many countries in the Global South that had practised non-alignment and that believed in neutrality and global disarmament were experiencing greater development and common prosperity as a result. Parliamentarians should therefore consider common security as a viable alternative and shun military alliances to ensure collective security regionally and globally.

The Chair, thanking the remote panellists for their presentations, said that the three approaches discussed were core components of the good practices that MPs could use to engage in dialogue, legislation, oversight and prevention in the pursuit of peace. To identify good practices, the IPU had engaged in a consultative process with surveys and webinars.

Mr. J. Granoff (President, Global Security Institute), panellist, introducing the second part of the discussion, said that it was important not to rely on technology for human security and for parliamentarians to be engaged in the governance of States. The primary duty of any State was to ensure the security of its people, not just militarily but also in terms of health and environmental security. Such issues could not be dealt with purely at the national level. While parliamentarians were elected locally, they needed to be able to address global issues, such as climate change and security. With the world currently facing a point of brinkmanship, parliamentarians had to speak up and make their vision of the world clear to Heads of State. Ethnic and religious differences paled in comparison to the responsibility to protect all life on the planet. Such issues required common security among States and human security nationally, with a people-centred approach that was based on science and human values. Parliamentarians should share their experiences in addressing the human security paradigm.

Mr. K.P. Tasa (India) said that parliaments played a fundamental role in ensuring executive accountability and good governance by upholding the rule of law, protecting human rights and ensuring national compliance with international obligations. In India, democracy had been strengthened over the previous 75 years, with the Parliament working tirelessly in the spirit of collective effort, inclusive growth and self-trust to bring about socioeconomic change. Parliamentary debate allowed opinions to be shared and decisions to be altered through questions, motions, visualizations and discussions. Parliamentary committees, in particular, were a vital link between governments and the public, enabling issues to be deliberated at length away from the glare of the media. India had always shared a message of peace and harmony with the world and strived to ensure peaceful coexistence. It was time to come together to build a better future for humanity.

Ms. T. Jintawet (Thailand) welcomed the inventory of tools, which provided innovative and well-designed applications for parliamentarians and means for engaging in activities that would pave the way to wider and deeper collaboration for the world's common security and for sustainable peace. Parliaments needed to take their government oversight role more seriously to ensure the effective implementation of policy frameworks for peace.

Ms. R.M. Singkaru (Indonesia), highlighting the importance of parliamentary tools to engage in dialogue, legislation and oversight, said that parliaments had great potential in the area of conflict prevention, mediation and resolution. However, it was important to go beyond traditional functions by providing parliamentarians with tools and procedures to engage in the digital sphere and harness technological progress in conflict prevention, especially through information governance. Digital tools should be developed to help parliamentarians anticipate cyberattacks and tackle misinformation and disinformation. Such tools would facilitate dialogue with different parties in order to find a pathway for conflict resolution. Parliamentary tools also needed to take into account the potential risks of climate — and environment — related conflict and equip parliamentarians with rigid procedures to facilitate the resolution of resource-related disputes. Lastly, tools were needed that facilitated parliamentary dialogue with local communities that were often neglected in the policymaking process.

Mr. S. Rachkov (Belarus) said that the panel discussion was an opportunity to hear expert opinions, and share best practices and experiences in the field. The world was currently facing a geopolitical division, with large-scale crises in the military, political, economic and humanitarian fields. He therefore called on international parliamentary structures to take initiatives to ensure constructive,

mutually respectful and equal cooperation to counter the escalation of international tensions. Every parliamentarian should work to ensure stronger parliamentary interaction, focusing peace efforts on the principles of multilateralism and cooperation. Unilateral, coercive measures against sovereign States were a serious obstacle to the implementation of those principles.

Mr. M.A. Bouchouit (Algeria) expressed support for the speech made by the President of Angola in support of Palestine and strongly condemned the statement made by the IPU President at the current Assembly. No other issue was more urgent and pressing than that of Palestine. In recent years, discussions had focused on Ukraine and the Russian Federation, and the conflict in Palestine merited the same treatment. The killing of children and destruction of hospitals, mosques, churches and schools amounted to genocide, yet there was little discussion of the matter. It was time for the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security to fulfil its responsibilities in that regard.

The Chair recalled that proposals were under consideration to include the issue of Palestine in the agenda of the Assembly as an emergency item; it was undoubtedly the most pressing and important issue at hand.

Mr. F.K. Wanyonyi (Kenya), noting the impact of the use of AI in autonomous weapons, said it was important to promote global peace and security by establishing institutions to regulate the harmful use of those weapons. The use of AI and autonomous weapon systems had caused much destruction to innocent people, and it was vital to defend those who could not defend themselves. He therefore called on the Standing Committee to recommend the imposition of embargoes on the aggressors that caused such harm, regardless of their power and economic might.

Mr. J. Granoff (President, Global Security Institute), summing up the discussion, said that, without diminishing any of the terrible crises that were ongoing in places such as South Sudan, Ukraine, Palestine, Israel and Kashmir, it was important to underscore that there could be no peace without justice. The United Nations Secretary-General had put forward an agenda for peace that addressed the social dimensions of peace and the need to strengthen international law. However, first and foremost it covered the issue of the elimination of nuclear weapons, which were inhumane and institutionalized adversity. It was absurd to pursue security by risking the entire future of humanity. The threat of nuclear weapons was inadmissible, and he urged parliamentarians to call on their Heads of State to address that issue.

The Chair thanked participants for their input, which would inform the next phase of the consultative process. Focus groups would be organized to continue shaping the inventory and collecting good parliamentary practices, with a view to establishing lasting peace.

The sitting rose at 13:00.

SITTING OF THURSDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2023

(Afternoon)

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

Panel discussion on the theme *The role of parliaments in promoting a culture of transparency, anti-corruption and citizen engagement to restore trust in national and international institutions and strengthen peace*

The President, introducing the panellists, said that building, strengthening and restoring trust in national and international institutions was essential to bridge divides and create an atmosphere conducive to peace and security. Parliaments should be at the forefront of those endeavours.

Mr. F. Zon (Indonesia), Chair of Southeast Asian Parliamentarians Against Corruption (SEAPAC) and Vice-Chair of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC), panellist, said that parliaments played a strategic role in improving the legitimacy of public institutions. In terms of political governance, parliamentarians should mobilize the collective political will needed to implement good governance principles within both their political parties and parliaments; find ways to incentivize political parties to be more transparent, including in their use of public and private funds; and ensure that a more professional approach was taken to political party

governance and management. Parliaments should also take a leading role in holding governments to account by ensuring consistency in planning and budgeting processes, for which they needed effective oversight tools.

Furthermore, MPs should serve as guardians of public integrity by strengthening anti-corruption laws, allocating more funding to anti-corruption programmes and building the collective will needed to strengthen anti-corruption agencies and safeguard them from political intervention. Parliamentarians should also take a leading role in translating the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) into national actions and in fostering international cooperation in that regard. The Indonesian Parliament had, for instance, amended its law on witness and victim protection to align it with the provisions of that Convention. It was also important to facilitate the exchange of information and mutual learning, and strengthen and synchronize anti-corruption efforts regionally and globally, in particular by leveraging networks such as the GOPAC.

With regard to transparency, it was important to foster more open public participation in policymaking and policy implementation and promote an anti-corruption mindset among citizens through political education. Digital technology could be harnessed to strengthen public engagement, driving a shift from government-induced public participation to citizen-induced public engagement.

Indonesia had shown a strong commitment to disseminating and practising an open government approach, and to constantly improving its accountability systems. The Indonesian Parliament had launched *Open Parliament Indonesia* in August 2018, which guaranteed citizens' right to information and promoted transparent, effective and efficient governance and accountability. It also carried out long- and medium-term policy planning with a focus on performance management and measurement. Citizen participation was central to the policymaking process, with opportunities for public dialogue provided both locally and nationally. In addition, the legislature's State Finance Accountability Committee was focused on reviewing and following up on findings of the supreme audit institution and on strengthening transparency and accountability, particularly in the use of State finances. Offices provided government information to the public, while information on legislative initiatives was made available on an online platform. Democracy was not simply a system of government but rather a set of ethical principles designed to ensure proper representation, transparency and accountability.

Ms. C. Fredriksen (Senior Manager, Global Foundations Unit, International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions Development Initiative (INTOSAI Development Initiative)), panellist, said that national audit offices were one of the pillars of integrity within a country and, together with parliaments, created the basis for accountability and the oversight of national expenditure and performance. National audit officers were key partners for parliaments, as they could provide both subjective and objective information on policy implementation and results to lawmakers, helping to create a feedback loop on the outcomes of the decisions made and budgets adopted.

In light of the decline in democracy and decreased trust in governments – and given the link between levels of democracy and corruption – it was important to ensure careful oversight of public spending and ensure that it benefited citizens. The COVID-19 pandemic had shown how emergency situations could exacerbate conditions for the mismanagement of public funds and create loopholes for unused spending and loss of public funds. There was a need for a shift in prioritization, coupled with careful scrutiny, to ensure that public funds were efficiently spent. A review of audits of COVID-19-related funds and programmes had indicated structural weaknesses in public administration and an increase in malpractice and mismanagement, highlighting governments' failure to protect citizens during a crisis.

Such evidence of wasted resources was particularly relevant given the current likelihood of economic recession and the increased instability in many regions. More than ever, it was important to ensure transparency in public spending and to hold governments accountable, in part by using the findings of supreme audit institutions, particularly in high-risk areas such as military procurement. As a result of the abovementioned COVID-19 audits, for instance, a number of public officials had been prosecuted for corruption. In addition, performance audits could provide information on the state of the services provided to citizens in areas such as health care, education and environmental management. As such, supreme audit institutions were valuable partners for parliamentarians looking to create a solid foundation for discussions of how to broaden the framework for national security and reinforce democratic practices while serving the needs of the people.

Through greater collaboration, supreme audit institutions and parliaments could help to strengthen the accountability ecosystem. In the coming year, a workshop on public engagement would be held for supreme audit institutions and parliaments in the Caribbean region, with a view to developing a joint understanding of how to strengthen accountability ecosystems and better engage the public and other partners to promote oversight, accountability and transparency nationally.

Mr. J. Granoff (President, Global Security Institute), panellist, said that Sustainable Development Goal 16 was an essential pillar of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: without good governance, the other elements of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) would fail. Good governance could not be achieved without the eradication of corruption. At the 2023 high-level political forum on sustainable development, politicians had, among other things, recommitted to preventing and combating illicit financial flows and to strengthening international cooperation and good practices on assets return and recovery. The IPU could play a key role in strengthening international cooperation, which was particularly important and often represented a weak link in anti-corruption efforts.

The United Nations estimated that US\$ 2 to 4 trillion was taken from the world's productive economies each year through tax avoidance, tax evasion, bribery, human trafficking and other forms of corruption. Cooperative efforts were needed to reclaim those assets, build integrity and promote progress towards the SDGs. Anti-corruption efforts would be one of the only ways to secure the funding needed to address current global challenges, such as protecting the climate, addressing inequalities and responding to pandemics. The issue therefore had to be mainstreamed, and anti-corruption education and culture needed to be promoted. While many countries had anti-corruption legislation in place, corrupt practices were still normalized within many societies and leaders did not exemplify anti-corruption behaviour. There was also a link between integrity in governance and implementation of the rule of law. Anti-corruption tools were available, but political will was often lacking. Parliaments had to force governments to work more cooperatively in order to address the issue.

The President invited the panellists to comment on the interventions thus far.

Mr. F. Zon (Indonesia), Chair of SEAPAC and Vice-Chair of the GOPAC, panellist, reiterated that Sustainable Development Goal 16 was a vital part of anti-corruption efforts and to achieving the other SDGs. The legislative, budgeting and oversight roles of parliaments were important to achieving good governance. Asset recovery was another, increasingly important issue, and the Indonesian Parliament was in the process of drafting a bill in that regard.

Mr. J. Granoff (President, Global Security Institute), panellist, said that building national anti-corruption capacities was essential, particularly in the light of advances in artificial intelligence (AI), which could be used by criminals to avoid enforcement. Two institutions provided Master's programmes in anti-corruption: the University for Peace in Costa Rica and the International Anti-Corruption Academy in Vienna. However, while country capacity-building was important, illicit financial flows were transnational and could not be controlled nationally. That made interparliamentary cooperation all the more important.

Ms. C. Fredriksen (Senior Manager, Global Foundations Unit, INTOSAI Development Initiative), panellist, said that audits had shown that implementation of anti-corruption frameworks was not always successful, particularly in countries where there were structural weaknesses in government administration. There was therefore a need for more capacity-building. Moreover, when it came to public engagement, data had shown that public participation in the budget process tended to be low. Greater international cooperation was therefore needed to strengthen citizens' participation in budgetary processes and policymaking.

The President opened the floor to questions and contributions, encouraging participants to share real-life examples and good practices.

Ms. S. Falaknaz (United Arab Emirates) said that there was a need to re-establish trust in national and international institutions through more realistic, long-lasting and inclusive policies that sought to achieve good governance and sustainable development. Parliaments should work on fostering trust between governments and their citizens through legislation and oversight of government programmes and budgets. Parliaments also needed to promote dialogue with their citizens and act as moderators between governments and the public. The Government of the United Arab Emirates had an ambitious vision to ensure the well-being of its people and promote international peace and security; it ranked highly in the Edelman Trust Barometer indicating levels of public trust in national institutions.

Mr. M.S. Abrach (Syrian Arab Republic) said that corruption could be prevented by ensuring justice and incentivizing investment. That required parliaments to work with governments to adopt transparent legislation that was not subject to interpretation. Parliaments also needed to work with international and regional organizations and with other parliaments; increase spending on anti-corruption education and innovation; empower women and young people; and promote trust between the government and the people.

Ms. S. Rafiei (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that parliaments played a key role in combating corruption by adopting and monitoring related legislation. Moreover, it was important to strengthen cross-border cooperation by ensuring the effective implementation of key international conventions, such as UNCAC.

Corruption had destructive effects on societies and eroded their ability to develop. Parliaments should play a role in combating corruption and restoring public trust by monitoring budget expenditures and the management of public funds. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, MPs carried out close monitoring and oversight of government offices, plans and programmes, which had helped to prevent corruption. In addition, transparency was a pillar of diplomacy and should be implemented diligently by parliaments, in particular by enacting the necessary laws. MPs in her country stood ready to share their experiences and successes in combating corruption.

Mr. K.P. Tasa (India) said that parliamentarians had utmost responsibility for legislating and protecting the democratic values on which societies were built. Eliminating corruption was a necessary yet daunting task, but not one that was out of reach. India took a zero-tolerance approach to corruption and had taken several measures to address the issue, including e-governance initiatives and the simplification of procedures and systems, with a view to providing transparent, citizen-friendly services. It also sought to ensure inclusive, participatory and responsive decision-making, involving local stakeholders, public representatives, women and minorities in various levels of decision-making and implementation. Efforts were focused on raising awareness, building capacities and restoring citizens' trust in democratic institutions. The Parliament of India had responded to demands for greater accountability and transparency by introducing new legislation, upholding citizens' right to information and promoting the use of information technology in public institutions and service delivery. It also ensured oversight through a series of committees, which helped to facilitate transparency and accessibility, strengthen efficiency and democracy and enhance public engagement in the legislative process. The committees had the power to scrutinize the working plans and programmes of ministries, departments and public institutions. It was important to leverage digital technology to improve governance.

Ms. M. Stolbizer (Argentina), said that corruption affected people's trust in public institutions, weakened governance, democracy and human rights, created poverty, and threatened peace and security. It was important to foster a culture of transparency and ensure that information was readily accessible by enacting legislation that gave citizens access to public information. Public engagement was also essential, as were accountability and integrity. A culture needed to be created in which parliamentarians had control of public management, which required laws on public ethics that prevented conflicts of interest and abuses of power. It was also important to correctly define such crimes and promote an independent justice system: impunity was the biggest incentive for repeated corruption.

There also needed to be stricter legislation on money-laundering. It would not be possible to tackle corruption effectively until criminals were prevented from hiding the money generated by such crimes.

Mr. H. Ebrahim (Bahrain) said that corruption was one of the main factors that hampered sustainable development and democracy; it also increased poverty and destabilized people's lives and had a very high economic and social cost. However, corruption was not just a national matter, but rather an issue of international concern. States, such as Bahrain, that had ratified UNCAC had taken a major step towards making anti-corruption an integral part of their national legislation. In Bahrain, MPs had been working to promote transparency and anti-corruption efforts in order to bring an end to abuses of power and conflicts of interest. Bahrain had also ratified the Arab Anti-Corruption Convention and established a national anti-corruption institution, which brought together lawyers and other national experts to promote anti-corruption efforts and protect society. Measures had also been taken to increase transparency, particularly relating to government budgets and spending.

It was important to promote integrity, which went hand in hand with anti-corruption initiatives. Dismantling the many international, regional and national criminal networks that drove corruption required cooperation between countries' law enforcement authorities, as well as with civil society. Corruption was a crime against humanity and needed to be eliminated through effective measures.

Ms. S. Unnopporn (Thailand) said that her country had an anti-corruption organization that was made up of 54 member organizations from the public, private and academic sectors and sought to encourage the Government to create laws to combat corruption. Its flagship programme, the *Integrity Pact*, was run in cooperation with the Comptroller General's Department of the Ministry of Finance, based on the related tool promoted by Transparency International. The programme prohibited the offering of bribes when bidding for government contracts and assigned independent observers to monitor public infrastructure projects. Member agencies and companies complied with strict transparency rules, requiring them to disclose all bidding information, including terms of reference and costs.

In 2017, Thailand had adopted its first national government procurement law, which applied to all government agencies, local authorities and state-owned enterprises and sought to improve transparency, strengthen integrity and address the risk of fraud. Thailand was also working on a law on strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP) that provided a legal definition of such lawsuits and empowered law enforcement authorities to file anti-SLAPP charges in court. The Parliament had also signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Anti-Corruption Commission to help to strengthen and expand the country's anti-corruption network in order to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 16 and create a more inclusive, accountable and transparent parliament.

Ms. F. Weisse (Chile) said that her country was experiencing a crisis of trust in all institutions. Legislative steps had been taken to prevent the misuse of public funds and reduce conflicts of interest within parliament. Despite those efforts, there was still a culture of corruption in her country, with people finding ways to circumvent their legal obligations. A recent scandal concerning the use of public funds by private companies had prompted calls for greater guarantees concerning the use of public funds and for audits of public accounts. Such abuses of power had terrible consequences for the poorest people.

As those who committed corruption were always one step ahead of the related legislation and regulations, it would be useful to have more information on the extent to which anti-corruption legislation was effective in reducing corruption and on other actions that could be taken to eradicate corruption and combat the crisis.

Mr. M.A. Nadif (Somalia) said that anti-corruption efforts required more transparency concerning the use of both public and private funds. There also needed to be international mechanisms to prosecute those involved in money-laundering so that funds could be frozen and returned to their rightful owners. His Parliament had urged the Government of Somalia to eradicate corruption within its institutions. However, the country lacked anti-corruption entities, without which corruption would continue and public funds would not be protected. The President of Somalia had called for strict anti-corruption legislation with strict punishments for criminals.

It was important for all governments to have comprehensive anti-corruption policies that increased transparency, raised citizens' awareness and encouraged whistleblowing. There also needed to be independent media outlets that could promote anti-corruption efforts and report on abuses of power.

Ms. A.A. Rodríguez Montero (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that her country had a long history of corruption, including within public institutions, with both politicians and civil servants involved in corruption. It was hard to change the situation because of the high levels of election fraud. Corruption had dire consequences, including the destruction of forests and pollution of the natural environment. She called for help in addressing the situation and asked for more information on the ways in which artificial intelligence could be used to oversee the financial system.

The President said that corruption had an adverse impact on democracy, good governance and citizens' trust in public institutions, contributed to inequality and poverty and reduced the well-being of the population. It was clearly a trigger for insecurity and conflict. Parliamentarians had to step up their efforts and establish a legal framework to promote transparency so that public institutions could enjoy greater legitimacy and efficacy and become fully accountable to citizens. That would help to protect and empower people, raise their standards of living and build a vibrant, secure and peaceful democracy.

Ms. C. Fredriksen (Senior Manager, Global Foundations Unit, INTOSAI Development Initiative), panellist, thanking representatives for sharing their anti-corruption experiences, said that it was important for countries to not only adopt UNCAC but also to ensure its meaningful implementation and adapt its principles and standards to the national context. She agreed that there was a need for greater cross-border cooperation and said that parliaments could play a key role in proposing transborder legislation and international conventions to facilitate the exchange of information relating to corrupt behaviour. Countries, for instance, often lacked legislation on the management of natural resources, which made it easy for governments to allocate such resources to private companies without due process.

Furthermore, she highlighted the importance of strengthening public financial management systems to prevent corruption from occurring. A well-functioning public financial management system ensured that there were procurement rules and an internal control system in place, which helped to reduce the misuse of public funds. Digitalizing government operations also made it easier to uncover illicit transactions and other fraudulent activities within governments.

Mr. J. Granoff (President, Global Security Institute), panellist, responding to the question relating to AI, explained that Nasdaq had developed a high-tech product that could identify illicit financial flows with a high degree of accuracy. It was available to global stock exchanges, banks and law enforcement authorities and could also be used by civil society to combat corruption.

Transparency was important because it led to accountability, which in turn helped to build trust. A lack of trust led to government impunity, which could filter down into the wider society, creating a culture in which people believed it was legitimate to take advantage of the tax system. Poor governance led to disruption within countries and increased levels of migration – the most unstable and dangerous countries in the world were those with the highest levels of corruption. Responding to the concerns raised about high levels of corruption in Latin American countries, he said that there were also examples of best practice in the region, such as the Odebrecht case, which had led to 77 executives pleading guilty to corruption in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

Countries had agreed on the need to combat corruption, but parliaments needed to hold government agencies to account and educate the public on the need to mainstream anti-corruption efforts. Public participation in decision-making and civic engagement were also essential in the fight against corruption.

The President thanked the panellists and representatives for their contributions.

Elections to the Bureau of the Standing Committee

The President said that there were seven vacancies on the Bureau. The following nominations had been received: Mr. A. Salman (Bahrain) for the Arab Group; Mr. K. Bayramov (Azerbaijan) and Ms. A. Kuspan (Kazakhstan) for the Eurasia Group; Ms. A.A. Rodríguez Montero (Bolivia (Plurinational State of)), Ms. A.C. Dartorao (Brazil) and Mr. L.A. Báez (Dominican Republic) for the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean; and Ms. F. Belhirsch (Netherlands) for the Twelve Plus Group. The President took it that the Standing Committee wished to approve those nominations to the Bureau.

It was so decided.

The President said that, in line with Rule 7.5 of the Rules of the Standing Committees, the Presidents of the geopolitical groups had decided on the rotation of the presidencies of the Standing Committees until 2033, agreeing that the positions of President and Vice-President should be shared equally between women and men, and that, over a given period, each geopolitical group should have the opportunity to chair each Standing Committee. For 2024–2025, it had been decided that the position of President of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security should be allocated to a female member of parliament from the Eurasia Group, and that the position of Vice-President should be allocated to a male member of parliament from the Asia-Pacific Group. Candidatures had been received from the Eurasia Group for Ms. A. Kuspan (Kazakhstan) for the position of President and from the Asia-Pacific Group for Mr. M. Rezakhah (Islamic Republic of Iran) for the position of Vice-President.

Ms. S. Amero (Uganda) asked why both positions had been allocated to countries in Asia and whether it was possible for other regions to be represented.

Mr. S.M. Mohamuud (Somalia) reiterated the concerns expressed by the delegate from Uganda.

The President explained that the allocation was based on the IPU's geopolitical groups, in the present instance the Asia-Pacific and Eurasia Groups, rather than on regions. The procedure had been decided by the Presidents of the geopolitical groups, and the Standing Committee was following the agreed procedure.

He took it that the Standing Committee wished to approve the nominations.

It was so decided.

Other business

The President said that the Bureau had discussed the situation in the Middle East and the need to tackle issues of peace and security, particularly when they were of such great magnitude.

He said that the Bureau proposed that the Committee should dedicate all its time at the 148th Assembly to the drafting of the resolution; that the Bureau should meet between Assemblies to discuss the state of peace and security to ensure that the Standing Committee addressed topical issues; and that issues pertaining to the Standing Committee's mandate should be monitored in advance of Assemblies and shared with IPU Members so that they were kept aware of the latest developments in the field of peace and security.

It was so decided.

A delegate from Switzerland thanked the President for his work.

The President thanked the Standing Committee and the Secretariat for their support and constructive cooperation over the course of his mandate.

The sitting rose at 16:30.

Standing Committee on Sustainable Development

SITTING OF WEDNESDAY, 25 OCTOBRE 2023

(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 14:30 with Mr. W. William (Seychelles), Vice-President of the Committee, in the Chair.

Adoption of the agenda (C-II/147/A.1)

The agenda was adopted.

Approval of the summary record of the Committee's session held at the 146th IPU Assembly in Manama (March 2023)

The summary record was approved.

Debate on the theme of the next resolution entitled *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity*

The Chair introduced the debate on the theme of the next resolution entitled *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity*.

Climate change was at the heart of the IPU's strategy and action. The IPU promoted strong and scientifically informed parliamentary action that supported countries to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change. It had adopted numerous resolutions and political pronouncements in that regard and would be launching the second phase of its climate change campaign *Parliaments for the Planet* at the present Assembly. The campaign was designed to mobilize parliaments and parliamentarians to act on the climate emergency, especially in the lead-up to 28th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in the United Arab Emirates in December 2023.

The topic of the debate would be introduced by two renowned experts: Ms. T. Tollmann (Process Management Officer, UNFCCC Secretariat) and Ms. A. Smagadi (Legal Officer, Officer in Charge of the Montevideo Coordination and Delivery Unit, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)). Three co-Rapporteurs had been appointed to draft the resolution, namely Mr. S. Patra (India), Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine) and Ms. M. Al Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates). After the sitting, the co-Rapporteurs would prepare the text which would then be submitted to the IPU Secretariat. The text would be open for amendments at the end of December 2023 which would be discussed by the Committee at the next IPU Assembly with a view of finalizing the resolution.

Ms. T. Tollmann (Process Management Officer, UNFCCC Secretariat), panellist, speaking via video link and accompanying her report with a digital slide presentation, said that her presentation would provide an overview of the global stocktake of the Paris Agreement. The global stocktake assessed collective progress towards achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and gave parties a chance to course-correct should they be off track. It functioned as an in-depth check on where the world stood on climate pledges and helped identify where to head next. The mandate for the global stocktake was contained in article 14 of the Paris Agreement. As part of the process, parties were asked to consider where they were on climate change, how they got there and how they would get to where they needed to be.

It was already clear that the world was not on track to meet the goals and objectives of the Paris Agreement. Temperatures were rising, risks and impacts were increasing, and support remained insufficient. Incremental action would not be enough to drive the transformation towards low-carbon, resilient societies. Deep, urgent and holistic approaches were necessary. The outcome of the global stocktake must charter a clear path for the next five years, indicating concrete milestones and targets that needed to be achieved.

The global stocktake looked at four thematic areas in particular: (1) mitigation; (2) adaptation; (3) means of implementation and support; and (4) integrated and holistic approaches. Mitigation, which included response measures, referred to the efforts made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Adaptation, which included loss and damage, referred to the ways in which countries adjusted to current and projected impacts of climate change. The means of implementation and support included capacity building, technology and finance while integrated and holistic approaches looked at systematic transformation and multisectoral initiatives. There were also many cross-cutting dimensions that applied across all four thematic areas, such as indigenous knowledge, fairness considerations, including equity, and the need to use the best available science.

The global stocktake took place every five years. The timing had been chosen on purpose as it coincided with the review period for the national determined contributions (NDCs). Indeed, the findings of the global stocktake were meant to inform parties on the next iteration of their NDCs, which were revised every five years and should be more and more ambitious in each round. The idea was to create a feedback loop that generated ever-increasing ambition and paved the way for stronger concerted global action. The first global stocktake had been launched in Glasgow at COP26 in 2021 and would conclude in Dubai at COP28 in 2023. The next global stocktake was due to start in 2026.

One of the most important outcomes of the global stocktake had been the increasing engagement of non-party stakeholders. Although it was a party-driven process, civil society was also very active given their important role in implementation. Civil society had contributed a great deal of information through submissions and participated at the technical dialogues, roundtables and world cafés.

There were three phases to the global stocktake: (1) information collection and preparation; (2) technical assessment; and (3) consideration of outputs. The technical assessment was comprised of technical dialogues which resulted in a synthesis report that contributed to the consideration of outputs. Parliamentarians could play a particularly important role in the final phase.

Governance of the global stocktake came under the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement. The said body had provided direction for all three phases of the process based on party perspectives. There was also a joint contact group, two co-facilitators of the technical dialogues, and a high-level committee involved in the consideration of outputs.

The current global stocktake was currently in the third phase, namely consideration of outputs. As part of that phase, a number of events were taking place including the Latin America and the Caribbean Climate Week 2023, the pre-COP28 meeting, and the Asia-Pacific Climate Week 2023. Several high-level ministerial sessions would also take place at COP28. A decision was expected to be issued as part of the final outputs and there were also unconfirmed reports of a declaration and technical annex.

Parliamentarians had a key role to play in setting NDCs which must go through parliament in the form of legislation.

Ms. A. Smagadi (Legal Officer, Officer in Charge of the Montevideo Coordination and Delivery Unit, UNEP), panellist, accompanying her report with a digital slide presentation, said that the legal division of UNEP provided technical legal assistance to countries in the field of environmental law, including on climate legislation. The assistance was provided under the Montevideo Environmental Law Programme which was an intergovernmental platform to advance priority actions in environmental law. The Montevideo programme supported the development and implementation of an environmental rule of law and was helping to build the institutional capacities of countries. The programme was now in its fifth decade of action. Its governance framework was made up of national focal points usually representing the ministry of environment, a steering committee elected by the national focal points, and a secretariat.

The programme looked at legal responses to the triple planetary crisis: the pollution crisis, the climate crisis and the biodiversity crisis. There were also cross-cutting areas of work, such as education and capacity building as well as access rights, including access to environmental information and access to remedies.

Parliaments could play a key role in passing climate legislation – both “climate framework legislation” and “climate change legislation”. Climate framework legislation: (1) set out the strategic direction for national climate change policy; (2) was passed by the legislative branch of government; (3) contained national long- or medium-term targets and pathways for change; (4) set out institutional arrangements for climate governance at the national level; (5) was multisectoral in scope; and (6) involved mechanisms for transparency and accountability. Climate change legislation: (1) referred to laws and policies that governed action on climate change; (2) was passed by both the legislative

and executive branches of government; (3) included actions to address climate change mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk management; and (4) was applied across different sectors, such as agriculture, land use, transport, energy and waste.

In terms of general action, parliaments should push for rapid and deep emission reductions to counter the rollback that had occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. Evidence suggested that sustained emissions reductions could only be achieved through legislation and strong parliamentary oversight. It was therefore important to take binding measures, such as enshrining a net zero emissions target in law.

In terms of specific actions, parliaments should make the necessary reforms in specific sectors to contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. They must exercise effective oversight over government actions to ensure alignment with constitutional and legislative commitments. There was a need to look at other, lesser-known sectors, such as air quality, and their links to climate change. Cross-cutting issues, such as access rights, must also be examined. Lastly, parliamentarians were encouraged to consider emerging climate concepts, for instance, how to deal with climate migrants.

She drew attention to the UNEP Law and Environmental Assistance Platform which was a digital tool allowing countries to submit technical assistance requests. The platform carried out step-by-step assessments to identify specific country needs. The Law and Climate Change Toolkit was another useful tool helping countries to identify needs regarding climate legislation. There were four modules under the toolkit: climate change, energy, urban planning and agriculture.

Ms. M. Al Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates), co-Rapporteur, said that, in the drafting process, it was important to consider the purpose of the resolution, its content and the way forward. The purpose of the resolution was to strengthen effective partnerships for climate action. The content must be made up of different recommendations and ideas to achieve the said purpose. The way forward was to include different viewpoints and ensure that the resolution could be implemented effectively in different national contexts.

She drew attention to why more partnerships in climate action were so important. First, the impacts of climate change were becoming increasingly visible, with millions of people facing a greater risk to their lives. Second, the increased risk of air pollution and extreme weather events were causing displacement of millions of people, sinking them further into poverty and hunger, and denying them access to basic services. Third, the gap between relevant stakeholders, such as governments, parliaments and the people, was increasing. Fourth, the world was far from achieving its goal of avoiding a global temperature rise of above 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The resolution would focus on strengthening partnerships and raising awareness. Her proposal was to take a three-tiered approach addressing personal action, national initiatives, and regional and global efforts. First, parliamentarians, as individuals, must show a strong personal responsibility to protect future generations while also encouraging individuals, communities, organizations and businesses to take action. Second, parliaments as institutions must foster more dialogue on climate change between national stakeholders, including government bodies, civil society and the private sector. Third, it was important to work together at the regional and global levels, including from within the IPU.

Mr. S. Patra (India), co-Rapporteur, emphasized the importance of defining the keywords to be used in the draft resolution. Delegates should clarify the term “partnerships”, for instance, whether it referred to collaboration between contributor and beneficiary or something else. They should clarify the term “climate action”, how it differed to the term “climate change”, and the topics that fell under its scope, for instance, mitigation and adaptation measures. They should clarify the term “promoting access”, in particular, what they wished to promote access to, for instance, financial resources and technology. The term “affordable green energy” must be defined as compared to “green energy”, including any national objectives in that regard. There was a need to clarify the term “innovation” and how delegates sought to operationalize it, for instance, whether through collaborative research and development or resources. Another key word to define was “responsibility”, particularly the scope of the responsibility and the stakeholders concerned. Lastly, more clarity was needed on the term “equity”, considering in particular how to bridge the gap between the haves and have-nots.

Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine), co-Rapporteur, said that implementation was key. The resolution must not just be about outlining the problem but also about finding a solution that was acceptable and implementable by all.

She drew attention to the crime of “ecocide” which legal experts had defined as an unlawful or wanton act committed with the knowledge that there was a substantial likelihood of severe, widespread or long-term damage to the environment. The crime was largely linked with civilian actions, although some military dimensions also existed. Experts had suggested that a reference to ecocide be included in the resolution.

Mr. K. Akino (Japan) said that, in Japan, global warming had caused mosquito infestations in winter and facilitated the spread of infectious diseases, such as dengue fever. Climate action required not only States but also non-State actors, including the private sector, to come together and share the latest technologies. During his time as Deputy Minister of Finance, he had pushed for the introduction of subsidies and taxation to support investment in advanced energy-saving equipment. The Government had given US\$ 2 million to the Global Health Innovative Technology Fund and was currently considering proposals on ocean thermal energy conversion, a method of power generation that used the temperature difference between the surface and the deep ocean, hoping to disseminate the technology to the rest of the world.

Mr. Gao Li (China) said that China was striving to peak its carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. The country had reduced its carbon intensity by more than 50% compared to 2005 levels, and was currently providing 50% of the world’s wind power and 80% of the world’s solar photovoltaic power generation equipment. China had also supported other countries in addressing climate change and enacted several energy and climate change laws.

China welcomed efforts to promote partnerships on climate change and wished to make three proposals in that regard. First, countries must jointly uphold the institutional framework for global climate change cooperation, namely the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. Developed countries must fulfil their obligations under international law to provide support to developing countries. Second, countries must collaborate to foster an international environment conducive to the green and low-carbon transition, while upholding a spirit of genuine multilateralism. It was vital to prevent the fragmentation of the global market, maintain the stability of global industrial and supply chains and prevent protectionism and unilateralism. He noted with concern that some developed countries had introduced unilateral measures, such as decoupling and de-risking policies, which undermined global green energy supply capacities. Third, there was a need to promote extensive in-depth dialogue and exchange among governments, parliaments, enterprises, research institutions, social organizations and the general public.

Mr. P.S. Rudana (Indonesia) emphasized the importance of applying local wisdom in climate change efforts. He drew attention to *Tri Hita Karana*, a philosophy practised in Bali which called for harmonious relationships between humans, humans and God, and humans and nature. The philosophy required people to protect nature as the source of life. Balinese people also practiced a day of silence each year which contributed to reducing emissions.

It was vital to speed up the clean energy transition while also protecting socioeconomic development. Indonesia aimed to increase the share of renewable energy in its energy mix from 3% to 23% by 2025. A new renewable energy bill had recently been agreed in Parliament.

National measures, however, were not enough and countries must work together. The resolution must emphasize the need for interparliamentary cooperation on issues such as investment, capacity building, technology transfer and innovation. It must call on developed countries to fulfil their commitment to mobilize US\$ 100 billion per year for climate action. It must also prioritize the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. There was a need to focus in particular on Sustainable Development Goal 7: ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, including universal access to electricity and access to green jobs.

Ms. A. Lotriet (South Africa) said that parliaments must ensure that energy transition loans provided to countries did not result in further indebtedness. While transitioning to sustainable energy sources was pivotal, it should not burden countries with overwhelming debts that impeded development efforts. It was shocking that, on average, African countries paid four times more when borrowing than wealthier economies. Such disparities should be vigorously addressed through multilateral forums such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

Parliamentarians must carefully scrutinize and monitor the terms of any financial assistance, ensuring transparency, accountability and alignment of loan conditions with long-term national interests. It was critical to conduct thorough assessments of the financial implications and potential risks associated with energy transition loans. Parliaments should help safeguard economic stability and sovereignty while simultaneously supporting the sustainable energy transition.

Parliamentarians were encouraged to openly collaborate, exchange best practices and establish strong partnerships to facilitate the effective implementation of climate-related initiatives. By leveraging collective expertise and experiences, it was possible to navigate the complexities of climate governance and ensure the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities for sustainable development.

South Africa was currently facing an electricity challenge that had accelerated its move towards clean energy. It was looking at boosting investments in new transmission lines and substations in line with a diverse mix of energy sources, including solar, wind, gas, nuclear, hydro and battery storage. One key reform was allowing private developers to generate electricity. To reduce the pressure on the grid, tax incentives had also been introduced for installation of rooftop solar panels.

Mr. H. Ebrahim (Bahrain) said that climate change action would not be successful without cooperation between all relevant stakeholders, including governments, civil society and the private sector. The United Nations (UN) had a particularly important role in promoting international collaboration on the transition to low carbon economies. Partnerships were needed to help implement national plans, find innovative solutions and manage risks. It was particularly important to support countries experiencing armed conflict which were most likely to be left behind. Any measures taken should be fair and beneficial to everybody.

Mr. G. Nouri Ghezal (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that access to affordable green energy would not be possible without enacting a just and sustainable transformation across all sectors. It was important to provide developing countries, particularly those that relied heavily on fossil fuels, with the means to implement green energy policies by improving their access to technology and finance. Workers and communities that faced job losses must be protected in the transition process. A collaborative approach was needed to drive down the cost of climate technologies and to create enabling environments that facilitated the uptake of those technologies, especially in developing countries.

Mr. P.B. Pham (Viet Nam) said that Viet Nam had set goals to restructure its economy towards green growth and sustainable development. It was making substantial investments in reducing dependence on fossil fuels and increasing the use of clean and renewable energy. The transition process, however, required large amounts of resources.

The transition to green energy should be recognized globally as a common objective within the framework of the UNFCCC. Common policy guidelines should be developed to help implement the transition nationally, supporting organizations, businesses, and households to go green. Global investments must be made into scientific research for new green energy technologies. There should also be global, regional and national efforts to raise awareness among communities about resource efficiency, energy efficiency, environmental protection, harmonious living with nature, biodiversity, conservation, and promotion of green consumption in both the public and private sectors. A roadmap was required that took into account the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Developed countries must facilitate the transition in developing countries by assisting them financially and technologically.

Ms. L. Northover (United Kingdom) said that the Parliament of the United Kingdom had passed the Climate Change Act in 2008 and set up an independent climate change committee to monitor government actions. A successful legal case had been taken against the Government for not adequately delivering.

She questioned the suggestion that the solution must be acceptable and implementable by all. Indeed, it could invite governments to claim that it was too difficult to achieve. Given the urgency and depth of the crisis, the international community must ensure it did not move at the pace of the slowest nation. The co-Rapporteurs should clarify how those potentialities would be addressed.

Ms. J. Sabao (Zambia) said that parliaments could play a critical role in promoting access to affordable green energy through their legislative, oversight, budgetary and representative functions. Their core functions provided different entry points for parliamentary action. Through law-making, parliamentarians could propose or amend legislation that promoted access to affordable green energy. Their oversight function empowered them to monitor the government's implementation of laws and policies. Through their role in budgeting, they could advocate for adequate resources for promoting access to affordable green energy. Lastly, as representatives of the people, they could engage constituents and sensitize them on the benefits of green energy.

Zambia had an abundant and largely untapped range of renewable energy resources, from hydro, solar and wind to biomass and geothermal, giving it great potential to harness green energy. However, the majority of the population still lived without electricity and used cooking fuels that negatively affected their health and wellbeing. The Government of Zambia had put in place several policy measures to promote universal access to clean, reliable and affordable energy, including the Renewable Energy Strategy and Action Plan 2022 and National Energy Policy 2019.

It was vital to find innovative ways to increase access to green energy. While there were challenges and barriers to overcome, such as financing, regulation and resistance to change, the potential benefits of green energy were vast, including economic growth, job creation, improved public health and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Policymakers must develop practical climate adaptation strategies and plans for energy infrastructure that took into account diverse climate justice considerations. Greater investment and participation of public and private investors were critical.

Mr. K.Y. Chhit (Cambodia) said that his Government was committed to green energy and climate change action. It was a long-term goal which should be addressed under the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Cambodia had recently submitted an updated version of its national determined contributions to the UNFCCC Secretariat. Among its objectives was achieving net zero emissions by 2050 and selling 15 billion tonnes of carbon credit to international partners. The country was also in the process of reducing national deforestation, getting rid of licenses for electricity generation from coal and increasing the use of electric cars. Overall, it had contributed 2.3% of its gross domestic product to climate action, including to adaptation, renewable energy and environmental protection.

The resolution should call on IPU Members to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by using green energies instead of fossil fuels.

Mr. B. Kalu (Nigeria) said that climate change was a pressing global crisis that required collaboration between governments, businesses and civil society. Three pillars must be prioritized in addressing the crisis: (1) promoting access to affordable green energy; (2) ensuring responsible innovation; and (3) fostering equity.

Nigeria had undertaken significant steps to combat climate change and implement both the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Some noteworthy initiatives included the development of Nigeria's SDG implementation plan 2022–2030 and the introduction of tree planting, erosion and flood control policies in several Nigerian states. In addition, the Climate Change Act had been passed in 2021 outlining Nigeria's commitment to climate goals, socioeconomic sustainability and resilience, including the goal to achieve net zero emissions between 2050 and 2070. One key provision mandated the Government to establish a national climate change action plan and a five-year carbon budget. Nigeria had also participated in research and development projects on green energy technology supporting innovation and corporate responsibility around grid energy.

Many countries in Africa, including Nigeria were in need of support from the rest of the world to enhance opportunities in the field of green energy. Nigeria had therefore been involved in climate advocacy calling on developed countries to fulfil their obligations.

Mr. S.V.D. Ram (India) said that green energy was a gamechanger in efforts to combat climate change given its sustainable nature, its ability to be replenished at a higher rate than it was consumed, and the minimal climate or environmental damage that it caused.

At COP26, India had pledged to intensify its climate action through five nectar elements (Panchamrit). As part of its updated NDCs, it would promote lifestyles that encouraged mindful and deliberate utilization of resources instead of mindless and destructive consumption. The country had also committed to reducing the emissions intensity of its gross domestic product by 45% by 2030 compared to 2005 levels and to achieving 50% cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuels by 2030.

Other initiatives included helping in the construction of the world's largest floating solar plant and launching a cross-border electricity trade to facilitate the sale and exchange of renewable energy power with neighbouring countries. India was also playing an active role in several international climate organizations, such as the International Solar Alliance and the Global Biofuel Alliance.

The prosperity and wellbeing of present and future generations depended on the pursuit of environmentally sustainable and inclusive economic growth with green energy being very important in that pursuit. He called on parliamentarians to work together, to innovate, to share knowledge, to support each other through technology and finance, and to make green energy accessible to all.

Mr. A. Alsalamah (Saudi Arabia) said that it was not enough to pass laws and regulations on access to affordable, green energy. There must be mechanisms for implementation, or the laws and regulations would have no meaning. The international community had delivered many speeches on the topic but had not gone far enough on implementation.

Mr. K. Tontisirin (Thailand) said that three approaches were needed when building partnerships on green energy: (1) a multistakeholder approach; (2) a multilevel approach; and (3) a multistrategic approach. The multistakeholder approach should focus on building public, private, professional, people-centred and parliamentary partnerships while the multilevel approach should look to build them at the individual, community, national, regional and global levels.

Thailand had adopted the bio-circular and green economy method which used household waste to generate energy. It was also working on forestation, investing in science, technology, research and innovation, including carbon capture, and promoting carbon credit. The country was in the process of developing various laws, including a clean air act and a climate change act. He encouraged parliaments to share best practices.

Mr. M. Alajmi (Kuwait) said that the international community must get more serious about climate change which was having negative effects on social, economic and political systems, and causing natural disasters such as water scarcity and drought. One way forward was to reduce the cost of green energy making it less expensive than conventional energy sources. Doing so would make green energy more accessible. It was paramount to pass laws on carbon neutrality and provide more funding for environmental issues. More solar energy stations were needed to reduce reliance on fossil fuels such as gas. There must be a focus on supporting developing countries, including through loans.

Mr. W.A. Nikiema (Burkina Faso) said that Burkina Faso had set up an institutional and legal framework on climate change that brought together the Ministry of the Environment, Green Economy and Climate Change, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation. There were also formal climate change policies, such as the national climate adaptation plan. Burkina Faso was doing its best to invest in green energy, including in a photovoltaic solar energy programme, and was looking to green hydrogen as a solution to the country's electricity deficit. Other initiatives included raising awareness among the population about their climate responsibilities and setting up a green fund for sustainable development programmes.

Mr. K. Al-Emadi (Qatar) said that Qatar was working to expand agricultural areas, had opened a horticultural expo and was working with the UN to plant a million trees. Some 10% of its electricity was now generated using solar power. Electric car manufacturing was also being encouraged.

Ms. S. Mikayilova (Azerbaijan) said that green development was one of the five priority areas of Azerbaijan's new socioeconomic development strategy. After ratifying the Paris Agreement, Azerbaijan had made a voluntary commitment to achieving a 35% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. Currently, the country's green energy potential was 157 gigawatts in wind and 220 gigawatts in solar. However, the share of renewable energy in the total energy capacity of Azerbaijan was expected to surpass 77% by 2030.

Azerbaijan had recently signed a memorandum of understanding with several countries on the establishment of an Azerbaijan-European Union green energy corridor which would supply green electricity from Azerbaijan through Georgia and the Black Sea to the rest of Europe. In addition, the Karabakh economic zone had been declared a green energy area built on the concept of green economy. Azerbaijan had also presented its candidacy to host COP29.

Ms. F. Bustreo (Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)) said that the climate crisis was a health crisis. The health of women, children and adolescents was particularly affected by extreme weather events, including through gestational and newborn complications, pregnancy loss, restricted foetal growth, low birth weight, and risk of pre-term birth. In addition, climate-related impacts worsened gender inequalities and disrupted the provision of services for sexual and reproductive health. Parliamentarians must prioritize women's, children's and adolescents' health in climate policies and financing while also addressing climate change in policies and financing on women's, children's and adolescents' health. Delegates were requested to recognize women's, children's and adolescents' health in the resolution.

Ms. A. Smagadi (Legal Officer, Officer in Charge of the Montevideo Coordination and Delivery Unit, UNEP), panellist, said that the resolution should include a clear definition of climate action outlining specific areas of intervention. There were many aspects that must be addressed, including climate migrants and financing.

Ms. M.S. Al Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates), **Mr. S. Patra** (India) and **Ms. L. Vasylenko** (Ukraine), co-Rapporteurs, noted the different considerations raised. They would do their best to include all proposals in the draft resolution with a view to making it both holistic and implementable.

Preparations for the Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in the United Arab Emirates

The Chair said that the annual Parliamentary Meeting at the COP was an important vehicle for parliamentary engagement in climate change processes. The next one would be held on 6 December 2023 at COP28 in the United Arab Emirates. The meeting would give parliamentarians an opportunity to obtain first-hand information on the main areas of discussion as well as to interact with senior officials and experts. One of the outcomes of the Parliamentary Meeting would be an outcome document. The Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates had appointed Ms. Al Suwaidi as the Rapporteur for the document.

Ms. M.S. Al Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates), Rapporteur of the outcome document of the Parliamentary Meeting at COP28, noted that, so far, parliamentary meetings at the COP had taken place on the sidelines of the conference rather than within it. Given the right of parliamentarians to have a more inclusive voice, the United Arab Emirates had been taking steps to change the situation. She was pleased to announce that the Parliamentary Meeting at COP28 would, for the first time, take place in the Green Zone, thus giving parliamentarians a chance to interact with decision-makers. The hope was that all parliamentary meetings thereon would have a similar setup.

The objective of the meeting was to better engage parliamentarians in climate discussions, including in the global stocktake, which would be the main topic of discussion at COP28. Parliamentarians would thus be better placed to inform the nationally determined contributions and partner with their governments. The meeting was also a chance to build on the recommendations of COP27. It was important to ensure that the global stocktake was not used to punish governments but to create a better future.

She suggested three key areas of focus for the outcome document. First, it was important to address the clean energy transition. Parliamentarians should consider how to better inform national strategies, policies and legislation on clean energy and how they would encourage green economy initiatives and green technology transfer in different sectors, including government, the private sector and civil society.

Second, the document should draw attention to parliamentary engagement. One important area of engagement was climate finance. Parliamentarians had a crucial role in mobilizing resources for the green transition, including through green budgeting practices. They could also support developing countries in their adaptation and mitigation efforts and in addressing loss and damage. One example showing the need for parliamentary engagement was the US\$ 4.5 billion energy aid package to be delivered by the United Arab Emirates to Africa. Beneficiary countries were required to protect the investment and ensure that it reached the people. Parliamentarians were therefore needed to pass the necessary legislation.

Third, another key area of focus was international cooperation. The IPU was a good base from which parliamentarians could work together in collaboration with other organizations, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNEP. She encouraged parliamentarians to use the resources available at those organizations.

Lastly, the following questions should be considered: (1) how to provide legislative support for mitigation, adaptation and greener economies; (2) how to implement the IPU 10 Actions for Greener Parliaments; (3) how to share best practices regarding the implementation of climate legislation and policy; and (4) how to collectively reduce the carbon footprint.

Parliamentarians were invited to submit other proposals for the outcome document. The key point was that the document should be actionable.

Mr. J.P. Letelier (Chile) said that the energy transition was very important but not enough to keep the global temperature rise below 1.5 degrees Celsius. The global methane emissions emergency must also be addressed. He recommended that the resolution discussed under the

previous item underline the need to cut global methane emissions by 30% by 2030, as highlighted in the global methane pledge, as well as the need to provide support to countries experiencing difficulties in reaching those goals. A similar reference should be made in the outcome document of the Parliamentary Meeting at COP28.

Ms. S. Shaw (Senior Advisor, Partnerships Team, COP28), panellist, said that the United Arab Emirates together with the IPU had worked hard to ensure that the voices of parliamentarians were heard at COP28. As such, the Parliamentary Meeting of COP28 would now be held in the Green Zone instead of on the sidelines. It was an honour to better include parliamentarians in the conference since they were the ones holding governments accountable for their pledges and commitments.

The Parliamentary Meeting would take place on 6 December 2023 which was the multilevel action day. It was a day when various parties would come together to identify ways to make all relevant stakeholders, including young people, women, children and the elderly, part and parcel of the solution. Parliamentarians were the link between governments and the people and must therefore take the opportunity to voice their concerns.

Outlining some logistical information regarding ticketing, accommodation and transport, she said that the United Arab Emirates was doing its utmost to keep the carbon footprint of the event as low as possible.

Ms. S. Rafiei (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that more action should be taken to prevent countries from taking unilateral measures and politicizing climate change. It was important to promote renewable energy, provide financial aid, protect livelihoods and include young people and women in climate action. COP28 was a good opportunity to work on clean energy, particularly in countries whose economy depended on fossil fuels. However, the focus should not only be on exporters of fossil fuels but also on consumers since their carbon footprint was larger. A balanced and unified approach rather than a unilateral one was necessary. Energy companies around the world must do more to support the transition to clean energy.

The Islamic Republic of Iran had proposed that an agency for climate change be established. The agency would be tasked with developing national legislation and assessing progress in accordance with the capacities of each respective country. She suggested that a workshop be held on the sidelines of COP28 to discuss the proposal.

She drew attention to the negative effect of war on the environment, as seen in Gaza. Israel was dropping phosphorus bombs on Gaza, which, in addition to being a genocide, was also destroying the land. That point should be included in the draft resolution discussed under the previous item.

Mr. M. Karakaya (Türkiye) said that Türkiye had doubled its greenhouse gas emission targets and was striving to achieve net zero emissions by 2053. It had introduced new green development reforms and submitted a candidacy to host COP31 in 2026. In 2022, a green deal action plan had been adopted with the aim of supporting the green transformation in all policy areas.

Türkiye was prioritizing the green energy transition and currently had an installed renewable energy capacity of 105 gigawatts, which was 54% of its entire energy mix. The country was aware of the economic and environmental challenges of the energy transition as well as of the requirements needed to make it a success. Nuclear power would play an important role in reducing greenhouse emissions as well as in meeting the growing need for energy.

It was important to have realistic expectations on green energy. The process was a delicate one. Countries must ensure that energy security needs were met and that investments were made in a responsible and strategic manner.

Ms. H. Burke (Event Manager, Green Zone, COP28), speaking via video link, said that the Green Zone at COP28 was different to previous years in that it was co-located with the Blue Zone. The co-location meant that more interaction could take place between the two zones. In the past, the Green Zone had been located at a distance from the Blue Zone thus inhibiting interaction. The COP28 President, however, was keen for the Green Zone to have more networking and collaboration opportunities.

There were several layers within the Green Zone. The first layer consisted of exhibitions and hubs housed in temporary buildings across the site. The buildings would accommodate up to 150 sponsors, partners, technology showcases and exhibitors. The second layer was a series of curated programmes and events. The Green and Blue Zones would follow the same thematic programme to encourage collaboration. The third layer was an arts and culture programme which

included panel discussions, entertainment and artworks that had been deliberately chosen to reflect the vision and themes of COP28. They were also inclusive and representative in nature. The arts and culture programme was another way to tell stories and share ideas on climate change.

The Presidency of COP28 recognized the importance of the youth voice in climate change discussions and had therefore set up a youth hub. A green education hub would also be there as well as a humanitarian hub providing a voice to civil society.

Overall, there were approximately 12 different venues and 70 scheduled events. The Green Zone would be open to visitors from the Blue Zone who wished to be involved in discussions.

The Chair asked Ms. Burke to explain the technical barriers that prevented access to the Green Zone.

Ms. H. Burke (Event Manager, Green Zone, COP28), speaking via video link, said that a registration process would take place allowing delegates to obtain a Green Zone pass valid for one day. The purpose of the registration process was to keep track of capacity and to facilitate sustainable reporting. There were four entry points into the site.

The sitting rose at 17:05.

SITTING OF THURSDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2023

(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 9:00 with Mr. W. William (Seychelles), Vice-President of the Committee, in the Chair.

Expert hearing on the theme *Ensuring global food security*

The Chair said that the scale of the current global hunger and malnutrition crisis was enormous, with more than 345 million people facing high levels of food insecurity in 2023. Conflict, climate extremes and economic shocks combined with the high cost of nutritious foods and growing inequalities were the major drivers behind those trends. The expert hearing would discuss ways in which parliaments could contribute to the transformation of agrifood systems to make them sustainable and more resilient, and to enable them to deliver low-cost, affordable nutritious foods and healthy diets for all. He introduced the panellists.

Ms. A. Badejo (Deputy Regional Director for Operations, Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, World Food Programme (WFP)), panellist, speaking via video link, said that the world continued to face one of the largest food crises in modern history with 345 million people in 79 countries experiencing acute food insecurity. The levels of food insecurity would deepen unless collective action was taken immediately and at scale. It was vital to address the drivers of the crisis, including conflicts, climate shocks and economic challenges. The interplay of those drivers was affecting the most vulnerable and eroding hard-won development gains.

Of the 345 million people facing acute food insecurity, 69% lived in fragile and conflict-affected regions. The current humanitarian needs were small in comparison to what they could be if governments failed to tackle climate change immediately.

In 2022, 32.6 million people had been internally displaced by disasters, 98% of which were weather-related hazards. That figure that could increase to 216 million by 2050. In particular, the climate phenomenon known as the El Niño was having devastating impacts on weather patterns across the globe, with vast implications for food systems and livelihood security in many regions, including Southeast Asia, Latin America, and East and Southern Africa. The phenomenon was expected to induce droughts, above average rainfall (which would contribute to drought recovery but also increase the risk of flooding), livestock losses and potential epidemics, thus jeopardizing agricultural production and exacerbating food insecurity.

In addition, several countries were yet to recover from the long-term economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and many were struggling with the crisis of prices. While international food fertilizer and energy prices had fallen from their peaks, they remained well above pre-pandemic levels. Food prices were currently 25% higher than in December 2019, fertilizer prices were 98% higher and energy prices were 56% higher. In fact, the overall price decline in recent months masked increases for individual commodities. For example, rice prices had risen to levels not seen in 15 years.

The WFP was facing a mammoth challenge. The number of acutely hungry people continued to increase, while humanitarian responses were ominously under-resourced and thus unable to keep up with global food and nutrition needs. Her colleagues were faced with impossible choices in the wake of crippling funding shortfalls, including having to turn away hungry people. The surge in acute food insecurity could only be properly addressed through adequate investment in the root causes.

She called on parliamentarians to steer global political will towards addressing food insecurity thus helping to build a more equitable, peaceful and sustainable future for all. It meant, among other things, expanding strategic funding, encouraging trade, focusing on climate, expanding investments in long-term resilience, encouraging collective action, and promoting peace, good governance and sound economic policies. Those were top priorities that the WFP was routinely obliged to temper for lack of funding. Nevertheless, the resolve of the communities affected was palpable, which was evidence of a widely held conviction that the challenges above were opportunities to improve.

Ms. S. Healy-Thow (Global Youth Campaigns Coordinator, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)), panellist, said that it was paramount to reshape and remould the broken food system. Food brought people together but also tore people apart. Food had direct impacts on climate degradation while climate degradation had direct impacts on food insecurity. Food was often used as a weapon of war.

One of the great injustices of the time was that a healthy diet was considered a luxury. Indeed, as much as 30% of the world's population was facing micronutrient deficiency with 820 million people malnourished and 676 million obese. Parliamentarians had a huge part to play in remoulding those numbers but not without young people. As a young activist on food systems, she had at times been refused the floor by decision-makers in discussions about her future. However, anything created for the future of young people without young people was not for young people.

For a long time, young people had not had a common agenda on food systems. As such, in 2021, at the United Nations Food Systems Summit, 10 young people had come together to create the Act4Food campaign. Act4Food had begun as a pledge to transform food systems and currently had over 400,000 pledges from young people from across the globe. However, pledges did not cause action. The Act4Food collective had held consultations with over 100,000 young people from across the globe about the actions they wished to see taken on food security by decision-makers. The top 10 actions were as follows: (1) ensure that everyone can afford healthy and nutritious food; (2) back sustainable farming to regenerate soils and reduce damaging chemicals; (3) ensure that every child can eat a healthy and sustainable meal at school, college or nursery; (4) educate the population about food and its impact on the planet and on health; (5) stop and reverse land use conversion, including deforestation; (6) ban single-use plastics in food packaging; (7) value local and indigenous food knowledge; (8) create employment for young farmers and agripreneurs; (9) protect food production from political disruption, conflicts and the effects of climate change; and (10) support local growers and food producers with subsidies and tax incentives.

Decision-makers must take the above actions and work with young people to ensure they benefitted everyone. Young people wanted to be the co-creators and co-implementers of food policies, not just the beneficiaries. Parliamentarians were encouraged to reach out to and work with youth organizations, schools and universities, many of which were carrying out campaigns and projects of their own.

Mr. D. Naughten (Ireland), Chair of the IPU Working Group on Science and Technology, panellist, drew attention to the Science for Peace Parliamentary meeting held in September 2023 in Viet Nam on the topic *Water security and insecurity: Rebuilding peaceful coexistence with science*. The meeting had brought together legislators and scientists to discuss pivotal water-related issues. The main goal was to employ science to aid evidence-based decision-making on transboundary water challenges. The conclusion of the meeting was that the planet's water security crisis demanded timely, evidence-based decisions, widespread community engagement and robust international collaboration.

Water security was a global concern that impacted food security and risked increased conflicts and violent extremism, especially in vulnerable regions such as the Sahel, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. A lack of clean water also often led to conflict. However, it was not just about having water but about getting equitable access to it, managing it well and ensuring its sustainability for future generations.

During the meeting, participants had looked at real case studies demonstrating the dire need for water projects in areas such as the Sahel, Palestine and the Mekong River Basin, and were made aware of how practical tools such as robust water legislation could help nations ensure equitable water use. A number of critical points had been made during the meeting. First, time was of the essence as

water and food insecurity were escalating and the international community was only on track to reach 12% of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Second, solutions needed to be tailored to specific contexts but with a global mindset. Third, addressing water security required an interdisciplinary approach involving water experts, regulators, parliamentarians and the communities themselves.

Three significant recommendations had also come out of the meeting. First, there was a need for evidence-based decision-making on water and sanitation with all decisions backed by scientific research, data and transparency. The data collected must include data on river flow management and water allocation, and it must be open source to foster a stronger bond between scientists, analysts and parliamentarians. Second, it was important to encourage community engagement through citizen science initiatives to fill data gaps and support solution crafting. Doing so would ensure that those impacted by water policies were part of the solution, thus enhancing responsibility and encouraging a sense of ownership. There must be an international commitment to ensuring technology and expertise were shared with developing regions. Third, parliamentarians and scientists must pressure their governments to support the adoption of the United Nations Water Convention, to actively implement its provisions and integrate them into overseas aid initiatives.

The above recommendations empowered parliamentarians worldwide to provide the best for their citizens. Implementing the recommendations would help minimize potential conflicts over water resources and promote sustainable water management. He called for all parliamentary committees on water globally to urgently consider those recommendations because a unified approach to water security was the path forward.

Mr. H. Ebrahim (Bahrain) called on the international community to mobilize resources to address the root causes of food insecurity, such as climate change and conflict. It was important to improve food systems and promote agriculture that produced high quality food. International cooperation was needed to fight malnutrition. In addition, countries must fund research on raw materials and address the challenges associated with food trade. It was necessary to work with the private sector as well as with scientists to promote food assessment. Scientists from sectors such as agriculture, climate and health should be involved in food policy efforts as should be the communities affected by food insecurity.

Ms. A. Lotriet (South Africa) said that the right to food was a fundamental human right both nationally and internationally. As such, access to food should be guaranteed whether in peace or war time. However, it was important to recognize that the fulfilment of the right to food went beyond mere access. Countries must prioritize sustainable and environmentally friendly agricultural practices that produced nutritious food for everyone, particularly for vulnerable groups, such those living in poverty and children.

Staggering amounts of food were wasted each year, which could instead feed billions of hungry people. The reduction of food loss and waste must be prioritized through legislation that supported the transition to sustainable agri-food systems. Those systems would improve resource efficiency, contribute to food security and enhance nutrition for all.

Parliaments could not overlook the critical issue of food safety. Consumption of nutritionally inadequate or contaminated food could lead to adverse health effects. Shockingly, research showed that nearly one in 10 people worldwide fell ill due to contaminated food, resulting in 420,000 deaths annually. Furthermore, the burden of foodborne diseases strained healthcare systems and damaged national economies. To address the challenge, it was necessary to develop policies, regulatory frameworks and effective food safety security systems, as well as to examine agricultural processes. South Africa had passed the Consumer Protection Act which dealt with the matter of food safety and was reviewing its processes to ensure they were sustainable and productive. It was also looking at the kinds of seeds being used to ensure they yielded nutritious food.

Mr. K. Alkharji (United Arab Emirates) said that food security was a key pillar for achieving the SDGs and was directly connected to promoting international peace and security. Parliament had a very important responsibility to promote food security through its legislative and oversight functions as well as through cooperation with all relevant stakeholders. He drew attention to the pillars of food security which should be taken into account when building strategies and policies: (1) availability of food; (2) access to food; (3) diversity in nutrition; (4) sustainability of provisions; (5) food delivery; and (6) food governance.

The United Arab Emirates had adopted a national strategy for food security and a law on food storage, and had established a council for food security. Many different government departments were involved in the development of food security policies.

Mr. P.G. Assirvaden (Mauritius) said that the right to food and water should be at the top of the agenda. The people who were most affected by food and water shortages were women, children, indigenous populations and migrants, as could be seen in Palestine, which was currently experiencing an unprecedented food, water and electricity crisis. Strict protocols should be applied to agricultural processes.

Mr. K. Tontisirin (Thailand) emphasized the need to mitigate and control the main drivers of food insecurity, such as conflict and climate change. It was important to promote food-sensitive agriculture and healthy diets at the national and community level, and more should be done to promote the right to food, particularly for infants and young children. There was also a need to take public health measures wherever necessary, including vitamin and mineral supplementation for vulnerable groups such as pregnant women and the elderly, as well as to introduce community-based programmes that involved the population. Thailand had done well in that regard having mobilized one volunteer for every 10 households to deliver basic services, such as water and health care, to vulnerable populations. Research and development in areas such as plant fertilizer and disease control were important to ensure high-quality and safe food for domestic consumption and trade. Parliaments should pass legislation on food security and nutrition, ensure an adequate budget and monitor government actions.

Mr. B. Khamchiev (Russian Federation) said that global sanctions against the Russian Federation were undermining food deliveries around the world thus exacerbating global food insecurity. Farmers were suffering while global corporations benefitted. President Putin had put forward an initiative to deliver 1,000 tonnes of Russian fertilizer and grain to the global market and was looking at alternative ways to supply food that bypassed the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

Mr. S. Ty (Cambodia) said that food security was a priority for Cambodia. Inclusive growth and sustainable development were not possible without tackling hunger and poverty.

Agriculture and farming were strategically important for achieving food security, poverty alleviation and inclusive growth. The sector was at least twice as effective in reducing poverty than any other sector and had contributed 63% to reducing poverty in Cambodia. Agriculture and farming were, however, in dire need of reform towards more climate-smart and resilient systems. Above all, it was necessary to transform food production, distribution and consumption patterns through targeted investments, ensure the efficient use of resources, develop a zero-waste supply chain, safeguard adequate nutrition and encourage healthy eating choices. The reform process should be an inclusive one encouraging active participation from all relevant stakeholders and fostering productive public-private-producer partnerships based on mutual trust. The public sector, particularly governments, must be more open, transparent, accountable, predictable and systematic in its decision-making. The private sector should switch the focus of its business culture from financial return to social and environmental responsibility. Farmers must exercise due diligence and self-reliance thus avoiding the dependency syndrome.

It was important to ensure land tenure ownership and sole access rights for farmers, give legal recognition to farmer organizations and promote community-based interventions. Farmers should undergo capacity building programmes, including on digital literacy and food awareness. More investment was needed in the agricultural sector, particularly for smallholder farming.

Mr. G. Nouri Ghezaljah (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the IPU could play a pivotal role in promoting food security, for instance, by providing a space to exchange ideas and supporting parliaments in their policymaking efforts. It was not possible to overcome regional and international crises such as food insecurity without international solidarity and cooperation.

Food security efforts must be ramped up as food and water shortages were becoming more and more serious every day. It was important to accept that the old systems were outdated. Developed countries should be more generous in sharing their knowledge and capabilities, including on science and technology. Sanctions against countries must be removed since they affected access to agricultural technologies and finance.

Mr. A. Alsalamah (Saudi Arabia) said that technology transfer and climate action were important in combatting food insecurity. Investing in foreign aid institutions nationally and internationally was also necessary. Saudi Arabia had spent more than US\$ 20 billion on development projects around the world through the Saudi Fund for Development and passed legislation that favoured its agricultural regions. It had also desalinated 20 million cubic metres of water for agricultural purposes.

Mr. M. Karakaya (Türkiye) said that some of the drivers of food insecurity, such as the use of the wrong agricultural practices, could be solved quickly while others, such as climate change, were long-term goals that required serious global cooperation.

Wars and conflicts, including the war in Ukraine and the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine, had further endangered food security. Türkiye had helped mitigate the problem by brokering the Black Sea Grain Initiative between Ukraine and the Russian Federation – a deal that had contributed significantly to the regulation of global food prices. Although the deal had expired, Türkiye continued its efforts to renew it. He expressed concern that food production and distribution in Palestine could be negatively affected by disruptions to essential infrastructure, agricultural lands and movement of goods and services. Israel must stop its attacks on Gaza as soon as possible. It was not possible to create a sustainable global food system without creating a more peaceful world.

Mr. M. Green (Canada) agreed that the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine had impacted global food security but pointed out that Canada was also experiencing a crisis of capitalism. Indeed, corporate companies were making millions of dollars of extra profit a day on the rising costs of food while certain groups of people were having to choose between rent, electricity or food. His constituency had some of the highest levels of child poverty and hunger in the country with 80% of the population on social assistance and welfare programmes having to use food banks.

Statistical reporting mechanisms on global food and water insecurity, particularly in western countries, rarely reflected the plight of minority communities, including indigenous people. The Committee should ensure that those communities were represented and consider the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People in its work. One particularly harrowing point was that far too many First Nations communities in Canada were under water boil advisories.

Ms. N. Lugangira (United Republic of Tanzania) said that it was not possible to talk about food security without nutrition security. The President of the United Republic of Tanzania had championed nutrition security by allocating a certain percentage of the local government budget to nutrition interventions. She had also signed a number of agreements with nutrition stakeholders. Her efforts had shown the importance of political will on nutrition security.

In the United Republic of Tanzania, like in many other African countries, the regions that produced the most food were often the regions with high levels of malnutrition. It showed that the problem was not always a lack of food but could instead be explained by the focus that the agricultural sector placed on production rather than consumption.

Deliberate efforts were needed to ensure that every child got a nutritious meal in school every day, which was not always the case in the Global South. She called on countries to not only sign up to the School Meals Coalition but also to implement it.

Mr. P.S. Rudana (Indonesia) said that Indonesia faced challenges related to food insecurity given its large population. Food insecurity was, however, a global problem. The United Nations had reported that 122 million more people worldwide had been pushed into hunger since 2019 and that one in four women and girls could experience moderate or severe food insecurity by 2030. It was crucial to transform agri-food systems, making them more sustainable, resilient and able to deliver low-cost, nutritious foods.

To that end, parliamentarians should use their oversight function to ensure that national food policies and regulations were effective in lowering the cost of nutritious food. It was important to allocate budgets for interventions that promoted access to healthy diets and monitor whether those interventions benefitted those most in need, including women. Promoting healthy dietary patterns and choices, for instance on social media, was also necessary. He emphasized that multistakeholder collaboration was key to transforming the agricultural system and called on parliaments to explore ways to strengthen collaboration with each other. Above all, political will and commitment were needed to ensure that no one was left behind on food security.

Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine) said that food was being used as a weapon of war. Ukraine normally produced 10% of the global wheat supplies, 13% of the global barley supplies and 15% of the global corn supplies, which amounted to 110 million tonnes of grain annually. However, because of the Russian aggression, that figure had fallen to 75 million tonnes and was expected to fall further to 60 million tonnes. In addition, 30% of Ukrainian land was covered in landmines and unexploded ordnance making it unfarmable, while Russian warships continued to prevent the safe passage of grain-carrying vessels in the Black Sea. Under the Black Sea Grain Initiative, Ukraine had been able to send out 1,000 ships with 725,000 tonnes of grain which was a start but not enough. In July 2023, however, the Russian Federation had pulled out of the deal.

The above situation was having dire consequences on global food security. Food prices had soared across the globe with the risk of hunger and famine returning in many countries, particularly in Africa. She called on parliamentarians to support President Zelensky's 10-point peace plan, which included a point on food security.

Ms. M. Mohanta (India) said that food security had far-reaching positive impacts on economic growth, poverty, education and health. India was one of the largest food producing countries in the world and, as part of the SDGs, had set the target of achieving zero hunger by 2030. The Parliament had passed the National Food Security Act in 2013 which provided subsidized food grains to two thirds of the population. India had also hosted the most recent G20 Summit where leaders had expressed their commitment to enhancing global food security, guaranteeing safe nutrition and healthy diets for all and promoting the right to adequate food.

The challenges posed by the current global hunger and malnutrition crisis were immense but not insurmountable. The global community, including governments, the private sector and civil society, must come together to address those challenges.

Mr. T.T. Sim (Malaysia) said that the world was under pressure because of global price increases with many people unable to afford food. Parliamentarians must collectively find solutions to the global food crisis.

A number of problems were blocking progress on food security: (1) the rising cost of agricultural inputs, such as fertilizers; (2) protectionist measures, such as the ban on rice exports introduced by India, which had caused a 40% increase in rice prices globally; and (3) the dominance of big agricultural companies in areas such as technology, leading to high input costs.

Parliamentarians must ensure global trade efficiency in order to drive down costs, including by overcoming conflicts, such as the war in Ukraine. He called for interdependence rather than protectionism. It was important to work together and harness the comparative advantages of different countries. Malaysia, for instance, should harness its capabilities as an efficient producer of palm oil, which was an affordable cooking oil. It was also important to share technology, for instance, agricultural equipment and machinery.

Malaysia was doing its best to promote sustainable agriculture. Strict standards were imposed, for instance, on palm oil production, in order to protect the environment.

Mr. K. Al-Emadi (Qatar) emphasized the importance of having food reserves and called on countries to put in place mechanisms responsible for stockpiling food. Achieving food security required countries to tackle climate change. Scientific research in food security was also very important.

Qatar was doing its utmost to introduce a sustainable food strategy and was already using renewable energy in food production. The Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute provided policymakers with data on which to base their food security initiatives. The country had also mounted an exhibition on combatting desertification which touched on topics such as nutrition, agriculture and technology.

He drew attention to the situation in Gaza where people did not have access to food. The international community must open up crossings into the area and unblock food supplies.

Mr. S.B.L. Theophilus (South Sudan) said that South Sudan was recovering from civil strife and almost 60% of its population depended on food aid. Even though the country had immense resources, it still depended on food imports because of the effects of war.

It was important to expedite public and private investment into food security. More funding was needed for research into crops that could help mitigate global food insecurity. Noting the environmental damage caused by deforestation, he called on parliamentarians to step up their efforts on environmental protection. Population growth was one factor affecting water shortages, particularly in urban centres. A global platform should be developed for sharing agricultural technologies particularly with less developed countries. Food security should not be weaponized in times of conflict so as to protect the vulnerable.

Mr. K.E. Kandodo (Malawi) said that it was totally unacceptable that, according to the WFP, over 800 million people did not have enough food to eat, particularly when there was in fact enough food on the globe to feed everybody. Food security was essential for achieving the SDGs.

Malawi had a long history of food insecurity. In recent years, the country had been hit by droughts and floods, which had had a devastating impact on crop production. The country had also been affected by the recent global economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, Malawi was committed to ensuring food security for all its citizens and had developed a number of policies and programmes to improve agricultural productivity, increase access to food and build resilience to shocks. One key success was its Farm Input Subsidy Programme, which provided fertilizers and seeds to smallholder farmers. Another key success had been the expansion of social safety net programmes that provided cash or food transfers to vulnerable households. The Government had also invested in irrigation infrastructure to help farmers cope with drought.

Despite the progress made, Malawi still faced challenges and needed support from the international community. There was a particular need for investments in sustainable agriculture, food systems and social safety nets. Malawi hoped to learn from the best practices of other countries, and develop new and innovative solutions.

He urged the IPU to play a leading role in addressing global food security and called on all countries to commit themselves to the issue.

Mr. F.K. Wanyonyi (Kenya) drew attention to the drivers of food insecurity, namely climate change and conflict. He agreed with Ms. Vasylenko that the war in Ukraine had affected food security in Africa. Food security, including food production and nutrition, should be made a priority in all countries. Parliamentarians must exercise oversight over the budget so as to ensure adequate funding for food security actions.

Mr. A. Motter (Senior Advisor, Economic and Social Affairs, Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations in New York) took the Chair.

Mr. M. Seroor (Bahrain) said that Bahrain had taken a number of measures to enhance food security. It had introduced a food security strategy 2020–2030 and was supporting food-related initiatives in other Arab countries. The Parliament had enacted legislation on the topic and was monitoring the implementation of food security initiatives.

Food security meant making healthy and nutritious food available to everyone at all times. It was important to tackle climate change, economic crises and price increase to ensure food security. To that end, Bahrain was building up more green spaces, using renewable energy and promoting the use of new technologies.

Mr. W. William (Seychelles), Vice-President of the Committee, took the Chair.

The Chair called on parliamentarians to stand together and ensure that their national governments truly delivered on food security.

Mr. A. Motter (Senior Advisor, Economic and Social Affairs, Office of the Permanent Observer of the IPU to the United Nations in New York) invited delegates to the African High-level Parliamentary Conference on Achieving Universal Health Coverage and Health Security Preparedness to be held in November 2023.

Elections to the Bureau of the Standing Committee

The Chair said that the Committee was requested to fill one vacancy for the Twelve Plus Group. The following nomination had been submitted: Mr. A. Gerasymov (Ukraine).

The nomination was approved.

The Chair said that the Committee was also requested to elect its next President and Vice-President. During the 143rd IPU Assembly in November 2021, the chairs of the geopolitical groups had reached an agreement on the distribution of presidencies and vice-presidencies of the Standing Committees coming to the conclusion that two key principles must be taken into account. First, the positions of President and Vice-President should be shared equally between women and men.

Second, over a period of six cycles until 2033, every geopolitical group should have the opportunity to chair each of the Standing Committees once. Taking those principles into account, as well as the distribution of positions in recent cycles, the geopolitical groups had agreed that for the period October 2023 – October 2025, the President of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development should be a male Bureau member from the African Group while the Vice-President should be a female Bureau member from the Arab Group. The following nominations had been submitted: Mr. W. William (Seychelles) for President and Ms. M. Al Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates) for Vice-President.

The nominations were approved.

Other business

The Chair said that, under the workplan recommended by the Bureau, the Committee would spend all of its time at the next Assembly preparing and debating its next resolution.

The workplan was approved.

The sitting rose at 10:55.

Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

SITTING OF WEDNESDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2023

(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 11:15, with Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium), Acting President of the Committee, in the Chair.

Adoption of the agenda
(C-IV/147/A.1)

The agenda was adopted.

Approval of the summary record of the Committee's session held during the 146th IPU Assembly in Manama (March 2023)

The summary record was approved.

The UN field presence in support of national development: The case of Angola

The Chair, introducing the item, said that the United Nations (UN) system was present in most developing countries, with a UN Country Team (UNCT) of agencies representatives headed by a Resident Coordinator (RC). The UNCT supported national development plans through a portfolio of projects and advisory activities agreed with the government of the country concerned and funded through a combination of budgetary and extrabudgetary resources. Over the years, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) had advocated for a closer relationship between UNCTs and host country parliaments as a way of building stronger accountability and buy-in for UN development work. In that regard, the IPU had worked with the UN Secretary-General to ensure that the job description of RCs included liaising with parliament. He was pleased to introduce as a special guest the UN RC in Angola, Ms. Z. Virani, who would discuss her own role and that of the UNCT vis-à-vis the Government and Parliament of Angola.

Ms. Z. Virani (UN Resident Coordinator in Angola), special guest, accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that she had first arrived in Angola three years previously amid the COVID-19 pandemic to discover that the UN system in Angola and Angola itself were each punching well below their weight, prompting the current focus in her work on strengthening their partnership and raising the profile of the UN system in Angola and vice versa. Although a prominent player within that system over the years, including as first Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission and as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Angola's relationship with the UN had stagnated over time. The UNCT had worked tirelessly to enhance that relationship, with fruitful results.

The UN had established a presence in Angola in 1977 to support the country's development following its independence in 1975. Unfortunately, a protracted and brutal civil war had broken out soon after and the UN had instead become largely involved in peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance operations. With relations deteriorating, the Angolan authorities had eventually asked the UN peacekeeping mission to leave, but UN funds, agencies and programmes had returned in the post-conflict era to resume their delivery of humanitarian aid, along with reconstruction and development support. Now an entirely different country recognized for its peace leadership in the region and beyond, Angola continued to work with the UN system to promote and consolidate peace, putting into practice the hard lessons learned.

In 2019, in a major reform of its development system, including of the UNCTs operating in over 130 countries, the UN had sought to make the system more relevant and fit for purpose and also more cost-effective through merging many of its operations. In monitoring progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the system was necessarily reliant on critical regional and local partnerships with a range of stakeholders, in particular governance structures, including the executive, the judiciary and parliament. As part of the crucial drive to mobilize resources for achieving the SDGs, the functions of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representatives had been separated from those of RCs, who were consequently tasked with realizing the strategic vision for the SDGs in line with the objectives and priorities of the countries that they served. She was consequently the UN Secretary-General's representative in

Angola, where over 20 UN agencies, funds and programmes operated, with or without a physical presence. Close collaboration with such development partners as the World Bank (WB), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) furthermore meant that all information, guidance and support provided to the Government was fully coordinated towards the same objectives.

For the preceding three years, the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) had shaped UN activities in Angola in the areas of economic and social transformation; adolescents', youth and women's empowerment; environmental resilience of vulnerable populations; and democracy and stability. It would shortly be superseded, however, by the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2024–2028, which would shift the emphasis from assistance to cooperation, with driving principles that were firmly connected to the country's SDG-related priorities, needs and challenges, as identified by the UNCT, and to the concept of "no one left behind". The vision was for an empowered, democratic and resilient Angola where all citizens participated in and benefited equally from its sustainable, inclusive and structural socioeconomic transformation.

The UNSDCF guidance was based on four pillars: people, peace and peace leadership, prosperity and planet — with the vulnerable as the drivers — underpinned by the notion that the UN could not address those matters singlehanded. Concerning the first pillar, Angola's low investment in health and education meant that it was failing to develop its human capital to the utmost. The desired outcome in 2028 was for more people to have access to quality services through effective institutions. With regard to the second pillar, the key challenges revolved around access to justice, anti-corruption, political rights, civil liberties, human rights protection, and the needs of areas rife with conflict and instability. The desired outcome in 2028 was for more people to participate in and benefit from more effective and inclusive democratic governance anchored in human rights, stronger prevention capacities, and the promotion of peace in the region. As to the third pillar, its aim of prosperity was about spreading the country's wealth more equitably and reducing unemployment, informal employment and underemployment, especially among youth. The desirable outcome in 2028 was for more people to participate in and benefit from inclusive, diversified and sustainable economic growth. Lastly, in respect of the fourth pillar, given Angola's extreme vulnerability to natural hazards from climate change, the desirable outcome in 2028 was for people to benefit from the sustainable management of the environment and natural resources and be resilient to disaster and climate change.

In connection with the 147th Assembly's theme of peace, justice and strong institutions, the peace pillar centred on the links between all pillars and aimed to achieve inclusive democratic governance anchored in human rights and strengthened prevention capacities. Critically, it was about renewing the social contract between government and elected officials and the people. In Angola, the peace pillar was primarily intended to support its peace leadership, exemplified by the Angolan President's designation as African Union champion of peace and reconciliation and, indeed, by the hosting of the current Assembly.

The theme of the Assembly was also aligned with UN efforts to achieve efficient, accountable and transparent institutions, with the Angolan Parliament as a main partner. Examples of activities conducted in that context related to preparation of the country's Voluntary National Review (VNR) of progress towards the implementation of the SDGs, and SDG localization. Through its agencies, funds and programmes, the UN had also provided tools for gender budgeting and for demonstrating a budget's impact on children's rights that, together with technical and advisory services, would enable parliamentarians to review budgets from those perspectives. In sum, the UN system worked with the Angolan Parliament to reinforce its fundamental role in institutionalizing a people-centred development model, and with Angolan parliamentarians to serve the people of Angola.

The Chair thanked Ms. Virani for her very interesting presentation and invited questions from the floor.

Mr. J. Laouhingamaye (Chad) welcoming the excellent insight provided into how the UN system operated in Angola, asked how parliamentarians had come to be involved in developing the new UNSDCF guidance and what parliamentarians could do to ensure a productive relationship with the UN system.

Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada), recalling a public admission by an eminent member of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism that the SDGs were in need of a "rescue mission", said that it was encouraging to interface with the RC and her UNCT on closing the gap between the good work of the UN and the implementation of change initiated by

parliamentarians. Also encouraging was the understanding that neither institution could be fully effective without the other. The good guidance of the UN was indispensable for parliamentarians in respect of the road maps that they designed and executed for the SDGs, many of which were highly aspirational but with a worrying implementation status. As it was frankly difficult for parliamentarians to turn to the UN for solutions, especially as required changes were often region-specific, he hoped that the better integration of the work of both institutions would continue so as to bridge the gap between promise and performance.

Ms. Z. Virani (UN Resident Coordinator in Angola), special guest, responding to the interventions, said that it was essential for the UN system, including UNCTs, to focus on engaging parliamentarians and indeed all levels of national governance in the development of tools such as the UNSDCF guidance. She and her team had actively reached out to Angolan parliamentarians, including in working group and committee settings, to elaborate on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), explain its connection with the country's national development plan — which they ultimately endorsed — and provide a toolbox for supporting their work and holding the executive to account. While possibly differing slightly among countries, engagement with parliamentarians was a mandated task for the RCs and UNCTs. On returning to their countries, Chadian and other parliamentarians should enter into a conversation with their RC, which she would gladly help to facilitate. It was not the UN system's job to develop a country but it would do whatever was required to support a country's development.

Once engagement was established, UNCTs would continue to work with parliament to monitor the implementation of the SDGs. It was evident from the recent 2023 SDG Summit in New York that the SDGs would be unachievable if business continued as usual, especially after the setbacks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. With only seven years of the Decade of Action left to deliver the Global Goals, all partners must rally together and redouble their efforts to find ways of accelerating progress and leaving no one behind. Globally, regionally and locally, UN teams were creating tools to that end. In Angola, data-crunching had been used to identify the three main areas – climate change, health and education – where investment would have the most impact through a multiplier effect. All UNCTs had such tools at their disposal to assist with appropriate decision-making on best ways forward to accomplishing the objectives sought.

Mr. O. Zhmerenetskiy (Ukraine) said that the humanitarian and development efforts of the UN were appreciated but it was proving no longer capable of influencing the settlement of armed conflict. It defied logic that the terrorist Russian State, which had cast the majority of Security Council vetoes in the past decade, should still be permitted to dictate the rules and get away with impunity for its actions — and not just with respect to Ukraine. The solution was to restore compliance with the Charter of the United Nations and for the UN General Assembly to vote on the right of the Russian Federation to participate in the United Nations. The composition of the Security Council needed reform.

Ms. S.B. Malwal (South Sudan) said that UN agencies operated differently in different countries and should work with parliament through its committees as well as through ministries. In her country, those agencies worked only with the executive and civil society organizations. She hoped that, by drawing attention to that fact, steps would be taken to involve parliament as well so that it could play its oversight role in monitoring the implementation of the SDGs.

Ms. R.N. Tonkei (Kenya) asked whether UNCT activities for women's and youth empowerment also included persons with disabilities, what those activities entailed and whether parliament played a part.

Mr. P. Faria (Angola) expressed fear that the UN was once more moving from one framework to another without assessing the effectiveness, impact and significant results of the first framework. Democracy and stability were crucial issues in Angola, which had held general elections only one year previously, with an outcome that was far from fair or transparent. He would be interested to know what the UN assessment was of those elections in terms of their fairness and credibility.

Mr. R. Lopatka (Austria), underlining the importance of strong institutions to positive development in any country, asked whether the UN had any projects in train with the Angolan Parliament to promote good governance.

Ms. Z. Virani (UN Resident Coordinator in Angola), special guest, again responding to the interventions made, said that the international community stood with Ukraine and that it was important to separate the governance structure and political architecture of the UN, namely the Security Council, which was indeed in need of reform, from what the UN system sought to achieve. The UN system that she represented did its best to provide humanitarian support, early recovery and basic governance structures in Ukraine and elsewhere. The UN motto was to stay and deliver, even in the most challenging situations, which is what UNCTs were tasked and honoured to do, in line with their mandate to leave no one behind and speak for the voiceless in working for a better tomorrow. The conflict in Ukraine had directly affected Angola and the entire continent in the form of rising food prices and food insecurity. She and her team worked to serve the Angolan people and protect them from the consequences of the stoppage of grain imports from Ukraine.

As to UN agency operations, they did indeed differ among countries, but efforts were being made to ensure closer cooperation system-wide and, in turn, better alignment of in-country activities. RCs were in fact strongly encouraged to work with parliamentarians. Her firm recommendation was for South Sudanese parliamentarians to reach out to the RC in South Sudan so that he could bring in the UNCT to offer its services and support. She would also take the opportunity of an upcoming meeting of RCs to raise the matter with him.

Concerning persons with disabilities, they were included in women's and youth empowerment activities, to which the key motto of leaving no one behind also applied. UN agencies working in Angola were implementing a range of projects for the benefit of such persons, including in health, education, vocational training and employment. The Angolan national development plan focused substantially on women and youth, who accounted for over one half of the population, and for the majority of those employed in the informal sector, which was being formalized with support from those agencies to ensure social protection for workers. She encouraged Kenyan parliamentarians to reach out to the RC in Kenya to obtain support and tools for promoting such activities.

With regard to the comments concerning Angola, UN activities conducted under the peace pillar were aimed at strengthening democratic institutions, including through the promotion of dialogue. She and her team worked closely with political party leaders in exploring ways of bringing together all of Angola's women politicians for dialogue and were also set to engage youth in the same manner. Lastly, in respect of projects under way with the Angolan Parliament, the UN system engaged with parliamentary working groups and committees to provide the required support tools. As with all such projects, it involved a joint exercise.

The Chair thanked Ms. Virani for her insightful presentation.

Bringing gender equality to the UN General Assembly

The Chair, introducing the item, said that the Standing Committee had covered a variety of interesting topics in its time, but with no outcome documents that could subsequently be used to good effect in parliament and even be transmitted to the UN. It had therefore been decided that the Bureau would summarize the content of hearings on particular topics in the form of draft motions to be presented to the Standing Committee for consideration. Such motions were not open for amendment other than through the addition of further text. On that understanding, a member of the Bureau would present a draft motion on bringing gender equality to the UN General Assembly, following which the IPU Secretary General, who chaired the Global Board of International Gender Champions (IGC), would address the Standing Committee.

Mr. H. Aoyagi (Japan), member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, presenting the draft motion, said that, as discussed at the Manama session of the Committee and at a follow-up briefing for parliamentarians on 3 May 2023, the parliamentary community needed to advocate actively for gender equality in the UN General Assembly. Currently, only one in four top ambassadors, or permanent representatives, at the General Assembly was a woman. That gender imbalance in the top decision-making body of the UN gave the impression that the UN did not practice what it preached when it came to gender equality. Making the General Assembly and other key UN bodies gender equal would greatly strengthen the multilateral system and its ability to deliver to the people.

Endorsed by the Bureau, the draft motion before the Standing Committee set out actions by which parliaments could advance gender equality in the foreign service. The Bureau hoped that members would support what was the Committee's very first draft motion and follow through with such actions, as he himself intended to do.

The IPU Secretary General, in his address, said that his role as Chair of the IGC Global Board complemented the trailblazing work of the IPU in the area of gender equality, in which its credentials were unimpeachable and worthy of commendation. In that role, he endeavoured to pass on the IPU experience to colleagues in other international organizations. As a group of institutional leaders and decision makers, including the UN Secretary-General, the IGC sought to promote gender equality in institutions and establish equal opportunity practices and approaches in two practical ways. First and especially crucial was parity in decision-making. In his experience, panel event organizers would invariably take remedial action if alerted to the fact that any gender imbalance among panel members was a disincentive to participation. All IGC network members were encouraged to draw attention to any such imbalances, in line with the IGC Panel Parity Pledge to no longer take part in single-sex panels, progress in the implementation of which would be reviewed in the coming weeks.

The IGC also had a Gender-based Violence Pledge, reflecting its determination to fight violence against women in the workplace, which the IPU was equally committed to doing through its new *Policy to prevent and address harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and other IPU events*. The IGC and the IPU prosecuted those matters very seriously in their desire to secure safe working environments for women and men alike. Both were also anxious to convey the message to the UN that it must be seen as gender equal. The current President of the UN General Assembly – another IGC member – was assertively promoting the gender equality agenda in all that he did, assisted by his Gender Advisory Board. Although the UN Secretary-General had done much to promote gender equality at the top of the UN, it was still a work in progress in the lower rungs. The Standing Committee's discussion of how to involve more women in UN diplomatic processes was very important, as was the draft motion under consideration. He would gladly answer questions about his own experience in the area of gender equality, which stemmed from a personal conviction and from the institutional viewpoint that the IPU must act on what it preached about gender equality.

The Chair, thanking the Secretary General for his contribution on such an important topic, said that even developed countries were not the best pupils in the class when it came to gender equality, with his country Belgium serving as a prime example in all but the lower institutional levels. Furthermore, while there might be gender equality in parliament, the same did not always apply to ambassadorial positions, perhaps because ambassadors had a lower public profile than parliamentarians and also tended, in his country at least, to come from aristocratic backgrounds, which were generally more male-oriented than female-oriented.

Mr. P.S. Rudana (Indonesia) said that, in working to overcome twenty-first century challenges, parliaments must ensure that women had equal opportunities with men to participate and hold leadership positions in all facets of life. The attainment of SDG 5, concerning gender equality, was deemed crucial by the UN General Assembly to the attainment of all SDGs, yet that body itself was far from gender equal. With women constituting only just under one quarter of permanent representatives to the UN, IPU Members should demand the nomination of qualified women candidates for that position as well as for positions as representatives to international organizations and as ambassadors. In approving such appointments, parliaments must ensure that gender equality was observed. Male allies in parliament must also advocate alongside gender champions for gender equality, including through appropriate laws and policies, to secure a voice and equal opportunities for women.

Mr. M. Almuhi (United Arab Emirates) said that women faced numerous obstacles to their participation in UN political work and that advancement on that score clearly had to start at home, notably with the promotion of gender equality by governments and parliaments. The IPU and the UN played pivotal roles in women's empowerment and gender equality but faced key challenges, primarily the few numbers of women in decision-making and politics, the paucity of effective gender-related monitoring and legislation, and women's lack of belief in their capacity to contribute towards strengthening international peace and security. Parliaments should therefore enact laws on gender balance, raise awareness, and develop and enhance mechanisms for monitoring government policies and plans vis-à-vis women's empowerment, gender equality and equal opportunities. Recognizing women's vital role in sustainable development, his country had pursued those objectives and now had the highest ever percentage of female ambassadors.

Ms. M. Aldhain (Bahrain) said that her country actively supported and promoted women's rights and women's participation in all spheres of activity. It followed related UN recommendations and guidelines, participated in UN-organized events on gender equality and women's empowerment, and engaged with UN bodies dedicated to the promotion of both. Bahrain provided financial and technical

support for national, regional and international projects and programmes in those domains, was strengthening its cooperation with such organizations as United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), and sought to exchange experiences and knowledge on gender-related issues. Bahrain also recognized that artificial intelligence and technology could be powerful tools for promoting gender equality and the 17 SDGs. In the setting of the UN General Assembly, it worked constantly for gender equality as the basis for sustainable development and social and economic peace, while in the domestic setting, Bahraini women had been appointed to a number of important ministerial positions.

Mr. S. Ambareesh (India) said that gender equality was not merely an abstract ideal but a fundamental human right. Bridging the gender equality gap in the UN General Assembly called for tireless efforts to secure equal opportunities for women in UN decision-making processes. India recognized that women's enormous potential must be expanded and supported to make them equal partners in national growth and development. It was known for its significant contributions in the UN context towards the advancement of gender equality, including in particular through the participation of its women in peacekeeping and stabilization missions. Its Permanent Representative to the UN in New York was a woman and one third of seats in the Lok Sabha were reserved for women. India was committed to promoting women's leadership and political participation and looked to the UN to serve as an example.

Ms. C.I. López Castro (Mexico), speaking as President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, said that true women's empowerment called for greater involvement of women parliamentarians in UN activities. IPU-organized events in New York were ordinarily chaired by men, while the UN itself, despite its talk of gender equality, had never elected a woman as its Secretary-General — a significant fact that the Bureau of the Standing Committee might wish to draw to its attention. The increased participation of women parliamentarians in the high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) was a welcome development and one that should be made to emulate in all UN events.

Mr. S. Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso) said that entrenched cultural traditions were among the obstacles to gender equality in his country but that community awareness and training activities were helping to change mindsets. A law to prevent gender-based violence and provide redress for victims had been enacted, along with a law setting a quota of 30% for women electoral candidates. Burkina Faso had a gender affairs ministry and a national human rights commission that had established gender equality as a principle of governance. It was equally important, however, to focus on protecting persons with disabilities, who were often forgotten in parliamentary debates. It should always be asked how many women — and indeed men — with disabilities attended meetings. The case of such women, a doubly vulnerable group, should be highlighted as a matter of course.

Ms. A. Alshaman (Saudi Arabia) said that, while women's economic parity and equality in the job market and in decision-making positions in international organizations made complete sense, it was first essential for rapidly developing countries above all to take necessary action, notably in matters of education, to ensure that women occupied important decision-making positions in general. Anti-harassment legislation had contributed towards improving Saudi women's participation in the workforce, but gender issues in Saudi Arabia should be viewed by others in the context of a young developing country still working to identify and rectify its flaws, including lack of gender parity in employment. In the Shura Council, 30 seats were now reserved for women, the hope being that the number would increase over time through the efforts under way to develop the role of Saudi women in society.

Mr. M. Ramírez (Chile) said that it was vital to advance women's equal representation in international organizations and elsewhere. The inauguration of Chile's first woman President in 2006 had been a significant moment. Thanks to her agenda, women had come to be included in decision-making, initially through policies robustly promoted by a new ministry for women and gender equality. The Chilean electoral law had also been reformed, leading to an almost eightfold increase in women parliamentarians since 1990, which had in turn improved other equality standards. In a historic milestone, the first draft of a new constitution had been prepared by a team comprising equal numbers of men and women. Lastly, the role of women in public policymaking was now better appreciated by parliament.

Ms. D. Dlakude (South Africa) said that an increase in women's participation in the UN General Assembly would bring a wealth of perspective and experience to the global stage and was crucial to ensuring gender equality and enhancing decision-making processes. It would shed light on such critical issues as gender-based violence, women's empowerment, inclusive development and peacekeeping, foster a more holistic approach to tackling complex global challenges, and serve as a beacon of inspiration for women and girls to dream bigger, aim higher and break through barriers to their ambition. Concerning the draft motion, it should include rotation of the gender of the IPU President, which would send a powerful message of the IPU's commitment to practising what it preached. Noting that South Africa's Permanent Representative in New York was a woman, she urged parliamentarians to strive for women's voices to be heard, celebrated, respected and included in all facets of global governance.

A delegate from Nigeria said that, were it not for the IPU rule on the inclusion of at least one woman in delegations from parliaments with women members, the Nigerian delegation would undoubtedly have comprised all men. In deciding to underutilize almost one half of its population, Nigeria would surely remain in poverty, which was chiefly driven by gender inequality attributable in large part to cultural stereotyping, religious convictions and a patriarchal social structure. Contrary to its motto, the UN had left behind Nigeria, where women parliamentarians were but a tiny minority and where men had no interest in equal opportunities for women. Of the 24 legislators in her state, she was the sole woman. The only solution was reform to outlaw the submission of all-male electoral lists by states and political parties.

A delegate from Peru, highlighting disobedience of the law as a major problem, said that all countries should make compliance with current laws a legal requirement. In addition, children should be taught not to discriminate, to treat others as equals, and to be inclusive. Members should plan on returning to the 148th Assembly able to state that they had implemented commitments made at the present Assembly while also taking stock of progress realized, which would bolster the legitimacy of their representation. Lastly, the UN must set the example by increasing women's participation in its management structures.

Ms. A.L. Ticona Quispe (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that her country had made great strides in legislation aimed at protecting women's rights, achieving gender parity, increasing women's political participation and ending political violence against women politicians. The question was how to look after women once they had entered politics. Regrettably, women were not yet part of global decision-making processes, including in the context of the UN and its General Assembly. Demands for them to be so must therefore be made.

The Chair said he took it that the Standing Committee wished to approve the draft motion on bringing gender equality to the UN General Assembly.

It was so decided.

The sitting rose at 13:15.

SITTING OF THURSDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2023

(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 11:40, with Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium), Acting President of the Committee, in the Chair.

Reforming the Security Council for a stronger multilateral regime

The Chair, introducing the item, said that the United Nations Security Council was designed to take prompt and effective action to preserve or restore peace and was the most powerful United Nations (UN) organ. Its resolutions carried the force of international law and could be enforced through punishing economic sanctions and, ultimately, military action. Its composition, however, no longer represented geopolitical realities. The inherent imbalance of voices and representation, as well as the indiscriminate use of the veto power by some of its permanent members, accounted for much of the Security Council's inability to act effectively and consistently in response to conflicts and other security

threats. After years of failed negotiations, the UN was increasingly under pressure to reform the Security Council. Most notably, the April 2023 report of the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism called on the 2024 Summit of the Future to agree to a review conference on the Charter of the United Nations focused on Security Council reform.

He welcomed as special guests who would lend their expertise on the subject: Mr. T. Albanai, Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations in New York, who co-Chaired the intergovernmental negotiations (IGN) on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, and Ms. A. Novosseloff, a research associate at the Centre Thucydide at the University of Paris.

Mr. T. Albanai (Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations in New York), special guest, speaking via video link, said that increased reform of the UN in general and the Security Council in particular was a growing issue that had been directly addressed by the UN General Assembly during its recent High-level Week. The need for reform had been spotlighted by the geopolitical matters before the Security Council, although systemic flaws had been recognized only one year after the Security Council's inception. The Security Council's current 15-State membership was indeed unrepresentative, notwithstanding that the question of equitable representation had been on the UN agenda since first raised in 1979. The pace of reform had remained glacial over the many years of the IGN that he currently co-chaired on that question. With help from the wider UN membership and increased political will, however, small but significant improvements in the process had been introduced in 2022.

First, one of the two days of IGN sessions usually conducted over a six-month period could now be publicly accessed via webcast or after the event, serving Member States with smaller delegations in particular by enabling them to follow the proceedings from any location and at any time. The visibility and transparency of the process had increased, as had accountability, thanks to that practical innovation, which also allowed parliamentarians, among others, to follow and understand the positions of their own and other Member States.

Secondly, in the absence of any record of proceedings, the IGN had tended to be repetitive in bringing new members of delegations up to speed while also reacquainting more seasoned members with ground already covered. A freely accessible repository of all relevant documentation, such as statements as well as proposals, including as uploaded by Member States, had therefore been created within the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General.

Those two modest changes having expedited the IGN pace, he and his Austrian co-Chair were endeavouring to move the process forward by urging Member States to include new ideas or changes of position in their statements on reform. The tradition of "formal informals" also continued, providing the opportunity for a free-flowing discussion and frank exchange of views among ambassadors and others, unimpeded by the official positions of the countries that they represented, with the aim of determining possibilities for convergence and small but potentially significant moves forward. Overall, the process was admittedly protracted but several benchmarks were near.

Concerning the 2024 Summit of the Future, there could be no credible outcome unless Security Council reform was addressed. As the only openly accessible forum in place for the expression of opinions and positions on the matter, the IGN were widely accepted as the appropriate vehicle for that purpose.

Ms. A. Novosseloff (Research Associate, Centre Thucydide, University of Paris), special guest, also speaking via video link, said that discussions on Security Council reform had indeed been lengthy, continuing for over 30 years. The Security Council's working methods had always reflected the state of the world, making it debatable whether reform was truly possible at the present time of such division, while its perceived lack of legitimacy related more to the failure of some to implement its resolutions. The Security Council had never been intended to be representative of UN Member States, which was the realm of the General Assembly. Rather, its limited composition was intended to promote efficient decision-making.

The identification of Member States that would participate in an enlarged Security Council had led to regional tensions and lack of consensus owing to opposition voiced to proposed candidates. Another question was the power of veto, which some permanent members did not wish to see exercised by certain Member States. The idea was for an enlarged Security Council to have three membership categories comprising the original permanent members with the power of veto, permanent members with no such power, and non-permanent members approved by the UN membership. A further question revolved around decision-making, as it was clearly easier for 15 members to reach a decision than it was for up to twice that number. While diversity was an asset, an enlarged Security Council was likely to create more division.

A positive development was the increased transparency of the Security Council's working methods. If, however, a consensus on the make-up of its permanent membership proved impossible, the Security Council would need to explore ways of ensuring that its resolutions were implemented.

The Chair thanked the special guests for their insights and invited comments from the floor.

Mr. S. Al-Mesned (Qatar), underlining the utmost importance of the responsibilities and functions of the Security Council, said that his country was committed to supporting international, regional and local initiatives, both materially and otherwise. A long-time supporter of the Security Council in the interest of international peace and security, Qatar additionally provided support to the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and, through the Qatar Fund for Development, to countries in dire need. It also had a positive record as an international mediator. As to the Security Council itself, its recent voting down of a resolution on a ceasefire in Gaza was symptomatic of its failure to perform its primary role, with grave consequences for international peace and security. Qatar favoured a radical reform for the sake of the entire world.

Mr. Aoyagi Hitoshi (Japan) said that, obstructed in its role by the Russian Federation's power of veto, the Security Council was prevented from ending Russian acts of aggression in violation of international law. With proposals for UN reform similarly likely to be vetoed, the IPU was being urged to exert its influence as a representative of global opinion to advocate from outside the system for necessary UN reforms. Giving rise to division and confrontation, use of the power of veto should be restricted so as to strengthen and restore trust in the Security Council, which should furthermore enhance the transparency of its deliberations, including by making them more accessible to non-permanent members. Its permanent and non-permanent membership should also be increased to reflect the global status quo. The Bureau should formulate reform proposals for transmission to the UN Secretary-General.

Ms. M. Aldhain (Bahrain) said that Security Council reform was vital to creating a fair representative system, enhancing the legitimacy and transparency of international decision-making, and reflecting geographical balance and political shifts, which would foster cooperation, dialogue and understanding among Member States. Proudly committed to the values of justice and equality, Bahrain advocated the representation of small developing countries in the Security Council membership, which would enhance effectiveness in dealing with international conflicts and global challenges. Bahrain was an active member of the international community, which must support the aim of constructing a stronger, more stable and more representative system for a better world.

Mr. M. Almuhihi (United Arab Emirates) said that there would be no Security Council or other reform without all its members, especially those with the power of veto, being fully on board. Wholly committed to the principles of international peace and security, his country always sought to be part of solutions, whether involving peaceful negotiations, constructive relations or humanitarian assistance. Only the previous week, the Security Council had been incapable of decision in the wake of events in a rapidly changing world. He wondered how the gap could be bridged between the growing aspirations of young people in search of more and the UN and Security Council in their current state.

Mr. Pham Phu Binh (Viet Nam) said that evolving and complex developments around the world necessitated reform to increase efficiency, transparency and democratic representation within the Security Council to better equip it to address global security challenges and meet the demands of the majority of Member States, many of them developing nations. Viet Nam supported the ongoing IGN and an increase in the Security Council's permanent and non-permanent membership, including seats for the Asia-Pacific and African regions, to ensure equal representation and the rights of developing small and medium-sized countries. In addition to improvement of the Security Council's working methods and agenda to promote more effective maintenance of international peace and security, it favoured strengthening the Security Council's relationship with the General Assembly through consultation. Such reforms would enable the Council to operate more effectively in line with the common aspirations of peoples worldwide for peace, stability and prosperity.

Mr. Li Gao (China) said that his country, a founding UN Member State and a permanent Security Council member, had always steadfastly supported the UN and firmly upheld the UN-centred international system and the basic norms governing international relations, underpinned by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Multilateralism must supersede the unilateralism and

power politics behind the turbulent global landscape to allow the UN to play its pivotal role in maintaining international peace and security. Security Council reform should be fair and just, notably by increasing the representation of small and medium-sized developing countries in particular to enable their participation in the decision-making. The historical injustice to Africa must also be rectified. Favouring a package solution based on common ground and the IGN, China hoped that all differences would be put aside to build international consensus on Security Council reform, with results that stood the test of time.

Mr. A. Golroo (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Security Council must be more democratic, more representative, more efficient, more fully law-oriented and more accountable, which could be achieved by determining its composition through a government-centred process to reflect present-day realities. Consistently criticized by many, the right of veto must also be fundamentally addressed as part of any reform. The Security Council's failure to enhance its working methods and decision-making processes had triggered a loss of trust in its legitimacy, justifying the need for increased accountability in line with the Charter of the United Nations, which provided that the Security Council acted on behalf of UN Members and was required to submit annual reports to the General Assembly.

Mr. M. Ramírez (Chile) said that his country, a five-time non-permanent member of the Security Council, had always defended multilateralism, and the all-out defence and promotion of human rights. It had also defended the Security Council's restructuring in the belief that the credibility of the international system was at risk. The Security Council's composition was at odds with the geopolitical reality in the twenty-first century, while the veto was conducive to inaction, as during the coronavirus pandemic when a swift and timely resolution had fallen victim to perpetual discussions over which country was the originator of the virus, or to silence, as when a recent resolution calling for a humanitarian pause to the fighting in Gaza had been vetoed. The situation must be urgently resolved, taking into account all standpoints. Latin America, moreover, must be represented within the Security Council to reflect the new world order.

Ms. D. Dlakude (South Africa) said that her continent faced wide-ranging challenges and occupied substantial space on the agenda of the Security Council, warranting its stronger and more meaningful representation on that powerful body. The Security Council's capacity to shape crisis management in Africa was currently undermined, whereas an increase in representation would ensure due attention to African perspectives and concerns. Such inclusivity would lead to more effective decision-making and actions tailored to specific African needs and realities. The Security Council's effectiveness in international peace and security had furthermore been compromised by its divisions and weakened unity. Use of the veto power, including for self-preservation rather than the greater good, had hindered the Security Council's ability to act swiftly and negotiate worthwhile resolutions, undermining its credibility and trust in its capacity to fulfil its key mission. Parliaments must hold their governments to account for any lack of engagement with a reform process whose urgency could not be understated.

Ms. A.L. Ticona Quispe (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that her country favoured Security Council reform, to which parliaments could contribute through debate aimed at building consensus on a structure for guaranteeing international peace and security. Through their parliaments, developing countries should work towards a united position on the way forward to a more equitable and representative Security Council that reflected the current reality. Any reform must also bring legitimacy to the Security Council's decisions and actions, with diverse interests reconciled in favour of peaceful coexistence and values shared by all Member States, and must additionally facilitate coordinated global responses to pressing challenges in a multipolar world. Parliamentarians should actively join in developing IPU proposals for effective Security Council reform.

Ms. S. Ambareesh (India) said that, with its cooperative, inclusive and consultative approach to international relations, her country believed that multipolarity, rebalancing, fair globalization and reformed multilateralism could no longer be kept in abeyance. The Security Council structure conceived in a different era was clearly inadequate to address twenty-first-century challenges, to which an effective response demanded a more representative and creative body. Already ongoing for over 15 years, the IGN were a smokescreen and could not be held perpetual hostage to naysayers. Such a critical matter instead demanded serious text-based negotiations aimed at producing solid outcomes within a fixed time frame, including to address effectively and decisively the injustice

experienced by the Global South. The Security Council's configuration must reflect the contemporary world order and align with the UN principles of fairness and equity. Reform to rectify the current disparity and strengthen the Security Council's credibility and legitimacy was imperative.

Ms. S. Attia (Egypt) asked whether there was a specific road map or timeline in place for the process of gathering reform proposals. The IGN had been ongoing for years without a solution, which might also happen with that process if it was left open-ended. She wondered about the expectations for success and welcomed the discussion, as it was beyond time for the IPU Members to contribute on such an important issue.

Mr. O. Zhmerenetskyi (Ukraine) said that the Security Council's ability to discharge its functions was limited by the power of veto, used chiefly by the Russian Federation, which, in the absence of a General Assembly decision, had illegally displaced all former Soviet republics in UN settings. It defied logic that such a country could veto resolutions condemning its crimes, of which Ukraine was not the only victim. In addition to including permanent members from Africa, Asia and Latin America, the Security Council should be empowered to prevent unwarranted use of the veto. The IPU must also engage more actively in the UN reform process, which should include a legal response to the illegitimate Russian assumption of the former Soviet Union's seat on the Security Council. Standing Committee members were urged to join in discussing his delegation's proposed motion on the subject at the 148th Assembly.

The Chair asked the special guests what contribution parliamentarians should be encouraged to make to the UN reform process and also wished to know about the related road map.

Mr. T. Albanai (Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations in New York), special guest, speaking via video link, said that the IGN co-Chairs were tasked with navigating the process and not with putting solutions on the table, which was the job of UN Member States and depended on their willingness to come together and compromise. Timetable questions were also theirs to answer. With much of the world clearly dismayed over the Security Council's operations, parliamentarians must articulate the views of the people to their UN representatives. Concerning the issue of representation versus efficiency, the Security Council's working methods had benefited from the introduction of measures to help incoming members prepare for their role. Those measures included allowing them to sit in on Security Council meetings and have access to Security Council documentation in the months preceding their term of office to allow their respective systems to adjust and understand the Security Council's workings, including the cycles for some of its agenda items. Until a point of true change was reached, the most effective means of enhancing the Security Council's efficiency and transparency was through such methods, based on cooperation, consensus and compromise among its 15 members, and through a discussion started in 2022 with the IGN co-Chairs to determine possibilities for moving forward on the many aspects of the Security Council's work identified for reform.

He welcomed the contributions of Arabic-speaking members of the Standing Committee to the important dialogue and applauded the United Arab Emirates for its outstanding work as a current non-permanent member of the Security Council to champion issues of concern to the Arab world. Fully agreeing with the Chilean and Bolivian representatives concerning the need for rapid change in the Security Council's working methods, he invited them to share their related vision, through the IPU, with the IGN co-Chairs. As to text-based negotiations, the Indian voice had been heard, but the Security Council remained split by the counterargument that the parameters of the discussion were so wide and disparate that the process would end in collapse as a resolution agreed without consensus could not be guaranteed adoption by the required two-thirds majority of Member States. Even in that event, it would still have to be ratified by parliaments, failing which the long and cumbersome process would need to be restarted. Like India, Egypt was also actively involved in that process, in which the way forward frankly depended on yet further compromise by Member States through dialogue and with encouragement from the wider international community, including parliaments and non-governmental organizations. If long-entrenched positions persisted, the process would stagnate. He therefore urged the IPU to present to the IGN co-Chairs the parliamentary vision for effecting change through the reform process.

Ms. A. Novosseloff (Research Associate, Centre Thucydide, University of Paris), special guest, speaking via video link, said that the Security Council acted on behalf of all Member States, who were required to carry out its decisions under Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations. Its

role was not to be democratic or representative but efficient and capable of quick decision-making, which was why its membership was restricted. It was for each region to designate a candidate for a permanent position on the Security Council, although some countries – those in Africa being a case in point – might wish alternatively to put forward their candidacies to the UN General Assembly directly. As to the veto, it was akin to a safety valve that forced Security Council members to seek consensus through compromise to the extent possible. Although it did not always work to that effect, it did crucially ensure that no major power withdrew from the UN membership. It was essential to counteract abuse of the power of veto, which in fact stemmed from division among Security Council members and indeed the wider UN membership.

Concerning the gap with regard to aspirations, people were ambitious for the UN but, as an intergovernmental organization, it could do no more than the bidding of its Member States, which made its policies. Citizens should hold their countries accountable for those policies and for the non-implementation of UN resolutions. As already emphasized, successful reform of the Security Council depended on the political will for compromise, which was questionable in an increasingly divided world.

The Chair said that, taking into account views expressed and the Ukrainian proposal, the Bureau would prepare a draft motion on the subject for consideration at the 148th Assembly. He took it that the Standing Committee wished to approve that course of action.

It was so decided.

Elections to the Bureau of the Standing Committee

The Chair said that two candidates had been nominated for election to the Bureau of the Standing Committee, namely, Mr. R. Lopatka (Austria) for the Twelve Plus Group and, for a second term after a period of absence, Ms. L. Crexell (Argentina) for the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC). He took it that the Standing Committee wished to elect those two candidates.

It was so decided.

The Chair, recalling the system of rotation agreed by the geopolitical groups for the positions of President and Vice-President of the Bureau for a two-year term, said that for period 2024-2025, the President would be a male from the Twelve Plus Group and the Vice-President a woman from GRULAC. The nominated candidates for those two positions were, respectively, Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada) and Ms. L. Crexell (Argentina). He took it that the Standing Committee wished to elect those two candidates.

It was so decided.

The Chair, citing Rule 10.2 of the Rules of the Standing Committees, said that three members of the Bureau from the delegations of Armenia, Brazil and the Republic of Moldova had been absent for two consecutive sessions without a valid reason and were therefore liable to lose their seats on the Bureau. He took it that the Standing Committee wished to approve the exclusion of those three delegates from membership of the Bureau on the ground mentioned.

It was so decided.

The sitting rose at 13:00.

Forum of Women Parliamentarians

SITTING OF MONDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2023

(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 10:30 with Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, in the Chair.

The President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, noting the importance of advancing gender equality within the IPU and throughout the world, welcomed participants to the 36th session of the Forum.

Election of the President of the 36th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians

As recommended by the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. F. Malaquias, Member of the National Assembly of Angola, was, by acclamation, elected President of the 36th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians.

Ms. F. Malaquias (Angola), President of the 36th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, took the Chair.

The Chair acknowledged the progress made towards gender equality but recognized that many challenges remained. Above all, it was necessary to increase women's representation in politics, combat gender stereotypes and strengthen support networks for women. Participants were encouraged to share their views, ideas and experiences to create a more inclusive future for all.

Mr. D. Pacheco (President of the IPU) thanked women parliamentarians for their active participation in the work of the IPU. It was impossible to have inclusive democracy without the full representation of women in parliament. Words were not enough: action was needed.

During his presidency, the IPU had held six Assemblies, four of which had taken place in countries with women Speakers of Parliament. It was also during his presidency that, for the first time in history, the IPU had managed to achieve 40% women delegates at an Assembly and at least one woman member of parliament in every parliament in the world. It was good news, but also bad news, given how long it had taken to reach those milestones. He was proud to say that Portuguese-speaking countries, including Angola, Cabo Verde, Mozambique, Portugal and Timor-Leste, were particularly well-represented when it came to women in parliament.

The Forum of Women Parliamentarians was a unique space. By bringing together women parliamentarians from all regions of the world, the Forum provided authoritative guidance at IPU Assemblies. Beyond that, it had turned the Organization into a model of gender inclusivity. The Forum drew much-needed attention to burning gender issues, including women in conflict, women in the spheres of power, gender-based violence and equality at work. The Forum made IPU resolutions stronger and the collective resolve to leave no one behind more concrete.

A gender lens was needed to address current crises. Any efforts to achieve peace, democracy and the rule of law were doomed if gender equality was not embraced. The world could not accept that in many societies: (1) women were still half-citizens; (2) girls were kept out of school, forced to marry or trafficked; or (3) important decisions continued to be made without the voices of women.

Parliamentarians must lead the way addressing the causes of women's underrepresentation in parliament. It was not enough to encourage women to stand for election. Once they were there, they must have their voices heard and be able to lead equally. Parliamentary institutions should be shaped to advance equality in their structures, working methods and culture. There must be zero tolerance for sexism in politics.

He counted on the Forum to remind the IPU of the Kigali Declaration which contained a road map on the way forward.

The President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians recognized Mr. Pacheco for his work on gender equality during his presidency. She thanked the National Assembly of Angola for hosting the 147th Assembly and expressed her appreciation to the Speaker of the National Assembly for her warm hospitality and benevolent welcome. She encouraged participants in the Forum to keep

each other informed of recent gender equality-related developments in their respective countries. She called attention to the task ahead of the Forum to “engender” the works and decisions of the 147th Assembly.

Ms. C. Cerqueira (Speaker of the National Assembly of Angola) said that Angola was close to achieving gender parity in its Parliament with women currently representing 39% of members. Women were the chairs and vice-chairs of several parliamentary committees, including those usually chaired by men, such as the committees on security and the economy. A women’s caucus had also been set up.

Drawing attention to the theme of the General Debate, she said that women parliamentarians could play an important role in promoting parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions. Armed conflict exacerbated the vulnerabilities of women and children who tended to be the main victims of atrocities. As such, women must have a voice condemning conflict around the world. In addition, it was the responsibility of women to promote justice by advocating for equality before the law. Basic rights for women, such as the right to economic freedom and equal pay, should be enshrined in law. There was also a need to combat crimes affecting women such as domestic violence. To achieve those objectives, women must be united and look for common ground.

It was encouraging that the four candidates vying for the position of the next IPU President were all women from Africa. Women from all countries and continents must make their voices heard within the Organization given the vital contribution they could make to find solutions to issues such as climate change, economic instability and world hunger. Opportunities for young people, especially young women, to take up international positions must also be created.

Adoption of the agenda (FEM/36/A.1-rev.2)

The agenda was adopted.

Activities to advance gender equality

The President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians said that, since the previous Assembly, the Bureau had drawn up a very important agenda for the 36th session of the Forum, which included a panel discussion on ending violence against women in politics and a parity debate to discuss the sharing of care responsibilities between male and female parliamentarians.

In August 2023, the Bureau had met to consider amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules with the aim of establishing gender parity as the new norm throughout the IPU. The amendments proposed included the need to ensure gender parity in all leadership positions, strengthen gender quotas for delegations and enforce sanctions for non-compliance with gender provisions. It was her hope that the amendments would make the IPU an even stronger leader on gender equality.

As President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, she was committed to promoting gender equality and would work towards that goal not only during Assemblies but also in-between. Since March 2023, she had visited 16 parliaments around the world to work on the women’s cause. On those visits, she had contributed to setting up a women’s caucus in Namibia, helped plan a regional meeting of women parliamentarians in Asia, and worked towards increasing the number of women parliamentarians in China, amongst other things. She had also been in contact with the Parliament of the United States of America and had had several meetings with Ms. N. Pelosi with a view to persuading the country to re-join the IPU.

Mr. A.R. Al Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), Chair of the Gender Partnership Group, said that the IPU focused a great deal of attention on increasing the number of women participating in politics. However, having large numbers of women in parliament did not necessarily mean that they participated actively. It was not enough for women to simply be in attendance and have their voices “heard”. Women must be supported to assume positions of leadership and to take part in decision-making.

The Gender Partnership Group had developed the *Policy to prevent and address harassment, including sexual harassment, at IPU Assemblies and other IPU*. Delegates were encouraged to endorse the policy and promote it at the IPU as well as in their own parliaments and local communities. It was important to create a culture of respect and ensure that all participants felt safe.

The President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians said that, in June 2023, the IPU, in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), had held a parliamentary roundtable entitled *Parliaments and women's rights: Implementing CEDAW, realizing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for all*. The discussions had focused on advancing gender equality and women's rights in three priority areas: political participation, decent work and education. The roundtable had brought together 35 parliamentarians from 23 countries as well as 38 observers. Its aim was to contribute a parliamentary perspective to the Human Rights 75 Initiative launched by OHCHR on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The roundtable culminated in the endorsement of a collective set of pledges.

Ms. Z. Hilal (Secretary of the Forum) wished to announce two upcoming initiatives on combatting violence against women in parliament. The first was a webinar for African Parliaments taking place in November 2023 to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. The aim of the webinar was to take stock of progress made since the publication of the IPU study on *Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Africa*. The second initiative was the launch of a new IPU study on *Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament in the Asia-Pacific region*. The study would investigate the prevalence of such violence and the specific forms of violence that existed.

The IPU, in partnership with the OHCHR, had recently published the second edition of the CEDAW handbook for parliamentarians, the first one having been published in 2003. Parliaments were essential to the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Indeed, the Convention required countries to ensure gender equality in law, establish specific mechanisms and targeted policies on women's rights, allocate gender-sensitive budgets and build support for gender equality, all of which were the responsibility of parliaments. She drew attention to the thematic areas outlined in the handbook, including cross-cutting issues, such as intersectionality. The handbook gave examples of good parliamentary practices and included a section on women living in challenging contexts. The IPU would continue promoting the CEDAW Convention by working very closely with the CEDAW Committee. The two bodies were working on a general recommendation on gender parity to be issued in 2024.

Contribution to the work of the 147th Assembly from a gender perspective

Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia), co-Rapporteur of the draft resolution entitled *Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm*, said that the draft resolution in question dealt with a specific type of human trafficking, namely the trafficking of young boys and girls into orphanages. The practice affected nearly eight million children worldwide. Criminals trafficked the children into so-called "orphanages" with a view to attracting money from generous donors and volunteers wishing to help. However, over 80% of the children were not orphans at all but had at least one parent who, with support, could take care of them. The resolution aimed to offer practical guidance for legislators on how to end orphanage trafficking. Among the recommendations made was the need to raise awareness among donors and volunteers encouraging them instead to support projects that kept children with their families, for instance, those that focused on eradicating poverty at home. Equally, it was important to legislate against orphanage trafficking making it a crime both in countries where donors were based and in countries where the children were exploited. Parliaments also needed to improve the child protection competencies in their countries. So far, a total of 180 amendments from 27 countries had been received.

Ms. S. Kiladze (Vice-Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child), panellist, said that orphanage trafficking was clearly a grave violation of the rights of the child. It was very complex in nature. Its negative effects went far beyond the violation of any one group of rights and concerned almost all aspects of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The preamble of the Convention clearly stated that the family was the natural environment for the growth and well-being of children. Orphanage trafficking deprived children of that environment and exposed them to violence, exploitation and abuse, including illegal adoption, child pornography and prostitution, and unlawful deprivation of liberty. Girls were particularly vulnerable to the crime because of deep-rooted gender discrimination.

It was a State obligation to protect children from orphanage trafficking and all three branches of power, including parliament, must take action. The joint statement of the IPU and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted in 2022 showed how crucially important parliaments were in the

protection and promotion of children's rights. Parliaments should take the lead by adopting legislation, establishing oversight mechanisms, prosecuting perpetrators, strengthening families, promoting education, addressing poverty, ensuring access to health care, combatting early and forced marriages, setting up rehabilitation services for child victims, and using media and social network platforms to raise awareness.

The Chair said that the Forum was now invited to discuss the draft resolution from a gender perspective and make any amendments necessary to accommodate the needs of women and girls. Ms. H. Ramzy Fayeze (Bahrain) would chair the debate and Ms. V. Riotton (France) would be the Rapporteur.

Ms. H. Ramzy Fayeze (Bahrain) took the Chair.

The Chair asked participants to address: (1) the ways in which orphanage trafficking targeted and affected women and girls, and men and boys differently; (2) the main drivers of orphanage trafficking and the extent to which the specific vulnerabilities and demand for that type of trafficking differed for women and girls; (3) how the vulnerabilities of girls and their families to orphanage trafficking could be reduced; (4) how laws and policies could better address orphanage trafficking, including by incorporating its transnational dimension; (5) how to ensure that law-enforcement practices in the fight against orphanage trafficking were victim-centred and gender-responsive, and placed the best interests of the child at the centre; and (6) how parliaments and parliamentarians could promote the role of women and girls in addressing trafficking, including orphanage trafficking.

Ms. S. Falaknaz (United Arab Emirates) said that it was important to promote international cooperation and exchange of expertise to protect victims of trafficking, including women and children. Parliaments must enact the relevant legislation.

In recent years, the United Arab Emirates had helped launch the Arab Declaration on Combating all Forms of Violence against Women and Girls, issued a law on protection from domestic violence and adopted a strategy to empower women.

Ms. L. Zepeda Martínez (Mexico) said that a sufficient budget was needed to tackle and understand the root causes of orphanage trafficking. Teenage pregnancy was very prevalent in Mexico with many such babies ending up in orphanages vulnerable to being trafficked. Insufficient funds for children's issues made it difficult for Mexico to act.

Ms. A. Alshaman (Saudi Arabia) said that the experiences of orphans differed depending on their gender. For example, girls were more vulnerable to sexual harassment and forced marriage while boys were more likely to end up participating in violent conflicts. It was important to revise legislation accordingly and criminalize all forms of human trafficking. Governments must increase their monitoring of orphanages, provide orphans with access to basic services, such as health care and education, and raise awareness of orphanage trafficking.

Saudi Arabia had enacted several laws to protect children from crimes such as harassment, trafficking, online abuse and child labour. All children received education, health care and psychological support regardless of gender. A monthly allowance was granted to children and young people in primary school, secondary school and university. Students were also given the opportunity to study abroad for a master's degree or PhD.

Ms. N. Mapisa-Nqakula (South Africa) said that foster homes, in addition to orphanages, were increasingly becoming places from which children were trafficked, with many countries lacking the systems needed to screen potential foster parents.

Given that women and girls were the main victims of trafficking, there was an urgent need for targeted interventions and comprehensive approaches that addressed their specific vulnerabilities. Parliamentarians could play a crucial role in that regard. It was important to protect the rights of women and girls, ensure their safety and empower them to resist and recover from trauma.

The resolution should urge parliamentarians to address the causal factors that brought children to orphanages in the first place, such as poverty and food insecurity. It should highlight the need for relevant legislation and gender-sensitive law enforcement.

Ms. T. Jintawet (Thailand) said that five points should be added to the draft resolution. First, it was important to develop a robust, comprehensive and reliable database on orphanage trafficking and voluntourism. The database should collect data that took into account the differing needs of boys and

girls. Second, parliaments should work closely with relevant stakeholders with a view to finding sustainable solutions. Third, there was a need to strengthen social services for child protection and make systems inclusive of the needs of all children, regardless of their migration status. Fourth, volunteers, child protection officers and social workers should be given training and capacity building support on orphanage trafficking, especially on the gendered aspects of the phenomenon. Fifth, inclusive and family-oriented policies should be promoted, especially those designed to strengthen parents' and caregivers' ability to care for children.

Ms. F.M.P. Konseibo (Burkina Faso) said that orphanage trafficking was a grave violation of human rights and urged parliaments to strengthen national legislation on the topic. It was important to address the root causes of the phenomenon, such as war, poverty and unwanted pregnancies. There was a need to raise awareness in schools, colleges and universities about unwanted pregnancies and make adoption practices stricter.

Ms. M. Vasilevich (Belarus) said that orphanage trafficking was a transnational crime that could only be addressed through international cooperation and coordinated action. Countries of origin, destination and transit across which victims were trafficked must work together. It was vital to bring to justice all those involved, including recruiters, intermediaries and those who benefitted from the trafficking.

Parliaments were encouraged to strengthen national legislation in accordance with international legal standards. Offences and penalties must be clearly defined in law and any related laws and policies, for instance, on immigration, labour and adoption, should be amended accordingly. It was important to have regular dialogues with relevant organizations especially in the field of tourism, raise awareness of child trafficking through regular briefings and special meetings, and promote accurate data collection and distribution. The victims of trafficking must receive support, including medical care, counselling, safe accommodation, legal assistance and temporary humanitarian visas.

Ms. M. Riquelme (Chile) said that Chile, along with other countries in Latin America, had experienced military coups, dictatorships and State-sponsored violence which had facilitated the trafficking of children. Many children had been affected, including orphans and children of politicians and political prisoners. It was necessary to impose sanctions against the crime both nationally and internationally and use science and technology to reunite the families affected. She agreed that an international database for orphanage trafficking should be created. Orphanage trafficking and its impacts must be taken seriously. It was, above all, a legislative task.

Ms. A. Kalmari (Finland) said that the resolution should include a reference to children with developmental disabilities who were even more vulnerable than others.

Ms. A. Erdoğan (Türkiye) drew attention to the situation in Gaza where women and children were struggling to survive. According to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), since 7 October 2023, 6,625 women and children had been injured, 493,000 women and girls had been displaced, 900 women had lost their husbands, and 3,103 children had lost their fathers. Approximately 50,000 women were pregnant, 10% of which were expected to deliver in the following 30 days, uncertain if their babies would survive. Parliamentarians could not turn a blind eye to the situation in Gaza. She called for an immediate ceasefire and an unhindered flow of humanitarian assistance into the area. A peace process should be initiated based on a two-State vision with East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine.

Mr. P.S. Rudana (Indonesia) said that orphanage trafficking made children vulnerable to exploitation, violence and abuse, and impacted their socioeconomic lives even into adulthood. The practice should be vehemently condemned. The resolution should urge countries to: (1) build a coalition of different groups, including men and women, to campaign for the elimination of orphanage trafficking; (2) adopt and implement national policy on human trafficking; (3) punish perpetrators; (4) engage women and girl victims in all deliberations; (5) economically empower women so that their children were not placed into orphanages or other facilities due to poverty; and (6) monitor the socioeconomic development of orphanage trafficking victims, including women and girls.

Indonesia had passed the Law on the Eradication of the Criminal Act of Trafficking in Persons, the Law on Child Protection and the Presidential Decree on the National Plan of Action on the Elimination of Trafficking in Women and Children.

Ms. N. Kpochan (Benin) said that it was important to address the root causes of orphanage trafficking, such as poverty and unemployment. Parliamentarians must strengthen legislation on orphanage trafficking and monitor its implementation. Indeed, implementation of laws was absolutely vital. Illegal adoption was not just a matter for the Global South but also for the Global North.

Benin had recently strengthened its own legislation. It had created protection centres for children, launched an awareness raising campaign and put in place programmes for women and girls at risk of being trafficked, including employment, education and financial assistance programmes. An institution to support victims of gender-based violence had also been established. Victims were provided with legal assistance.

Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah (Egypt) pointed out that there was no international pact or convention on orphanage trafficking, leaving many children, especially girls, vulnerable to the crime. A comprehensive, international approach was needed.

Egypt had ratified many international pacts, conventions and protocols on human trafficking which had now been harmonized into Egyptian law. It had been one of the first countries to pass a national law that criminalized human trafficking and was committed to its implementation. In addition, article 80 of the Egyptian Constitution guaranteed protection for children against violence, sexual abuse and trafficking. The definition of “orphan” had recently been amended in law to encompass a wider range of children, including street children and undocumented children.

The development of orphans, for instance, through education, must be encouraged so as to create healthy, prosperous societies. She called on the IPU and other interparliamentary organizations to take measures to protect children.

Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine) drew attention to the 19,546 Ukrainian children who had been illegally abducted by Russian troops and deported to the Russian Federation. The Russian occupying authorities were separating children from their rightful families using filtration procedures or simply orphaning the children by killing their parents. The children were then being transported to institutions and forcibly adopted. In 2022, the Russian Federation had amended its legislation to expedite adoption procedures specifically for Ukrainian children. Once the children were in Russian families, their identity was erased, and the children became very difficult to trace. So far, Ukraine had managed to return approximately 400 children and was doing its utmost to return the rest. It was, however, a slow process whereby each child had to be negotiated individually. She called on the international community to put pressure on the Russian Federation to stop taking Ukrainian children as prisoners of war.

Ms. N. Boulhan Houssein (Djibouti) said that there was a need to adopt laws aiming to prevent trafficking in children, increase sanctions against perpetrators and regulate orphanages to ensure the wellbeing and safety of orphans. It was necessary to monitor implementation of the laws as well as the situation in the orphanages. Parliamentarians should raise awareness about orphanage trafficking among the public and put pressure on the media to cover the issue. They should also be involved in international cooperation, including with other parliaments and with international organizations. Sufficient resources and budget must be assigned to tackling the scourge.

Djibouti had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, submitted reports on its implementation and put in place national legislation to protect children.

Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche (Algeria) said that Algeria recognized the important role of women in society. A non-discrimination clause as well as a clause protecting women from all types of violence had been included in the Constitution. In addition, the country had signed all international conventions on the protection of women and was working to adapt its national legislation to those conventions. Women played a pivotal role in the development of societies and must therefore be protected. She called on delegates to support the proposed emergency item entitled *Stopping the war and violations of human rights in Gaza*.

Ms. M.M. Chinomona (Zimbabwe) said that orphanage trafficking was a complex and multifaceted challenge that demanded a comprehensive and coordinated response from all stakeholders, including parliamentarians. In particular, there was an urgent need for targeted efforts to protect and empower girl victims who were especially susceptible to sexual exploitation and gender-based violence.

Zimbabwe had established an anti-trafficking inter-ministerial committee mandated to oversee the implementation of strategies to curb trafficking in persons in Zimbabwe. It had also put in place the Zimbabwe Trafficking in Persons National Plan of Action as the operational framework for the

Trafficking in Persons Act. The country had a set of comprehensive childcare policies that had been tentatively designed to include a gender perspective. The policies offered a safety net for orphaned children, particularly girls, who could otherwise be ensnared by trafficking networks. Going forward, Zimbabwe sought to enact gender-responsive legislation frameworks that specifically aimed to protect the vulnerable, including minors, particularly girls.

Ms. I. Sviatenko (Russian Federation), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the statement provided by the delegate from Ukraine was false. The Ukrainian military was the one firing at kindergartens and schools and using children as human shields. Children who had been taken to other regions had been placed in foster homes, not adopted. Foster care meant that the children could be reunited with their families once their relatives had been found. The Russian Federation had never prevented children from reuniting with their parents and was working with the international community on the matter, including the International Committee of the Red Cross and with Ukraine directly.

Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia), co-Rapporteur, said that the issues raised, particularly the need to emphasize the specific impacts of orphanage trafficking on women and girls, would be taken on board.

She drew attention to the paradigm of the “three P’s” for addressing trafficking in persons: prosecution, protection and partnership. Forging partnerships was particularly important given the need for global action. The international community must come together to deal with the countries sending money and volunteers as well as with the countries in which children, whether genuine orphans or not, were exploited. Parliamentarians were very well placed to inspire global action.

The sitting was adjourned at 13:10 and resumed at 14:30 with Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, in the Chair.

Panel discussion on *Women in politics: To stay or not to stay?*

The President said that too many successful women were quitting political office because of unbearable pressures, exhaustion, violence, harassment and intimidation. The present panel discussion would take stock of issues that jeopardized women's careers in politics and uncover solutions.

Ms. M. Rempel Garner (Canada), panellist, said that it was important to ensure that women were not only elected to parliament but also stayed in parliament. Women had many reasons not to enter politics, including violence, online harassment, lack of childcare and a diminished ability to fundraise. They would not stay in the job unless they could make a meaningful contribution. It was vital that they were not tokenized. A question that was constantly on a woman's mind was whether it was worth it to participate in politics. In her opinion, it was only worth it if women had the space to pursue their political passions with equity and dignity. Indeed, women must be given a seat at the table and have their voices not only heard but also implemented. The Forum of Women Parliamentarians should consider how to overcome the above issues, making sure that the voices of women were not seen as a nuisance but as a vital part of the solution.

Ms. C.M. Mumma (Kenya), panellist, presenting her opinions as to why women in high-level political positions left their jobs, said that women in politics had a greater burden to carry because the expectations placed on them were usually much higher than those placed on men. In Africa, many women were already carrying the burden of providing social security to their communities, including health care and food. When they moved into politics, that burden was amplified even more in light of the patriarchal nature of the spaces they were forced to manoeuvre, including political parties and even parliament itself. Indeed, parliament was a workplace designed for men where women were not treated as equal players. For instance, women were rarely put on influential committees and chaired them even more rarely. As such, many women decided to opt out of politics. It was vital to make political spaces more accommodating of women.

In Kenya, economic empowerment was a big factor in whether someone was elected given the high cost of elections. Candidates must either find the money to launch a campaign or persuade a political party to take them on. Those realities posed a problem for women who were less economically empowered and struggled to be recognized by political parties. It was important to change the situation not only in national parliaments but also in local assemblies and devolved governments.

In conclusion, she reiterated that parliament was not yet a workplace conducive to women's participation in politics. Not only were there difficulties for women in getting into parliament but the workplace itself violated and excluded women. Parliaments must be inclusive and representative of all interest groups, including women, young people and persons with disabilities.

Ms. F. Malaquias (Angola), President of the 36th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, took the Chair.

Ms. K. McArthur (Chief Operating Officer, Apolitical Foundation), accompanying her comments with a digital slide presentation, said that her foundation worked to encourage new, more diverse and better prepared people, particularly women, to run for political office and to better support them once they were in.

Over the past year, her foundation had been looking at mental well-being in politics. The research suggested a complex situation where the mental well-being of politicians had been negatively affected as a result of the challenges faced but had also been positively affected due to the rewarding nature of the job. A total of 41% of the politicians surveyed had low or very low mental well-being, a figure that was higher than other high-stress professions, such as police officers and doctors. It was the first time that the mental well-being of political leaders had been measured.

The research had also examined the factors influencing the mental well-being of political leaders. The results were many and varied. Some key influencing factors included personal background but also parliament as a workplace and its culture. One interesting finding was that women in parliament were putting in more emotional labour and were often responsible not only for their own emotions but also for those of their colleagues. There were some unexpected findings, such as the fact that women politicians in Sweden were having a particularly negative experience suffering from higher levels of anxiety. Some more recent forms of abuse affecting the job included online harassment, hate speech and threats that were disproportionately directed at women. As such, three quarters of the women parliamentarians surveyed had stopped engaging with social media despite it being an effective way to engage with citizens. Many women were left asking themselves whether it was worth it to enter politics.

Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, panellist, said that the three studies on sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament carried out by the IPU (one global study and two regional studies in Europe and in Africa) had uncovered the nature and magnitude of violence against women in parliament. While both men and women in politics were exposed to abuse, it was disproportionately directed against women.

The studies revealed that more than 80% of the women parliamentarians surveyed across the three studies had been affected by psychological violence. The most widespread manifestation of psychological violence consisted of sexist attitudes and remarks. It was common to see sexist stereotypes and practices aimed at ignoring, ridiculing and degrading women as well as judgements about their appearance, all of which indicated that women were not welcome in politics. Threats of death, rape and assault aimed at women themselves or their loved ones were also common. Online sexist attacks were also highly prevalent across the three studies, especially in Europe where 58% of respondents had experienced such attacks. The study in Africa showed that close to 40% of the women surveyed had been sexually harassed while the global study revealed that 25% of women had faced physical violence and 33% had faced economic violence. Incidents of violence were more prevalent among women parliamentarians living with disabilities, young women, unmarried women and women from minority groups. Women who spoke out in support of gender equality were the prime targets for organized attacks, including by ultra-conservative or anti-feminist groups.

The studies revealed that male parliamentary colleagues were the primary perpetrators of the abovementioned violence. In Europe, 76% of cases of sexual harassment against women parliamentarians were perpetrated by their male parliamentary colleagues from their own political party and other political parties. However, the majority of acts of online sexist attacks, acts of intimidation and threats against women parliamentarians could be attributed to the public or to anonymous people.

Women parliamentarians were greatly impacted by gender-based violence. More than half of the women parliamentarians affected in Europe and in Africa had said that they felt isolated and abandoned in a hostile, discriminating and dangerous environment. Several had reported that violence and harassment had triggered anxiety, health problems or sleep disorders. One third of women parliamentarians in Europe and 65% in Africa feared for their safety and the safety of their family. Nevertheless, more than 80% of women parliamentarians who had experienced violence confirmed their determination to continue in their parliamentary work, which was a sign of resilience and hope.

She encouraged delegates to talk about their personal experiences and how they had overcome them. Not only would it show women parliamentarians that they were not alone but would also open up a space to address the problem.

Ms. M. Alsuwaidi (United Arab Emirates) reiterated the importance of adopting strategies in parliament that promoted women's rights locally, regionally and internationally. It was necessary to help women overcome the challenges they experienced in parliament, including violence.

Emirati women enjoyed a great deal of status locally and internationally. They represented 50% of parliamentarians in the Federal National Council as well as 51% of candidates on electoral lists. In addition, the United Arab Emirates had ranked first in the female parliamentary representation index in the World Competitiveness Yearbook of the Institute for Management Development. The United Arab Emirates was therefore an international model for women's empowerment.

Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche (Algeria) said that women were essential to achieving sustainable development, democracy and prosperous societies. Thus, the participation of women in political life was not a choice but an obligation. Parliamentarians, together with the United Nations, had an important role to play in removing obstacles for women who wished to enter politics, including by combatting violence.

Ms. F. A. Masiko (South Africa) said that it was crucial to recognize that overcoming legal gender barriers benefitted all of society, not just women, while advancing the rights of women was an essential goal in itself, with significant socioeconomic benefits. Research had consistently shown that countries where women shared equal rights with men in accessing political and economic opportunities were more resilient in the face of crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and conflict. As such, empowering women should be viewed as a strategic imperative for national development. It was paramount to allow women parliamentarians to tell their stories in their own words. By sharing their experiences, women parliamentarians could inspire others, shed light on their realities and act as a catalyst for change.

Ms. E. Takagai (Japan) said that Japan was lagging behind on female participation in Parliament. Women represented only 10% of parliamentarians and had made up only 20% of candidates in the most recent elections. Similarly, only 2 out of 28 parliamentary committees were chaired by women. Even more concerning was that parliamentary authorities were impeding the creation of an inclusive and diverse workplace environment and deliberately giving preferential treatment to male parliamentarians. She would continue her efforts to introduce a system that gave women a certain percentage of seats in the Parliament of Japan while helping women parliamentarians to develop their skills, expertise and experience. It was in the interest of the nation for women to be active in political life.

Ms. D. Bergamini (Italy) agreed that more women were needed in politics and that women should not be tokenized. Parliament remained a man's world where distrust towards women was rampant. Distrust easily turned into violence. Parliamentarians were encouraged to be role models for societies all over the world. It was not enough to have quotas. Rules within political parties must be amended to be more coherent with the needs, priorities and ambitions of women.

Ms. K. Slassi (Morocco) said that politics was a difficult field for men and women alike, but women faced more obstacles, such as exclusion and abuse, both online and in person. It was important to work with the authorities to pass gender-equal legislation, empower women economically and raise awareness. Women in politics must self-improve in order to become more confident on their path in the political arena.

Morocco had worked to boost the participation of women in politics because of the benefits their contribution brought to development and democracy.

Ms. F. Muyumba Furaha (Democratic Republic of the Congo) said that the fight must go on despite the high levels of violence against women in politics. The future of female leadership depended on it. Parliamentarians must do everything possible to bring in more female leaders.

The challenges faced by women in parliament were enormous, but the situation was improving. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the number of women in the Senate had gone from 5 to 25.

Women must be able to pursue a political career without risk of danger, pressure or burnout. The solution to the problem was to keep resisting but also to protect women from the violence they experienced.

Ms. A. Alshaman (Saudi Arabia) encouraged women to face challenges with determination and power. With enough political will, women's political empowerment could be improved, including through legislation. Saudi Arabia had adopted a set of initiatives to empower women politically. The initiatives had led to a number of women being appointed to high-level positions, such as ministers and ambassadors. A 20% quota had been introduced in the Shura Council. The country also had many laws to empower women socially and economically and to protect them from all forms of violence and discrimination. One of the most important laws contained provisions on equal pay, protection in the workplace and provision of childcare services.

Ms. E. Azad (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that it was possible to empower women in the political arena by adopting the correct policies. The Islamic Republic of Iran prided itself on its policies to empower women allowing them to showcase their abilities and skills. One important achievement was having over 25% of executive positions filled by women.

A necessary condition for women's participation in politics was safety and security. Yet, thousands of women and children were losing their lives as a result of the recent attacks perpetrated by Israel in Gaza. Attacking civilian targets, such as schools and hospitals, was strictly forbidden under international law yet Israel continued to do just that. She urged delegates to condemn the actions of Israel and thus lay the groundwork for a better life for the people of Palestine.

Ms. M. Vasilevich (Belarus) said that equality between men and women was key for a just and democratic society and women's involvement in society led to increased productivity and economic growth. In Belarus, women and men were given equal opportunities under the Constitution and women's political participation in political life continued to increase. Currently, women represented 40% of parliamentarians and 53% of civil servants. The Government was creating conditions that allowed women to combine their professional and family duties, for instance, by providing free nurseries and kindergartens. Public organizations also played a role in women's empowerment. One such organization in Belarus was the Belarusian Women's Union which supported women in their political careers. Belarus agreed that gender equality was key to fostering peace and harmony and was making every effort to support the development of a gender-equal society.

Ms. S. Alyousef (Syrian Arab Republic) said that women played a crucial role not only in protecting their families but also in addressing crises and fostering peace. Women, however, were faced with many challenges, such as extremism, which prevented them from participating in politics. It was important to work on community programmes and sustainable development initiatives that included women. Hate speech against women must be eliminated in order to increase their participation in politics. Governments should work together with media outlets to achieve that goal.

Ms. K.A. Ogbara (Nigeria) said that 49% of the Nigerian population were women, yet women made up only 4% of the legislative arm of government compared to the global average of more than 20%. Low levels of female representation were due to cultural stereotypes, religion and patriarchal social structures. Women's empowerment and gender equality were fundamental human rights that were at the core of equitable development.

The problem of women's underrepresentation should be addressed from the foundation, namely from within the education system. In Nigeria, 60% of out-of-school children were girls, thus leaving them disenfranchised from the beginning. That said, the current President was renewing the hope of women by giving 25% of ministerial appointments to women.

More legislative action was needed to increase the participation of women in politics in Nigeria. The international community should call on the Nigerian Parliament to revisit the many gender bills that it had rejected. Women must remain focused and determined irrespective of challenges such as political violence.

Ms. F. Weisse (Chile) said that development was not possible without equality and equity, including equality of opportunities, and women must be able to say yes to the opportunities that did arise. In order for that to happen, public policies were needed to allow women to combine family responsibilities with work. Women in politics were reference points for other women showing them that high levels of female representation were possible. Chile had been working on increasing the participation of women in parliament but was still lagging behind.

Society must begin to see women as equals in terms of skills and competencies. It was vital that all types of gender bias be eliminated when appointments were made. Neither positive nor negative discrimination should be applied. People should be evaluated as human beings regardless of gender.

Ms. C. Dao née Macoura (Côte d'Ivoire) said that women represented half of the global population and their participation was key to national development. Côte d'Ivoire had taken a number of legislative measures to reduce the level of violence against women and had therefore seen those levels fall. A report analysing the most recent municipal elections showed that women candidates had not experienced much violence. Women wishing to enter politics must be resilient and must continue fighting. One of the most important steps towards increasing women's participation in politics was to ensure that girls had access to education.

Ms. J. Sabao (Zambia) said that only 15% of parliamentarians in Zambia were women, a figure which had gone down from 18% in the previous Parliament. Although progress on women's participation had been slow, the Zambian Parliament had made some notable gains in female leadership at the parliamentary level. For instance, the current Vice-President of Zambia and the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of Parliament were all female.

Zambia had formulated several strategies to address the low number of women in politics, including measures that monitored government activities on women's inclusion and funding for policies and programmes aiming to improve female participation.

Ms. I. Sviatenko (Russian Federation) said that, in her country, women represented 20% of the Council of the Federation, including the Speaker, and 25% of the regional parliaments. More than 40% of small and medium enterprises and 30% of exporting companies in the Russian Federation were led by women. The Leaders of Russia competition was receiving more and more applications from women, with 58,000 female leaders having already taken part. Moreover, the Eurasian Women's Forum played an essential role in empowering women, bringing together female leaders from over 140 countries. Currently, the Forum was working to empower women in the field of technology and research, promote female entrepreneurship and improve financial literacy among women. Lastly, she drew attention to the Women's Business Alliance within BRICS and a club of female prize winners within the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum.

Ms. S. Amero (Uganda) said that it was important to sensitize women to the realities of political life, giving them an example to follow and motivation to keep pushing forward. Women should be shown how to break through challenges thus making them less likely to feel intimidated and more likely to stay in the job. Some cultures and traditions discouraged women from participating in politics. Women could nevertheless be more involved if they were empowered economically. In Africa, it was very difficult to stand in an election without financial resources.

Uganda had a good number of women in high-level political positions. For example, the Prime Minister, two Deputy Prime Ministers, the Vice-President and the Speaker of Parliament were all women. The Constitution required that 30% of parliamentarians were women, a figure which had been exceeded and stood at around 38%.

Ms. H.Y. Shin (Republic of Korea) said that, in 2020, the Republic of Korea had elected its first female Deputy Speaker in the history of the National Assembly and was hoping to see a female Speaker as the next step. However, women remained underrepresented in Parliament at only 18% compared to the global average of more than 20%. A number of challenges must be addressed to overcome the problem, including combatting inequalities around the social status of women.

Polarizing politics had given rise to gender conflicts, creating barriers for women politicians and impeding the introduction of gender-sensitive policies. It was vital to foster a political culture that unleashed the potential of women parliamentarians. Women parliamentarians were often vulnerable to insults and humiliation regarding their appearance and opinions and were expected to be superwomen: models, wives and working politicians. She encouraged women leaders around the world to show solidarity, cooperation and support for each other.

Ms. S. Sirivejchapun (Thailand) said that, in 2016, at the time of the global study on sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament, Thailand had already put in place a code of ethics for parliamentarians which required them to respect the personal rights of their colleagues and prohibited the use of any derogatory language, including sexist language. Since then, both chambers of Parliament had issued separate codes of conduct which included provisions specifically condemning sexual harassment and violence against women. The parliamentary commission on

ethics had been tasked with processing complaints, the most serious of which were referred to the national anti-corruption commission for further action. Cases of sexual harassment committed by parliamentarians outside of parliament were also brought forward, with both sides required to be treated fairly.

The representation of women in Parliament had increased to 19% in the previous election showing that the Parliament of Thailand had become a more gender-sensitive institution with zero tolerance for sexism, harassment and violence against women.

Ms. D. Tei (Tonga) said that only 2 out of 28 parliamentarians in Tonga were women, including herself. One of the challenges faced by women parliamentarians were patriarchal mindsets where men were considered better leaders. In a recent study carried out in Tonga, 92% of respondents believed men to be more likely to have the skills and experiences needed for parliament. Such perceptions remained prevalent despite the growing number of women in leadership positions. In addition, women parliamentarians were more vulnerable to criticism and strong opposition from their colleagues, including from other women politicians, and faced scrutiny and cyberbullying from the public on social media. It had become clear that the public held women to a higher standard than men. Nevertheless, she was empowered through the Forum of Women Parliamentarians to strive forward and considered her work to be worth it. It was only by overcoming the above challenges that peace, justice and strong institutions could be achieved.

Ms. C. Sousa (Portugal) said that the only answer to the question of whether women politicians should stay or go was yes, they should stay. Women had only just arrived in politics and had much to do. Every time a women gave up, she was giving up possibilities for the future generation of women leaders.

Violence against women must be dealt with collectively rather than individually so that women understood that they were not alone. Although violence against women was not new, it had taken on new forms, including digital violence. The objective of such violence was to silence women and remove them from the public space. Women were being attacked simply because they were women.

Portugal was including more and more women in Parliament. Recently, however, the far right party had been undermining the empowerment of women and legitimizing the hate speech that was happening online. Online hate speech was regulated by technology companies thus making it very difficult to fight.

Ms. S. Mikayilova (Azerbaijan) said that the Azerbaijani Parliament had elected a woman Speaker and was continuing to improve its legislation depending on the needs of society. Women's participation in some fields, including education, science and health care, was fairly high in Azerbaijan at 70%, 60% and 50% respectively. In other fields, however, women's participation left much to be desired and must therefore be improved. She emphasized that it was easy to adopt laws but difficult to implement them. There was a need to combat cultural stereotypes which were hindering progress. Non-governmental organizations, political parties, parliaments and governments were more powerful when they included the voice of women.

Ms. M.L. Carneiro (Brazil) said that Brazil was considering introducing gender quotas of up to 30% with a view to increasing the number of women in the national and regional parliaments. The Forum of Women Parliamentarians should create a mechanism to support parliaments in the drafting of gender-sensitive laws where parliaments with more advanced laws could serve as examples for those with less advanced laws.

Ms. M. Rempel Garner (Canada), panellist, said that it was striking that women parliamentarians from around the world were facing similar challenges despite being from different countries and cultural backgrounds. Women must therefore continue sharing their experiences. She agreed that women must resist the urge to give up. It was indeed worth it to fight for women's voices. Women must, however, accept that they themselves would be doing most of the work on women's empowerment. While male allies did exist, the structures in which women were working remained patriarchal. Power was taken rather than given. Women must take that power by taking up space, speaking truth, making their voices heard, refusing to be silenced or tokenized, and being unafraid to make people uncomfortable. It was also important for women to take credit for the incredible work they were doing. She emphasized that every little bit of progress must be celebrated. In all of the above, it was absolutely vital for women to support each other.

Ms. C.M. Mumma (Kenya), panellist, agreed with the general consensus that women should not quit. Instead, parliament must introduce operational policies or codes of conduct that prohibited behaviours that objectified women, such as sexual harassment. Such policies would not only protect women but also men who had been affected. Many countries, including Kenya, did not have sufficient policies in that regard. The policies should apply to parliamentarians just as much as staff.

In addition, parliament as an institution must adapt its physical infrastructure to be more supportive of women, for instance, by setting up crèches where young women could take their children during working hours. Currently, the parliamentary infrastructure was designed for men. Similar adaptations should be made for people with disabilities, including visual, hearing and physical disabilities. There was also a need to form women's caucuses in parliaments around the world which could then support each other with the help of the IPU.

Greater participation of women in parliament could only be achieved by strengthening the participation of women in political parties. It was not just about creating women's wings but about putting women in high-level leadership positions.

Overall, it was the responsibility of parliaments to set an example for society by creating a safe working environment for everyone, whether for women, young people or people with disabilities.

Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, panellist, drew attention to a law on digital sexual violence passed in 2021 in Mexico known as Olimpia's law. Mexican activist, Olimpia Coral Melo, had campaigned for the law after her ex-boyfriend had released a sex video of her online without her consent. The law went by the motto "without my consent is not your content" and made it a crime to release any sexual material without the consent of the subject in question. Even forwarding a photo would now be considered a crime. Olimpia's law was not just a legal milestone but a symbol of what could be achieved when an individual stood for justice and equality.

Mexico also had a law on political violence which prohibited people from standing as candidates had they committed sexual violence. The law also made it possible for women parliamentarians to raise complaints about the behaviours of parliamentary colleagues.

She agreed on the importance of creating women's caucuses to foster cooperation. The caucuses should be composed of women parliamentarians from different political parties.

Ms. K. McArthur (Chief Operating Officer, Apolitical Foundation) agreed that women should talk to each other about their struggles even if it was difficult to do so. Indeed, peer-to-peer support was one of the best ways to build resilience in politics. It was also important to share ideas, opportunities and solutions on ways to address violence as well as to engage political parties and parliaments on the issue. The system must be changed from the inside by learning from examples such as Olimpia's law.

The issue of online violence specifically was particularly pressing. Parliamentarians should consider how to harness technological advancements, such as artificial intelligence, to combat online trolls. One way forward was to mobilize internet "elves" to spread positive information and counter hatred.

Hearing of the candidates for the post of IPU President

The Chair invited the candidates for the post of IPU President to present themselves.

Ms. C. Gotani Hara (Speaker of the National Assembly of Malawi), speaking via video message, said that she wished to inspire a rebranding of the IPU as a powerful organization perceived as both locally relevant and capable of solving global challenges. Globalizing and localizing the identity of the IPU would require a strong results-oriented internal culture and the creation of a powerful external narrative about its work and achievements.

She had 15 years of experience in Malawian politics, having served in several cabinet portfolios. Issues such as climate change and inclusion were not just abstract concepts to her but issues that she could feel, see and touch since they spoke directly to the situation in Malawi. She was a change maker who was already promoting the IPU's mission and objectives by building resilience and championing empowerment, inclusion and action on climate change while also being active within the global parliamentary ecosystem. The breadth, depth and variety of her leadership skills and experience equipped her with a unique ability to be a first-class champion of the IPU.

Although the IPU had achieved a great deal in recent years, a more visible and expressive IPU was needed in light of the rapid changes seen in recent years, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis. There was a need to find more unified and conceptual ways of dealing with such challenges which could only be delivered by a leader with exceptional skills, broad experience, foresight, determination and a hunger for making a positive difference. She had what it took to make such a difference.

Ms. T. Ackson (Speaker of the National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania) said that, before becoming Speaker of Parliament, she had also served as Deputy Speaker and Deputy Attorney General of Tanzania, and had taught law at the University of Dar Es Salaam. In the coming months, the IPU would be revising its Statutes and Rules. Given her legal experience, she would be better placed than any of the other candidates to oversee that process.

She drew attention to the IPU Strategy 2022–2026 noting in particular two of its policy priorities: peace and security, and gender equality. The world was currently facing many peace-related challenges, including wars in the Middle East and Ukraine, which affected women and children disproportionately. As President, she would advocate for dialogue between countries as a means of achieving peace. Gender equality fell under the umbrella of inclusivity, which was necessary to build effective parliaments. Indeed, parliaments could not be effective if they did not consider all groups of society. Not only was it important to include women at the decision-making table but also young people and people with disabilities. As President, she would create a platform that brought to the table all the people directly affected by the topics being discussed.

She commended Mr. Pacheco for the good work he had completed during his presidency. His work to expand the IPU membership was particularly noteworthy, having persuaded Liberia and the Bahamas to join and initiated conversations with the United States of America regarding their potential return. The whole world must meet at the IPU with the objective of creating peace and democracy for all.

Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal) congratulated Ms. López Castro, President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, and all previous Presidents including Ms. Vasylenko for their extraordinary work in support of women. She also paid tribute to the outgoing President of the IPU, Mr. Pacheco.

Introducing herself, Ms. Mergane Kanouté said that she had first been elected in 2017 and was now head of her political party as well as Vice-President of the Presidential Majority Group in her Parliament. Her experience was living proof that women could be political leaders. She was also an expert in business communications and had been in various roles both in the public and private sectors.

During her time at the IPU, she had served as a member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians. As part of that work, she had helped put together a set of guidelines to combat sexual harassment and violence against women in parliament and had presented them in a number of African parliaments, including the Central African Republic and Morocco.

It was absolutely paramount to fight for greater participation of women in parliament. Her country, Senegal, had already achieved parity showing that it was indeed possible. As President, she would harness the experience she had gained nationally, internationally and within the IPU to increase female representation in parliaments worldwide as well as in IPU delegations. She had recently served as the Vice-Chair of the Gender Partnership Group and was therefore well-informed about the composition of delegations.

She emphasized the importance of women's networks. It was necessary to ensure that women's caucuses were established in every parliament, as well as to set up an international network of women's caucuses. Senegal had recently become a member of the executive committee of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie. Such networks made it possible to build the capacities of women. Women must also be included in the mediation of conflict.

One of her goals was to build bridges between nations from within the IPU and promote parliamentary diplomacy for dialogue, peace and democracy. Overall, she wished to improve the general state of democracy. The world was facing many conflicts and crises and parliamentarians must listen to the concerns of the population.

Other important priorities included the need to ensure that IPU resolutions were implemented in all parliaments and that the Statutes and Rules were revised in a way that gave more influence to the geopolitical groups at the Executive Committee. It was also important to strengthen the work of the regional bureaux.

She believed that she was well-suited to the role of IPU President and had the experience necessary having already worked on many IPU's policies and strategies. She was also highly available and able to devote herself entirely to the job. Indeed, she was not a Speaker of Parliament and had recently turned down two posts within her Parliament, namely Deputy Speaker and Chair of the parliamentary committee on health, to free up time for the IPU presidency.

A delegate from Nigeria, addressing Ms. Ackson, asked what she would bring on board that would change the IPU for the better.

Ms. T. Ackson (Speaker of the National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania), said that one of her objectives was to amend the IPU Statutes and Rules to include a provision obliging parliaments to recount, either to the Assembly or the Governing Council, how they were implementing IPU resolutions and decisions. It was important to do so since some countries were not moving forward with implementation.

She also hoped to create a platform where parliamentarians could share experiences on gender equality and women's rights. Countries could then learn from each other and thus make progress. One such success story was that of Sierra Leone which had increased the representation of women in parliament from 20% to 30% after following the example of the United Republic of Tanzania. The platform could also be an opportunity to share experiences around inclusion of other underrepresented groups, such as people with disabilities.

A delegate from Uganda asked Ms. Mergane Kanouté to clarify what she had done for women as former Vice-President of the IPU Executive Committee, particularly any work done on women's caucuses.

Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal) said that, as a former member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, she had worked together with other members to increase the participation of women in the IPU. There were many delegations that had previously comprised zero women but had now improved their numbers thanks to her efforts.

In addition, the guidelines to combat sexual harassment and violence against women in parliament were a very important milestone helping to raise awareness of the problem. She herself had presented the guidelines on behalf of the IPU and the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians in a number of countries.

The abovementioned achievements were not the work of one individual but a result of teamwork. It was therefore important to pay tribute to the entire team.

A delegate from Zambia asked Ms. Ackson how she would balance her work as Speaker of the National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania with her role as President of the IPU should she be successful.

Ms. T. Ackson (Speaker of the National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania) said that she had four assistants, a Deputy Speaker and three presiding officers to support her in presiding over the house. All candidates for the post of IPU President were required to be members of parliament. As such, there was an understanding that the President would have other responsibilities. It was simply a case of committing to the job. She wished to reassure delegates that the IPU would be well-served by electing her as President.

Elections to the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

The Chair said that the Forum was requested to elect one representative from the Arab Group to replace Ms. H. Ramzy Fayez (Bahrain), two representatives from the Eurasia Group to replace Ms. E. Vtorygina (Russian Federation) and Ms. Z. Greceanii (Republic of Moldova), and one representative from the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) to replace Ms. W.P. Andrade Muñoz (Ecuador).

Ms. Z. Hilal (Secretary of the Forum) said that the Eurasia Group had submitted the following nominations: Ms. T. Vardanyan (Armenia) and Ms. S. Khasayeva (Azerbaijan). The Arab Group had submitted the following nomination: Ms. M. Saleh (Syrian Arab Republic). GRULAC had submitted the following nomination: Ms. L. Carneiro (Brazil).

The nominations were approved by acclamation.

Report on the discussion on a draft resolution on the agenda of the 147th Assembly

Ms. V. Riotton (France), Rapporteur, summarizing the discussion on the draft resolution entitled *Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm*, said that 18 delegations had taken the floor, including 17 women and 1 man.

Delegates had agreed on the important role of parliaments in combatting orphanage trafficking. It was vital to have robust laws in place and to monitor their effectiveness. The relevant authorities, such as the police and the judiciary, should have the necessary competencies and resources to fight the crime. Global cooperation was needed since trafficking was a cross-border phenomenon. Tourism agencies and online platforms should play their part and must be held accountable. The immigration authorities should also be kept informed. All actions must respect the rights of the child and be gender-sensitive. It was essential to collect gender-segregated data which must be available internationally.

Delegates also highlighted the need to address the root causes of orphanage trafficking, such as poverty, lack of schooling and unwanted pregnancies. It was important to look at those causes through a gendered lens given that women and girls were particularly affected.

Orphanages and foster care placements were often unregulated. As such, to ensure their well-being, children should be taken away from their families only as a last resort.

Some children, particularly girls living with disabilities and illegal immigrants, were particularly at risk of being trafficked. The interests and rights of all children must always be protected. Victims should be given financial and legal assistance and families should be given support. Offering educational grants and conducting awareness raising activities were other effective ways of combatting the scourge.

The abovementioned proposals would be translated into a set of amendments that would be submitted to the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights.

The report was adopted.

Venue and date of the 37th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians

Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, said that the next session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians would be held at the 148th IPU Assembly in Geneva in March 2024.

The sitting rose at 17:35.

Forum of Young Parliamentarians

SITTING OF TUESDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2023

(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 14:00 with Ms. E. T. Muteka (Namibia), member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, in the Chair.

Adoption of the Agenda (FYP/147/A.1-rev)

The agenda was adopted.

Opening remarks

Mr. D. Pacheco (IPU President) said that he welcomed the energy of young parliamentarians. Peace, justice and the function of government itself was particularly relevant to young parliamentarians and was the foundation of everything else. Although education, sustainable development and efforts to combat climate change were important, none of those issues could be discussed without peace. Peace required a culture of tolerance and respect; it was natural not to agree all of the time, but discussion of ideas required respect. A culture of respect, within and between nations, would see many conflicts disappear. That culture was particularly important to young people, because it was their future and they should not allow others to determine it. It was also important that other parliamentarians should accept the participation and ideas of young people. The role of the IPU in that regard was to send a message on the importance of young people's representation in parliaments. In Africa, where the average age was 19 years, only 2.2% of parliamentarians were under 30 years of age. If young people did not feel represented within the system, they could be tempted by extremist ideas and try to change things from outside the democratic system. More young people needed to participate in politics and in parliaments. He was proud to stand before a strong generation of young parliamentarians with a mission to serve societies and people that they represented. He urged them not to give up until they achieved the world that all were waiting for.

The Chair thanked the IPU President for his support for young parliamentarians during his mandate, which was coming to an end at the present Assembly. The Forum wished him well in his future endeavours.

Mr. M. Bouchouit (Algeria) said that, at the inaugural ceremony of the Assembly, the IPU President had delivered a speech that was biased towards the Zionist entity and its attacks on the Gaza Strip. That was a case of double standards. The IPU President had forgotten his words on humanity from previous Assemblies and should be ashamed.

Mr. D. Pacheco (President of the IPU) said that he would respond directly to those comments as that was the way he had always conducted politics. He had been elected to the Portuguese Parliament in 1991, when he was 25 years of age, so had long experience in his Parliament and had won a lot of elections in his country. Sometimes there was agreement, sometimes disagreement, sometimes an election was won, and sometimes it was lost. He respected the opinion of the Algerian delegate, but it was completely different from his. It was impossible to identify a peaceful solution in the Middle East without two States.

Mr. M. Chungong (Secretary General of the IPU) paid tribute to the good work of young parliamentarians and encouraged them to continue to ensure that the deliberations of the IPU were informed by the youth perspective. The IPU remained committed to empowering young people within and outside the IPU and was the custodian of the SDG indicator on the age of members of parliament. For that reason, the report on youth participation in parliament was all the more important. The underrepresentation of young people in parliaments should be fixed, and the report identified solutions that were grounded in experience and practice in parliaments and other jurisdictions. The Forum could draw from those solutions in its deliberations on how parliaments could become more equal in terms of age. The campaign to lower the age of eligibility was yielding fruit through the *Not Too Young To Run* campaign and the IPU was supporting youth caucuses. The older generation should continue to

mentor the younger generation. The IPU would continue to promote the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign and stood ready to listen to young parliamentarians and ensure that the solutions for youth participation adopted by the IPU were designed and led by young people. He wished the Forum well in its work.

The Chair thanked the IPU Secretary General for reaffirming his support for strengthening youth participation.

Election to the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians

The Chair said that the Forum was required to elect one member to the Board to fill a vacant position.

Ms. Z. Hilal (Secretary of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU) said that the Eurasia Group had nominated Mr. S. Ismayilov (Azerbaijan).

The nomination was approved.

Updates on youth participation

The Chair said that the Ninth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians had been held on 15 to 17 September 2023 in Viet Nam and had been attended by approximately 300 young parliamentarians from 65 countries, 44% of whom were women. The Conference had focused on the role of youth in accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through digital transformation and innovation. An action-oriented Conference Statement had been adopted that included a proposal to close digital gaps, a call to boost innovation and start-up ecosystems, and an appeal for a responsible and inclusive approach to new technologies that would mitigate the potential risks and promote cultural diversity and dialogue.

The Empowerment Series for young members of parliament had continued with two online briefings, one on youth in climate negotiations and one on the human rights of youth, which had brought together 78 participants from 34 countries to share experience and recommended actions. The *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign had also continued with a celebration of its second anniversary in May 2023. As of September 2023, 1460 changemakers, 60 of them Speakers of parliament, had pledged to support youth participation in parliament. A stand had been set up at the 147th IPU Assembly to encourage more members of parliament and Speakers of parliament to pledge support for the campaign. The IPU had also facilitated the participation of young members of parliament in international activities, including the UN Economic and Social Council Youth Forum and the World Bank Group Global Young MP Initiative. The President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians had undertaken missions to promote the Forum and youth participation in the United States of America, Latin America and South-East Asia. The latest IPU report on youth participation in parliaments had been completed but made for sobering reading.

Ms. Z. Hilal (Secretary of the Forum), outlining the findings of the report on youth participation in national parliaments and accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that she was pleased to launch the 2023 edition of the report in Angola, at the heart of Africa, which had a significant youth population. The data set in the report was the largest ever; data had been collected from 202 chambers of parliament. The main trends within the report indicated that young people remained vastly underrepresented in parliaments; although people under 30 years of age accounted for approximately half the global population, only 2.8% of MPs were under 30 years of age, and 70% of countries continued to prevent young people who were old enough to vote from running for office. The IPU was a strong partner in the *Not Too Young to Run* campaign, which she invited all delegates to join. It had been reported that 65% of chambers of parliament had a committee to address youth issues; she encouraged delegates to advocate for such a committee if there was not already one in their chamber. Only 18% of parliaments had a youth caucus. Three parliaments had established youth caucuses since the publication of the previous report and several had introduced quotas for young parliamentarians.

Aside from the legal barriers to young peoples' political participation, there were also financial barriers in the form of the costs of running a campaign, particularly when electoral campaign spending was not capped in any way, and lack of access to funding. Life cycle challenges, such as studying or starting a family, were also a factor, as was mistrust in political institutions. Young people were also hindered by their lack of established networks or access to such networks, although social media potentially offered an alternative way of networking. The report contained data on the age trends in parliaments, and a ranking of the top 10 countries by number of young parliamentarians.

The research undertaken had revealed that, globally, gender inequality was lower among young parliamentarians than among older parliamentarians. That could offer some hope for the future, but additional measures would be needed to make faster progress. Quotas for women and for young parliamentarians were needed to seriously tackle gender inequality and youth participation and empowerment. No country had yet met the IPU 2018 targets for the percentage of parliamentarians under 30 years of age, although some countries had achieved the target for the percentage of parliamentarians under 40 years of age and more countries had reached the target for parliamentarians under 45 years of age. Progress was also slow on gender parity. Greater efforts were also needed on youth leadership in parliaments. Across the globe, there was no Speaker of parliament who was under 30 years of age and only 15 Speakers of parliament who were under 40 years of age.

The *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign had identified key actions to address the underrepresentation of young people in parliament and the IPU stood ready to support work on those actions, including through sharing expertise on strategies taken in other countries and providing the training required to support and encourage young parliamentarians. She called on all delegates to promote the campaign among their parliamentary colleagues, including ministers, prime ministers and Speakers of parliament, to help make the change.

The Chair said that she encouraged each delegate to visit the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign stand and sign up their whole delegations to the campaign. She invited young parliamentarians to share their comments on youth participation.

Mr. N. Alalou (Syrian Arab Republic) said that Syrian youth were suffering after years of terrorism and war led by criminal gangs from around the world who had destroyed infrastructure and human resources. The economic sanctions against his country must be lifted and the illegitimate occupation removed. What was happening in Palestine should be considered a war crime due to the targeting of innocent civilians. It should be recalled that Israel was an occupying State and that Palestinians had the right to struggle for freedom and to have a State. He called on delegates to think of the Palestinian people and their need for a dignified life.

Mr. O. Sanchenko (Ukraine) said that he was the leader of the youth wing of the Servant of the People Party: the party of Ukrainian President Zelensky. His country was currently at war and young people were engaged in the fight, which would be sustained until victory prevailed. The Ukrainian parliament was considering the role of young people in Ukraine once it had won the war. In 2021, a youth law had been adopted that led to the establishment of over 400 youth councils across different levels of government, youth infrastructure such as youth centres, and a youth fund to support young people's initiatives. He stood ready to share his experience of implementing youth policy with others.

Mr. S. Patra (India) said that the population of India was one of the youngest in the world. Government institutions and organizations and national youth and education policies were aimed at educating young people, providing them with training and employment opportunities and tapping into their creative energies. An apprenticeship programme had benefited 4.7 million young people and the number of start-ups in the country had grown to more than 90,000 in 2023, with a significant number working in developing technology industries.

Youth parliament competitions and a youth parliament festival promoted parliamentary democracy. The youth wings of political parties had led to the election of four members of the Lok Sabha (House of the People) who were in the age group of 21-30, while 50 members were in the age group of 31-40. The Parliamentary Research and Training Institute for Democracies organized educational visits to parliament. In 2023, the commemoration of 75 years of independence in India had focused on the contribution of young people to a vibrant democracy, while the Y20 – a platform for young people to engage in global debates linked to the G20 – had held discussions across the country and had drafted an action agenda.

Mr. S. Pariyar (Nepal) said that, under its new Constitution, Nepal had become a republican, federal country. There were eight parliamentarians who were under 30 years of age and 31 parliamentarians who were under 45 years of age. The majority of parliamentarians from his political party were under 50 years of age, a fact that was changing the narrative on youth participation. His party believed in youth, democracy and the parliamentary system, and that parliaments should be vibrant and sovereign, in order to ensure peace, justice and democracy.

Ms. T. Jintawet (Thailand) said that, following recent elections, a record 42% of members of the lower house of parliament in Thailand were under 45 years of age, and nine young members of parliament chaired standing committees. Political parties had also been recruiting more young people and it was hoped that those changes would ensure that young peoples' voices would be heard and the challenges that they faced would be addressed.

Mr. M. Green (Canada) called on young people to reflect on the fact that war was a situation in which young people died and old people talked. Although much was said about youth participation in parliament, the plain truth was that young people did not have higher rates of participation in electoral politics because their elders refused to make space for them. Those elders made decisions – on climate change, war and migration – that affected young people's lives and the outcomes of which they would not live to see. He called for the elders within the IPU to consider that every year they took a seat in the legislature was a year that a young person could not sit in that same seat. He urged the young parliamentarians in the room to also consider placing a limit on their own public service, if they should reach several decades in parliament. He further called on them to deeply consider who they lifted up through their political participation, in order to avoid the mistakes of their elders. It was time for young people to truly have the opportunity to lead.

Mr. O.A. Alao (Nigeria) said that his presence in the room, accompanied by two young parliamentarian colleagues, indicated the positive state of youth participation in Nigeria. A parliamentary committee on young people took care of youth issues in parliament and across the country at the state and local levels. It was not enough, however, to talk about youth involvement. Like the meetings of the United Nations, the Forum should create news when it met. The elders did not know the outcomes of their decisions, and they lacked the online access to information enjoyed by young people. Any time that the Forum met it should issue a resolution or document to let the elders know that they had plans to influence wars and countries, and to change perspectives.

Mr. M. Ramírez (Chile) said that, following a period of dictatorship, in 1990 her country had only seven women members of parliament but changes since that time had increased women's participation in politics and, as of 2022, there were 54 women members of parliament. During the most recent constitutional process, full gender parity in political participation had been rejected, however. While young people were represented in the Senate, the Chamber of Deputies had a minimum age of 35 years. A move in the right direction, however, had been a policy to renew the Chamber of Deputies through the retirement of parliamentarians who had been in the chamber for 30 years.

Ms. S. Falaknaz (United Arab Emirates) said that, in her country, a young parliamentarian would act as co-Rapporteur to the 28th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28), while another young parliamentarian had responsibility for the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization that would take place in February 2024 on the sidelines of the 13th World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference. The age of eligibility remained an issue for young people in her country, however a children's parliament existed that operated in the same way as the official parliament. COP28 would be attended by 100 youth delegates from the least developed countries and small island States, which was unprecedented and demonstrated the desire and ability of young people to participate in decision-making.

Ms. O. Sanogo (Mali) said that she was a member of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians and was speaking on behalf of a colleague who was unable to be present at the meeting. Only 30% of parliamentarians in her country were under 45 years of age. Greater youth participation would require the empowerment of young people and mentoring of candidates to the National Transition Council. She expressed the hope that the IPU would offer support in that regard. In response to claims that young people lacked experience, she suggested that older politicians could hold on to their seats while sharing their experience with the younger generation.

Ms. R. Hosni (Egypt) said that, aside from legislating, the role of parliament included overseeing the actions of the executive and ensuring that international conventions were respected. The role of young legislators was to launch initiatives that would promote peace and justice, which were invaluable to building strong institutions, and to open up to dialogue with non-governmental and civil society organizations and all groups in society. As representatives, their role should include the promotion of principles of justice through the relevant institutions. The dynamism of young parliamentarians and their knowledge of the community's concerns meant that they could play a crucial role in establishing a culture of peace, human rights and tolerance by organizing events to create safer and more just societies.

Ms. A. Vidot (Seychelles) said that only six of the 35 members of parliament in the Seychelles were under 40 years of age, and only two of them were women. The Parliament had committees to tackle issues affecting young people, including a committee on communicable disease, HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health and rights, and a women's caucus. Outreach programmes were aimed at inspiring young people to engage in politics and take on leadership positions, and visits to Parliament were encouraged. Young people in the Seychelles, a small island State, faced particular challenges in politics, such as bullying on social media and a lack of moral and financial support.

Mr. K. Kabre (Burkina Faso) said that the transitional President of Burkina Faso was under 35 years of age and the Chair of the Transitional Legislative Assembly was under 45 years of age. The future belonged to young people, who should be involved in decision-making and development work. The multifaceted crisis in his country particularly affected young people and women and had led to the establishment of a young parliamentarians' network for peace. The network helped strengthen young parliamentarians' ability to promote interreligious dialogue and peace, and to become leaders and take action on the ground in defence of their homeland. Young people were participating voluntarily in action for peace.

Mr. L.A. Báez (Dominican Republic) said that significant progress had been made in his country in terms of young people's participation in politics through parliaments and city councils. A law had been introduced that would ensure that 10% of parliamentarians were young people. To address the need for young people to gain experience, work was under way to provide role models and opportunities for young people to get involved in community activities and understand the work of legislating and decision-making. He suggested that a chat group should be set up for the young parliamentarians to remain in contact after the Forum, and that an event for young parliamentarians could encourage broader cultural exchange.

Mr. M. Pramanik (Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health) said that he wished to draw attention to the Global Forum for Adolescents, coordinated by the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health. The Partnership was part of the *1.8 Billion Young People for Change* campaign aimed at galvanizing multisectoral actors, including parliamentarians, to call for the prioritization of the health, empowerment, education and well-being of young people. Young parliamentarians had a lot to do and say in channelling the future course of the human capital of their countries. The Global Forum for Adolescents, which had taken place on 11 and 12 October 2023, was the culmination of a series of events that reached 7,000 stakeholders across 48 countries. It had also provided an opportunity for States to pledge resources to prioritize the well-being of young people, and 17 States had done so.

A short video was shown promoting the 1.8 Billion Young People for Change campaign in the context of the Global Forum for Adolescents.

The Chair said that it was clear that a lot of work had been undertaken and she encouraged young parliamentarians to continue that work to make youth participation a reality.

Contribution to the work of the 147th Assembly

The Chair invited the Forum to consider the theme of the General Debate, *Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)*.

Ms. D. Simeonova (Bulgaria) said that young people played a crucial role in generating new ideas, achieving peaceful societies and resilient institutions, and ensuring the implementation of policies to encourage youth participation in politics. Her political party was composed mostly of young people, had worked to introduce legislation on women's rights and had appointed the youngest ever Speaker of the National Assembly, under whose watch actions had been taken to boost the resilience of institutions, such as restoring the rule of law. Young parliamentarians were more resolute in the initiation of political reform and the fight against corruption, and were better placed to achieve peace, justice and strong institutions because they were less likely to have been involved in previous illegitimate practices. Young people particularly valued freedom of speech and of movement. Achieving peace was not only a matter of saving innocent lives but also of democratic values. National parliaments were the most important political institutions in ensuring just societies and should implement policies for education on democracy and progressive values.

Ms. F.A. Masiko (South Africa) said that, despite SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, violent conflicts around the world were derailing the global path to peace, and one in four young persons lived in a setting affected by armed conflict or organized violence. UN Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security had requested a progress study on the topic. The recommendations to achieve SDG 16 based on that study included addressing political exclusion and building trust, and establishing youth parliaments. In South Africa there were several platforms to address youth issues, including two parliamentary committees with responsibility for issues that affected young people, and a youth parliament. In addition, the Constitution required Parliament to involve the public in its activities and processes, and young people were frequently invited to participate in parliamentary initiatives.

Mr. S. Pariyar (Nepal) said that justice was needed for peace, and the maintenance of peace and justice required strong institutions. Those institutions must be democratic and protected by the Constitution. Following 10 years of internal conflict, Nepal was undergoing a process of transitional justice. Young parliamentarians believed in peace and the need to provide justice in keeping with history and culture, including for Indigenous Peoples. Efforts were needed to improve the representation of people from all walks of life in the democratic process, and to ensure the protection of minority culture. Young parliamentarians should consider how to build a just society with the political participation of all genders, sexualities and other hues of life.

Mr. Hoang Minh Hieu (Viet Nam) said that his Government had hosted the Ninth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in September 2023, and thanked all those who had attended. The focus of the Ninth Global Conference had been digital transformation and innovation, a theme that should also be raised in relation to parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions. Discussions at the Ninth Global Conference had addressed potential threats to global peace and security, such as the persistent digital divide, online harassment and violence, and the misuse of artificial intelligence. He called for the establishment of parliamentary committees on the future that, with youth participation, would assist with forecasting and responding to long-term change and hidden threats. The legal framework for data protection and cybersecurity should be enhanced, and open source and transparent algorithms should be promoted. Intercultural dialogue and respect for diversity and indigenous knowledge would help drive sustainable development, prosperity and peaceful coexistence.

Ms. M. Vasilevich (Belarus) said that lack of trust could call into question the effectiveness of international dialogue, while the absence of a systematic approach to resolve key issues had a negative impact on plans for sustainable development and to improve people's quality of life. Parliaments had great potential to address challenges and promote mutual support and peaceful coexistence among nations in order to overcome crises. Belarusian parliamentarians stood ready to support any initiative that would contribute to sustainable development. Wisdom and solidarity were needed to overcome the challenges of the 21st century.

Mr. A.S. Cissé (Guinea) said that Africa was affected by instability due to coups and political problems, yet lacked the representation of young people in institutions needed to fix problems. He called for the support of the IPU for the young people of Africa, particularly those in States in transition as they were re-establishing institutions and giving greater responsibility to young people. In Guinea, more than 30% of members of the legislative body were women, and more than 25% of parliamentarians were under 40 years of age. A forum for young members of political parties had been established, which gathered together representatives from 65 political parties to defend young people's interests. Support would be appreciated in particular because the implementation of quotas had been noted as a key way to achieve results.

Ms. A.A. Rodríguez Montero (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that her country was going through a crisis in justice. Young people and women were calling for an independent justice system. Many women who had reported crimes had been silenced by the system; the Government had been in power for more than 15 years and the independence of institutions had degraded and there was no one to defend the people, even children. Young people lacked political representation and the finances to reach the masses, and therefore made use of social media to exert influence and find information, yet social media was also a source of harassment and violence. She expressed the hope that solutions could be found to those problems.

Ms. R.M. Orisel (Cuba) said that, in terms of establishing dialogue with young people and vulnerable groups, parliaments were well-placed to work at the national and international levels, and Cuba stood ready to cooperate on dialogue for peace and justice. Education played a significant role in the participation of young people and ensuring that public policy was implemented. Despite the challenges it faced, her country provided universal access to education, free of charge. Cuba stood ready to cooperate with all parliamentarians and to participate in the work of the IPU.

Mr. S.S.H.J. Amaral (Timor-Leste) said that, in his country, a strategic plan had prioritized the participation of young people in parliament, including through the establishment of an encouraging environment and the creation of a group of young parliamentarians under 45 years of age. Transparent discussion was held on priority topics. A forum for dialogue on youth participation had been established with the involvement of young parliamentarians from each area, and had discussed the importance of legislation. An atmosphere of learning had been established to better understand young peoples' concerns.

Mr. M. Almuhi (United Arab Emirates) said that the challenges facing the world were escalating in a context of weak security, weak institutions and weak access to justice. Action was needed from governments and civil society organizations to develop permanent and sustainable solutions to end violence, promote justice, and combat corruption, violations of human rights and misinformation and disinformation. People needed the opportunity to raise their voices without discrimination. Conflicts should be resolved in a just and fair manner. His country had achieved success on SDG 16: 92% of people felt safe walking alone at night and 50% of parliamentarians were women. A high percentage of young people held positions in government and in various institutions.

Mr. W. Soto Palacios (Peru) said that, at the Ninth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, delegates had committed to ensuring the introduction of initiatives on digital transformation and innovation in their parliaments. Young parliamentarians were particularly close to the digital world and the world of innovation. Similarly, at the 147th Assembly, young parliamentarians had a key role to play, and should take on the shared work of boosting innovation in parliaments.

The Chair thanked delegates for their sharing their views and experiences, and expressed the hope that they would participate in the special segment of the General Debate reserved for young parliamentarians.

She invited the Forum to consider the draft resolution of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights under consideration at the present Assembly: *Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliamentarians in reducing harm*. Before opening the floor, she invited Ms. Rudenko (Ukraine), the Rapporteur for the draft resolution, to present her overview report on the topic.

Ms. O. Rudenko (Ukraine), Rapporteur for the youth overview report of the draft resolution on orphanage trafficking, said that, in her country, at least 20,000 children, many of them orphans, had been forcibly deported by the Russian Federation to its territory. In her report, she had taken a comprehensive approach to tackling all elements of the problem using the acronym "CARE". "C" stood for controlling the work of orphanages to enforce standards of care and prevent the commercialization of their work, "A" stood for allocating proper support to disadvantaged families as poverty was a root cause of the entry of children into orphanages, "R" stood for raising awareness among donors and volunteers of verified initiatives, and "E" stood for elaborating a clear national and international legal framework that obliged States to address orphanage trafficking. All key aspects of the overview report had been reflected in the draft resolution. The comprehensive approach set out would reduce harm to children caused by orphanage trafficking.

Mr. M. Rezakhah (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Parliament of his country had approved a number of acts that would help prevent trafficking in children and in persons, including amendments and laws on the protection of unsupervised and improperly supervised children and adolescents, amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Law on the Protection of Children and Adolescents. His country had acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography in 2007. Further steps included the establishment of social emergency hotlines, a special judiciary for children and adolescents, and a social support plan for working and street children.

Individual laws could not solve the problem of child trafficking, however, since the resolution of this matter would require a foundation of peace and security, and an end to the destruction of families: two things that certain powers did not consider in their interests. Invasions and occupations should be prevented, such as the war crimes in Palestine that had led to the murder of civilians and destruction of the homes of countless children. He asked whether the UN and its parallel organizations had the capacity to facilitate preventive measures in that regard, or whether there was no choice other than to establish separate organizations that would have what it took to save lives.

The Chair thanked the Rapporteur and the delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran for their contributions.

Hearing with candidates for IPU President

The Chair invited the candidates for IPU President to present themselves. The candidates would then be asked questions by the Forum.

Ms. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania) said that she was the Speaker of the National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania and was 47 years of age. At 38 years of age she had become Deputy Attorney General, a member of parliament and the Deputy Speaker of Parliament. Her Parliament was making progress on youth participation – it had quotas for young parliamentarians, approximately 30% of members of parliament were under 45 years of age and it had joined the *I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament!* campaign. She wished to bring that experience to the IPU. If elected, she would ensure that the IPU engaged with young people in line with the IPU 2022-2026 Strategy, in particular Strategic Objective 2 on Promoting inclusive and representative parliaments. The IPU would also undergo reform. National parliaments had been requested to submit their views on changes to the Statutes and Rules of the IPU; that was an opportunity for members of the Forum. As a parliamentarian who had aged out of the Forum only two years previously, she was well-placed to work with young parliamentarians and make changes in the Statutes to see change trickle down to national parliaments. She wanted to see youth representation in national parliaments similar to that in her country, where 50% of the cabinet were young parliamentarians and the Secretary General of the majority political party was a young woman. The United Republic of Tanzania offered an example. She called on young parliamentarians to give her their votes as she was young and they could count on her; she would do what was needed to address the youth challenges in their respective parliaments.

Ms. C. Gotani Hara (Malawi) said that she was the first female Speaker of the National Assembly of Malawi. She had started in politics at 30 years of age and had become a cabinet minister at 35 years of age. It seemed that the voices of young parliamentarians were not being heard at the IPU. Given that only 2.8% of parliamentarians globally were young people, as incoming IPU President she would advocate for the election of more young members of parliament, including through lobbying for changes in the law. The IPU also needed to provide capacity-building for young parliamentarians to make them the best members of parliament available, and thereby interest others in standing for election. As incoming IPU President she would make structural changes: the rules for the Executive Committee should be changed to include a youth representative from each geopolitical group. When travelling to engage with international organizations as IPU President, she would be accompanied by a young parliamentarian, in an effort to give young people a platform. She would introduce regional youth conferences and a youth academy, similar to that run by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association – of which she was Africa Regional Chairperson. The IPU was a powerful tool and young people were needed on board. She called for delegates to give her their vote.

Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal) said that she wished to congratulate the Chair of the Forum for her work, which was also testament to the significant work concerning young parliamentarians achieved by the outgoing IPU President. She had held a number of leadership positions in politics, had significant experience of serving on the committees of the IPU and wished to place her experience at the disposition of young parliamentarians. Young people would be a grand priority in her vision for the IPU. She would work with young parliamentarians to improve their representation and level of responsibility in national parliaments and that work would be led by young people. Young parliamentarians would be provided with capacity-building opportunities and she would let young people lead in communicating with other young people and with elders. Young people suffered the brunt of the consequences of conflict and crisis, yet were an indispensable force in building a nation. She sought the support of young parliamentarians and of the Forum in order to translate into action her vision of the IPU, a revolutionary, dynamic and innovative vision in which young people would play an important role.

The Chair thanked the candidates for their presentations. The candidates would first be asked two questions by members of the Board of the Forum.

Ms. S. Falaknaz (United Arab Emirates) said that she wished to learn the candidates' vision of the role of the IPU in advancing youth participation within the Organization and in national parliaments.

Ms. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania) said that she would work tirelessly to increase youth participation. In the United Republic of Tanzania there was a quota of 10 young members of parliament, although in fact there were currently more than 10. A quota of 30% was in place for women members of parliament and the same measure could be implemented for young people. Speaking as a lawyer, she noted that laws and constitutions would need to be changed to increase the number of young parliamentarians. She would use her expertise in that area and also invite parliamentarians to learn from each other. Most parliamentarians were members of political parties, and she would therefore work with political parties to introduce youth quotas that would boost youth visibility and provide an opportunity to see young peoples' potential as leaders. Her story was an example of that approach.

Ms. C. Gotani Hara (Malawi) said that enabling legislation was needed, as had been introduced for women. Some countries had achieved parliaments that comprised 50% women; the same should be achievable for young parliamentarians using the same approaches. Parliaments needed deliberate policies to empower young parliamentarians in order to encourage others. Youth caucuses should be introduced. It was also necessary to consider the challenges faced by young men.

Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal) said that, since communication was her area of expertise, she would work on a communication strategy to help young people convince their national parliaments to bring in more young parliamentarians. She had the time and energy required because she was not a Speaker of parliament and she had declined high-level posts of responsibility in her country, in order to dedicate her energies to the IPU. In terms of experience, Senegal had quotas and laws for gender parity and she could repeat that process for the representation of young people in national parliaments. She would work with young parliamentarians in their national parliaments to introduce a young parliamentarians' group, like that of the Senegalese Parliament.

Mr. W. Soto Palacios (Peru) said that, in 2021, the IPU had launched a call for the participation of young women, and the IPU was a leader in the Generation Equality Forum. He asked what strategies the candidates would use to encourage IPU Members to promote the political participation of young women.

Ms. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania) said that the Generation Equality Forum was important to all countries. She had started work on women's representation prior to standing for election to the presidency of the IPU by sharing information on strategies with the Speaker of parliament for Sierra Leone, when they had met in Nusa Dua. Following that discussion, Sierra Leone had introduced changes in the law, and its Parliament currently comprised more than 30% women. That was one strategy to make sure that women's voices were heard at the decision-making table and it could be applied to young people. Inclusion under Strategic Objective 2 of the IPU 2022-2026 Strategy encompassed all groups in society, including women, young people, people with disabilities and all other groups that were disadvantaged or underrepresented in parliament.

Ms. C. Gotani Hara (Malawi) said that she understood that the question pertained mostly to young women. It was important to make sure that young women felt safe in politics and that the environment was conducive to their participation, which meant that the bullying that was sometimes present in parliaments and political circles would need to be addressed. In her country, most women were unable to participate in politics because they were financially handicapped, so targeted economic empowerment programmes were needed. In the long term it would be crucial to ensure that girls received an education, in order to become young women who could participate in politics, and to have as many role models in politics for young girls as possible.

Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal) said that she wished to reassure the young parliamentarians of the IPU that she would work for the advancement of young people. The Senegalese delegation had placed importance on young people by including the Presidents of the young parliamentarians' and young women parliamentarians' groups of the National Assembly.

Together, they could overcome all the challenges that young people faced in their national parliaments. She had experience that included working with the IPU to develop a guide on sexual harassment.

The Chair invited two members of the Forum to put a question to the candidates.

Mr. D. Keorapetse (Botswana) said that he wished to know what deficiency the candidates detected in either the constitutive document of the IPU or any statutory instrument, in terms of furthering the interests of young people and achieving adequate representation of young people and women in the key decision-making structures of the IPU.

Ms. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania) said that, since the IPU was a body comprised of different national parliaments, change was needed in how young people were represented in parliaments. If she became President of the IPU, she would use her influence as a political figure to make sure that national parliaments said yes to youth. More young people in national parliaments would lead to more young parliamentarians at the IPU, which would trickle down to decision-making structures like the IPU Executive Committee and Governing Council.

Ms. C. Gotani Hara (Malawi) said that the IPU had a clear strategy in place for young people, the deficiency was that there were not enough young parliamentarians. The inclusion of a young parliamentarian from each region on the Executive Committee would involve young people in serious decision-making. Serious dialogue was needed to engage with heads of State and governments on the issue of young parliamentarians.

Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal) said that improvements had been made in terms of the numbers of young people in national parliaments – she had seen that work in action as a member of the IPU Executive Committee – but further advances were needed. She would work with national parliaments to find mechanisms for better youth representation. She had the availability, the commitment, the energy and the time to engage in parliamentary diplomacy on behalf of young people.

Mr. A. Caroni (Switzerland) said that, since the role of IPU President would take up an enormous amount of time, he asked Ms. Gotani Hara and Ms. Ackson whether they planned to remain Speaker of their respective national parliaments if elected as IPU President, and if so, how they would find enough time for the IPU.

Ms. T. Ackson (United Republic of Tanzania) said that, as Speaker of the National Assembly of Tanzania she had a Deputy Speaker and three presiding officers. Her presence as Speaker was only required during the reading of and voting on the national budget. Other sessions could be chaired by any of the four other officers. There was a history of electing Speakers of parliament to the presidency of the IPU, including one past President who had been the Speaker of parliament in Senegal.

Ms. C. Gotani Hara (Malawi) said that, if she were elected IPU President, she would continue to act as Speaker of the National Assembly of Malawi. The National Assembly only met for 17 weeks of the year, which meant that she would have time. There were two capable Deputy Speakers who could take on the role in her absence and, as in Tanzania, the Speaker was only required on certain occasions –for the State of the Nation Address and the presentation of the budget.

The Chair thanked the candidates for their time and their responses to the Forum's questions. She wished them all the best in the elections for IPU President.

Preparations for the 148th Assembly (March 2024)

The Chair, based on the proposal made by the Board of the Forum, proposed the nomination of Mr. W. Soto Palacios to be Rapporteur for the youth overview report on the resolution to be discussed by the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, and the nomination of Ms. S. Falaknaz to be Rapporteur for the youth overview report on the resolution to be discussed by the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development at the upcoming IPU Assembly. The nominations were confirmed by the Forum.

The sitting rose at 17:15.

Second Global Parliamentary Summit on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism

The global response to the Call of the Sahel

WEDNESDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2023

(Afternoon)

The event was called to order at 14:00 by Mr. M. Omar, Senior Adviser to the IPU Secretary General, as the Moderator.

The Moderator said that, following a visit to Niger in 2019, the then Chair of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG) had noted that discussions on countering terrorism and violent extremism tended to prioritize the Middle East and Europe over Africa. Noting that similar priorities were being set for current conflicts across the world, notwithstanding the significant resources that international organizations invested in Africa more widely, the present Summit would therefore focus on the Sahel.

Mr. D. Pacheco (President of the IPU) said that terrorists were on the rise across the world, attacking defenceless civilians, spreading economic instability and even controlling certain territories. It was important to identify the causes of terrorism and to understand why it was so difficult to overcome it. Terrorism was often related to young people's vulnerability to radicalization due to a lack of hope in their prospects for education, employment, health care and family life, and a consequent sense of having nothing to lose.

Solutions should be rooted in raising public awareness of the value of tolerance, respect and peaceful cross-community coexistence, alongside the dangers of hate speech and intolerance of others' ideas and practices. Economic stability and growth were equally important, as they gave access to drivers of hope for the future, such as education and employment.

To implement those solutions actively, governments across the Sahel should be supported to attract investment, develop good governance, tend to their environment, grow the economy and so provide their citizens with opportunities. Providing that support meant engaging with governments in ways that avoided imposition or interference, recognized each State's independence and defined cooperative strategic partnerships that produced the wherewithal to eliminate the causes of terrorism.

Equally importantly, all relevant actors must respect international law at all times and everywhere. Any breaches should be condemned.

Mr. M. Chungong (Secretary General of the IPU) agreed that, while discussions were valuable, implementable recommendations must follow, particularly as so many in the Sahel were being deprived of basic amenities, causing them to be displaced. HLAG's work was a noble cause that maintained focus on the Sahel when other current crises might divert attention from the region. The parliamentary support that the Group offered could help lift millions out of poverty and insecurity. The success of counter-terrorism in the Sahel depended on development work to address people's needs and aspirations, and so avoid young people joining armed groups through a lack of opportunities. Each HLAG member should make serious commitments towards combating terrorism and demonstrably affecting Sahelians' lives. The IPU would always facilitate such work.

Mr. M.B.M. Al-Ahbab (Qatar), President of the IPU Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, said that more than 23 million people across the Sahel were living in poverty, while natural disasters were displacing many. Climate change was leading to drought, desertification and scarce resources in West Africa. Crime, violence and extremism were on the rise due to factors including demographic change, corruption, lack of opportunity, and disease. The Summit was an opportunity to turn the discussions of previous meetings into an action plan to meet the Sahel's needs. The role of parliaments was to pass legislation, exercise oversight, conduct parliamentary diplomacy and cooperate with the United Nations on counter-terrorism.

Nevertheless, root causes must be tackled, as terrorists would always manage to circumvent existing counter-terrorism legislation, particularly through technology. Causes of terrorism in the Sahel included limited educational, cultural and security prospects, and climate change. Those factors drove young people towards irregular and unsafe migration, and made them vulnerable to recruitment by extremists or mercenaries that could threaten the region's stability.

Tackling root causes required the collective effort of the international community, particularly cooperation between climate change and counter-terrorism bodies. Young people would engage with society if they were able to deploy their skills and had better job opportunities. Parliaments and other organizations should expand peaceful dialogue and run projects to achieve such aims.

Some African countries were moving away from democracy towards military rule due to the Sahel's lack of political stability and security. That would harm regional economic and social systems, and weaken both governments and military forces. Solutions lay in root-and-branch political reform to found strong institutions and choke off the sources feeding terrorism. Implementing such solutions would involve: cross-party political input; contributions from young people; exchanging experiences and good practices; dialogue and conflict resolution; and agreeing a unified definition of terrorism that did not single out particular religions. Qatar's support for some of the least developed countries had illustrated the potential of such work.

The Shura Council had signed a memorandum with the Doha-based parliamentary engagement office of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT). Qatar's other counter-terrorism work included: passing laws to counter organized crime and terrorism; establishing committees to fight terrorism, money-laundering and human trafficking; forging bilateral relationships that promoted the rule of law and information exchange on terrorism and its funding; establishing a US\$ 20 million fund with the African Union to integrate migrants into their host societies; opening a centre in Copenhagen to promote dialogue and coexistence; running initiatives to expand economic opportunities for young Arabs and educate millions of girls in conflict zones; supporting the repatriation of Africans stranded abroad; and leading the international community's efforts to promote reconciliation in post-conflict countries.

He hoped that the examples shared would help participants to agree on recommendations to tackle terrorism, promote stability, resolve conflict and fight hunger in the Sahel.

Ms. Á. Vadai (Hungary), Acting Chair of HLAG, said that, since the first Summit, the Sahel had endured events such as coups d'état and mercenary action. HLAG's feelings of responsibility had grown as it had learned more. Accordingly, meetings such as the present Summit should be replaced with more parliamentary field visits to understand first-hand what support the Sahel needed.

All United Nations (UN) bodies with relevant expertise should work in partnership with HLAG, the focal point of parliamentary activity on countering terrorism and violent extremism. HLAG should champion transparency, and coordinate activities and funds to aid the Sahel. She committed to helping vulnerable communities and removing all support for corrupt people or groups.

Despite significant investment in the Sahel, it was still no safer for girls to be educated there, and no easier to access clean water or adequate food supplies. All differences among HLAG members should be subordinated to the common agenda of making the Sahel a safer environment. The guiding principles to achieve that agenda included: coordinated work, and transparency to tackle corruption and misuse of funds; a role for HLAG in monitoring actions and outcomes of the Summit; and respect for the subject of the Group's work and Sahelians themselves.

Mr. S. Killelea (CEO, Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)) said that the Institute's main products included: a global peace index; a global terrorism index; and a positive peace index, which measured countries' abilities to sustain peace and their future potential for positive economic and ecological performance.

The Institute's thematic reporting in the Sahel had revealed that the interrelated and systemic nature of the region's challenges must be tackled in the round. In one study, most Sahel countries had appeared at the bottom of the global peace index, with thousands of terrorist attacks having occurred there in recent years. Closer analysis had then highlighted links between such violence and climate variability, environmental degradation and malnourishment. For example, by tracking over 30 violent groups in 15 West African countries, the Institute had drawn links between malnourishment (much higher among Sahelian young men than young women) and recruitment into violent groups.

The detailed mapping of such factors could contribute significantly to finding systemic solutions to the region's challenges. For instance, as research indicated that the Sahel had enough water for its needs, action could be focused on improving water management, thereby facilitating higher agricultural yields, better food provision and gradual economic development.

Mr. Jiang Chenghua (China) said that terrorism should be tackled in three ways. First, strong solidarity, cooperation and multilateralism would help the world develop a shared vision of the future that involved a holistic approach to tackling terrorism's causes and symptoms, and allowed all communities to share in the responsibilities and benefits of that vision. The UN and the Security Council would play a crucial role in building a counter-terrorism coalition and promoting implementation of instruments such as the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

Second, fairness, justice, equity and the rule of law should be upheld, while double standards or the selective application of global norms should be rejected. Countries should develop deradicalization measures that suited national circumstances, adhered to applicable international law, and did not allow for external interference.

Third, security was the foundation of development. Sustainable, balanced and inclusive development was the keystone to tackling the roots of terrorism that in turn, ensured enduring stability. The international community should therefore urgently work to reduce poverty, including by achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

China respected each country's right to choose their own development path, tailored to their national circumstances. Through bilateral assistance and contributions to multilateral initiatives, China would support the Sahel's efforts to solve African problems in African ways. It would also strengthen efforts to share with other parliaments its experiences of counter-terrorism legislation, as well as to deepen international cooperation to contain extremism, and safeguard the security and stability of individual countries and the international community.

Session 1: The Call of the Sahel: The wind of change

Ms. Á. Vadai (Hungary), Acting Chair of HLAG, took the Chair as Moderator of the first session.

The Moderator said that the session's political focus would be on analysing the relationships between coups d'état, governance, corruption and the proliferation of terrorism, and how they threatened Sahelians' well-being.

Mr. S. Killelea (CEO, IEP) said that elements of the Sahel's challenges could be compared to issues in other parts of the world. For example, recent research on organized crime in Mexico postulated that drug cartels would die out quickly if recruitment was stemmed. In the Sahel, recruitment into extremist groups relied on indoctrination, but was essentially driven by poverty and the paucity of people's life chances. Understanding those drivers could help identify what sort of development could resolve the region's problems.

Relevant drivers in the Sahel included significant environmental damage, water and food shortages, and significant population growth. More people would lead to higher economic productivity, but would also result in environmental stress, and food and water shortages, which had to be curbed.

Solutions were also needed to: improve the functioning of government and the rule of law; counter corruption; enhance information flows to counter extremist propaganda; and ensure people felt that development was effective, with resources fairly apportioned. A better understanding of the region's systems and dynamics was required, including how local leaders wielded power. More information was also needed on whether factors underpinning the relative peacefulness of some of the Sahel's neighbours could be adapted to the Sahel.

A delegate from Chad, speaking on behalf of Mr. H. Kabadi, President of the Transitional National Council of Chad and President of the G5 Sahel Interparliamentary Committee (CIP G5 Sahel), said that the region's challenges had been thoroughly discussed at previous meetings and needed no repetition.

Sahelians had endured too much suffering. They were now expecting the present Summit's conclusions to lead to specific and robust recommendations, as well as concrete decisions and outcomes. They would also want to know which partners were supporting them, and how that support would be delivered.

Mr. H. Traoré (Vice-President of the Transitional National Council of Mali) agreed that summits should combine discussions with delivering specific, pragmatic results.

After a decade of operations, the international peacekeeping mission in Mali had not improved the conflict situation. Malians had therefore been obliged to take their fate into their own hands. Since then, the country had been truly engaged in overcoming terrorism. It was particularly concerning that people who financed terrorism were often close at hand; some were even attending the present Summit. Without them, terrorists would be unable to wage war against governments. Specific measures were needed to end such circumstances, under which Sahelians had suffered egregiously.

It was time to establish the financial and material means to eradicate terrorism, and demand that countries which supported and financed terrorists ceased to do so.

A delegate from Burkina Faso, speaking on behalf of Mr. O. Bougouma, President of the Transitional Legislative Assembly of Burkina Faso, said that the future of Burkina Faso was extremely uncertain because of the country's direct experience of terrorism and its consequences. However, that did not mean that the country's people were simply accepting uncertainty. Instead, they were successfully taking initiatives. Even though the country might not have all the means to tackle terrorism, citizens were aware that they had a responsibility to demonstrate nationally and internationally that they were stopping terrorism in its tracks without waiting for any external support.

Such determination was nevertheless insufficient, given the far-reaching and damaging nature of terrorism; the resilient people of Burkina Faso knew that difficult moments lay ahead. However, under the leadership of President Ibrahim Traoré and the President of the Transitional Legislative Assembly, together with the law enforcement authorities, volunteer units and all citizens of Burkina Faso, an end to much of the extremist violence might be in sight, if higher authorities, including the IPU, provided support.

Currently, Burkina Faso was not receiving any serious support to combat terrorism; the country's citizens were simply fighting back with the resources they had. However, similarly to other Sahel countries, Burkina Faso's significant difficulties made it impossible to overcome terrorism alone. Partnership was the only route to positive outcomes. It was therefore hoped that the IPU would take bold decisions in support of the Sahel countries and beyond to tackle the region's threats. The means of success were available. All that remained was to dispense with preliminaries and move to the crux of the matter.

Since the *Call of the Sahel* had begun, much had been said that had undoubtedly touched the hearts of those involved. However, those discussions appeared to have been in vain, as there were no tangible or visible signs of any specific action having been completed. He echoed Ms. Vadai's call to replace high-level meetings with concrete action, and to go into the field to support Sahelians more effectively.

Mr. R. Lopatka (Austria) said that, as a parliamentary initiative, the *Call of the Sahel* had always endeavoured to listen to the views of all Sahel countries to help clarify the type of support needed on the ground, as well as involving UN and civil society experts.

A dispassionate assessment would have to conclude that, since the first Summit, regional problems had intensified, new centres of terrorism had been established and democratic institutions had been weakened. In response, HLAG should strengthen support for those who countered such trends, continue its partnership with the UN, and encourage further support from individual countries within HLAG.

Countering terrorism was not only a question of ensuring security. It was also about providing food, clean water, health care, education and good job prospects, as well as fighting corruption and promoting sustainable economic growth.

Mr. D. Alamos (Chief Parliamentary Engagement Officer, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)) said that the parliamentary engagement office established in Doha in 2021 was designed to strengthen the core functions of parliaments in countering terrorism and violent extremism, with a particular focus on the Sahel.

Across the region, UNOCT had run high-level parliamentary dialogues, coordinated technical assistance and capacity-building, and contributed to legislative assistance projects with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The agreement between UNODC, UNOCT and the IPU was an important element of ongoing work.

UNOCT had established a counter-terrorism coordination mechanism for parliamentary assemblies, whose 17 members from across the world had agreed that Africa and the Sahel were the top priorities.

UNOCT, the African Parliamentary Union and the Shura Council of Qatar had run a high-level parliamentary conference on understanding the terrorist threat in Africa. The conference had decided to establish a counter-terrorism working group for Africa, through which UNOCT was channelling technical assistance to African States.

Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada) said that the Sahel was a troubled region due to chronic food shortages, exacerbated by climate change, ethnic violence, corruption, terrorism and coups.

Despite significant funding and development work, few positive outcomes were discernible. Without a sense of hope, nothing was likely to change. She therefore asked whether the Sahel approach should be rethought, and whether there was any willingness among the factions involved to work towards peace.

Mr. A. Golroo (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the international community must help the Sahel to overcome the worrying spread of terrorism. The globalization of State terrorism by the United States of America and its allies, including Israel, was also a concern.

Some believed that military action was the only way to combat terrorism. Others felt that wider issues, such as culture, also played a part.

Anyone who breached international law should be considered a terrorist. In the Sahel, the United States of America, its allies and mercenary groups were favouring certain powers. The U.S. Pan-Sahel Initiative had declared the Sahel a safe haven from terrorists, but had in fact helped fuel terrorism in the very region it had sought to protect.

International cooperation was essential to deal with the Sahel's urgent terrorism challenges. Climate change-induced drought had intensified poverty and insecurity in the region. Solutions lay in greater investment in human resources, training and State-funded schools, among others.

Mr. A. Yagoubi (Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean), speaking via video link, said that the media often forgot the Sahel, despite the region's concerning security situation, numerous coups and high levels of terrorism-related death.

The work of parliamentary assemblies participating in the first year of the *Call of the Sahel* initiative had been assessed. The IPU, the Arab Parliament and the CIP G5 Sahel had contributed to the positive results achieved. It was now everyone's responsibility to bring to fruition the groundwork completed so far.

Many potential opportunities flowed from the Sahel's significant natural resources and its young people, eager to realize their ambitions. Sadly, foreign powers, and criminal, terrorist and mercenary groups in the region, were intent on promoting their own interests with no regard to those of local communities. Such groups contributed to increasing violence and hatred, sometimes operating from within a State's military structures.

The first task was therefore to understand which terrorist and criminal groups were involved and how they were continuing to grow stronger. Important elements of their success included their involvement in the black economy, their use of new technology, and their ability to distribute the profits of their work among local populations. Such actions allowed them to present themselves as legitimate participants in the governance of various countries, and further endangered the stability and security of the region.

It was important to continue working with UN agencies and participating in relevant meetings, while avoiding any duplication of effort to optimize outcomes and ensure the most efficient use of available funding. Future work should focus on: countries returning to democracy and putting an end to the taking of power through coups; respecting the Charter of the United Nations; fostering security, education, local community engagement, and social and economic development; mitigating and adapting to climate change; and combating corruption.

The event was suspended at 15:45 due to technical difficulties and resumed at 16:00.

Mr. A. Alharbi (Saudi Arabia), member of HLAG, said that it was important to stand in solidarity with Sahelians as they faced violence, extremism and climate change.

In 2015, Saudi Arabia had established the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition comprised of dozens of countries, including 25 from Africa. Saudi Arabia funded military-related work, such as through a 100-million-euro donation at a summit in Paris. The Saudi Fund for Development had financed a wide range of projects in the Sahel worth more than US\$ 1 billion.

When the UN peacekeeping mission ended in December 2023, States and their parliaments that supported the Sahel would need to work together to ensure ongoing support. The UN, the IPU and all organizations should unite their assistance to the region in overcoming its difficulties; Saudi Arabia would continue contributing to those efforts.

Mr. B.N. Tankoano (Executive Secretary, CIP G5 Sahel) said that he had not yet seen any evidence of UNOCT's work on the ground in the Sahel. He asked Mr. Alamos to convey to UN leaders that the Sahel countries had high expectations of UNOCT and wanted its parliamentary engagement resources to be deployed to support the *Call of the Sahel*, especially the next phase focused on mobilizing funds to implement specific projects.

Mr. M. Omar (Senior Adviser to the IPU Secretary General) welcomed the revival of the agreement between the IPU, UNOCT and UNODC. He invited Mr. Tankoano to a coordination meeting with UN representatives the following day, the results of which would then be briefed to HLAG members.

Session 2: Sahel's rising generation: The struggle to be heard

Ms. E.T. Muteka (Namibia), Member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, took the Chair as Moderator of the second session.

The Moderator said that the Sahel's younger generation were talented women and men who faced enormous challenges in areas such as accessing employment, education and health care. They were often unemployed, which increased their vulnerability to attempting irregular migration or joining terrorist groups. Conflict, violence, insecurity and poor educational opportunities were also significantly affecting the survival of girls and adolescents. Only one in two young people were literate in the Sahel (around half the pan-African average), while just one in three Sahelians completed secondary education.

Although women played a central role in food security and societal resilience, their position in the economy had to be improved, as profound gender inequalities persisted, which hindered their empowerment.

Mr. A. Dagamaissa (Programme Manager, International Alert) said that International Alert was an international civil society organization. It supported people affected by conflict to find peaceful solutions and build a peaceful world for their families and communities in which differences were resolved without violence. International Alert had worked in the Sahel since 2013, and with the IPU since 2021, providing regional security advice, guidance and expertise on the ground.

Since the *Call of the Sahel* had begun, International Alert's partnerships had been based on thorough discussions, analysis and reflection regarding the issues at stake, followed by specific proposals for supporting Sahelians affected by violent extremism.

Despite its wealth of natural resources, the region was facing complex and interlinked challenges. A deteriorating security situation, the increasingly serious impact of climate change, economic and political shocks, and the continuing threats of terrorism and violent extremism were all hindering progress.

Although women and young people made up the majority of the population of the Sahel, they remained excluded from decision-making processes. That situation was related to numerous factors, which continued to widen the gap between elected officials and citizens, weaken the institutions of governance, and exacerbate social tensions. Over 230 million Sahelians were younger than 24. Despite their numbers, they were at the bottom of the political, social and economic hierarchies. Both women and young people encountered many barriers when attempting to join the political and economic realm. Current elites, mainly composed of older men, maintained their hold on the levers of power. Symbolic gestures remained more prevalent compared to action ensuring that women and young people were truly represented. Often, women and young people did not have the skills to participate formally in political life and public domain decision-making. Factors underpinning that skills shortage included the economic marginalization of women and young people, a lack of access to education (particularly for girls), patriarchal attitudes, and conservative religious views articulated through the influence of religious leaders on the decision-making and political elite. For young people, the same factors were exacerbated by a lack of age-related quotas in representative bodies, age restrictions on officially starting out in politics, limited prior experience, and the high costs of entering politics. Unemployment and underemployment made young people particularly vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups or to increasingly dangerous immigration routes to Europe.

Several initiatives had attempted to improve women's and young people's political participation in the Sahel, including laws mandating gender parity or quotas for women in politics, and strategies proposed by civil society organizations. International Alert had worked with public and private-sector representatives to analyse how they might support young people in making an effective contribution to decision-making, as well as to development in their local communities. Six recommendations had been drafted.

First, existing standards should be implemented, and institutions should be strengthened to improve democratic governance and citizen engagement. Innovative strategies should be developed, so that methods of strengthening democracy and inclusive governance could be realized, including gender equality and the involvement of women and young people in politics.

Second, to enable women and young people to participate effectively in political decision-making, their skills should be strengthened in terms of conflict management and the ability to advocate for leadership in public administration.

Third, the capacities of existing movements for women and young people should be strengthened. Cross-party solidarity among women in leadership positions should also be fostered, as should links between young members of the elite and their contemporaries who remained excluded.

Fourth, social services and private-sector initiatives should be improved. The education of young people and girls was a crucial factor in empowering those groups and their communities, and in including them in civil society. Ensuring young people's access to good quality employment would also make them less vulnerable to violent extremists.

Fifth, multi-institutional initiatives should be delivered, including bipartisan interventions across media outlets and novel strategies dealing with the social and economic status of women.

Sixth, women should promote conflict prevention and peacebuilding as an essential element of peace and security across the Sahel.

As previous meetings had thoroughly identified the region's challenges, it would be helpful to consolidate that material into a single document, which could then serve as a road map to ensure continued momentum towards delivering solutions on the ground.

Ms. C.I. López Castro (Mexico), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and ex officio member of HLAG, said that women and girls were disproportionately affected by situations in the Sahel that required military intervention. However, they were also the main advocates for social change and peace in their communities. Improving their circumstances was an inalienable right, and a key element of economic and social development.

Armed conflict and the climate crisis meant that millions of children were in need of humanitarian aid and protection. Insecurity and displacement were pushing the crisis into remote areas with scant infrastructure and resources where children already had limited access to basic services. Among the huge numbers forced to flee from or within the region to refugee camps or already-vulnerable host communities, women and girls were deeply affected. Nonetheless, with support from the international community, women had strengthened their position and played important roles as peacebuilders and negotiators, including in remote areas. In Nigeria, for example, a women's movement had stopped the use of women suicide bombers and encouraged women to join rural security teams.

Women must be present at such Summits so that issues were considered from a gender perspective. The humanitarian response to the Sahel crisis should be strengthened. Short and long-term investment was also required, especially in sustainable development, security strategies and improved governance, all of which contributed to consolidating peace in the region, particularly for women and girls.

A delegate from Zambia said that, as stability anywhere was stability everywhere, UN bodies and groups such as the African Union or the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), must work together to ensure Sahelians had the resources needed to prevent terrorism. Stability and peace required interdependence in implementing rules-based international controls, including disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Similarly, international cooperation and diplomacy ensured respect for agreements and treaties, which was an essential part of progress towards sustainable growth. That progress would also allow young people's voices to be heard. Parliaments must oversee their governments' implementation of such agreements and treaties.

A delegate from Morocco recalled the Sahel's challenges, including extremism, hunger, corruption, embezzlement of international aid and a lack of opportunities.

The Sahel was a resource-rich region of a resource-rich continent. Almost a quarter of the world's population was in Africa. The majority of Africans were young people, whose potential and high levels of education were needed by aging parts of the world, such as Europe.

It was arguable that, if higher-income countries refrained from exploiting Africa's natural resources, there would be no need for aid. If respect for African countries was shown, and their resources were used in the interests of Africans, then the results would be that: Africa would develop; young people, including girls, could access good quality education, and would be dissuaded from involvement in terrorism; and no Africans would be dying while attempting to cross the Mediterranean. Instead, the overwhelming majority of current migrants were from Africa, and only a fraction of them arrived in the countries for which they had set out.

Additionally, the region's current conflicts had been caused by external military intervention. The conflicts used weapons from western countries, shipments of which could easily be tracked by satellite, but were not.

A representative of the Parliamentary Assembly of la Francophonie (APF) said APF's recent political crises had flowed from the inability of civilian governments to combat terrorism, which had then led to coups. Seven African APF chapters were currently suspended following a breakdown of their constitutional orders. Three such cases had been the result of terrorism. Although the APF had been unable to work politically with the suspended countries, a sense of pragmatism meant that inter-parliamentary cooperation was still continuing.

In 2022, the APF had organized a regional youth parliament, which had included the whole of West Africa rather than just the Sahel. The youth parliament and civil society organizations had considered how to create a vanguard of young people that offered alternative models to those of terrorism. They had noted that the spread of terrorism across West Africa had been partly due to terrorists' abilities to adapt to international efforts to confront them.

The APF supported the *Call of the Sahel*, but suggested more countries should be involved due to the recent expansion of terrorist activity across the region.

A delegate from Chile said that there were similarities in the language used to discuss counter-terrorism at the present Summit compared to that used in Latin America to advocate for vulnerable communities and wider stability, as well as to fight against poverty, drug trafficking and poor employment opportunities, which drove young people to be recruited into extremist groups.

It was also important to understand the generalized harm caused by illicit activities, even though they were lucrative for specific groups.

Internationally known criminal gangs and armed groups were harming Chile, just as extremists were seeking to control territory in the Sahel and undermine its democracies. Democracies should therefore be strengthened through initiatives such as the present Summit. Those involved in countering terrorism and violence must take difficult decisions and work together across regions and continents, focusing on citizens' most important demand – the demand for security and peace.

The challenges of tackling terrorism and irregular migration should be addressed internationally, through carefully coordinated cross-border partnerships, especially with countries whose policies were successfully addressing both challenges.

A delegate from Kenya said that, while he acknowledged the plight of the Sahel and called for immediate action, the Summit should also consider how to address terrorist threats posed to the rest of Africa, especially East Africa. Poverty and drug trafficking were linked to terrorism. People who were trafficked often had little choice but to join terrorist groups, sometimes committing acts of terrorism in their own countries. Summit participants should launch new programmes and initiatives to break those links. To avoid holding ceaseless conferences without results, as many specific solutions as possible should be proposed.

Session 3: The Call of the Sahel: Development is the answer

Mr. M. Bouden (Algeria), member of HLAG, took the Chair as Moderator of the third session.

The Moderator said that the recent rise in terrorist activity against military and civilian targets posed direct threats to development, security and peace in Africa and more widely. Economic, social and environmental circumstances in the Sahel had contributed to greater insecurity, which should be addressed by more significant national, regional and international efforts. Factors leading to increased terrorism and extremism included foreign militants entering the region, the spread of hatred and extremist ideas across digital platforms, drug trafficking, irregular migration, underdevelopment, coups and weakened institutions.

All institutions must contribute to combating terrorism and violent extremism. Providing citizens with new educational and employment opportunities would also play a role.

Algeria had always stood in solidarity with the Sahel on counter-terrorism. It had also hosted a meeting of the *Call of the Sahel*, at which dozens of parliamentarians, scholars and traditional leaders had gathered for interactive exchanges on the needs of vulnerable groups and women. The words of the *Call of the Sahel* should now be translated into action.

Mr. B.N. Tankoano (Executive Secretary, CIP G5 Sahel), accompanying his comments with a digital slide presentation, asked what priorities should be set for supporting the Sahel. According to the International Committee of the Red Cross, the global attention attracted by the Sahel's security situation had obscured the tragedy of millions of families struggling to survive due to food shortages. With levels of displacement on the rise, the region was already a fertile area for radicalization and extremism.

Poverty was the fundamental cause of the problem. The solution was to avoid focusing exclusively on military and security challenges, while intensifying development support. Sahel countries received aid averaging around 7% of their GDPs, with the European Union (EU) as a leading donor. However, as those countries were also at the bottom of global human development rankings, the question was why such significant development funding failed to have an impact.

Research – including a French Senate report on Mali and a European Commission report on Niger – suggested that the significant time and money invested in such countries had had little discernible effect on specific policies, development initiatives, or the overall aims of ending economic stagnation, impoverishment and regional instability. The World Bank (WB) had also reported in 2016 that the per capita incomes of Sahel countries had fallen below what they had been at post-colonial independence. Such outcomes were partly due to insecurity stemming from both internal and cross-border conflict, trafficking and massive migrant flows. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had found that more than five million people across the Sahel were internally displaced, refugees or asylum seekers as of June 2023, while a third of people in the region needed urgent aid or protection. Longstanding corruption, acute climate change, inappropriate use of aid funding, and the interference of foreign powers had also weakened the link between aid invested and development outcomes.

The region was receiving no foreign direct investment. Most Sahel countries were at the bottom of world investment rankings, as there had been little industrial development over the last 10 to 15 years due to terrorist activity. There were also significant opportunity costs for taxation-derived public sector spending due to heavy military expenditure in conflict zones.

The region faced major challenges on education, women's employment and energy. Few schoolchildren and few women, finished their education. Wider gender inequality was also hindering women's empowerment. Electrification levels were approaching half the pan-African average, while in rural areas, those levels were two-thirds below average.

The Sahel was also barely able to feed itself independently, despite the vast majority of the region being agricultural land.

In theory, the potential for mining natural resources could be a significant part of the Sahel's response to its challenges. In practice however, leveraging those resources was usually only possible through foreign-owned mines, which sometimes paid a host country as little as 2% of the proceeds.

Future development initiatives, as part of the *Call of the Sahel*, would benefit from the region's fast-growing youthful workforce. Initiatives could also be based on current schemes, such as the Sahel Alliance, provided that Sahelians were empowered to run their own development projects that enabled the region's people to help themselves. The principles on which such projects should be based were, first, that beneficiaries should be able to take ownership of and exert true control over the support they received, so as to decide exactly how they would like to develop. Second, donors should allow the funds they provided to be incorporated into the national development plans of recipient States without any provisos. Third, projects should be better harmonized with each other, as well as being managed on the basis of results and shared accountability. Otherwise, any aid provided would never result in positive development outcomes.

The current priorities for the Sahel were to: improve governance by strengthening Sahel States that currently faced significant difficulties; prevent and contain violent conflicts; continue support for countries engaged in the fight against terrorism, including via funding for those that needed it; ensure that the large number of young people in the region were supported into good

quality employment, including within the private sector; empower women and girls to improve their prospects and help others to do likewise; and support the restructuring of the agricultural and private sectors.

Mr. A.G. Luzzi (Programme Management Officer, UNODC) said that working with the IPU had enabled UNODC to extend its governmental outreach to include parliamentarians and to contribute technical expertise to the *Call of the Sahel* initiative. Together, the IPU and UNODC had published model statutes and shared UNODC's terrorism legislation repository with MPs.

In the aftermath of terrorist activities, the military often stepped in to provide initial support to civilian criminal justice structures. Interagency partnerships were therefore important to equip the military with skills such as collecting trial-admissible evidence. Those partnerships also contributed to SDG 16 and its focus on peace and strong institutions.

UNODC stood ready to help Sahel countries to respond to terrorism by strengthening their criminal justice capabilities in terms of crucial principles such as the rule of law, due process, gender considerations and human rights. Parliamentarians should contribute by developing comprehensive counter-terrorism legislation that reinforced such principles nationally. UNODC could also support parliamentarians and governments with advice on how to ratify the 19 legal instruments against terrorism, facilitate legislative reviews and deliver national counter-terrorism strategies.

To ensure they could quickly overcome shocks, local communities should engage with local leaders and wider civil society, addressing the underlying causes of radicalization, building trust and preventing extremism from taking root.

As part of its global programme focused on women, young people and terrorism victims, UNODC had adopted gender-sensitive approaches so that women could play a full role in countering terrorism. Those approaches had included teaching women to recognize signs of radicalization, promoting gender-sensitive prosecutions in terrorism trials, and training hundreds of policymakers worldwide.

Although young people were vulnerable to narratives of intolerance that glorified violence, they could also help promote counter-narratives that steered their peers away from terrorism. For example, a UNODC-established network of young law enforcement and criminal justice practitioners had been set up to foster a common culture of peace and mutual trust. UNODC could also work with Sahel governments, religious leaders and civil society to mirror initiatives that had been successfully deployed in Asia to prevent violent extremism.

By working with victims of terrorism and their associations, UNODC had contributed to meeting victims' needs, such as having access to justice, compensation and assistance, thereby helping wider society to better understand terrorism and its effects. Such work was part of UNODC's commitment to invest in a more secure, stable and prosperous Sahel.

Mr. M. Omar (Senior Adviser to the IPU Secretary General) said that, due to a perception that politicians had let the region down, the *Call of the Sahel* had sought alternative solutions with academics from various disciplines. In one instance, representatives of the Sahel had visited the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN).

Both visits to and longer periods spent in the Sahel had enabled HLAG members to discuss the region's challenges with Sahelians who had relevant first-hand experiences to share and who rarely took part in international meetings, including former terrorists. As a result, some HLAG members had concluded that environmental degradation created a vacuum that was often filled by extremist activities. Others had originally thought religion would be crucial to understanding terrorist recruitment, but had instead found that the dire circumstances faced by some Sahelians meant that a modest financial or equivalent incentive could be enough to recruit them.

One important discovery was that the considerable efforts and resources expended by individual countries or organizations to improve the region's fortunes were often run competitively rather than in partnership.

When dealing with issues such as the Sahel's rich natural resources and the exploitation of its people, the focus had been on how far people could leave behind ideas of strengthening military resources and embrace an entirely development-based approach.

Even though some form of occupation might seem to be the Sahel's constant destiny, visits to the region had suggested that change was afoot. Sahelians were asking for clean water and good quality education, improvements in the currently insufficient levels of respect for their human rights, equal amounts of attention and action compared to other crises in the headlines, and a greater recognition of what made Sahelians internally similar to the rest of the world, with less emphasis on external differences. The international community must implement its development work with greater intensity and clarity, so that ordinary Sahelians could clearly feel its effects.

The search for solutions was being hindered by forces working in opposing directions. Some saw conflict as the key problem, and believed that development could not progress unless corruption levels fell. Others highlighted that Sahelians could not independently access their natural resources, the proceeds of which could contribute to both tackling corruption and resolving conflict.

The delivery of specific projects would be recommended in the Summit's outcome document. There was scope to integrate such projects into existing IPU workstreams on topics known to have a clear effect on tackling terrorism – such as improving governance or equality – and on which the IPU Standing Committee on International Peace and Security, as well as the Division of Programmes, were currently working.

After HLAG had discussed and approved the recommendations, and in line with the Group's evidence-based approach, a new ad hoc committee would be proposed, administered by the HLAG and G5 Sahel secretariats. It would focus exclusively on the Sahel, and monitor completion levels of the projects recommended in the outcome document.

By investing time and resources into the new committee, parliamentarians would demonstrate that peace and security in the Sahel directly contributed to global peace and security. Sahelians would also be free to write their own history, thereby ending a pattern of behaviour by which the world ignored or quickly forgot tragedies that occurred in Africa.

The switch to delivering specific projects would contrast with the past pattern of decision-makers travelling to counter-terrorism meetings across the world almost as an end in itself. In future, parliamentarians would need to work in partnership with project managers on the ground and monitor progress towards successful project delivery, including by institutionalizing national-level relationships between legislatures and executives with regard to the appropriate funding and effective implementation of counter-terrorism measures. Similarly, countries currently investing significantly in counter-terrorism, including Saudi Arabia and China, would be encouraged to coordinate their work more closely with the UN, the IPU and civil society organizations.

The Summit's outcome document would therefore be an invitation to every State to make specific commitments to improve the situation in the Sahel.

Mr. D. Naughten (Ireland), Chairperson of the IPU Working Group on Science and Technology, said that, under the *Science for Peace* initiative, he had convened Sahelians and leading scientists to consider how to remove the causes of conflict from discussions. Ireland's own peacebuilding experiences, and the Science and Technology Group's work on water management, indicated that, when factors such as cultural differences ceded priority to a purely solutions-based approach, trusting relationships could be established and strengthened. At a previous meeting in Bahrain, Sahelian and Irish participants had also agreed on the importance of African-led initiatives built on the experiences of local communities.

In terms of taking action, the *Call of the Sahel* document could be formally submitted, debated and adopted by parliaments across the world. MPs could then ensure that the governments they hold to account took internationally coordinated and holistic action to deliver the Summit's recommended projects. Instead of focusing on security issues alone, project-oriented interventions should take account of questions such as the Sahel's food crisis, and the alarming number of children denied an education due to school closures.

The IPU should organize meetings to enable parliamentarians and government officials to hear from talented Sahelian women and young people, and so understand more about their needs. For example, prioritizing an increase in literacy levels might be considered a pre-requisite for improving the region's overall prospects.

He would ensure that the Irish Parliament debated and adopted the *Call of the Sahel* document, advocated it to EU and UN institutions, and supported other parliaments around the world to do likewise. He called on those present to commit to similar undertakings.

The event ended at 17:45.

Parity debate

I care to care: Male parliamentarians engage in equal caring responsibilities

WEDNESDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2023

(Morning)

The debate was called to order at 09.00 with Ms. C. López Castro (Mexico), President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, in the Chair.

The Chair said that she was grateful to all delegations for attending, particularly those with male parliamentarians. Following the adoption of the Kigali Declaration, the debate would facilitate actions ensuring men and women provided care equally. It was important for both men and women parliamentarians to work on this matter. Parliamentary gender equality commissions should be promoted to ensure that men also served on them. The presence of both genders at the current debate demonstrated an interest in the unpaid care that supported children's well-being and created healthier, fairer, more gender-equal and non-violent societies. Parliamentarians should leverage that interest to foster change.

Equality in caring responsibilities in practice: Interactive exercise

Mr. W. Van den Berg (MenCare officer, Equimundo, Centre for Masculinities and Social Justice), panellist, accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that he wished to perform an exercise that he used with parents to negotiate equal caregiving within households in order to ground the policy discussion. Everyone should have received a profile listing a person's profession, gender and caring responsibilities. Delegates should imagine a person in their country, or think of someone they knew, who corresponded to that profile. Examples of profiles included a male and a female agricultural worker, each with five children and two elderly parents; a male and a female domestic worker, each with three children; a male and a female factory worker, each with one child; a male and a female doctor, each with three children and one elderly parent; a male and a female lawyer, each with two children; a male and a female business entrepreneur, each with no children. Along the side of the profiles were circles. He would read through 10 questions and, if the answer was "yes", delegates should add a sticker to the circle. The questions were: (1) Have you had, or will you have, opportunities to complete your education?; (2) Can you pay someone to care for your young children?; (3) Can you pay someone to care for your elderly parents?; (4) Do you spend less than an hour per day caring for your children?; (5) Can you spend more than a week away from your immediate family?; (6) Are you unconcerned about having enough food?; (7) Are you non-reliant on care from another person to keep you healthy? (8) Can you decide when and how many children to have?; (9) Can you obtain a bank loan to start a business?; (10) Is it unnecessary for you to plan food and meals for the household?.

Mr. W. Van den Berg invited delegates to compare their scores and, using a show of hands, asked who had scored more than six, more than four, and less than three.

Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah (Egypt) said that she could not identify with the questions because she did not have children or elderly parents.

Ms. H. Al-Helaissi (Saudi Arabia) said that the exercise was revealing and demonstrated the need to change attitudes. She had received the profile of a poor male factory worker with one child. She only replied "yes" to the first question.

Mr. M. Green (Canada) said that he had initially answered the questions according to his personal situation. However, the profile that he had received – a male agricultural worker, whom he had assumed was based in Canada, with five children and two elderly relatives – had made him consider his country's recruitment of poorly paid temporary foreign workers to farm low-cost produce. The exercise had made him reflect on capitalism and colonialism, and the impact of migration worldwide on international and national outcomes.

Ms. F.M.P. Konseibo (Burkina Faso) said that she had been unable to properly participate because she no longer had elderly parents or dependent children. It would be helpful to see the questionnaire or compare responses.

Mr. W. Van den Berg (MenCare officer, Equimundo, Centre for Masculinities and Social Justice), panellist, asked for responses from those who had answered “yes” to more than five questions.

Ms. S. Rašković Ivić (Serbia) said that she had received the profile of a male doctor with three children and one elderly relative. She had answered “yes” to all of the questions because doctors were very well paid in Serbia. However, she would have answered differently for a female doctor because women spent more than an hour per day caring for their children. In Serbia, women provided four more hours of care per day than men.

Mr. A. Touizi (Morocco) said that he had the profile of a male agricultural worker. In Morocco, such an agricultural worker would spend time with his children because they helped with agricultural activities. There was no need to care for the elderly because children cared for their parents. Children also wanted to pursue an education.

Ms. H. Ramzy Fayez (Bahrain) said that she had the profile of a male lawyer with two children with a score of six out of 10. She had answered “no” to the first question because a lawyer had to complete studies and did not need more education. Young people’s attitudes, especially in the Middle East, were changing. Men increasingly performed household tasks and provided childcare. Perhaps that positive change resulted from the increasing need for women to prove themselves and contribute more than housework. Young people also seemed more conscious of children’s need to spend time with both parents.

Ms. S.-C. Njebarikanuye (Burundi) said that she had in mind her 30-year-old son, who had a wife and child. She had answered “yes” to all of the questions, except the fourth because he sometimes cared for his child in the evening when his wife studied. He was financially stable and could decide how many children he wanted.

Mr. W. Van den Berg (MenCare officer, Equimundo, Centre for Masculinities and Social Justice), panellist, said that the delegate from Serbia had highlighted gender inequalities among members of the same profession. Delegates should think of citizens’ lived experiences in their countries, and how those experiences impacted their ability to become parliamentarians.

Policies and parliamentary initiatives on equal care: Presentation and sharing of good practices

Mr. W. Van den Berg (MenCare officer, Equimundo, Centre for Masculinities and Social Justice), panellist, accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that evidence collected as part of the *State of the World’s Fathers* series demonstrated that the individual decisions that parents could make to ensure equality depended on the structures around them and their experiences. There were five keys to unlocking men’s caregiving and to ensuring equality. Two concerned social and gender norms, and laws and policies. Both should be aligned. The remaining three keys concerned the economic and physical security of families, the relationship between couples or co-parents, and the individual man’s decisions as a father.

Ms. B. Argimón (President of the General Assembly and Senate of Uruguay), panellist, said in a pre-recorded video message that it was very important to contribute to laws and policies concerning the care system. Several years prior, Uruguay had modified a law on the national care system. Such laws paved the way for progress in modern democracies. Over the years, she had witnessed the loss of women’s labour potential. Those who wanted children often took a step back in their careers, and women overwhelmingly cared for children and the elderly. To achieve genuine parity, public policies should ensure care, such as through centres for children and the elderly, and decision-making bodies should provide support. Care should be provided for the youngest and oldest in society. Parliamentarians should ensure that there were care laws and policies, which represented genuine progress.

Mr. T. Loughton (Vice-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Fatherhood, United Kingdom), panellist, said that he also chaired the APPG Conception to Age Two – First 1001 Days because those early years were so important for parents. As a parent, he knew that the British Parliament was not family-friendly and he suspected that other parliaments were not either. Parliamentarians had to spend time away from their families and, before the COVID-19 pandemic, mothers on maternity leave had not been allowed to vote. Fortunately, that was no longer the case – although the change should have come sooner – and fathers could also vote during paternity leave. Ten years earlier, a crèche had been established at the House of Commons and, under certain circumstances, parliamentarians could bring their children when they had to vote. It was important that parliament set an example for the rest of the population. Although difficult, it was important to develop a better work-life balance.

The APPG for Fatherhood, which promoted best practices within Parliament and beyond, stressed the importance of fathers for children's emotional, cognitive, social and gender role development. They provided encouragement, support, discipline and guidance, and supported children's physical and mental health. Legislation should focus on parents rather than just mothers. Children's brains developed most in the first 1001 days of life and parents should care for them from an early age. There was strong evidence that good maternal mental health fostered strong bonds between a mother and baby, and that children needed a strong relationship with their father for their brains to develop fully and in time for school. There was also evidence that traumatic birthing experiences affected fathers.

The adoption of the Kigali Declaration had been very encouraging because women spent four times more time as men providing care. A poll in the United Kingdom had revealed that 37% of young men felt that society expected them to be the breadwinner; 49% of British adults believed that a man would feel emasculated if he could not provide financially for his family; 34% of men aged under 35 felt that struggling with mental health made them less masculine. The Government had introduced the Start for Life programme, which focused on the early years of life, and men in the United Kingdom were encouraged to become involved in children's centres and family hubs. In that regard, various initiatives, such as football projects, had been introduced in children's centres and family hubs.

It was important to focus on fathers' mental health. There were many parliamentary debates on mental health in which parliamentarians shared their experiences. Twenty years earlier, that would have been unthinkable because of stigma. Half of the members in the House of Commons and House of Lords had participated in a mindfulness programme. During Baby Loss Awareness Week, fathers had shared their experiences of losing a baby. Transparency was important, as was ensuring that parents received support, because health and education services often only contacted mothers.

In the United Kingdom, 21% of children lived in single-parent families. In 90% of those families, the mother brought up the child; 58% of separated fathers contacted their child less than once a week. To tackle the lack of male role models, men were encouraged to work as teachers and in caregiving roles. There were schemes for older men, including retirees, to provide mentorship within fatherless families. Male celebrities and sportsmen could also provide good role models for children. Children benefitted from two present and engaged parents, and it was therefore important to challenge norms, ensure fathers' engagement with their children as early as possible, and disregard traditional gender roles.

Mr. M. Green (Canada) said that, as a father, he identified with Mr. Loughton's comments about masculinity. It was important to acknowledge that the patriarchy harmed and victimized men by denying them vulnerability and tenderness, and directly or indirectly engaging them in perpetual cycles of domination and violence. When he had served as a city councillor, there had been no paternity leave or workplace accommodations for him to spend an equal amount of time with his child. As a parliamentarian, he was aware that parliaments were ill-adapted to parents. It was therefore important for parliamentarians to continue striving for gender equality and to dismantle patriarchal systems.

Mr. J. Fakhro (Bahrain) said that it was important to remember that women spent four times as much time as men providing unpaid care, particularly to children. Education would be key to sharing responsibilities equally between men and women. Curricula from kindergarten onwards should teach children about their social responsibilities. His generation had been taught that men should provide and women should raise children but, over the previous two decades, attitudes had shifted. Greater changes would not be achieved without teaching boys that they had the same caring responsibilities as women.

Ms. A. Martínez (Spain) said that the Social Institutions and Gender Index had assessed gender equality in 179 countries and ranked Spain third. However, despite national efforts, the National Institute of Health and Safety at Work had found that women performed 12.5 more hours of non-remunerated work and 5.8 more hours of remunerated work per week than men. Women prioritized care over remunerated work, and that required a multifaceted response. The minimum wage had increased and a labour law promoted stable work contracts. The system of domestic workers had been incorporated into the general social security system. The law ensured equal parental leave for men and women. Free schooling for children aged 0-3 years was promoted. A guide on co-responsibility had been published to promote equality between girls and boys in schools. A law for dependants provided care through the public system. Those changes would have been impossible without an accurate representation of society in the Spanish Congress of Deputies and the Cortes. Those institutions had introduced crèches, enabled parents to vote remotely, and adapted working hours to improve work-life balance.

A delegate from Morocco said that there was greater awareness that parents should share childcare equally. However, women continued to provide more care for children and relatives who were elderly or disabled. The Moroccan Parliament had pushed to provide day-care services for women employees and women working in the courts. The Ministry of Solidarity, Social Integration and Family had been charged with that initiative and should create state institutions. The Government aimed to compensate maternity leave in recognition of mothers' unpaid work. The Parliament was discussing direct support for children from vulnerable families. She encouraged shifts in attitudes, otherwise the impact of changing laws would be limited. To quote Simone de Beauvoir, "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman".

Ms. S. Unnopporn (Thailand) said that, as values evolved, parliamentarians were well-placed to promote more investment in the care economy, create opportunities for male professional caregivers, and promote policies and practices ensuring an equal share of care work between men and women. That would normalize the idea of men as caregivers, address stigma, break generational barriers and advance gender equality. In Thailand, male government employees were entitled to 15 days of paid parental leave and — subject to approval — a further 15 days of unpaid leave. The parental leave system aimed to promote women's economic empowerment and reduce their domestic responsibilities. Such a HeForShe programme should be replicated in the private sector. National parliaments could increase awareness of how distributing unpaid and domestic work equally could boost gender equality in employment locally and internationally. Tackling long-standing gender norms and stereotypes closed gaps in gender inequality and would benefit households and economies.

Advocating for equal care: Techniques, tips and action plans

Mr. W. Van den Berg (MenCare officer, Equimundo, Centre for Masculinities and Social Justice), panellist, accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that care was a net positive contribution to society. In the context of working with men to improve gender equality and prevent violence, men were often told the actions that they should avoid. However, by caring for others, men could contribute positively to society. A survey of some 12,000 people across 17 countries, carried out as part of *The State of the World's Fathers 2023* report, had revealed that the words most associated with "care" included "love", "health", "help" and "protection", which demonstrated a positive view of care worldwide. However, in underserved communities, care also represented a burden. As other delegates — including from Spain — had indicated, time-use data was a good indicator of inequalities between men and women.

Care was pervasive. As part of *The State of the World's Fathers 2023* survey, participants had been asked how much time they spent on different care tasks for family members. Interestingly, the participants had misjudged the time that they spent providing care. When added together, the hours that they reported totalled more than 24 hours per day each, which demonstrated the weight of the burden of caring and suggested that respondents were often carrying out different kinds of care tasks simultaneously. The report had not followed the typical minute-by-minute approach of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) or International Labour Organization (ILO) but the finding was nevertheless revealing.

There was a profound relationship between democracy and care, both of which were underpinned by the same principles: (1) noticing citizens' or the state's need for care; (2) taking responsibility for that need; (3) satisfying that need. Those principles applied at the personal level; e.g. when a father fed his child, and at the public level; e.g. through the provision of public health or social

services. The survey had asked participants to prioritize 14 policies. The top seven were inflation and the cost of living, healthcare access and quality, women's rights and gender equality, care for the elderly, childcare access and quality, climate change, and military and national security. The latter priority was the only one for which more men had voted than women.

According to data that the WORLD Policy Analysis Center had collected between 1995 and 2020, maternity leave had gradually become more available and was offered in most countries. The ILO recommended 14 weeks of leave, which an increasing number of countries offered or exceeded. The number of countries offering paternity leave had sharply increased, with some offering 14 weeks or more. The current debate had revealed that inequality persisted but there was a sense of cautious optimism. Although not yet reflected in the data, norms were changing, and men provided more care. Equal caregiving would ensure an equal economy and we should therefore aspire to provide 14 weeks of parental leave.

It was important to debunk three parental leave myths. The first was that men would not use the leave. According to data collected by MÄN between 1974 and 2020, in Sweden, men's uptake of shared leave had increased whereas women's had decreased, although gender inequality persisted. Reasons for poor uptake included remuneration and job protection. Mothers were generally willing to take unpaid leave and change or leave jobs to provide unpaid care; fathers were even more willing to change jobs to take parental leave. The second myth was that men would not use the leave to provide childcare. Although global data was not yet available, the research for *The State of South Africa's Fathers 2021* and interviews from a small sample had revealed that fathers had used most of their leave for childcare. The data collected for *The State of the World's Fathers* demonstrated a similar trend. The third myth was that economies could not afford to lose men's labour. However, according to the ILO Global Care Policy Portal, which calculated the return on investment of different policies, every US dollar invested in care policies in Argentina generated a return of US\$ 2.04. There was therefore evidence of the cost benefits of parental leave. There was also an issue of rights: if we could not afford to lose men's labour, we implied that we could afford to lose women's labour. In many countries, men and women were financially equal until women became pregnant, at which point their income was reduced. It was then very difficult for women to return to their pre-pregnancy financial level. Even couples that were willing to equalize their relationship were dependent on the system around them.

Parliaments could consider certain policy responses. He invited delegates to share their success stories with the MenCare campaign, which was compiling and promoting case studies through its network and website. According to Equimundo's research, it was imperative that workplaces and managers supported workers' care duties, and that job-protected and fully paid parental leave was available. Health sector reforms, particularly with regard to the first 1,000 days of life, could promote fathers' involvement during pregnancy and as caregivers. Becoming a father or mother was a defining moment in one's identity. Leveraging that period of change in fathers' lives could create lifelong behavioural changes. Following on from Ms. Argimón's statement, national care policies could help combine inter-ministerial work to recognize, reduce and redistribute care work. The availability of social protection was often overlooked and should not be perceived as exclusively for mothers. In South Africa, male single parents were increasingly common, and they used social protection funds to provide essentials for their children. He agreed with the delegate from Bahrain on the importance of promoting male caregivers in schools, the media and other institutions. He was pleased to note the male parliamentarians participating in the debate.

Ms. F. Ilimi Haddouche (Algeria), First Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, took over as Chair.

Ms. A. Alshaman (Saudi Arabia) said that implementing the wise and important steps outlined in the presentation would be difficult in her country. Saudi Arabia remained a patriarchal and tribal society. Extended family was important and provided care. Grandmothers and mothers-in-law took care of children instead of men. However, Saudi Arabia had implemented reforms: women had up to three years of maternity leave throughout their careers; men had three days of paternity leave which, although short, represented progress. The debate had focused on basic principles and values of humanity. It was human nature to be caring, regardless of gender. If that had changed, it was due to the demands of everyday life.

Mr. K. Tontisirin (Thailand) said that it was important to raise awareness through education, information and communication. He agreed with the delegate from Saudi Arabia that men and women should have empathy for each other and should contribute within households. Laws should be enacted to ensure that men and women provided equal care within families, communities and

societies. There should be an ecosystem to support the law and facilitate understanding of people within workplaces and communities. Action should be taken at the macro and micro level, and raising public awareness through education, information and communication was necessary.

Ms. A.N. Ayyoub Awadallah (Egypt) said that Egyptian law helped women to achieve a work-life balance and ensured equal participation in the workplace. The law dealt with the extra hours of work performed by women and gave them four months of maternity leave, which could be renewed twice consecutively. Paternity leave had also been established in law, despite concerns that men would not use the time to provide childcare. Cultural change was needed.

Mr. B. Balbone (Burkina Faso) said that his country had a Ministry for Women, National Solidarity and Family which promoted gender equality and the Ministry of Health had introduced a code for husbands to involve them in domestic tasks.. Parliamentarians should ensure crèches were available in workplaces so that women could continue to breastfeed. Women were encouraged to breastfeed babies aged 0–6 months, but many women fed their children breastmilk alongside baby formula or only baby formula. Women were entitled to three months of maternity leave whereas men were entitled to three days of paternity leave. It was therefore difficult for men to help raise children and care for the health of spouses and children. His country encouraged men and women to care for children — especially during the child's first 1,000 days of life — to ensure adequate nutrition and proper cognitive and physical development.

Ms. O. Sanogo (Mali) said that women on maternity leave in her Parliament could vote via proxies and had documents delivered to their homes. Women were entitled to 14 weeks of maternity leave, with some sectors stipulating that the leave should start eight weeks before childbirth and end six weeks after childbirth. Men were entitled to three days of paternity leave, which they accepted because they had been taught that women raised children. Although breastfeeding was encouraged for babies aged 0–6 months, almost all women working as civil servants or in the private sector were unable to meet that target because they could only take six weeks of maternity leave after childbirth. Women generally attended prenatal consultations alone. She agreed that men should also receive psychological support in the event of an infant death.

Ms. H. Ramzy Fayez (Bahrain) said that she agreed with all the points that had been raised. In her part of the world, boys were brought up to be served. Mentalities must change. Parents should ensure boys did housework and cared for younger siblings. Teaching responsibility early would produce men who accepted that work willingly.

The Chair said that there was general agreement that couples should work together to care for children. Parliamentarians should find more effective legal mechanisms to protect children.

The debate ended at 10.30.

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

The role of parliaments in tackling the humanitarian impacts of climate-related displacement

THURSDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2023

(Morning)

The sitting was called to order at 11:30 with Mr. J.K. Waweru (Kenya), President of the Committee, in the Chair.

The President said that the Committee had decided to raise awareness of displacement because it was one of the most severe consequences of climate change. Data from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) indicated that each year, more than 20 million people required protection having been displaced internally or across borders due to climate-related events.

Refugees, internally displaced and stateless people were at the forefront of the climate emergency, thereby reinforcing underlying vulnerabilities and challenging both displaced and host communities. For example, low and middle-income countries were most likely to be adversely affected by climate change, but also hosted around 76% of refugees. Parliamentary action was a crucial part of a solutions-oriented agenda that would help to protect and assist both hosts and displaced people by addressing their vulnerabilities and bolstering their resilience to future climate events. The Committee encouraged lawmakers to champion those issues in their national parliaments, and regional and international parliamentary forums.

The growing number of people affected by climate-related displacement meant prevention, mitigation and protection were crucial to addressing that issue. Panellists would share experiences of tackling the humanitarian impact of such displacement, in terms of policy, national development and action plans, and legislation.

The President asked the first panellist, Mr. Fry, who had recently presented a report to the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) on the protection of the human rights of climate-displaced people, about the main challenges on that subject.

Mr. I. Fry (UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change), panellist, said that climate-displaced people suffered many human rights abuses, such as poor access to water, sanitation, education and health services, and the risk of trafficking and torture. Displaced women and children were particularly vulnerable; children were sometimes forced into military service and active conflicts.

People displaced across international borders due to climate change were vulnerable to human rights abuse because they were not defined as refugees under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (the Refugee Convention), and so were not legally protected under it. He had therefore recommended to the HRC that an optional protocol under the 1951 Refugee Convention be drafted to provide similar protection for climate-displaced people.

Regionally, the African Union and some Latin American countries had recently included people suffering the results of public disorder in their definitions of a refugee. While those definitions had not always included climate-displaced people, the willingness to consider such changes in general opened the way for regional organizations to protect climate refugees.

Mr. A. Harper (Special Advisor on Climate Action, UNHCR), panellist, stressed the importance of joint work with the IPU given parliamentarians' unique role in representing the most climate-affected communities and delivering change on the ground.

Accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation, he said that climate change amplified vulnerability, but not threat. Inequality between at-risk populations and those able to adapt would continue to increase unless the former received sufficient resilience support. Given their importance in providing that support, national policies, as well as strategies and laws, must protect all of society, including displaced people and refugees.

Climate-displaced people were undoubtedly affecting overall global refugee flows. In all, 70% of refugees came from climate-affected countries with the lowest adaptation capacities, and moved to countries that were also vulnerable to climate change. Due to the cross-border nature of the problem, parliaments in increasingly climate-affected areas should work together on regional initiatives.

Diverging opinions made international agreements challenging, as illustrated by a recent failure to achieve consensus on a loss and damage fund. Therefore, national and regional alternatives should lead the way instead. Instruments such as the Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (1969) or the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees (1984) might be investigated to determine whether they could protect people moving across borders in addition to the protections of the Refugee Convention.

Climate change could be a key driver of the movements of refugees, as it increased levels of competition, conflict, violence and displacement. It also affected how refugee status was determined, as the number of victims of discrimination within the context of climate change was on the rise. Work was therefore continuing to ensure pragmatic alternatives to full protection under the Refugee Convention. More inclusive approaches to determining who was entitled to protection included: Argentina's special humanitarian visa programme; Article 16 of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in the IGAD region (2020); States in the Horn of Africa and the Americas extending international protection to people fleeing across borders due to climate-related disasters; and the development of national jurisprudence granting refugee status for solely climate-related reasons.

Parliamentarians should contribute to mainstreaming appropriate protections into mechanisms such as national climate change adaptation plans, nationally determined contributions, or disaster recovery plans. Mechanisms providing for groups such as refugees or indigenous communities could achieve a whole-of-society approach, avoid exclusion, and help secure funding from international financial institutions.

He invited parliamentarians to support the Global Refugee Forum (December 2023), particularly its aim of mobilizing funding commitments that would recognize the needs of refugee-hosting States and those most affected by climate change.

The President asked the next panellist, Ms. Dartora, to describe the committee on which she served, and the measures it had taken on climate-related displacement, particularly in relation to Brazil's severe flooding in September 2023.

Ms. A.C. Dartora (Brazil), Vice-President of the parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on International Migration and Refugees (the Committee), panellist, said that she was proud to be participating as the first black woman elected to Parliament from the south of Brazil. The Committee, which comprised members of both parliamentary chambers in Brazil, had been formed to tackle the forced displacement of people from Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Syrian Arab Republic and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). The Committee was a focal point for joint action by the legislature, the executive and civil society on migration policy. It continuously monitored and assessed issues that affected migration trends at Brazil's borders, and the rights of the refugees involved.

Part of the Committee's role was to comment on migration-related public policy, the causes and effects of international migratory flows, and the links between migration and climate change. After a new government had come to power, and following national and international discussions, the Committee had been re-established in 2023, with a commitment to take specific action, particularly on the rising levels of climate-related migration.

According to UNHCR, environmental disasters or extreme weather phenomena were the cause of three times more displacement than conflict and violence. The World Bank had found that around 17 million people in Latin America would be forcibly displaced for climate-related reasons by 2050, with the global total exceeding 216 million by the same year.

High temperatures in tropical rainforest areas had increased the risk of wildfires, which had been particularly devastating recently, after months of drought, low humidity and strong winds. Official statistics in Brazil showed that rain and drought had directly affected 8.5 million Brazilians in 2023, including through loss of life, displacement and economic hardship.

Brazil had also been hosting many Haitian refugees after an earthquake in 2010. The Committee had monitored migration flows and ensured that the rights of Haitians could be exercised. A recent industrial accident had highlighted poor working conditions for some migrants, in addition to xenophobic violence and racism. As few migrants spoke Portuguese, they were more likely to have low-income, higher-risk jobs, which might not fully support their families. The Committee was developing protocols to assist such people. It had visited the site of the industrial accident, where it

had been clear that certain workers' rights had not been respected. International parliamentary cooperation was crucial to raise awareness and encourage legislators to make financial support available.

The President referred to Greece's recovery from past economic challenges, the significant flows of migrants into the country, and the wildfires that had taken place there in 2023. He asked the final panellist how far climate change and the displacement of people were linked in Greece; how climate change had affected refugees and other vulnerable people hosted by Greece; and whether the Hellenic Parliament had taken steps to protect the rights of climate-displaced people or displaced people affected by climate change.

Ms. D.-T. Avgerinopoulou (Greece), Chair of the Hellenic Parliament's Special Permanent Committee on Environmental Protection and the Sub-committee on Watercourses, panellist, said that Greece was vulnerable to climate change, as well as being a host country and transit route for refugees. In 2007, citizens in southern Greece had been internally displaced by wildfires that had destroyed 70% of forests and farmland, and had forced people, including those working in agriculture, to find jobs elsewhere. To date, 80% of those displaced had not returned.

The Hellenic Parliament's Committee on Environmental Protection was making every effort to tackle environmental and humanitarian concerns regarding climate refugees as related issues. It had contributed to a new national legal regime for climate refugees. The Greek Government had recently established a new Ministry of Migration and Asylum with a General Secretariat for Migration Policy, and was playing a leading role on the matter across the Mediterranean.

The Hellenic Parliament had also debated the implications of certain Pacific islands disappearing due to climate change, including the need to provide those islanders with new statehoods and livelihoods.

According to the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, more than a billion people had been displaced over the last 10 years, while more frequent extreme weather events were causing annual increases in the number of climate refugees. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre of the Norwegian Refugee Council had reported that more people were now displaced due to climate change than factors such as war or economic necessity. Parliaments had a duty to address such challenges.

Over the last 15 years, Greece had seen more than 100,000 people internally displaced due to natural disasters. As a result, the Hellenic Parliament had recently legislated for a system of State aid encompassing immediate payments for short-term needs, grants for new accommodation and reimbursements for economic loss. A recently passed law also provided support to all internally displaced people across the country. The legislation, which conformed to EU legal instruments on internally displaced people, was available to be shared.

After environmental disasters, the Greek Government implemented recovery plans, including reforestation, infrastructure reconstruction, tax incentives and job creation schemes to encourage people and businesses to return to affected areas. In partnership with other countries, Greece was preparing a holistic, coordinated and humanitarian approach to receiving migrants, whether for climate change or other reasons.

Over the years, Greece had given shelter and protection to hundreds of thousands of migrants, and rescued tens of thousands from the sea. At first, migrants had been placed in concentrated areas that were vulnerable to extreme weather conditions. More recently, they had been housed side-by-side with Greek citizens, by converting various buildings and even improving the buildings' energy efficiency. Migrants were being trained, including in the green economy, with the aim of contributing their new skills, either in Greece or their home countries.

To better protect those affected by climate change, national bodies, the IPU and the wider global community must agree on a common definition of the term "climate refugee" and adopt legally binding instruments regarding such people.

The President said that the national and regional learnings shared by panellists had been invaluable, especially the insight that immediate disaster response measures could be combined with preventative work by advancing green initiatives.

Mr. M. Seroor (Bahrain) said that crises, especially climate-related ones such as sea-level rise, were an important factor in people being displaced as they fled such situations and sought safety. Climate change was increasing the number of people on the move. It had now become an urgent matter needing a prompt response and more action within a common framework.

Through their legislative and budget oversight powers, parliaments could play an important role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those relating to displacement and climate change. As the link between citizens and the State, parliamentarians had to advocate for people-centred laws and policies, so that no one was marginalized. MPs should also encourage governments to focus on data, as information analysis was a significant part of resolving many challenges.

Communities that were the most vulnerable to climate change must be included in local development planning. Climate-related displacement should also be included in international policy-making to ensure the most beneficial outcomes for all.

A delegate from Fiji said that climate-related displacement was a critical issue for his country. He recalled the points made by the Pacific small island developing States at the 2016 UN World Humanitarian Summit about: the new norms defined by the severity, intensity and frequency of climate-induced disasters; the need for climate-change-affected countries to set priorities rather than donors; and the need for smaller States to influence multilateral decision-making through partnerships.

Climate-related work must be prioritized across the Pacific island States, as they were among the most vulnerable. Reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) among others indicated that many such States were likely to be submerged due to rising sea levels. The Pacific small island developing States were therefore deeply concerned about the threat to their citizens' right to life, and issues of displacement and forced migration, including the reported lack of appetite to amend the Refugee Convention.

In 2021, the Fijian Parliament had passed the Climate Change Act, which included provisions on displacement and relocation. The immediate focus was on internal displacement, but Fiji was also preparing for forced cross-border migration.

The work of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and that of the UNHCR was ongoing. The IPU's work on climate-related displacement deserved praise, as it brought together parliamentarians, who were the crucial decision-makers on that subject.

Mr. P.K.K. Thangwa (Kenya) said that climate refugees and climate displacement must be discussed in parallel with climate action. African leaders had discussed climate action at the Africa Climate Summit in September 2023 and had shared the resultant declarations with the IPU and various countries. The role of parliamentarians in climate action was to provide for the protection and assistance of displaced persons, and to ensure appropriate funding for climate-related emergencies.

Africa was most severely affected by climate change, even though it was only responsible for 4% of global greenhouse gas emissions. The IPU needed to develop policies to ensure that the countries contributing the remaining 96% were required to pay for carbon credits. African and other countries affected by climate displacement could then access funding and take appropriate action.

Public awareness of climate issues and environmental stewardship should also be raised, including through MPs engaging with their constituents, and by incorporating the topic in school curricula.

Mr. K. Khalil (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, like Greece, his country had suffered wildfires, as well as terrorists committing arson. Both events had destroyed large areas of vegetation and had displaced communities.

The Syrian Parliament had adopted legislation to serve those who had been displaced, including a law that made the State legally responsible for restoring the fire-affected areas. That responsibility had become a major burden, as Syria's economy had deteriorated due to past terrorist activity, including the occupation of certain parts of the country by armed groups. Syria called on likeminded countries to support it in restoring its natural habitats, especially as it had already made strenuous efforts to press ahead with such work.

Ms. G. Morawska-Stanecka (Poland), Member of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, speaking via video link, said that deteriorating environmental conditions caused by climate change were a driver of conflict. There were particularly visible links between climate change, poverty and conflict in developing countries. Factors such as climate-driven precariousness, or food and water insecurity, were leading to uncontrolled migration, followed by regional instability. Only a decisive response, implemented through multilateral organizations, could provide the assistance that climate-displaced people needed.

Parliamentary contributions to resolving climate-related displacement should include mainstreaming displacement costs into national policies, strategies and laws. MPs could also scale up action to avert or minimize climate change impacts on host communities, as well as impacts that jeopardized the rights of refugees, internally displaced people, and stateless people.

Mr. S.P. Teo (Tuvalu) said that, at two metres above sea level, Tuvalu was fighting its greatest climate change threat – sea-level rise – including through major earthworks. He asked whether Tuvaluans would be recognized as climate change refugees if the works were unsuccessful, and the country was submerged.

Ms. W.N. Makwinja (Botswana) said that climate change effects in Botswana were significant, including in the country's rural communities that were dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods. Drought had driven many in those communities who were outside social protection programmes towards cities that could not cope with such levels of internal migration.

Parliaments had a duty to mitigate the effects of all migration by setting up mechanisms to cater for those forced to move, including migrants in refugee camps and those susceptible to the false promises of traffickers.

Ms. D. Alzayed (Bahrain), Member of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, speaking via video link, said that Bahrain's continuing cooperation with international organizations included championing initiatives to tackle climate change, natural disasters and displaced people.

Parliamentarians were duty-bound to focus on climate-related displacement, including by: ensuring that resources were available; passing good-quality national, regional and international legal instruments; reviewing existing legislation to ensure it enabled countries to successfully implement their national strategies; and receiving guidance on how best to work jointly on climate change. The international community's expertise should also be leveraged to identify and overcome emerging new challenges.

Developed countries should support regions with fewer resources to tackle climate challenges, especially as many of those regions hosted huge numbers of climate-displaced people, and other refugees. Collectively, parliamentarians had a wide range of specialist expertise. They had a duty to maintain, foster and improve that expertise within the next generation, so that climate challenges could be tackled by each country's brightest and best.

Mr. W.M. Aye (Myanmar) said that Myanmar was prone to climate-related disasters, especially in Rakhine State. The conflict there had led to widespread internal displacement, exacerbated by the coup of 1 February 2021 that had also led to continuing atrocities, and a severe cyclone in 2023 across the centre of the country.

Parliamentarians were supporting their constituents, but significantly more aid was needed. Currently, the United Nations and civil society aid should not be channelled through Myanmar's military authorities, as they were preventing it from reaching affected areas. Instead, cash should be transferred directly to civil society or humanitarian organizations in the affected areas, where appropriate materials could be purchased. Recommendations for such organizations could be made.

Ms. S.E. Lucas (South Africa) said that a cross-party group of parliamentarians appointed to assess the impact of South Africa's 2022 floods had found that: readiness for climate-related disaster remained in question; aspects of early warning systems left much to be desired; project management and impact assessments did not always accurately reflect the reality of certain risks; disaster response could have been improved by involving non-governmental entities, such as traditional leaders; and the Auditor General's assessment of the allocation of recovery funds could have been improved. While the COVID-19 pandemic had helped prepare governments to respond to crises, thorough disaster management plans were still needed.

Mr. A.A. Paredes Gonzalez (Peru), Member of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, said that many people had previously moved to major cities due to the better educational opportunities there. However, people were currently moving to cities to escape environmental damage.

Peru's parliamentarians were soon to approve a budget to implement preventative climate change measures and enhance preparedness. Other lawmakers should consider doing likewise.

Mr. U. Fasi (Tonga) said that, in January 2022, Tonga experienced the most severe volcanic eruption the world had seen for 30 years. The eruption and subsequent ash plume caused widespread damage, including the destruction of smaller islands, and the displacement of people, households and whole villages. Vulnerable groups were particularly affected. The Refugee Convention should be reviewed to take account of the increasing number and profile of climate refugees.

The President asked the panellists to name one priority area on which parliaments should work.

Mr. I. Fry (UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change), panellist, said that States should develop legislation to address internal displacement, while cross-border displacement called for regional and global solutions. The majority of displaced people came from developing countries, which were responsible for small amounts of greenhouse gas emissions, a key cause of displacement. International cooperation was needed to avoid developing countries absorbing the costs of displacement. An optional protocol to the Refugee Convention would support that approach.

Mr. A. Harper (Special Advisor on Climate Action, UNHCR), panellist, said that parliamentarians should shape the way displaced people were protected within their own State, build on IPU work to facilitate regional cross-border protection covenants, and foster a sufficiently widespread regional consensus on the issue to be able to influence multilateral instruments.

Ms. A.C. Dartora (Brazil), Vice-President of the parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on International Migration and Refugees, panellist, said that what was needed were multidisciplinary efforts to mitigate climate change and to address the consequences of migration. For parliamentarians, that might mean legislating to encourage green infrastructure development. Priority must also be given to mainstreaming environmental work and good environmental education, and to continuing the fight against racism and xenophobia.

Ms. D.-T. Avgerinopoulou (Greece), Chair of the Hellenic Parliament's Special Permanent Committee on Environmental Protection and the Sub-committee on Watercourses, panellist, said that parliaments should work on mitigating the factors that led to further global warming and on preparedness, including early warning systems.

The President said that prevention, early warning systems and good auditing had been highlighted as important elements of addressing climate-related displacement.

Parliaments had a crucial role in: legislating to mitigate climate change displacement; approving appropriate budgets to implement those mitigations; further debating the inequity between those who cause climate change and those who suffer its consequences; continuing to raise public awareness of climate change; and encouraging younger generations to engage with green projects.

The sitting rose at 13:10.

IPU-ASGP joint workshop

The digital transformation of parliaments

WEDNESDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2023

(Afternoon)

The event was called to order at 14:30 with Ms. B. Sekgoma (Secretary General of the South African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF)) as the Moderator.

Mr. N. El Khadi (President of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP)), welcomed participants to the joint workshop, which marked the launch of the IPU-ASGP [Guide to digital transformation in parliaments](#). Digital devices and tools had become essential to all areas of parliamentary life and could help parliamentarians meet citizens' expectations and their mandate. The digitalization of parliaments involved consideration of digital infrastructure and cybersecurity, and the risks posed by artificial intelligence (AI) and big data. Secretaries General were at the forefront of the development of digital uses in parliament and, since they did not always have the answers, they needed to cooperate to develop a road map for digital transition that would work for parliamentarians, administrations and citizens. That need had resulted in the *Guide*, which had been developed by a working group that had held regular online seminars and had conducted a large-scale survey on the matter. The information it contained had been produced by Secretaries General for Secretaries General, as was the practice of the ASGP. It marked the result of 18 months of intense cooperation with the IPU. The *Guide* would not have been possible without the willingness of Secretaries General to share their knowledge. He was counting on all to disseminate it far and wide.

Mr. A. Richardson (IPU Programme Manager, Parliamentary Standards Setting and Knowledge Generation) said that the *Guide*, which was available online in English, French, Spanish and Arabic, was the fruit of successful collaboration between the IPU Centre for Innovation in Parliament (CIP) and the many Secretaries General who had generously shared their experience of digital transformation. The working definition of digital transformation used in the *Guide* was "the action of applying new digital-based tools and technologies to parliamentary processes and culture". Technology was only a part of it, however. Digital transformation went beyond digitalization to transform ways of working. While the COVID-19 pandemic had brought a period of forced innovation, the aim of the *Guide* was to support a managed transformation of the day-to-day business of parliament. Four areas of impact for a digital transformation programme had been identified: culture, people, process and technology. He encouraged participants to look at the *Guide*. It was a practical tool that discussed the current state of digital transformation, based on survey data, and the roles and responsibilities of parliamentarians and Secretaries General in digital transformation, and set out practical steps to establish a digital transformation programme.

The Moderator welcomed participants to the joint workshop. She invited Mr. M. Schäfer, the Secretary General of the German Bundestag, to share his approach to digitalization in parliament, in particular given the large size of the German parliament.

Mr. M. Schäfer (German Bundestag) said that, like other parliaments, the Bundestag was not starting its digitalization from scratch. Multiple projects had been under way for many years. The main issue was how to undertake digitalization in a consistent and effective manner. It was crucial not to work on the same thing in different places of the administration, which could happen if there was no comprehensive strategy. His administration had started by drawing up an overview of current and upcoming projects, and the different needs and expectations of all stakeholders – not only the administration, but also of the 730 members of parliament, approximately 3,000 employees and the parliamentary groups. The overview allowed the prioritization of projects, which was the first step towards a strategy. In terms of challenges and opportunities that he had learned, when considering the needs and expectations of the different stakeholders, there was a risk of uncovering competing requirements for the administration and the members of parliament. In order to avoid that, it was important to bring the stakeholders together and get them behind a single strategy.

Responding to the Moderator's question on how stakeholders could be brought together to collaborate efficiently, Mr. Schäfer said that his administration was working on it. A consultation process was needed to link the different views of stakeholders, avoid conflict and gain stakeholder's

commitment to working together on a strategy. His administration aimed to have a draft digital strategy ready for consultation with stakeholders by the beginning of 2024, with a view to having a commonly adopted strategy by the end of that year.

Regarding barriers to digitalization, Mr. Schäfer said that, as everyone in the room had probably experienced, there was resistance to change in all groups at all levels. He had the sense that fundamental opposition to digitalization was decreasing. A main obstacle was helping colleagues understand that digitalization involved rethinking parliamentary procedures. The direct digitalization of established procedures, that were often complicated and full of exceptions, did not work. The rethinking of processes was an aspect of the digitalization of administration that offered an opportunity to make things easier and more efficient.

The Moderator said that there were two key stakeholders in the institution of parliament – the administration and the members of parliament. She invited Ms. S. Falaknaz (United Arab Emirates) to share her experience of digitalization as a member of parliament.

Ms. S. Falaknaz (United Arab Emirates) said that she was an elected member of the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates. She communicated with her constituents through social media, and that was how she had won their trust and their votes. On her entry into parliament, she had been handed a tablet device and a specially designed portal allowed constituents to learn of her day-to-day activities and to reach out to her with their concerns. The Secretary General of her national parliament was a young person who believed in the digital transformation, which meant that the required budget and resources had been made available thanks to momentum from the top. Members of parliament had purchased an e-notebook as an experiment and the Secretary General had rolled them out across most of the General Secretariat.

The Moderator said that both presenters had touched on the issue of culture, and the need to change and find new ways of doing things. The areas of people, process and technology were also clearly important.

Mr. A. Richardson (IPU Programme Manager, Parliamentary Standards Setting and Knowledge Generation) suggested that participants should break into small groups for discussion to reflect on which of the four areas — culture, people, process and technology — they would seek to change in their parliament and on how improvements could be made through digital transformation.

Participants discussed their views in small groups.

The Moderator invited participants to share what had inspired or surprised them during their discussions.

A delegate from the United Arab Emirates said that his group had considered the area of culture, since that was considered the area with the greatest resistance to change. To change the culture in parliaments, Secretaries General could focus on four areas of action: holding sensitization activities for relevant actors, making digital innovations accessible — including through training; emphasizing the security of data, and ensuring that new applications were relevant.

A delegate from Botswana said that her group had focused on culture and people, since culture would determine how people responded to the process of change for digital transformation. It was important to change systems within a reasonable time frame, to avoid technology becoming obsolete before the tendering process had finished. Robust change management and effective communication was needed to prevent fear of change and help people adjust their mindsets.

A delegate from Canada said that, although each country represented in his group had a different situation, a common thread was the infinite need for resources to implement projects and the difficulty in implementing rapid change. In the consultation process and planning for digital transformation, it was important to take into account who made the decisions. In Canada, for example, the administration set priorities in that area, whereas in France, parliamentarians had a greater say.

A delegate from the Syrian Arab Republic said that his group had agreed that digital transformation was essential to the work of parliaments and their members. The security of information was a crucial consideration, however. The Vietnamese Parliament had experience of providing documents online following each session. The Syrian Parliament was quite traditional but was looking to follow the experience of the United Arab Emirates and enter the digital world.

A delegate from South Africa said that his group had considered process to be the main issue, since each area of digital transformation required a structured approach to change.

The Moderator invited the panellists to make their closing statements.

Ms. S. Falaknaz (United Arab Emirates) said that, as a parliamentarian, every day in office counted. The General Secretariat had quickly provided for business as usual during the COVID-19 pandemic using technology. Data was also an important aspect of digitalization, given the responsibility of parliamentarians to their constituents. One challenge was the generation gap between parliamentarians and their differing needs for skills acquisition.

Mr. M. Schäfer (German Bundestag) said that it was clear from the discussion that participants shared similar outlooks and challenges in terms of digital transformation. For him, culture was the most crucial of the four areas because an openness to innovation, not just in the person of the Secretary General but across the administration and among parliamentarians, was needed to advance digitalization. A key role of Secretaries General was to promote that culture of innovation and push digitalization from the top.

The Moderator invited the representatives of the IPU and the ASGP to make their closing statements.

Mr. A. Richardson (IPU Programme Manager, Parliamentary Standards Setting and Knowledge Generation) said that the energy in the room suggested that the motivation to work on digital transformation was there. He encouraged participants to consider the state of digitalization of their parliaments, what the next steps were and who to consult. The *Guide to digital transformation in parliaments* provided ideas on the roles of members of parliament and Secretaries General in digital transformation. The IPU Centre for Innovation in Parliament had developed a network of parliamentary directors of information and communications technology who shared experiences. The Centre would hold an online event on digital transformational leadership in November.

Mr. N. El Khadi (President of the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP)) said that the *Guide* was a tool to help develop a strategy for digital transformation. It was clear that vision and strategy were key to success in digital transformation as in all areas of life. The *Guide* was a valuable tool to support parliamentary administrations in developing their priorities on digital transformation.

The event ended at 16:00.

IPU-UNICEF joint workshop

The role of parliaments in securing effective public spending for children's rights

TUESDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2023

(Afternoon)

The event was called to order at 12:00 with Ms. S. Kiladze, Vice-Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and a former member of parliament of Georgia, as the Moderator.

The Moderator, reminding participants that the IPU and the CRC had adopted the Joint Statement on the Role of Parliaments in the Implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, said that parliaments were crucial to protecting and promoting children's rights, particularly through budgeting.

Ms. L. Moreira Daniels (Chief of Social Policy, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Angola), panellist, accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that children represented the future and, in many countries, over half of the national population. Parliamentarians were therefore crucial to upholding children's rights, allocating budgets, influencing policies and enforcing laws that benefitted children. They were essential to upholding national and international instruments — such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child — and to highlighting children's issues that did not receive media attention. They provided a contact point for their constituents, which included children. They also helped uphold Article 4 of the Convention, particularly General comment no. 19 (2016) on public budgeting for the realization of children's rights (art. 4); ensured the sustainability of services provided; and ensured transparency, accountability and public participation.

The national budget was a government's most important policy tool and it demonstrated where words would be put into action. Ministries of finance worldwide aimed to bolster and diversify economies, but that was difficult without investments in human capital, which should begin before birth. However, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Health Expenditure Database, health expenditure per capita in many countries remained low. Children were also impacted by public financial management issues, insufficient funding in particular sectors and programmes, regional and social inequalities in funding, and weak financial transparency and accountability mechanisms. Moreover, the way in which many budgets were designed hindered parliamentarians from assessing the benefit of children's programmes.

Some countries lacked resources and therefore allocated little to children's programmes. *Global Trends in Child Monetary Poverty According to International Poverty Lines* revealed that one in six children lived in poverty. Some underfunded schools did not have hygiene facilities, enough teachers, or even a roof. Malnutrition among children under the age of five, low salaries for doctors and nurses, and drug stock-outs had a lifelong impact on children, which affected the whole economy. Those issues concerned parliamentarians. It was important to ensure that budgets were guided by the four Convention principles: non-discrimination; best interest of the child; right to survival and development; and right to be heard. Budgets could be designed according to a life cycle approach, which took into account the latest data on the needs and vulnerabilities of demographic groups, and ensured demographic equity in budgets. Budgets often concentrated resources in the later stages of life but, according to Heckman's economic theory, investments in the early stages generated the highest return and were therefore the most valuable. Parliamentarians should advocate for such investments, examples of which included a government child support grant in South Africa, free sanitary products for girls, tax incentives to make donations for classrooms, and early childhood programmes and education. UNICEF had published a report, *Too Little, Too Late*, on that issue.

Parliamentarians were also crucial to overseeing how the budgets that they had approved were spent. They should hold hearings with ministries, request detailed quarterly expenditure reports, follow up on audit recommendations and work with civil society. Citizens could also monitor budgets. In order to increase public participation parliamentarians should inform citizens of when they would make field visits — as was the case in Mozambique — and so maximize the value of those meetings. It was also important to include children and young people in committee-level meetings in order to uphold the

fourth Convention principle to respect the views of the child. It was also important to strengthen equity measures to ensure no child was left behind. For example, parliamentarians had provided grants for children with disabilities, social assistance for vulnerable children, and bursaries for girls from poorer areas. Parliamentarians should advocate for programme-based budgets, work with their ministry of finance to receive better budgets, and identify where funds had been allocated. Parliamentarians' work went beyond approving budgets and carried on into the budget cycle.

The Moderator said that funds for children's issues remained low. Many countries were endeavouring to distribute those funds more equally and it was imperative to uphold the four Convention principles, which directly impacted children's lives. It was also important to influence budget cycles in order to ensure sufficient resources were allocated to children.

Ms. A.-E.N. Gomes da Silva Troso (Chair of the fifth Committee on Economy and Finance, National Assembly of Angola), panellist, accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that her government received its budget on 31 October every year. Members of parliament then worked for several weeks in specialized committees to evaluate the funds allocated to each committee. The committees for family and social workers, health and education, and human rights were particularly involved in analysing the budget from a children's rights perspective. Parliamentarians discussed the budget with civil society and, with varying degrees of success, relayed the outcomes of those discussions and their own opinions to the Government. The proposed budget was then taken to the plenary for final approval, which was usually given by 15 December.

Discussions with partners, civil society and non-governmental organizations about the national budget were usually productive. UNICEF, the National Assembly's main partner, would provide advice about how to increase impact in areas such as health, education, children, poverty. Debates with the Government could be difficult because the Government had to reflect the views of its partners and parliamentarians in the final budget.

The International Budget Partnership oversaw the Angolan Government's budget and had provided its last general evaluation for 2019 in 2021, and it would probably provide another for 2021 in 2023. It held discussions with the Government and civil society, rather than the Parliament. Although some of the recommendations from the Partnership's previous evaluation had already been implemented, others required more work and Ms. Moreira Daniel had referred to some of them. The first recommendation was for parliamentarians to preview the budget before its publication on 31 October. Some countries provided parliamentarians with the budget or an indication of where funds would be allocated. The second recommendation was to deliver audit reports and partial budget reports on time and to provide sufficient analysis of the Government's budget-related activities. Normally, an audit should be provided every quarter but they could be very late, although some progress was being made. The third recommendation was to avoid reallocating funds from one project to another without National Assembly approval, although this happened often. The fourth recommendation was to increase public and civil society participation in the budget. UNICEF had been pivotal to implementing that recommendation, but more could be done.

In 2023, social spending had reached a record high, particularly in the areas of education and health. However, figures were nominal and the increase was therefore not as significant as it appeared. That was the case for expenditure on water and sanitation. However, the Government did not always spend all of its budget. In 2021, it had spent 95% of the budget for water and sanitation as it had many projects to improve water distribution for cities and localities, but a lower percentage of the budget for education had been spent. More work was needed in that area and Ms. Moreira Daniels' recommendations to work with civil society, use oversight powers and make inquiries should be followed to ensure that budgets were used entirely.

To improve the upcoming budget, the National Assembly was endeavouring to engage with youth and children. The Speaker of the National Assembly had invited groups of children to the National Assembly to hear their views, hold discussions and teach them about the institution. She also wanted to create a children's parliament. It was important to promote capacity-building among members of parliament because sometimes they were unfamiliar with budgetary terminology and financial records. The current year would be the third in which parliamentarians would receive such training. It was also important to improve communication and find ways for civil society to help parliamentarians monitor budgetary expenditure, implement the budget, and oversee that implementation. There were organizations carrying out important work that would be valuable governmental partners. Better relationships should be developed with non-governmental organizations that had greater knowledge of the role of the budget and how to maximize expenditure. In that regard, UNICEF had been instrumental in Angola over the previous years. Its presence during the preparation

and evaluation of the budget had been pivotal to making progress. Angola should emulate other parliaments worldwide and create a budget office where members of parliament could access information and data analyses.

The Moderator was pleased to note the three committees working on children's rights in the Angolan National Assembly, the inclusion of civil society in the budgeting process, and UNICEF's work to raise awareness of children's rights within the National Assembly and to provide advice on how to improve. Progress in budget oversight, the social sector, education, health and sanitation was encouraging. Children's parliaments were important. Inflation was unfortunately a worldwide issue that decreased the nominal value of budgets allocated to children's issues. She hoped that the challenges highlighted with regard to budgeting for children's rights would be overcome.

The Moderator opened the floor for discussion.

Ms. E.T. Muteka (Namibia), accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that Namibia had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in October 1990. With regard to article 4, the national budget was important for upholding Convention commitments. The Namibian Parliament facilitated the implementation of the Convention by holding the Government to account and ensuring that resources were effectively used to uphold children's rights. Namibia allocated approximately half of its national budget to social areas that benefited children, including basic education (23%), health (13% on average), social protection (11%) and child grants (18%). Some 340,000 children received a monthly grant of 350 Namibian dollars from the budget, while children with disabilities received a monthly grant of 1,400 Namibian dollars. More of the budget should be allocated to early childhood development and pre-primary education, nutrition and child protection services. Currently, only 3% of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture budget was allocated to childhood development, and only 1% of the Ministry of Health and Social Services budget was allocated to nutrition. Funding should also be increased for child protection services. Spending efficiency should be improved through enhanced monitoring, including through parliaments, to ensure value for money and timely project execution. Spending equity should be improved to ensure that the most vulnerable children had the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

The Namibian Parliament had received support from UNICEF and the European Union to carry out a detailed budget analysis project. It examined the social sectors that benefitted children in order to inform debates and approve budgets. In 2022, a budget transparency action plan had been developed alongside UNICEF. The plan, which was currently being implemented, would ensure transparency in the budgeting process and would provide opportunities for citizens' participation, including children — as per article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child — when approving the budget. Members of parliament had received training on overseeing children's budgets in order to help them advocate for children.

The Parliament was bicameral and consisted of an upper house, which had a children's parliament, and a lower house, which had a junior council. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, both houses had received an annual budget but the shift online had generated expenses in order to provide children with equipment, online platforms and internet access. Work was underway to improve in that area.

Parliament faced three challenges with regard to reflecting children's needs in the budget. The first concerned children's limited involvement in developing the budget. To mitigate that issue, a session had been held a few months earlier to educate the members of the children's parliament on their role in the budgeting process. Parliament should also create more opportunities and platforms to facilitate children's participation. The second challenge concerned Parliament's limited financial resources, particularly for budget implementation. Consequently, it tended to approve and debate policies and legislation more effectively. The third challenge concerned the structure of the budgetary process. Parliament received the budget proposal from technical experts in various ministries, including the Ministry of Finance and Public Enterprises, and it was only included at the end of the budgetary process. That process was insufficient and needed to be changed. There was no greater way to invest in the future than to invest in children.

The Moderator, highlighting Namibia's relevant experience in upholding children's rights through its Parliament, expressed her hope that the information from the presentation would be included in Namibia's state report as part of the review of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in May 2024.

Mr. K. Tontisirin (Thailand) said that he wished to share Thailand's experiences from the previous decades in upholding children's rights. He had been involved in promoting children's rights and tackling hunger and malnutrition but more should be done in those important areas. He acknowledged the support UNICEF had provided to his country.

Regarding budgets, it was important to consider policies, strategies and programmes of action, and to learn about management concepts in order to not be overwhelmed by details. Parliamentarians had a legislative function and their most important task was improving budgets. Budgets could be aimed at activities that were not specific to children but benefitted them nonetheless, such as ensuring clean water and sanitation (Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6).

Referring to Ms. Moreira Daniels' presentation, he noted the lifecycle approach to budgeting. High-quality antenatal care services had to be available to increase the birth rate and reduce deaths related to childbirth. UNICEF had been promoting the first 1,000 days of life campaign, which involved promoting maternal health and breastfeeding, providing complementary feeding, ensuring basic services and implementing immunization programmes. In addition to those actions, universal health care might need to be strengthened. It was essential to continue monitoring growth and development throughout school and to take remedial action if necessary. For example, the causes of stunting should be identified and addressed. His visits to Ethiopia, Kenya and Zambia, had revealed that records of measurements were often kept but little remedial action was taken. Although that situation might have changed, it was nevertheless important to highlight it.

There was a need for a community base to increase basic services coverage. In Thailand, there was one volunteer for every 10 households. Volunteers received health and communications training, which they could use to ensure mothers and children benefited from those basic services. That base had been particularly effective during the COVID-19 pandemic. Government must provide basic services through universal health care.

At school, children should receive lunches, preferably containing local produce. The national budget had been used to create the Equitable Education Fund, which included oversight mechanisms. Many countries had negative population growth rates so it was important to invest in youth, strengthen the social sector and implement a life cycle approach in order to increase health-care coverage. Parliamentarians should exercise their legislative function with regard to the budget and oversee its implementation and progress. By interacting with citizens, parliamentarians could ensure that citizens' needs were reflected in the budget and they could act in the best interest of the community and country. Upholding children's rights was complex and required a multistrategy, multilevel and multistakeholder approach that included the government, academics, professionals, civil society, the private sector and individuals.

The Moderator said that the Thai Government and UNICEF had invited her to visit Thailand as part of a children's rights mission, and she hoped that the Thai Parliament would participate in order to increase understanding of how to uphold children's rights.

Ms. E. Jailosi Jolobala (Malawi) said that the budget cycle in Malawi began at local level with the engagement of community members. Following that, it was mandatory for the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs to conduct budgetary consultations which involved many sectors — including civil society, academia and the private sector — and the Budget and Finance Committee. The Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs would then table the budget and parliamentarians had two weeks to form groups and analyse it. A budget office was available to provide assistance and children's rights organizations, and UNICEF would participate in public parliamentary hearings to inform parliamentarians' debates. Parliamentarians could also engage with the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs. Following that two-week period, a debate was held and funds could be reallocated within the budget, provided that the total funds spent did not increase.

The National Children's Commission had been established and its board members included children. A youth parliament had also been created but its activities had been challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change crisis. The resolutions of the youth parliament were channelled to the National Assembly through respective committees. The committees therefore tabled the reports and the National Assembly would reach an agreement. If necessary, the Government could change laws or policies and, if that process was too lengthy, parliamentarians could introduce private members' bills. Such a bill had expedited legislative changes to help people with albinism.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis had led to financial constraints and a stagnation in the budget allocation for children's rights issues. However, the Ministry of Gender, Community, Development and Social Welfare dealt with children's issues and the analysis of its budget presented an opportunity to explore that area. Parliamentary committees oversaw budgetary implementation, and reviews were carried out to evaluate the activities of the previous six months.

Ms. S.R. Medegan Fagla (Benin) said that Ms. Moreira Daniels' presentation had made her aware that budgets in Benin did not consider children's issues enough within the national budget. UNICEF and other organizations should therefore help train parliamentarians to produce budgets that met children's needs. While parliamentarians had received ample training on gender issues and were able to approach ministerial budgets from a gender perspective, they were, however, unable to approach those budgets from a children's rights perspective. It was therefore essential that they received similar training in that area.

Since 2017, Benin had run a successful primary school meals campaign, which the World Food Programme (WFP) had recognized as the best in the world. Currently, 75% of schools offered lunch, which ensured that students had at least one meal per day and increased school attendance. In rural areas, or in areas where schools were far from homes, children used to either go home for lunch and not return to school, skip lunch and have poor concentration in the afternoon, or not attend school at all. However, the school meals programme had reversed those trends, which boosted grades and encouraged parents, particularly in rural areas, to send their children to school because it provided their children with one free meal per day. Parliamentarians within the Commission for Education, Culture, Employment and Social Affairs monitored the programme each year and kept the government abreast of challenges on the ground. At least once a year, the Government provided updates on the improvements that had been made thanks to parliamentarians' recommendations. By 2022, parliamentarians had increased programme coverage from 50% to 75%, and efforts were underway to reach 100% coverage. The Government was also exploring a programme to ensure that all children up to the age of five received the necessary calories and nutrients. Although that programme was still under consideration, it was hoped that it would be deployed by 2025. Malaria was the deadliest disease in Africa among adults and children, and therefore all children up to the age of five had access to free malaria care.

Ms. L. Northover (United Kingdom) said that she was a Liberal Democrat serving in the House of Lords, whereas Mr. T. Loughton (United Kingdom) was a Conservative serving in the House of Commons. Across the British political spectrum, there was agreement on the importance of health and education. However, there was much lively debate about how to support early childhood education, support children, balance pensioners' and children's needs, and provide funding. Parliament was central to that debate and the United Kingdom also had a free press. To scrutinize the activities of each ministry and oversee budget allocation and implementation, the House of Lords and the House of Commons had select committees consisting of members of parliament from all parties. They were crucial to holding the Government to account. In the House of Commons, those committees shadowed every ministry. Think tanks, external bodies, non-governmental organizations and civil society also scrutinized the actions taken and proposed by the Government.

Analysis was vital to the UK foreign aid programme. No one should be left behind and therefore gender (including reproductive health and rights), disability, education, health, human development, nutrition and climate change were analysed. During her time as a Minister in the Department for International Development and as Minister for Africa from 2010 to 2015, she recalled that developing countries had been requested to carry out analyses based on gender, even though the UK budget in 2011 contained no such analysis. However, those analyses were important to monitoring developments and implementation.

Mr. T. Loughton (United Kingdom) said that he was pleased to note Ms. Moreira Daniels' emphasis on the importance of early childhood and how life began in the womb. Importantly, the UN had recently recognized the importance of that antenatal period, particularly for babies and parents to form close relationships. Domestic violence and parents' perinatal mental health impacted children. In recognition of the importance of those early years, the Family Hubs and Start For Life programme had been established to monitor parents' mental health as well as children's health, and any attachment issues. The brain developed exponentially in the first 1,000 days of life so monitoring mental and physical health was important. Therefore, UN work in that area was a step in the right direction.

Children's issues were often compartmentalized, despite the fact that they impacted education, health, criminal justice, housing and digital safety. Often, funds spent in one department achieved results in another. For example, good education reduced youth crime rates. It was necessary to develop an improved and coordinated approach that included children's support and care, particularly in early childhood.

The UK Youth Parliament met annually to vote on topics that members wanted to analyse. The Youth Select Committee produced high-quality reports, to which the Government had to respond, and scrutinized ministers. There were youth mayors and cabinets across the country that sat alongside

counsellors as they decided budgets and policies. It was crucial that the Children's Commissioner could investigate all issues affecting children so that children's voices could be heard on all levels. That was particularly important for children who could not advocate for themselves, such as those with disabilities, refugees and the very young.

The Moderator expressed her hope that the British Government would work to implement the many recommendations that the Committee on the Rights of the Child had made at its ninety-third session in May 2023. She had worked on the country task force and she noted the strong civil society in the United Kingdom.

Mr. N. Alalou (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his country had amended its national legislation to accommodate the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children's rights started with families because children raised in healthy families led healthy lives. It was particularly important to focus on the health of women to ensure that they were ready for pregnancy and that their children were physically and mentally healthy. Once born, children needed adequate and appropriate nutrition, housing and education. Parliamentarians worked on legislation in those areas but they faced challenges.

The Syrian Arab Republic had been the target of terrorism, which had impacted human rights, destroyed infrastructure such as day-care centres and schools, and led to the loss of family members. The country was being occupied and had illegitimate foreign armies on its territory which, alongside sanctions, had increased inflation to 260% and negatively impacted income and families. The decrease in per capita, family and state incomes had worsened children's services. Those problems were not unique to his country.

There were three categories of children: (1) children living within families; (2) children who had been orphaned; and (3) children whose parents were unknown. Regarding the first category, the Parliament had tried and failed to improve the situation of families. Regarding the second category, the Parliament had worked with civil society to find orphanages that would care for newborns with either one parent or none. Regarding the third category, it was essential to provide a family, or some kind of lineage, and meet those children's needs. Education and health care were free and the private sector could help with any shortcomings. The IPU should support his country in overcoming that crisis, eradicating terrorism, lifting sanctions and convincing the foreign entities that were looting his country to leave.

The Moderator agreed that war had a devastating impact on children, particularly those in refugee camps.

Ms. M. Mohanta (India) said that parliaments were pivotal to implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child by ensuring funds and resources were invested effectively. India had introduced an exhaustive legal and policy framework to safeguard children's rights and ensure children's safety, development, protection and participation. In 2022, NITI Aayog and UNICEF India had signed a statement of intent on the SDGs to formalize a cooperation framework and develop a report, *State of India's Children: Status and Trends in Multidimensional Child Development*. As part of India's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the report would provide policy recommendations to accelerate progress towards achieving the SDGs and ensuring no child was left behind. In the 2022-2023 budget, the Government had allocated 92,736 crore Indian rupees for policies and schemes that ensured children's welfare, education and rights. Those funds should be allocated to schemes focusing on nutrition, women's safety and empowerment, protection for poor children, and children's rights.

Ms. M. Aldhain (Bahrain) said that her Government upheld children's rights, prioritized children's and orphans' protection, and provided a suitable environment for them. Alongside UNICEF, it was mobilizing funds for educational and social development activities because it considered education to be a fundamental right. The Government was adopting creative educational programmes to ensure children developed all of their skills. In the legal field, a special court for children and women had been established, laws had been passed to punish child trafficking, and work was underway to build the capacity of children's rights lawyers. The Government was working to provide the best health care and prevent the spread of disease. It was important for children to play sports. Education and health infrastructure had been improved and measures were being taken to provide children with psychological care. Children's knowledge of technology and science should be enhanced. Bahrain had hosted workshops alongside UNICEF to share knowledge about children's rights and further research in that field. She hoped that those efforts would help uphold children's rights, improve their welfare, and further their development in order to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

Mr. K. Mandandi (Zambia) said that all children had human rights, which included the right to freedom of expression, equality, health, education, a clean environment, a safe place to live, protection from harm, a name and a life. In 1991, the Zambian Government had established the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services to provide equitable social protection services and foster sustainable human development. The Ministry provided adoption and child welfare services, and furthered child development. In 1991, the Zambian Government had also ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child without reservation. Through the Ministry of Sport, Youth and Child Development, the National Assembly of Zambia had provided the National Child Policy 2015-2021, which was a revision of the National Child Policy 2006. It tackled existing issues that had emerged in the previous decade, such as orphanhood, vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence, disability and HIV/AIDS. It also addressed child marriage, migrant children, circumstantial children, and children's access to information and communication technologies.

The Moderator, thanking delegates and speakers, as well as the IPU for mainstreaming children's rights within parliamentary work, said that it was important to raise awareness among parliamentarians so that they would promote and protect children's rights.

The sitting rose at 13:45.

IPU-WHO joint workshop

Unpacking the development of the Pandemic Accord

THURSDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2023

(Morning)

The event was called to order at 9:30 with Mr. G. Silberschmidt (Director, Health and Multilateral Partnerships at the World Health Organization (WHO)) as Moderator.

The Moderator said that the workshop would focus on the role of parliamentarians in fostering ownership and transparency of the Pandemic Accord and in addressing the needs of diverse communities and countries worldwide, taking into account specific health disparities, cultural sensitivities and regional variations. There would be three parts to the workshop: opening remarks, an interactive panel discussion by parliamentarians and a floor debate.

Opening remarks

The Secretary General said that the purpose of the discussion was not to negotiate the Pandemic Accord since, under international law, the prerogative for negotiating treaties and other international instruments lay firmly with governments. Instead, the purpose was to ensure that the negotiations were informed by the real-life experiences of the people as articulated by members of parliament. The voice of parliaments must be heard loud and clear in negotiations. Once concluded, the legislative power in most jurisdictions would need to ratify the Accord for it to enter into force. It was also the legislative power that would provide resources and hold the government accountable for its implementation. As such, it was important to build an institutional relationship between parliaments and the governmental negotiating authorities which could be done from within the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Indeed, the IPU could mobilize parliaments at the highest level making sure their common aspirations could materialize.

The IPU was very convinced of the utility of the Accord. It was important to learn from the COVID-19 pandemic and put in place mechanisms that allowed for more resilience. It was only a matter of time before another pandemic broke out and world leaders must not be caught napping. The Accord was an opportunity to rebuild the trust in public institutions that had been lost during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as to re-establish equity and solidarity within and between countries. Indeed, COVID-19 had revealed gross inequities between countries, including in the distribution of vaccines. The Accord must address such matters helping to ensure that underprivileged countries had equal access to health products.

The doors would be open to continue the discussion beyond the present workshop. The IPU was working with the WHO to put in place a road map that facilitated the IPU's contribution to the process of concluding, ratifying and implementing the Accord. The IPU already had a specialized body responsible for health matters, namely the Advisory Group on Health, which was committed to the process.

The Moderator agreed on the important role of parliamentarians in the Pandemic Accord negotiations. It had come to his attention that parliamentarians were receiving letters from constituents containing conspiracy theories about the Accord. The WHO would prepare a factsheet that would empower parliamentarians to respond to such letters.

Dr. T.A. Ghebreyesus (Director-General of the WHO), speaking via video message, said that the United Nations General Assembly had recently adopted a political declaration on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, underscoring its commitment to addressing shared threats with a shared response. The COVID-19 pandemic had upended lives and livelihoods, disrupted societies and economies, and exacerbated political fault lines within and between nations. It had also eroded trust between governments and institutions, fuelled by a torrent of mis- and disinformation, and laid bare the inequalities of the world, with the poorest and most vulnerable communities the hardest hit. The next pandemic was not a question of if but of when and the international community could not repeat the same mistakes. It was for that reason that WHO Member States were negotiating a new Pandemic Accord and drafting amendments to the International Health Regulations (IHR). The goal was to strengthen the legal framework for the global response to pandemics. He urged

parliamentarians to support the negotiations towards a timely conclusion by the 2024 World Health Assembly. However, the work must not stop there. It was vital to follow through with national ratification and accountable implementation.

Ms. P. Matsoso (co-Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB), WHO), speaking via video link and accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that those who had survived the COVID-19 virus owed it to those who had succumbed to be better prepared for future pandemics. No single government or multilateral agency could address the threat alone. It was important to have a rules-based system to predict, prevent, detect, assess but also to effectively respond to pandemics in a highly coordinated fashion nationally, regionally and globally. There was a need to ensure universal and equitable access to health services and to prevent any disruption to those services during pandemics. Health products such as vaccines and medicines must be readily available and meet standards of quality, efficacy and safety. Diagnostics must also be of a high quality.

In recognition of the above, the World Health Assembly had taken a decision in December 2021 to establish the INB to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. The INB would address gaps in that area, including in the development and distribution of, and unhindered, timely and equitable access to, medical countermeasures, as well as in strengthening health systems and their resilience with a view to achieving universal health coverage. The body would apply a comprehensive and coherent approach to strengthening the global health architecture and develop a new instrument for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response with a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, prioritizing the need for equity.

The intergovernmental process for concluding the Pandemic Accord must rely on existing legal infrastructure. It must take place in accordance with the WHO Constitution, particularly Articles 19, 21 and 23, and recognize other legal instruments such as those that espoused human rights. Article 19 of the Constitution allowed for the adoption of conventions and agreements, Article 21 of regulations, and Article 23 of recommendations and resolutions. Member States must decide which of those instruments would be most appropriate and which clauses would be legally binding.

Regional representation must be taken into account in the drafting process given the diversity that existed between regions in terms of needs, burden of disease and capacity to respond. Therefore, the INB was made up of representatives from every WHO region. The drafting process would not be easy since regional priorities differed, but solidarity was needed, as demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic which had affected everyone everywhere.

The process for negotiating the Accord was Member State-led. The instrument would not be imposed on anyone but developed with the voices of every country in mind, taking into account local experiences and lessons learnt. The process would be consensus-based and conducted in a transparent and inclusive manner that recognized the importance of including different stakeholders. It was from that perspective that the WHO was involving as many stakeholders as possible with whom it had held public hearings, informal focus consultations and regional consultations.

She was pleased that the IPU would play a facilitatory role in the negotiating process. The COVID-19 pandemic had affected every sector of society from finance to education to transport. Parliamentarians were therefore well-placed to implement the Accord.

The Accord must take a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach to strengthening national, regional and global capacities and resilience to future pandemics. It must help prevent and prepare for future threats. It must foster ownership, transparency and solidarity, ensure alignment with the needs of diverse communities and countries worldwide and address specific health disparities, cultural sensitivities and regional variations.

The INB had begun its work in February 2022. The Accord had been through many different iterations and had now been developed into a negotiating draft. The next stage was for countries to begin negotiations.

Mr. S. Solomon (Principal Legal Officer, Unit on International, Constitutional and Global Health Law, WHO), accompanying his remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that one of the questions often asked by parliamentarians was whether they could see the text of the Pandemic Accord, to which the answer was yes. The process for drafting the Accord was one of the most transparent normative processes that had ever taken place at the WHO. The latest draft of the instrument, namely the negotiating draft, was not yet on the WHO website since it had not been translated into the six official languages. However, it had been distributed to every Member State and somehow found its way onto the internet.

The operationalization of equity was one of the key objectives of the Accord. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic had revealed many equity gaps, which the Accord aimed to address. There were three particular areas of focus: (1) better access to the tools needed to respond to pandemics as well as to the pathogens themselves, thus helping to improve public health surveillance and risk assessment and strengthening the development, production and availability of public health products for a better, shared and more equitably distributed response; (2) development of a more sustainable global production capacity for pandemic response products that was also better distributed; and (3) improved and stronger national health capacities, including health systems, public health surveillance, supply chain and logistics support, regulatory procedures and One Health processes. The WHO was seeking common ground on all three of those focus areas.

He drew attention to what the Pandemic Accord could not do. First, the Accord could not give the WHO sovereignty over the issues contained therein. As stipulated in the WHO Constitution, sovereignty was in fact held by Member States. Second, the Accord could not solve all the problems of pandemic prevention, preparedness and response because to do so required the cooperation of not only Member States but many other national, regional and international stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society and the general public. Third, the Accord could not be successfully implemented over the long-term without: (1) continuous engagement by all countries through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach; (2) good, transparent and inclusive governance; (3) sustainable financing; and (4) continuous political will.

The WHO Constitution operated in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, including the principle of sovereign equality among nations. Article 2 of the Constitution made it clear that the function of the WHO was to act as the directing and coordinating authority on international health work. National health work, however, was reserved to Member States, not to the WHO – a point included in Article 3.3 of the negotiating draft. In addition, the WHO Constitution made it clear that the Director-General was appointed by Member States and subject to the authority of the Executive Board, which was composed of 34 Member States. Member States therefore had the authority on all the above matters and on all matters that flowed from the Constitution, including conventions, agreements or regulations.

It was not the first time that the WHO had prepared a convention or agreement. Indeed, the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control had been adopted and entered into force in 2005 and the International Health Regulations had been adopted and entered into force in 2007. All such instruments were subject to domestic approval by Member States, including consideration by parliaments, to enter into force, as would also be the case with the Pandemic Accord. Adoption of the Accord in May 2024 did not mean entry into force.

Dr. F. Bustreo (Chair, Governance and Ethics Committee, Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)), accompanying her remarks with a digital slide presentation, said that it was important to keep in mind the impact of pandemics on the people. It was easy to lose sight of the people in treaty negotiations, where so much focus was placed on the legal aspects.

The COVID-19 pandemic had had the biggest impact on the most vulnerable populations, disrupting in particular the health services that were fundamental for the health and well-being of women, children and adolescents, including — but not limited to — immunization services and maternity services. It had also highlighted a shadow pandemic of gender-based violence. As much as 45% of women had experienced intimate partner violence during the pandemic or knew another woman who had. The problem had been exacerbated by the measures taken to control the pandemic, such as lockdowns, which had forced women into the same physical space as their perpetrators. The pandemic had also had an enormous impact on the education and psychosocial development of children and adolescents. Adolescents had been particularly affected in terms of their mental health. Indeed, the WHO had registered an increase in depression and anorexia among adolescent girls as well as an increase in teenage pregnancies.

The above impacts were not limited to the COVID-19 pandemic but had also occurred during other health events, such as the Ebola epidemic. The three countries affected by Ebola — namely Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea — had been on track to reduce maternal deaths before the pandemic had hit but had then regressed massively.

The equity dimension, including the gender equity dimension, must be at the forefront of pandemic response and women must be involved in the Pandemic Accord negotiations. It was unfortunate that Ms. Matsoso was the only woman on the INB and that national task forces on pandemic response were mostly led by men. Without the participation of women, the gendered aspects of pandemics, such as gender-based violence, were forgotten. There was also a need for equity between countries. Past events had shown that low-income countries tended to have less access to response measures, including vaccines, treatments and technologies.

Panel discussion by parliamentarians

Dr. L. Gomes Sambo (former WHO Regional Director for Africa and former Health Minister of Angola) took over as Moderator.

The Moderator said that pandemics could arise at any time from a disease outbreak anywhere in the world that scaled up geographically into an international public health concern. There had not been enough international coordination in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many countries had been looking out for themselves, ignoring developing countries who had been crying out for help in terms of better access to technologies and response capacities.

He had helped coordinate the response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa in 2014 and 2015 which had been a devastating experience given the lack of preparation nationally, regionally and globally. Although the WHO had learnt from the Ebola epidemic, it had not been enough to stop COVID-19. There was now an opportunity to draft an international instrument that could more effectively coordinate the response to future health emergencies. Parliamentarians could play a very important role in that process, particularly in terms of ratification and implementation at country level.

Dr. F.E. Ndugulile (United Republic of Tanzania), Vice-President of the IPU Advisory Group on Health, panellist, encouraged parliamentarians to use the COVID-19 pandemic as a benchmark on what was and was not working in the global health system. The international community had mobilized itself in a very short space of time to diagnose and treat the virus as well as to come up with a vaccine, but there had also been deficiencies in terms of access to the vaccine worldwide. It was important to use the experience to better prepare for future pandemics.

The Pandemic Accord must be people-centred and must prioritize equity. Members of parliament must be involved before, during and after its adoption. They were encouraged to push their governments to support, sign and ratify the Accord, domesticate it into national law, use their oversight function to ensure it was implemented in accordance with established timelines and make funds available for its implementation. It was also necessary to make sure that the Accord was well-received among the population as well as to debunk any negative campaigns around it.

Ms. E.T. Muteka (Namibia), panellist, said that the COVID-19 response had revealed an imbalance between first world and third world countries in terms of access to vaccines, testing and other prevention, preparedness and response interventions. The health systems in developing countries had been most severely disrupted due to limited response and a lack of capacity. The ability to contain a global pandemic required having a robust national system in place to detect outbreaks and respond speedily.

The Pandemic Accord must equalize capacities for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response between all countries, for instance, by encouraging the international community to invest in the production of vaccines, oxygen tanks, laboratories and advanced technologies, especially in developing countries. For the Accord to work, countries must be willing to share cross-border health data without compromising individual country's health information systems or sovereignties.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Namibia had increased hospital and bed capacities across the whole country, increased the number of isolation centres countrywide and constructed high volume oxygen tanks at major health facilities. It had also increased its capacity to test for COVID-19, enhanced access to vaccines across the country and created a platform for developing a national emergency preparedness and response strategy. Lastly, a national emergency team had been put together aimed at ensuring swift responses.

Ms. H. Al-Helaissi (Saudi Arabia), member of the IPU Advisory Group on Health, panellist, agreed on the need to apply the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and to foster better global coordination on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response. Accountability was also very important in crisis management.

Saudi Arabia had taken strict precautionary measures and made proactive decisions during the pandemic. For instance, it had issued a royal decree establishing a specialized committee to follow up on developments pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic. The country had pledged US\$ 500 million to support global efforts to combat COVID-19 and injected US\$ 50 billion into its banking, financial and business sectors to prevent an economic collapse. In addition, a health volunteer platform had been launched enabling volunteers from different sectors to contribute to the fight against COVID-19. A total of 34 hospitals had been equipped with 80,000 beds and a central national laboratory had been

established in addition to 19 regional labs. Out of all the measures taken, the most difficult was the suspension of the Hajj pilgrimage for the very first time in Muslim history. It was, however, a necessary step that had saved many lives.

She drew attention to the different technologies used by her Government in managing the pandemic, including an application which displayed the COVID-19 status of its users. Although many people had criticized the application for abusing individual privacy, it had helped decrease COVID-19 cases by 61%. Saudi Arabia had also made significant investments in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, 5G and data management to create an interactive map of COVID-19 data. The map provided accurate statistics and analytics to support national strategic decisions.

Floor debate

Mr. G. Silberschmidt (Director of Health and Multilateral Partnership at the WHO) took over as Moderator.

A delegate from India said that the COVID-19 pandemic had underscored the need for a more comprehensive international approach to public health that acknowledged that the well-being of all living entities was interconnected. With that in mind, India had put forward the vision of *One Earth One Health* which called for holistic health care for all, including people, animals and the planet. It had introduced health policies that aimed to provide universal health services at affordable prices and established the world's largest health protection programme. Awareness raising and diseases control programmes were conducted regularly as a means of preventative health care. One such programme was the Eat Right India Movement, which promoted healthy lifestyles. India had increased investment into reforms that safeguarded against public health emergencies and launched a health infrastructure mission to develop long-term capabilities and preparedness in that regard.

The global health system must be able to withstand and respond to shocks. To that end, it was necessary to invest in national health care infrastructure, for instance, by upgrading health facilities and expanding medical education and training. It was also necessary to invest in research and development for new vaccines and treatments. Global health challenges could only be addressed through effective collaboration between governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector. Global health institutions must be inclusive and transparent and must reflect the diversity of the global community. India was committed to global solidarity having shared its public health expertise with other countries, particularly in the developing world, on issues such as disease surveillance and immunization.

A delegate from Portugal, speaking on behalf of UNITE Parliamentarians Network for Global Health, said that UNITE was firmly committed to the Pandemic Accord given the trillions of dollars and nearly seven million lives lost to the COVID-19 pandemic. The international community must never again make the same mistakes that it had been making throughout history. Indeed, it tended to commit its efforts every time a crisis occurred but then moved on without fixing the structural problems at the heart of a crisis. It was necessary to adopt an accord to address financing problems related to pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, put in place mechanisms with accountability and monitoring capabilities, and make countermeasures available for all. Indeed, equity was a key element. It could not be that citizens of richer countries were having two or three doses of a vaccine while citizens in Africa remained unvaccinated. Parliaments must convince governments to push through the Pandemic Accord and then ratify it.

A delegate from Bahrain believed in the importance of a global system that provided quality health care for all. The international community must uphold its commitment to providing technical support and coordinating vaccines. It was not the time to dismantle the current systems but instead to fill the gaps that had come to light during the COVID-19 pandemic. Efforts must be taken to enhance health systems. All States should develop their response mechanisms, provide the resources needed to face new challenges, improve their pandemic preparedness in line with WHO guidelines, and integrate the lessons learnt from COVID-19.

A delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran said that universal health coverage had always been a priority for the Islamic Republic of Iran. The national development agenda put an extra emphasis on social welfare and health while the Constitution set the framework for a national health service available to all citizens. Health care was provided all around the country in both big and small areas.

International collaboration was important so that countries could share experiences and transfer technologies. Health threats in one country could easily spread to neighbouring countries, to the region and even around the world.

The Islamic Republic of Iran was able to provide good health care services to its citizens despite obstacles such as sanctions. Sanctions had, however, caused a great deal of damage. The IPU was a good platform from which to combat unilateralism.

A delegate from the Syrian Arab Republic said that health care was available to all citizens of the Syrian Arab Republic. The country, however, was facing a terrorist war and blockade which was having a negative impact on the economy and causing the health system to deteriorate. Many doctors were leaving the country and medical equipment was lacking. Although the WHO had provided support, that support had decreased over time. He called on the IPU to assist his country in improving its health care infrastructure.

The Moderator called on governments to conclude a strong and equity-focused Pandemic Accord by 2024 and on parliaments to ratify and implement the Accord swiftly.

The event ended at 11:00.

Adoption of resolutions, final documents and reports

SITTING OF FRIDAY, 27 OCTOBER 2023

(Afternoon)

The sitting was called to order at 17:15, with Ms. C. Cerqueira (Angola), President of the Assembly, in the Chair.

Item 3 of the agenda (continued)

General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)* (A/147/3-Inf.1 and DR)

The President said that substantive and robust deliberations had taken place over the preceding three days of General Debate on the theme *Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)*, during which some 160 interventions had been delivered by close to 120 national parliaments and 12 partner organizations. Set out in document A/147/3-DR, the resulting Luanda Declaration emphasized the collective responsibility of parliamentarians to act effectively on issues raised so as to promote the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16. The Declaration considered good governance as essential to achieving all SDGs, with parliaments playing a key role, and called for strengthened trust and more active public participation in all institutions, at all levels and in a more equitable and inclusive manner. The Declaration also underlined the centrality of the rule of law to action to promote good governance, including transparency in the administration of public affairs for the common good.

With justice as a prerequisite to peace, the Declaration stressed the importance of strengthening impartiality in its administration and guaranteeing swifter proceedings. It also reaffirmed conformity with the rule of law as the basis for the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflict, reiterating the need to protect human rights and ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid to conflict-affected regions. It furthermore called for action to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women, minorities and the socially disadvantaged, for public sector reform, and for resource mobilization, with an emphasis in development cooperation on public investment. Lastly, in light of the upcoming global stocktake of SDG 16 in 2024, the Declaration urged parliamentarians to ensure that national plans were aligned with that Goal in the interest of peace and justice for all, with no one left behind.

She took it that the Assembly wished to endorse the Luanda Declaration.

It was so decided.

Item 5 of the agenda

Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm (Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights) (A/147/5-DR)

The President drew attention to a revised draft resolution entitled *Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm*, set out in document A/147/5-DR, which had been prepared by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights.

Ms. L. Reynolds (Australia), co-Rapporteur for the revised draft resolution, said in presenting the text that it had been supported by all Standing Committee members, who had worked in a great spirit of collegiality and common cause to strengthen the initial draft further. Comprehensive and practical, the revised draft was focused on supporting all parliamentarians to take meaningful action, through education, legislation and advocacy, to stop a very wicked form of child trafficking. If the text was adopted, the IPU could be proud of leading the way towards helping the eight million vulnerable children transferred or recruited into orphanages or residential care settings for exploitation and/or profit. It would also be supplementing the “3Ps” — prevention, protection and prosecution — used in

combating human trafficking with a fourth, namely “partnerships”. By working together in global partnership, parliamentarians could eventually end orphanage trafficking. Also needed, however, were more robust child protection systems and suitable family-based care. She thanked all those who had contributed towards finalizing the revised draft resolution, which she hoped that the Assembly would see fit to adopt.

The President said she took it that the Assembly wished to adopt the revised draft resolution *Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm*.

The resolution was adopted by consensus, with India expressing a reservation on operative paragraph 4 and the Islamic Republic of Iran expressing a reservation on the reference to SDGs 4.1 and 4.2 in preambular paragraph 22.

Mr. A. Gajadien (Suriname), President of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, thanking Ms. Reynolds and Committee members for their constructive approach to preparing the resolution, said in reporting on the Committee’s other work at the Assembly that members had firmly supported the Bureau’s recommendation that preparatory work should begin at the 148th Assembly on a draft resolution entitled *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*, with Ms. M. Rempel Garner (Canada) and Ms. N. Lugangira (United Republic of Tanzania) as co-Rapporteurs. Mr. Naughten (Ireland), Chair of the Working Group on Science and Technology, had offered to work with the Standing Committee with the aim of developing strong guidance for parliamentarians in the subject area.

As a topic for debate at the 148th Assembly, the Committee had agreed to *Sustainable actions to improve the life conditions of people with disabilities, including their chances for education and work opportunities*. Along with the proposed draft resolution, the topic chimed well with the Committee’s three chosen areas of focus for the coming years: improvement of the functioning of parliaments; democracy and human rights in the digital era; and a more inclusive and fairer world. Through that focus, the Committee would develop its expertise to increase impact and contribute robustly to work under the IPU Strategy. Lastly, the Standing Committee had elected Ms. J. Mahmood (Maldives) as its new President and Mr. A. Torosyan (Armenia) as its new Vice-President. He thanked Committee members for what had been achieved together during his two-year term.

The President said she took it that the Assembly wished to take note of the report.

It was so decided.

Item 6 of the agenda

Reports of the Standing Committees

Ms. D. Bergamini (Italy), member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, reporting on the Committee’s deliberations at its two recent sittings, said that an expert hearing had been held, followed by a lively debate, on the theme *Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence*, which was the topic of a resolution to be developed by the Committee at the 148th Assembly. As a follow-up to the 2022 IPU resolution on peace processes, a panel discussion had also been held on an inventory of tools for parliamentarians to engage in dialogue, legislation, oversight and prevention in the pursuit of peace. The discussion had covered common and human security approaches and the principles of free speech as well as good practices for promoting parliamentary engagement in conflict prevention. A further panel discussion on the role of parliaments in promoting transparency and fighting corruption had identified cooperation with supreme audit institutions as a means of helping to eradicate fraud, considered a root cause of conflict and a threat to peace.

In addition to several Bureau members, the Committee had elected Ms. A. Kuspan (Kazakhstan) as its President and Mr. M. Rezakhah (Islamic Republic of Iran) as its Vice-President. In discussing its workplan, the Bureau had agreed to convene between Assemblies to enhance preparedness for the Committee’s meetings, including through monitoring of the situation of peace and international security. It had also agreed that parliamentarians should find ways of resolving conflict while showing humility, dignity and respect for all parties. With peace and security as the IPU priority theme for 2024, the Bureau had further agreed to strive for a reinvigoration of multilateralism to strengthen the links among nations, citizens and institutions so as to give peace a chance. She thanked all Bureau colleagues and Committee members for their precious work.

The President said she took it that the Assembly wished to take note of the report.

It was so decided.

Ms. M. Al Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates), member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, reporting on highlights from the Committee's sessions in Luanda, said that the first of three panel discussions had focused on promoting access to affordable green energy and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity, which was the subject chosen by the Committee for a draft resolution at the 148th Assembly. The second panel discussion had centred on a draft outcome document from the Parliamentary Meeting to be held at the 28th session of the United Nations (UN) climate change conference in Dubai, where a critical global stocktake of progress achieved since the Paris Agreement in 2015 was on the cards. The Meeting was to take place in the Green Zone, which would enable direct access to the decision-makers with whom the IPU sought to partner. The third panel discussion had focused on ways of ensuring global food security through making agrifood systems more sustainable, resilient and capable of delivering nutritious and affordable food for all.

The key takeaways from the panel discussions related to the severe impact of climate change and disasters on the vulnerable, and the inclusion of young people in resolving food security issues; the paramount importance of collaboration and partnership among all stakeholders in matters of climate change; and parliamentary action to promote equitable food access, sustainable agriculture, transparent data, knowledge sharing and international cooperation so as to address food and nutrition security effectively. Lastly, the Committee had elected Mr. A. Gerasymov (Ukraine) as a Bureau member, Mr. W. William (Seychelles) as its President, and herself as its Vice-President. Ms. L. Moreina (Uruguay) would replace Mr. R. Lozano, also of Uruguay, who was no longer a member of parliament. In approving its workplan for the 148th Assembly, the Bureau had agreed to dedicate all its sittings to preparing a draft resolution on its chosen subject.

The President said she took it that the Assembly wished to take note of the report.

It was so decided.

Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium), Vice-President of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, reporting on the Committee's work in Luanda, said that, at the first of its two sittings, the Committee had learned from the UN Resident Coordinator in Angola about the work of her UN Country Team, which was guided by the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and its four pillars of people, peace, prosperity and planet. In addition to providing oversight of government actions, parliaments had been encouraged to meet the Resident Coordinators in their home countries and learn about the work carried out there with UN partners.

At its second sitting, the Committee had considered aspects of the United Nations Security Council reform following input from two contributors with specialist knowledge of the subject. The first had encouraged parliamentarians to work on formulating reform proposals for submission through the IPU, while the second had stressed the need for reform measures that would ensure the implementation of Security Council resolutions and enhance the Council's effectiveness and efficiency. The Committee had also adopted its first-ever motion, on bringing gender equality to the United Nations, and planned to work on a second motion on Security Council reform at the 148th Assembly. Lastly, Bureau members had visited an impressive UN project outside Luanda that provided microloans and skills training to help Angolans transition successfully from the informal sector to the formal economy. Thanks to that project, moreover, products were now being exported to a number of countries around the world. He welcomed new Bureau members Mr. R. Lopatka (Austria) and Ms. L. Crexell (Argentina), who would also serve as the Committee's Vice-President, and new President Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada).

The President said she took it that the Assembly wished to take note of the report.

It was so decided.

The President congratulated all the newly elected office holders of the Standing Committees and wished them full success in their important work ahead.

Item 7 of the agenda**Approval of the subject item for the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights
at the 149th IPU Assembly and appointment of the Rapporteurs
(A/147/7-R.1)**

The President, introducing the item and drawing attention to the related information set out in document A/147/7-R.1, said that the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights had proposed as its subject item at the 149th Assembly *The impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law*, with Ms. M. Rempel Garner (Canada) and Ms. N. Lugangira (United Republic of Tanzania) as co-Rapporteurs.

She took it that the Assembly wished to agree to the proposed subject item.

It was so decided.

Closure of the Assembly

Mr. M. Bouden (Algeria), speaking on behalf of the African Group, expressed gratitude to the Parliament of Angola for hosting the 147th Assembly and paid special tribute to Ms. Cerqueira for her prudent stewardship of the proceedings. Recognized and respected for her humanitarian approach, defence of the rights of peoples and championing of just causes, she had skilfully discharged what must have been a difficult task at a time when events were escalating and positions diverging increasingly around the world. Along with its staff, consultants and others, the IPU was to be applauded for its successful organization of the Assembly in such a beautiful and hospitable African Portuguese-speaking country, bringing pride to the continent. Through cooperation in every sphere, the peoples of Africa would safeguard their interests in the face of major challenges, including severe polarization, tension and turmoil. Such challenges should prompt the international community to rethink its stance towards just causes and assume its responsibility to protect colonized peoples subjected to oppressive violence and human rights violations. International peace and security were indivisible and all was rooted in human solidarity, lack of which would have dangerous repercussions for the entire world.

He warmly congratulated the incoming IPU President on her election and wished her every success. She could be assured of full support in abiding by the founding principles and values of the IPU, upholding justice, and demonstrating humanity. The IPU was fast approaching its 150th Assembly, necessitating even greater efforts to further raise its profile for the sake of a better world and well-being for all.

Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the Twelve Plus Group, said that the Group had met throughout the Assembly and had also organized, together with the delegation of Ukraine, an important and well attended side event *Lives Beyond Borders: Remembering Children Lost to War*. Members of the Group had actively participated in, among others, meetings of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and Democracy, including as co-Rapporteur for its pivotal resolution *Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm*. The Group welcomed the Committee's choice of artificial intelligence as the topic for a draft resolution, with one of its members again serving as co-Rapporteur. Concerning the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, the Group applauded the adoption of its first-ever motion, on bringing gender equality to the UN General Assembly, and welcomed the Committee's pledge to craft similar end products in future. Currently Acting Chair of the Committee, he commended its former Chair, Mr. Wehrli (Switzerland), and its Secretary, Ms. Torsney, for their work on redefining the Committee's mandate, and was convinced that, in the experienced hands of its new Chair, Mr. McGuinty (Canada), the Committee would continue to build on its achievements.

All parliamentarians must strive to address the current situation in the Middle East, which would hopefully have become a less divisive topic by the time of the 148th Assembly. With resolutions on the inhuman war of aggression against Ukraine still without effect on the ground, he called on Russian parliamentarians to take responsibility rather than be complicit in terrible war crimes. He also called on the incoming IPU President to demand the immediate and unconditional release of the 2023 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Ms. N. Mohammadi, from an Iranian prison. Parliamentarians must do the same, both in her case and in that of all others imprisoned simply for peacefully exercising their human rights. Delegations from the Group had met with the delegation of parliamentarians in exile from Myanmar, where the 63 cases before the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians spoke all too clearly to its human rights situation. Parliamentarians must raise all such cases in their bilateral meetings with country authorities and maintain pressure at every opportunity.

On a positive note, the IPU was writing history with the first-ever election of an African woman as its President. Ms. Ackson would have a strong ally in the Group, which was committed to upholding the core IPU values and principles. He expressed appreciation to all participants in the Assembly for the inspiring exchanges that had taken place, to the Angolan hosts for their warm hospitality, and to the IPU Secretariat for its tremendous work.

Mr. M.A. Nader (Iraq), speaking on behalf of the Arab Group and thanking the Parliament of Angola for its kind hospitality and unstinting efforts to facilitate the work of the Assembly, said that the Group roundly appreciated the support of the Angolan and other delegations for the plight of Palestinians, above all in Gaza, where the most appalling genocide was playing out before the eyes of the whole world. The achievement of international peace and security required concerted efforts to identify and address the causes of conflict precisely so as to prevent adverse consequences such as those being witnessed as a result of global failures.

Unfortunately, in addition to not shouldering their responsibilities on that score, the countries with influence sometimes lacked neutrality and were biased in favour of those acting in disregard of human rights and international law. Observance of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations was alone sufficient to secure just solutions to war and conflict, stop the killing of women, children and civilians, and end occupation. As the history of Angola showed, occupation would indeed end, even if it took four centuries. He thanked the IPU Secretariat for its excellent organizational skills and congratulated Ms. Ackson on her election, wishing her every success in her new role.

Ms. D. O'Neill (Australia), speaking on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, said that her delegation was honoured that the Group had endorsed its Chair, Mr. Dick, Speaker of the Parliament of Australia, as a member of the IPU Executive Committee, the first time in over 30 years that an Australian had served in that position. The Group thanked the Angolan hosts of the Assembly, and in particular Ms. Cerqueira, for having taken such good care of all delegates, and likewise thanked the IPU Secretariat for its tireless efforts to ensure a successful Assembly.

The Group had endorsed by consensus Mr. Teo, Speaker of the Parliament of Tuvalu, as its candidate for the Cremer-Passy Prize awarded to him for climate change advocacy. In advance of the Assembly, its Chair had hosted a series of webinars for Group members, including on youth and women's engagement with parliaments in the region, which had provided an opportunity to acknowledge common challenges, share initiatives and learn about best practices. The Chair had also invited the IPU presidential candidates to present themselves to the Group by webinar and subsequently in Luanda. The Group welcomed the presence of four of its eight Pacific Island members at the Assembly, which had ensued from its commitment to engage those members in IPU events. Congratulating Ms. Ackson on her election, the Group looked forward to increasing its presence and to further strengthening its relationship with the IPU.

Mr. M. Nadir (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC), extended thanks to the Parliament of Angola for its warm welcome and meticulous hosting of the Assembly as well as appreciation to Mr. Pacheco, who had been a good friend to all GRULAC countries. As the IPU President, he had stood up for all IPU Members and worked hard to attract additional parliaments from the GRULAC region into the IPU membership, the most recent entrant being the Parliament of the Bahamas at the current Assembly. The Group was grateful to Mr. Pacheco for his service and to the IPU Secretary General and his staff for having been so kind, accommodating and helpful in the run-up to the Assembly.

A delegate from the Islamic Republic of Iran, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the same countries that expressed concern over the imprisonment of an Iranian national had expressed no similar concern about the massacre of over 2,000 children in Gaza. In addition to themselves holding many thousands of prisoners, those countries were responsible for untold deaths by drowning at sea, were separating the children of migrants and asylum-seekers from their families and sought to mislead global public opinion to shift focus away from the Israeli child-killer regime. With their history of colonial aggression, they were unqualified to run the world and preach about international law and rules-based order. Rather, they should focus on their own domestic matters and avoid meddling in the internal affairs of others.

Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), President of the IPU, delivering his final statement in that capacity, expressed sincere thanks to all the Angolan authorities and parliamentary staff for the manner of their welcome and for their excellent preparation of the Assembly, which had been behind its success. His promise at the start of his mandate in 2020 to have an IPU Assembly in a Portuguese-speaking country had materialized in Luanda, with over 1,200 participants from 128 countries around the world in attendance, to whom he was grateful for having chosen to come and engage actively in the IPU's work. Over the preceding week, they had heard many inspiring examples of how parliaments worked to promote action for peace, justice and strong institutions, and many good ideas about principles for guiding that action. The Luanda Declaration underscored the vital role of good governance in social cohesion, recognized the inseparable bond between people and institutions, emphasized the need for gender parity, youth inclusion and fair representation of all groups, and underlined the responsibility to combat corruption and protect human beings.

The role of parliamentarians as lawmakers and overseers of the executive uniquely positioned them to champion much needed governance reforms to ensure transparency and historic trust in institutions. All Members should make the most of the IPU, especially in the current troubled times, with escalating challenges such as the Middle East crisis compounding the urgent need to act on commitments. In all such long-running conflicts, violence beget violence, not peace. The hostilities

must be ended and discussions renewed with the aim of coexistence in peace and security for Israel and Palestine. More immediately, however, the flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza and the release of all hostages must be assured.

The 147th Assembly had brought together experts and parliamentarians for the Second Global Parliamentary Summit on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism. As made clear in the Luanda Declaration and with the Sahel as a case in point, inclusive, transparent and robust institutions were critical to breaking cycles of political instability, identifying solutions and developing legitimate governance. Most crucial, however, was implementation.

In 2024, while continuing its work on climate change, the IPU would in parallel work on peace and security as a priority theme. No one focused on their survival in conflict could think about the SDGs, gender parity in parliament or youth participation, for which peace was therefore a prerequisite.

Now at the end of his IPU presidency, he reiterated his thanks to all IPU Members, from which he had learned much during his three years in office. He congratulated his successor, whose strength, competence and professionalism as an African woman would surely make her an amazing President, and thanked Ms. Cerqueira for the warm reception in Angola. He had been honoured to serve the IPU and would be equally honoured to serve it as a delegate from Portugal.

The President, in her closing statement, said that the Assembly had ended with a sense of duty accomplished and of strong friendship, cooperation and dialogue forged between Africans and the world as represented by parliamentarians from all continents. She commended Mr. Pacheco for the impetus he had given to the IPU and for having ended his mandate in the Portuguese-speaking country of Angola. For the first time, an African woman had been elected as IPU President, which was a tribute to the numerous women Speakers of Parliament from the region. She congratulated the Parliament of the Bahamas on becoming the 180th IPU Member and adding value, with its young woman Speaker, to women's representation in the IPU.

Over 1,200 delegates from around the world had gathered in Luanda to promote peace and justice through parliamentary action in support of development, fundamental human rights, the fight against terrorism and preservation of the environment while also striving for alternative solutions to address the climate and energy crises. The Assembly had demonstrated the importance of including all groups in discussion and decision-making, especially youth as a key resource and women as a valuable asset for peace and sustainable development. From the intense debates, it was evident that parliamentarians were set on pursuing dialogue and tolerance for resolving differences between peoples and States, and on developing robust action to achieve the SDGs, in particular SDG 16, with its emphasis on parliaments as key governance institutions. It was their job to leave a legacy of peace and prosperity for all. She expressed special thanks to the President of Angola for his unwavering support and to all those who had enriched the work of the Assembly and contributed to its success.

The President was presented with a gavel and block in appreciation of her service to the 147th IPU Assembly.

The President declared the 147th Assembly closed.

A video of members of the UN Chamber Music Society playing the official IPU Anthem was screened.

The sitting rose at 18:50.

Luanda Declaration

Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)

*Endorsed by the 147th IPU Assembly
(Luanda, 27 October 2023)*

The buck stops with us. This is the overarching message that we, parliamentarians participating in the 147th IPU Assembly in Luanda, retain from our General Debate on Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions, corresponding to Goal 16 of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 16), also known as the “governance goal”.

Our discussion highlighted the critical role of good governance as a societal good in its own right and as a means to the attainment of all the Sustainable Development Goals that were adopted in 2015. Good governance is the glue that binds people to each other and to their institutions, nurturing solidarity, civic engagement and political citizenship. At the same time, as defined under SDG 16, good governance enables sound policymaking and direct accountability to the people, without which we will not succeed in our shared struggles against poverty, inequality, conflict and environmental degradation, including the climate emergency, that are being experienced in every corner of the world.

We have taken stock of the many governance issues highlighted in SDG 16 that need immediate attention according to United Nations reports but also, and more importantly, of our experience in our own countries, where popular disaffection with the institutions of government – and with politics in general – is becoming ever more palpable.

As representatives of the people, we are keenly aware of our responsibility to address this state of affairs. We end this Assembly fully aware that SDG 16, more than any other SDG, relates to parliament as the key institution of governance in every country. Having the power to enact laws, adopt budgets and oversee the executive, we are uniquely positioned to make government work better at all levels – national, sub-national and local – and to restore the conditions for peaceful coexistence that support sustainable development and democracy in all their dimensions.

Topping the list of governance issues that we must tackle most urgently is the need to strengthen trust and ensure the more active participation of citizens in institutions at all levels, beginning with our own parliaments, where women and youth, as well as the poor and other disadvantaged groups, must be more equitably represented.

We believe that inclusion and representation are essential to building legitimacy and transparency, as the keys to more effective accountability. By opening up institutions to people from all walks of life and without discrimination, we can strengthen the people's trust in their institutions, provide public services that deliver and develop policies that leave no one behind. With regard specifically to the key issue of fair representation of the various groups and political forces in parliaments, we will strive to review and reform as needed our electoral systems in the light of the IPU Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections, as well as other international standards.

The new Indicators for Democratic Parliaments, developed by the IPU in collaboration with the United Nations and other partner organizations, provide an important tool to help us assess and strengthen our parliaments according to the principles set out in the SDGs, such as effectiveness, accountability, transparency and participation. We welcome the publication of these Indicators, which will help to guide the development of our institutions. We will do our utmost to turn these principles into action and to report back on progress made.

Among the various possible solutions to make parliaments more inclusive, we will consider measures to promote ambitious and well-designed quotas aiming at gender parity and equitable representation of all groups, as well as aligning the minimum age of eligibility for public office with the voting age. We will endeavour to review our own policies and processes, with the aim of ensuring that leadership positions are equally shared between men and women within our institutions and build a culture of inclusiveness and non-discrimination in line with the IPU Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments.

The rule of law, the idea that no one is above the law, that all people are equal under the law, and that everyone has the right to be protected by the law, must lie at the core of our action to strengthen governance.

With this fundamental principle in mind, we will aim to curb corruption so that public resources are not diverted for personal gain and policies are not tailored to particular interests at the expense of the common good. Along these same lines, we will endeavour to free government and relevant regulatory bodies from the “corporate capture” that is a frequent cause of distortion in policy outcomes. Inspired by recent global initiatives to combat illicit financial and arms flows, we will strive to tighten the rules and close the loopholes that enable these most nefarious forms of corruption. We support national audit institutions for their valuable role in ensuring transparency and accountability through independent verification of public spending and related government processes.

With regard to the justice system, we will aim to strengthen the impartiality of the courts, speed up trial times, extend legal aid and other facilities to improve access for the most vulnerable, expand the availability of less onerous processes such as arbitration and mediation, and ensure fairness in sentencing.

By extension, we will aspire to establish or strengthen independent national human rights institutions as essential tools for the promotion and protection of all human rights. We will seek to work closely with these institutions to implement their recommendations and to harmonize national legislation with international norms. In the context of this year’s 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we pledge to revitalize our actions to promote and protect human rights. We will strive to uphold the right of all legitimately constituted civil society organizations to make their voices heard on behalf of the groups they represent. We will also examine measures to strengthen the regulatory frameworks that govern the right to information so that, except for the most sensitive national security reasons, government-held information can be made available to the public on request and in a timely fashion.

There can be no peace without justice. As conflicts within and between countries continue to become alarmingly more frequent and severe, undermining development gains, we will seek to address the root causes of conflict that can often be found in economic inequality and discrimination against entire groups, due to gender, racial, ethnic, religious or cultural differences. We will also aim to invest more in human security – defined as the provision of food, health care, environmental security and other such contributors to human well-being – as the main path towards peace and development.

We reaffirm most strongly our belief in the rule of law, at both the national and international level, as the foundation of conflict prevention and resolution, as well as in dialogue and diplomacy as the only way towards lasting peace. We call on parties in all armed conflicts to abide by the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols with no exceptions. We encourage more frequent use of the International Court of Justice and other international judicial institutions as key tools to resolve disputes between countries peacefully.

We cannot ignore the fact that our Assembly here in Angola has taken place against the backdrop of a rapidly escalating crisis in the Middle East. We express grave concern about the humanitarian consequences of the crisis and we implore the international community to take definitive action to ensure the unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief into Gaza without delay. Above all, the hostilities in this region must cease and negotiations must resume towards a sustainable two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security.

Recognizing that most armed conflicts and related mediation efforts tend to be male-dominated, we will support more robust involvement of women and youth in peace processes. We will strive to take all necessary measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women, especially women in politics, as well as against minority and marginalized groups, and provide assistance to survivors.

A key measure of good governance is the quality of the civil service and of the public sector in general, which provide the most immediate interface between government and the people. We recognize the need for deep reforms of public administrations so that they are adequately staffed through fair and transparent recruitment processes as well as equipped with the most modern tools to provide quality service to the public. Most importantly, we will seek to ensure more direct citizens’ input into public sector reforms and into the administration of public services, including health care, education and environmental preservation, so as to more effectively meet the needs of the people.

The success of all our reforms will depend most critically on the mobilization of financial and human resources. We are committed to reversing the tide of underinvestment in the institutions and processes that lie at the core of SDG 16. In particular, a more coordinated effort must be made to collect data on gender, age, income and other criteria that are key to identifying those most at risk of being left behind. Relatively modest as a share of national budgets, the implementation cost of SDG 16 will pay high dividends in terms of producing positive social cohesion, peace, and development outcomes across the board. In this connection, we call on countries to review their development cooperation policies so that due emphasis is given to investments and capacity building in recipient countries' governance sectors.

In view of the major global assessment of SDG 16 expected at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2024, we will aim to conduct a thorough review of our national plans for SDG 16 and of the public sector in general, including through parliamentary hearings, special parliamentary commissions and other such initiatives. We encourage the IPU to collect and disseminate the findings from this exercise, and to highlight the good practices that may help mobilize further parliamentary action.

We are deeply grateful to our host, the National Assembly of Angola, as well as the Angolan authorities and the Angolan people in general, for providing us with this valuable opportunity to come together as a global parliamentary community. We look forward to taking this Declaration back to our parliaments and to playing our part in ensuring its effective implementation.

Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliaments in reducing harm

*Resolution adopted by consensus¹ by the 147th IPU Assembly
(Luanda, 27 October 2023)*

The 147th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Recalling the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2000), the Guidelines regarding the implementation of that Optional Protocol (2018), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006),

Welcoming United Nations General Assembly resolution 74/133 of 18 December 2019 on the rights of the child, in particular its focus on children without parental care, its call for States to progressively replace institutionalization with quality alternative care, including, inter alia, family and community-based care, and to take appropriate measures and approaches, and its paragraph 35(t), which calls on United Nations Member States to take “appropriate measures to protect children who are victims of trafficking and are deprived of parental care, enact and enforce legislation to prevent and combat the trafficking and exploitation of children in care facilities, support children who are victims of human trafficking in returning to their families and in receiving appropriate mental health and psychological assistance that is victim-centred and trauma-informed”, and to take “appropriate measures to prevent and address the harms related to volunteering programmes in orphanages, including in the context of tourism, which can lead to trafficking and exploitation” (a phenomenon known colloquially as “voluntourism”, a form of tourism in which travellers participate in voluntary work overseas),

Acknowledging recommendation D.1 of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child 2021 Day of General Discussion Outcome Report, which, inter alia, calls on United Nations Member States to “adopt legislation and regulations to eliminate orphanage tourism and volunteering in orphanages, prevent incentives driving institutionalization and family separation and ensure adequate offences and penalties to prevent and enable the prosecution of violations of children’s rights in alternative care, including orphanage trafficking”,

Highlighting paragraph 93 of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, welcomed in resolution 64/142 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 2009, and included in its annex, which provides that “all alternative care settings should provide adequate protection to children from abduction, trafficking, sale and all other forms of exploitation”,

Recalling Articles 35 and 36 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which respectively require States Parties to “take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form”, and to “protect the child against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child’s welfare”,

Acknowledging the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000), supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000), in particular Article 3(c), which confirms that child trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation, and Article 9.5, which requires States Parties to “adopt or strengthen legislative or other measures, such as educational, social or cultural measures, including through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, to discourage the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons, especially women and children, that leads to trafficking”,

¹- The delegation of India expressed a reservation on operative paragraph 4.

- The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed a reservation on the reference to SDGs 4.1 and 4.2 in preambular paragraph 22.

Underlining the guiding principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), i.e. the best interests of the child, non-discrimination, participation, protection, inclusion, and survival and development, that provide the framework for all actions concerning children,

Recognizing the urgent need to address orphanage trafficking, which is a multi-dimensional and complex phenomenon as it interacts with a wide range of factors that involve the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child into residential care for the purposes of exploitation and/or profit, and particularly the absence of legal safeguards and regulations and child protection systems, including those which are inadequate or contain loopholes, and which result in severe harm to children's physical, emotional and psychological well-being,

Recognizing also the urgent need for legislators and governments to take more proactive national steps to combat and reduce the risk of trafficking in human beings,

Noting that orphanage trafficking as a form of trafficking and modern slavery is a growing international concern that must be addressed through cross-border collaboration and cooperation between the countries of origin, transit and destination, including through measures to prevent such trafficking, to punish the traffickers and to protect the victims of such trafficking, which requires extensive and wide-ranging intervention at local, national, regional and international levels by all actors and stakeholders working together,

Acknowledging "A study on the exploitation and sexual abuse of children in the context of travel and tourism; a closer look at the phenomena of voluntourism", presented by the United Nations Special Rapporteur to the United Nations General Assembly in October 2023, on the sale, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children,

Acknowledging also the efforts to eradicate the phenomenon of orphanage trafficking that is still widespread due to the scourges of war and internal conflicts, and which leads to the breakdown of child protection systems,

Recognizing the necessity of a multifaceted approach to prevent and combat orphanage trafficking, including the collection of reliable data on children in orphanages, in order to protect children from such exploitation in the first place, including within the travel and tourism sector, domestically and in destination countries,

Recognizing also the urgent need for States to strengthen child protection systems worldwide to safeguard the inherent rights and holistic well-being of all children, especially those in vulnerable situations, such as children with disabilities, refugees, internally displaced children, and children affected by armed conflicts,

Recognizing further that many orphan children worldwide who have been placed in care homes for a variety of reasons are the most affected during times of war and conflict because they are forced to contend with the ills of orphanhood, isolation and the repercussions of war, which expose them to an uncertain fate,

Recognizing that a family caregiving setting is the most conducive environment for the growth, well-being and safety of children, and that removing a child from the family should, wherever possible, only be considered as a temporary last resort,

Concerned that not all States currently have the necessary legal framework to combat orphanage trafficking, in particular legal provisions to criminalize it, or the budget, technical expertise or human resources to address the problem,

Concerned also by the lack of regular monitoring of orphans' residential care facilities and the lack of regulation of voluntourism, in particular voluntourism activities involving children, which place children at risk of commodification, exploitation and sexual abuse in the context of for-profit activities, and which increase vulnerabilities to human rights violations,

Recognizing the importance of creating awareness of the risks and indicators of orphanage trafficking and the harms associated with it, notably the adverse impacts on child rights, among the public, particularly parents, teachers, children, community leaders, social workers, legislators and other relevant policymakers and stakeholders,

Highlighting the precarious situation of the children involved in cases of orphanage trafficking where victims and survivors often lack appropriate legal remedy, support and access to justice, and the importance of a victim-centred and trauma-informed approach when combating the problem, as well as of child-centred rehabilitation processes,

Noting that orphanage trafficking is a commercial and exploitative act that may be driven by economic motivations, and may subject victims to various forms of exploitation including sexual exploitation, forced begging and forced labour, and may be exacerbated in conflict and post disaster contexts,

Recognizing that addressing orphanage trafficking will contribute towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their targets by 2030, including:

- SDG 1.3 on social protection systems and measures
- SDG 1.a on ending poverty
- SDG 4.1 on free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education
- SDG 4.2 on quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education
- all targets of SDG 5 on gender equality
- SDG 8.7 on the eradication of forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour
- SDG 16.2 on ending the abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children,

Recognizing also United Nations General Assembly resolution 77/159 of 14 December 2022 on enhancing the role of parliaments in accelerating the achievement of the SDGs,

Highlighting the importance of paragraph 31 of United Nations General Assembly resolution 74/133 of 18 December 2019 on the rights of the child, which urges States to “strengthen child welfare and child protection systems and improve care reform efforts”,

Taking note of the guiding principles stipulated in the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism adopted by the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization in 1999, which advises States, the private sector and other stakeholders on responsible and sustainable development of tourism, including measures to prevent and protect children from sale and exploitation, particularly sexual exploitation, in the travel and tourism industry, as well as of the 2020 *Tips for a responsible traveller* developed by the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, which calls on tourists to observe human rights and protect children from exploitation and abuse,

Concerned that well-meaning support for institutions through donations, child sponsorship programmes, orphanage volunteering or tourism, and faith-based missions, can lead to unnecessary family-child separation, perpetuate institutional models of care, undermine the development of more appropriate family-based care services, and create an economic incentive for orphanage trafficking,

Welcoming the efforts of governments who have issued travel advisories and information materials to travellers, particularly tourists, in tourism source and destination countries, discouraging orphanage tourism and volunteering due to the risk of exploitation and profiteering,

Highlighting that poverty and inequality, as key drivers of orphanage trafficking, are exacerbated by humanitarian disasters, climate change, armed conflict, political instability, lack of education, inequitable social-economic structures, family violence and gender discrimination,

Recognizing the unique needs of children belonging to minority groups or who are of indigenous origins,

Emphasizing that cooperation and coordination between parliaments and their governments aimed at combating and eradicating the drivers of orphanage trafficking at the early stages are of utmost importance,

Highlighting that gender-based discrimination and violence against women and girls, as well as a lack of sexual and reproductive health services and education, often result in teenage or unwanted pregnancies which in turn increase the risk of orphanage trafficking,

Recalling Article 8.2 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989, adopted by United Nations General Assembly resolution 44/25, which provides that: “Where a child is illegally deprived of some or all of the elements of his or her identity, States Parties shall provide appropriate assistance and protection, with a view to re-establishing speedily his or her identity”,

Recalling also the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption of 29 May 1993, which establishes four main principles: the best interests of the child as the primary consideration; the prohibition of any profit to prevent trafficking; the double subsidiarity of international adoption (the latter is considered only if no solution can be found in the child’s country of origin); and the requirement to go through accredited bodies before being able to adopt,

Recalling further the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance of 23 December 2010,

Deeply concerned about illegal international adoptions, whereby thousands of children around the world have been taken away from their families and placed illegally on the international adoption market, whether through orphanages or not,

Highlighting the fact that, for the people concerned by these illegal adoptions, the consequences are dramatic in both human and administrative terms,

Bearing in mind that many States have undertaken or are undertaking investigations on illegal adoptions and are taking concrete measures to prevent them and help the victims,

Bearing in mind also the *Joint statement on illegal intercountry adoptions* issued by the United Nations Human Rights Office on 29 September 2022, which indicates that illegal intercountry adoptions can constitute crimes against humanity, and which establishes three obligations for States, as follows: to prevent, investigate and remedy such crimes,

1. *Condemns* all forms of orphanage trafficking and orphanage tourism, including orphanage volunteering;
2. *Emphasizes* the importance of cohesive international efforts to combat orphanage trafficking amidst armed conflicts or other humanitarian disasters;
3. *Calls upon* parliaments to cooperate and coordinate with their governments to introduce legal measures aimed at combating orphanage trafficking at the national level;
4. *Calls upon* the IPU to draft a model law for sending and receiving States, formalizing, in the best interests of the child, a clear legislative framework to combat orphanage trafficking and prevent orphanage tourism, address remaining gaps and ongoing challenges, in law and practice, whereby in all actions concerning children, their rights, education, voices, needs and security are at the centre of any proceedings that affect their well-being, and to share knowledge of existing legislation and implementation;
5. *Also calls upon* the IPU to prepare a parliamentary guide that sets out the working mechanisms for parliaments to discuss legislation on combating orphanage trafficking and prohibiting orphanage tourism, as well as to develop international principles and standards governing voluntourism activities that are in accordance with human rights norms and standards and particularly with the rights of the child, providing tools to monitor public policies on the protection of children from orphanage trafficking, and specific mechanisms of action that are applicable to parliaments in different regions of the world;

6. *Invites* those States that have not yet done so to consider ratifying and fully implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2000), and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000), as key international instruments in the fight against orphanage trafficking and related crimes;
7. *Stresses* the importance of multidisciplinary, multisectoral and international cooperation, including cross-border cooperation, in strategies to combat orphanage trafficking and tourism, and in ensuring the safe repatriation and rehabilitation of trafficked children;
8. *Calls upon* parliaments and parliamentarians to actively engage in promoting a shared, up-to-date national understanding of the nature of orphanage trafficking;
9. *Acknowledges* that migrant populations, including refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as children from war zones and temporarily occupied territories, are particularly vulnerable to orphanage trafficking and exploitation;
10. *Calls for* the protection of the rights of refugee and migrant children, especially those separated from their families and susceptible to orphanage trafficking, in accordance with international law and child protection standards;
11. *Encourages* parliaments to build synergies with their respective governments to implement appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures that take account of the differentiated needs and experiences of children according to their age, sex, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, culture, language, disability, migration status or other socio-economic factors, while also taking account of parental responsibilities and ensuring children's participation in the development of measures pertaining to them, and by gathering and analysing data on gender in this domain;
12. *Also encourages* parliaments to ensure, through relevant legislation, that victims of trafficking are provided with long-term tailored assistance, irrespective of their readiness to cooperate with law enforcement;
13. *Urges* parliaments to adopt legislative and regulatory measures that promote the reintegration of children from institutions, such as orphanages, children's homes and rescue centres, back into their families, or their placement in suitable family-based care, such as foster care and kinship care,
14. *Calls upon* parliaments to provide adequate budgetary allocations and resources for the effective implementation of the laws and measures in place to deliver quality care to children in institutional and alternative care settings and to ensure the effective protection of children from exploitation and abuse in the context of orphanage trafficking and voluntourism;
15. *Urges* parliaments to ensure the development and implementation of robust screening processes for organizations and individuals involved in the establishment or funding of orphanages, to secure transparent, accountable and temporary practices;
16. *Strongly urges* parliaments to prioritize the allocation of resources for robust legislative frameworks and effective enforcement mechanisms to prevent and combat orphanage trafficking, including rigorous inspections of and licensing procedures for childcare facilities, and for comprehensive victim support systems;
17. *Emphasizes* the importance of a commitment by the private sector, including the travel industry, civil society, academia, charities and communities to work together and collaboratively with governments to combat orphanage trafficking and to stop the flow of funds and volunteers to institutions which commodify children;

18. *Urges* parliaments and parliamentarians to promote awareness, in both sending and receiving countries, among governments, civil society, charities, community groups, faith-based organizations, educational institutions and families of orphanage trafficking, of the harms of orphanage tourism, donations to orphanages, and the importance of family-based care, and thus provide protection to children to grow in a family-based environment under their own cultural conditions;
19. *Also urges* parliaments to enable the rapid exchange of information amongst anti-trafficking actors to adjust responses according to the constantly changing tactics of traffickers, as well as to promote awareness and monitoring among related agencies operating in the same space, with an emphasis on cooperation, technology and information sharing;
20. *Invites* the IPU to schedule periodic meetings and workshops with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, and with other stakeholders, experts and activists, emphasizing local and regional initiatives for preventing and tackling the problem of orphanage trafficking and orphanage tourism, and other activities to allow parliaments to exchange information regarding good practices and successful experiences in combating orphanage trafficking and prohibiting orphanage tourism in line with international human rights standards;
21. *Calls upon* national parliaments to accelerate their efforts in poverty eradication and reaffirm that investment in children and the realization of their rights through an integrated and multifaceted approach based on the well-being of children under the Sustainable Development Goals is one of the best ways to protect children from unnecessary institutionalization and the risk of trafficking and exploitation;
22. *Urges* parliaments to take effective action to implement international commitments and bring their domestic legal and regulatory framework into full conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children and United Nations General Assembly resolution 74/133 of 18 December 2019 on the rights of the child, including by:
 - a. Ensuring criminal laws enable the prosecution of orphanage trafficking and exploitation offences, including the unlawful removal of a child from parents or guardians and placement in a care facility for the purpose of exploitation and/or profit and/or to ensure that countries are not used as safe havens or channels for exploitation and abuse of children;
 - b. Criminalizing the grooming of children and of trusted persons (parents, guardians, caregivers) to facilitate both online and offline sexual exploitation especially by persons in positions of power, authority or trust, and by undertaking efforts to adopt legislation that enhances online safety and establishes mandatory efforts and liability for technology companies, creates standards for monitoring and reporting of harmful online acts to protect potential victims and prevent future instances of exploitation;
 - c. Establishing by law extraterritorial jurisdiction for all offences of child trafficking, exploitation and grooming;
 - d. Establishing enforceable child protection regulations for the travel, volunteering and tourism industry that include a prohibition on orphanage volunteering and non-family visits to orphanages, and regulation of other forms of voluntourism activities involving children;
 - e. Incorporating regulations on the participation of voluntourists, volunteers and visitors into existing child protection, child welfare and alternative care regulations, and specifically restricting non-family visits to and volunteering within residential childcare facilities;
 - f. Ensuring that a child- and disability-friendly and gender-responsive reporting mechanism, as well as regular monitoring and supervision, is accessible to children in residential care, and to children and young people who have transitioned out of care, while ensuring the confidentiality and safety of the reporter and witnesses;

- g. Establishing sufficient not-for-profit sector regulations and ensuring charitable activities comply with international child rights norms, safeguard children's best interests, and protect children, especially children with disabilities, from harm, abuse and rights violations;
- h. Strengthening the implementation of child protection laws and regulations, including the licensing, monitoring and oversight of residential care facilities in cooperation with civil society, and of protective measures to avoid the re-traumatization and re-victimization of child victims as a result of any interactions with State authorities including in investigative and judicial processes;
- i. Ensuring that laws related to the protection and welfare of children provide that, insofar as possible, children remain in the custody and care of their families except in circumstances in which harm can only be prevented by temporarily placing the child in a home, orphanage or rescue shelter;
- j. Calling for robust measures to hold accountable all individuals or entities involved in orchestrating or facilitating the deportation and abduction of children from temporarily occupied territories, including through the potential use of orphanages for exploitation and profit;
- k. Establishing by law the right to remedies, including compensation, for children who are subjected to trafficking, including orphanage trafficking;
- l. Strengthening international adoption regulations to ensure that intercountry adoptions are conducted transparently, ethically and in the best interests of the child, with a focus on preventing trafficking and exploitation in the context of adoption;
- m. Preventing international adoption by parties to an armed conflict, particularly prohibiting such adoption of children from conflict-related regions;
- n. Developing and enforcing a domestic volunteering framework that includes conducting thorough background checks on volunteers and providing training and support to eradicate unskilled volunteering, ensuring that volunteers understand and respect the rights of children;
- o. Ensuring that children who are transitioning out of care upon reaching the age of majority receive dedicated, comprehensive assistance prior to leaving care that effectively and meaningfully prepares them for independently living out of care, including on how to enter the job market, and an assistance and measures package to meet their needs once they have left care, as well as a point of contact for ongoing and periodic safety and well-being reviews;
- p. Encouraging governments and national tourism authorities to improve their administrative and legal processes in regulating the private sector within the travel and tourism industry to ensure compliance with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and child rights' obligations, and the "do no harm" principle by creating incentives for tourism operators to actively prioritize child protection to vulnerable children in touristic destinations and to undertake human rights due diligence, as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility programmes;
- q. Developing robust national databases on the scope and prevalence of voluntourism within national contexts by improving and securing a comprehensive approach to data collection through multisectoral partnership which is essential for developing targeted prevention;
- r. Providing national children and youth protection authorities with a sound legal basis, and sufficient financial and human resources to fulfill their tasks and enable continuous oversight of residential care facilities and effective protection of individuals entrusted to such institutions;
- s. Strengthening deinstitutionalization programmes and family-focused development targeting poor parents and disadvantaged families through formal education, training on parenting capacities and economic incentives;
- t. Advocating for the development and implementation of safe repatriation, reintegration and rehabilitation programmes for children who have been victims of orphanage trafficking, exploitation or forcible transfers;

- u. Prioritizing investment in multi-sectoral collaborative partnerships by working cooperatively with relevant stakeholders to find sustainable solutions to address the root causes of orphanage trafficking and voluntourism, which includes investment in poverty reduction, food security, sexual and reproductive health rights, security and the rule of law;
 - v. Strengthening social services for child protection and making systems inclusive to respond to the needs of all children, regardless of their migration status, with a focus on both primary violence prevention for all children and more targeted prevention and child-friendly response services, particularly for children in vulnerable situations; as well as by giving priority to legal services and safeguards for children at risk or who are victims of sale, abuse and exploitation;
 - w. Promoting inclusive and responsive family-oriented policies, including those designed to: strengthen parents' and caregivers' ability to care for children, support social policies that work towards the deinstitutionalization of children, address negative social norms that affect equal access to quality education, and prevent the exploitation of children within childcare institutions or alternative care;
23. *Calls upon* IPU Member Parliaments to request their governments to pay particular attention to situations of illegal intercountry adoptions and, if they have not already done so, to conduct investigations into the matter in order to shed full light on these facts and to understand the processes that have made it possible for illegal adoptions of abducted or trafficked children to be validated, legalized and authenticated;
24. *Also calls upon* IPU Member Parliaments and their governments to do their utmost, once such investigations have been terminated, to ensure that the conclusions drawn lead to concrete measures aimed at helping victims, on the one hand, and, on the other, at preventing other persons from becoming victims in the future;
25. *Further calls upon* IPU Member Parliaments and their governments, on the basis of such investigations, to acknowledge that cases of illegal adoption have indeed taken place and to recognize the persons concerned as victims.

Bringing gender equality to the UN General Assembly

Motion adopted by the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs (Luanda, 25 October 2023)

The IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs believes that gender equality is a critical enabler of democracy and sustainable development.

Gender equality is recognized in a number of high-level international commitments, including the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Achieving gender equality in decision-making at all levels, including in parliaments, is a key objective of the IPU and of the United Nations.

Resolution 76/269 of the General Assembly acknowledges the underrepresentation of women in diplomacy and proclaims 24 June the International Day of Women in Diplomacy.

However, 75% of Permanent Representatives in the General Assembly of the United Nations are men.

The Committee calls upon all parliaments to:

1. Review their recruitment process for their national foreign service to ensure that women are encouraged to apply and given equal opportunity for advancement as men;
2. Urge the government to set a deadline by which women and men will be represented in equal numbers in the foreign service and to provide the parliament with regular updates;
3. Use parliamentary processes to review their government appointment of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations (New York, Geneva, Vienna) and senior diplomats to capitals around the world from a gender perspective;
4. Meet with their Permanent Representatives to the United Nations yearly, inquiring specifically about advances toward a more gender-equal UN General Assembly;
5. Mark the International Day of Women in Diplomacy with a parliamentary hearing and other initiatives to raise the visibility of this issue in government policy and in national media and with the public at large.

Report of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

*Noted by the 147th IPU Assembly
(Luanda, 27 October 2023)*

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security held two sittings on 24 and 26 October with its President, Mr. M.B.M. Al-Ahbab (Qatar), in the Chair.

On 24 October, after going through procedural items and official communications, the Committee held a hearing of experts on the theme Addressing the social and humanitarian impact of autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence. The hearing was opened by a video message from Ms. I. Nakamitsu, United Nations Under Secretary General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, who stated that urgent action by political leaders to prohibit and regulate such systems remained paramount. Parliamentarians must play a crucial role in holding governments accountable, in triggering concrete action and in ensuring transparency in governance.

The hearing featured several interventions starting with Ms. P. Peraza Aguilar, Minister-Counsellor with the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), speaking on behalf of Mr. C. Guillermet-Fernández, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to UNOG, former deputy Minister for External Affairs. Costa Rica's efforts centred on the urgency of promoting the negotiation of an international instrument on the prohibition and regulation of autonomous weapons systems. Ms. G. Hinds, Legal Advisor at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), focused on the legal and ethical concerns as a result of the unpredictability aspect of new technologies of warfare and on the work done to safeguard and strengthen humanitarian protection of civilians and combatants. Ms. C. Connolly, Manager of Automated Decision Research, the monitoring and research team of the Stop Killer Robots coalition, called for new international law on autonomy in weapons systems and for meaningful human control over systems that detected and applied force to a target based on sensor inputs rather than an immediate human command. Such a regulation was urgent not only for conflict situations, but also for everyday security as that technology could be used domestically by police forces. Ms. M. Stolbizer (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the co-Rapporteurs of the forthcoming draft resolution, confirmed that the drafting team was also focusing on the urgency of bringing back human control over weapons systems through strong regulation.

The debate that followed featured 16 interventions from parliamentarians and one from a permanent observer. Stress was placed on the pace of development of artificial intelligence (AI) and its integration in militaries around the world, raising concerns about the adverse, exacerbating consequences of the future integration of AI and autonomous weapon systems in the current climate of conflict and tensions. It was, however, also acknowledged that AI could serve humanity positively.

Parliamentarians agreed that AI and autonomous weapons systems must be regulated, especially in terms of the ethics of granting a machine the ability to decide whether or not to kill humans. The need for multilateral interaction in building consensus around the topic of autonomous weapons and AI was emphasized, as well as the critical role of parliamentarians to uphold the values of human rights and international humanitarian law.

The second panel on the theme Inventory of tools for MPs to engage in dialogue, legislation, oversight and prevention in the pursuit of peace was held on the same day in follow-up to the 2022 IPU resolution on peace processes. Mr. P. Działkowiec, Director of Mediation and Peace Support at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), introduced the panel by referring to the state of peace in the world. The interventions that followed highlighted the various approaches which formed the basis of a necessary paradigm shift in the understanding of security. Ms. H. Qasas, Executive Director of the Principles for Peace (P4P) Foundation, presented the principles for peace and their usefulness in parliamentary action towards peace. Societal peace was possible and lasting when parliaments actively orchestrated the transition from agreements to tangible change, to dignified, legitimate and accountable security. Mr. D. Kiniger-Passigli, expert in crisis resolution, development cooperation, public and labour affairs, speaking as Vice-President of the World Academy of Art and Science, emphasized that the human security approach was a universal and people-centred method that highlighted the interdependence between peace, security, sustainable development and human rights, and helped establish early prevention. The last speaker, Ms. A. Chenoy, Adjunct Professor at Jindal Global University, India, and Member of the International Peace Bureau (IPB) Common Security working group, referred to common security as a method to fight against the insecurity some countries

felt vis-à-vis others. Insecurity aggravated tensions and often led to conflicts. Common security focused on joint survival rather than on mutual destruction and it offered a viable alternative for a peaceful future.

Mr. J. Granoff, President of the Global Security Institute and an international lawyer in the field of human development and human security, opened the debate by pointing out that the three approaches were linked with parliamentary functions and could be used as tools by parliamentarians. He outlined some of the good practices that had been identified during the research conducted since the adoption of the 2022 IPU resolution and that would be showcased in the inventory of tools for parliamentarians when engaging in conflict prevention. The debate featured six speakers who all emphasized that parliamentarians had a key role in promoting peace and security and should therefore engage internationally to develop solutions to global threats. The speakers also shared some examples of parliamentary actions and welcomed the development of the inventory of tools with the hope that it would help parliamentary action to be more conducive to peace.

On 26 October, the Standing committee held a third event, a panel discussion on the theme The role of parliaments in promoting a culture of transparency, anti-corruption and citizen engagement to restore trust in national and international institutions and strengthen peace. The panel featured three experts. Mr. F. Zon (Indonesia), Chair of South East Asian Parliamentarians Against Corruption (SEAPAC) and Vice-Chair of the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC), said that parliament could ensure public integrity, improve public institution legitimacy and uphold transparency by mobilizing political will and enhancing public engagement. Ms. C. Fredriksen, International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) Development Initiative, highlighted the need for partnerships between parliaments and Supreme Audit Institutions to strengthen accountability ecosystems, and to better engage the public and other partners in promoting support for oversight and accountability, and subsequently transparency in their national environments. Mr. J. Granoff, speaking as former Permanent Observer for International Anti-Corruption Academy to the United Nations Secretary-General, recalled the importance of international cooperation in preventing and combating corruption, bribery and money laundering in all their forms, and taking back control over productive economies' stolen assets and illicit financial flows that were needed to fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The ensuing debate featured eleven speakers. It reinforced the idea that the fight against corruption required transnational cooperation, and that technologies could serve to monitor illicit transactions and help countries identify the channels through which corruption operated. Speakers were in agreement that transparency, integrity, citizen involvement, legislation, oversight, capacity building, cooperation and training were all concrete steps towards a culture of transparency that was well within the reach of parliamentarians.

The report on the work of the Committee was presented to the Assembly at its last sitting on 27 October by Ms. D. Bergamini (Italy) on behalf of the President of the Standing Committee, Mr. M.B.M. Al-Ahbab (Qatar).

The Bureau of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security met on 25 October 2023. Six out of 13 members as well as the representatives of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians were present.

A lively debate took place where Bureau members agreed that the proliferation of conflicts was dividing humanity in a way that would not benefit any side and that it was worth remembering that the security of one nation could not be assured at the expense of another. They also agreed that as parliamentarians they were obliged to resolve conflict, and that in cases where resolution seemed impossible, where compromise seemed out of reach, they were bound to find a way forward – not for themselves, but for all those who they represented. To that end, they must show humility, dignity, solidarity and respect for others, and should strive to reinvigorate multilateralism to strengthen the links between nations, citizens and institutions and thus give peace a chance.

During the meeting, the Bureau discussed its workplan. It was agreed that all the time allocated for the 148th Assembly would be devoted to negotiating the next resolution. Bureau members also proposed that, for planning purposes, the Bureau should strive to meet online in between Assemblies to discuss the state of peace and security. Also, issues relating to the Committee's mandate must be regularly monitored and a relevant report should be prepared and shared with IPU Members to keep them abreast of the latest developments in the field of peace and security. The proposal was subsequently approved by the Standing Committee at the end of its last plenary sitting on 25 November.

Report of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development

*Noted by the 147th IPU Assembly
(Luanda, 27 October 2023)*

The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development held its sittings on 25 and 26 October. Both sittings were chaired by the Committee Vice President, Mr. W. William (Seychelles).

Debate on the theme of the next resolution entitled *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility, and equity*

The theme of the next resolution was introduced by two experts: Ms. T. Tollmann, Process Management Officer at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat, and Ms. A. Smagadi, Legal Officer, Officer in Charge of the Montevideo Coordination and Delivery Unit, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The draft resolution co-Rapporteurs Mr. S. Patra (India), Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine) and Ms. M. Al Suwaidi (United Arab Emirates) were also present.

Ms. T. Tollmann (UNFCCC), citing the sixth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), emphasized the urgency of climate action and introduced the Global Stocktake (GST) as a critical mechanism within the Paris Agreement. The GST, occurring every five years, assesses parties' climate measures and informs their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). It focuses on mitigation, loss and damage, and means of implementation and support to enhance international cooperation and ambition. She highlighted the engagement of non-party stakeholders in the GST, emphasizing civil society's role, and outlined the three GST phases: information collection, technical assessment and outputs leading to COP28. In terms of governance, the process involves the Conference of the Parties (CMA) as the overall authority, supported by the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI). A high-level committee, comprising CMA Presidencies and SBSTA/SBI Chairs, oversees high-level events in the global stocktake process, ensuring a structured and organized approach.

Ms. A. Smagadi (UNEP) discussed the alignment of legislation with the Committee's draft resolution and introduced the UNEP Montevideo Environmental Law Programme. The programme served as an intergovernmental platform dedicated to advancing environmental law priorities and had entered its fifth decade of action. A central focus of UNEP's activities within the programme was capacity building, aimed at equipping nations and regions with the knowledge and resources needed to create, implement and enforce environmental laws effectively.

Ms. Smagadi highlighted key thematic priorities, including addressing critical issues such as pollution, climate change and biodiversity crises through legal responses. Parliaments have a pivotal role in addressing these global challenges by developing and enacting environmental laws, both by way of overarching frameworks and specific climate change legislation. Parliaments can take rapid measures, define actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through sectoral laws and ensure the effective implementation of these laws through oversight. Recognizing the interconnectedness of environmental and climate-related legislation is crucial, and parliaments can draft legislation that establishes climate rights and obligations, creating a legal framework for climate action. They should also actively engage in discussions about emerging climate concepts to ensure the legal system remains adaptable.

To support these efforts, UNEP offers an online Law and Environmental Assistance Platform (LEAP), providing step-by-step assessments to identify specific legal needs, and a Law and Climate Change Toolkit to facilitate the implementation of legal measures to address climate-related issues. In conclusion, Ms. Smagadi emphasized that UNEP's Montevideo Environmental Law Programme underscored the vital role of parliaments in shaping and implementing environmental and climate legislation. It offers guidance and practical tools to assist in these efforts, contributing to the strengthening of legal frameworks necessary for addressing pressing global environmental challenges.

Following the expert presentations, the co-Rapporteurs addressed the Committee. Ms. M. Al Suwaidi (UAE) highlighted the urgent need for increased partnerships for climate action, emphasizing the visible impact of climate change on basic needs and the growing gap between stakeholders, underscoring the necessity for more effective climate action. Limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius was a challenge which is why parliaments must scrutinize governments to achieve that goal. To strengthen the parliamentary role in climate action, it was necessary to raise awareness, foster individual responsibility, initiate interactions between parliamentarians and stakeholders, and support regional and global efforts to align parliaments with international climate agendas. Mr. S. Patra (India) clarified the key components of the draft resolution, defined the crucial notions and elaborated on the nuances between climate action and climate change. He delved into the scope of “access”, affordability of green energy, responsibility, and equity. Partnerships involved both providing and receiving support. Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine) focused on implementation, stressing the need to take practical steps for successful resolution implementation. She introduced the idea of including ecocide as an environmental crime.

Twenty delegates shared their countries’ climate action practices and challenges. Delegates raised critical questions about the pace of global climate action and concerns about exceeding temperature limits. Given the complexity of climate issues, it was important to remove technical and financial barriers. International collaboration and partnerships were essential. In view of the vulnerability of their nations to climate change, there was a need for coordinated efforts while bearing in mind the common but differentiated responsibilities among nations. The importance of sharing good practices on green energy transition and removing barriers for sustainable transformation was stressed. In terms of parliamentary functions, oversight of the Paris Agreement commitments, budget allocation for the green transition and the enacting of laws for carbon neutrality were emphasized. The pivotal role of parliamentary bodies in addressing pressing global environmental challenges was highlighted.

Preparations for the Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in the United Arab Emirates

The Chair recalled that the IPU had been promoting parliamentary engagement in climate change for more than a decade. To that end, the aim of the Parliamentary Meeting at COP28, that was being co-organized by the IPU and the Federal National Council of the UAE, was to give parliamentarians an opportunity to obtain first-hand information on the main issues to be discussed at COP28. It is the first time that the venue of the Parliamentary Meeting, which is to be held on 6 December in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, will be in the COP Green Zone thereby elevating the visibility of parliaments as key stakeholders in climate action.

The Parliamentary Meeting’s Rapporteur Ms. M. Al Suwaidi (UAE), Ms. S. Shaw, Senior Advisor at COP28, and Ms. H. Bourke, Green Zone Manager at COP28, shared the main points of the draft Outcome Document to be adopted as well as the practical arrangements for the meeting. The Standing Committee was invited to provide comments and ideas to further refine the text of the Outcome Document before its presentation at the Parliamentary Meeting.

The document is being drafted around thematic elements including clean energy transition, parliamentary engagement and international cooperation. A total of four delegates took the floor to share their ideas on the draft document. Comments included the suggestion to include wording on reducing methane emissions as a complementary method to address climate change. The importance of green development and climate finance was also highlighted.

Expert hearing on the theme *Ensuring global food security*

The discussion and key issues for consideration were introduced by Ms. A. Badejo, Deputy Regional Director for Operations, Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, World Food Programme (WFP), and Ms. S. Healy-Thow, Global Youth Campaigns Coordinator for the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN).

Ms. Badejo (WFP) highlighted the profound challenges faced by the world’s most vulnerable populations in relation to food security. People living in fragile and conflict-affected regions were now also grappling with the added burden of the climate crisis. Frequent disasters were causing damage to lives, livelihoods and harvests. There was an urgent need for governments to take climate action. The El Niño phenomenon which reached its peak in September 2023, is expected to last until May 2024. It

causes droughts and increased rainfall that jeopardize agricultural production and food security. The paradox was that while some regions of the world faced both drought and flooding simultaneously, other regions were struggling to recover from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Although food, fertilizers and energy prices had decreased, they were still higher than their pre-pandemic levels. Furthermore, global food needs were outstripping the humanitarian system's ability to meet those demands. Governments must invest in tackling the root causes of food insecurity and parliaments must bolster the political will and funding to enhance food security, improve people's lives worldwide, expand training programmes and focus on long-term resilience while promoting peace and sound economic policies.

Ms. Healy-Throw (GAIN) emphasized the critical importance of involving young people in discussions about their own future, especially when they were the ones directly impacted by the decisions made today. Food, a fundamental human need, holds immense significance not only in terms of nutrition but also in terms of its role in environmental degradation and even conflict. It was crucial to engage young people in developing solutions. She presented a set of actionable commitments aimed at ensuring food security, including making healthy food affordable, ending harmful chemical use in farming, providing every child with a healthy school meal, educating everyone about the environmental impact, halting land use degradation, banning single-use plastics, embracing indigenous food knowledge, ending destructive practices, and supporting local growers through tax incentives. It was important to involve young people in co-creating and driving these initiatives forward. She encouraged leaders to engage with youth councils and organizations in their respective countries.

A total of 22 delegates took the floor to share their experiences, insights and concerns on the pressing issue of ensuring a stable and sustainable food supply for the world's population. Delegates highlighted the intricate interconnectedness of countries and their food systems. Consequently, food and nutrition security was not merely a national concern but a global challenge that necessitated international collaboration. Parliaments, as the legislative bodies of nations, were pivotal in fostering this global collaboration. They hold the power to create and amend policies that can influence trade agreements, agricultural practices and food distribution on a national level. Nevertheless, food security cannot be achieved in isolation. Nations must work together to ensure that food is produced, distributed, and accessed fairly and sustainably on a global scale. Equitable access to food is a shared responsibility that parliaments must recognize. By fostering cooperation with other countries and international organizations, parliaments can help create a more inclusive and just global food system. This involves supporting initiatives to combat climate change, reduce conflicts and ensuring that vulnerable regions receive the aid they need. Moreover, the emphasis on sustainable agriculture underlines the importance of practices that do not deplete resources, harm the environment, or negatively impact other nations. Parliaments have a role in promoting policies that encourage responsible agricultural practices that consider the global consequences of local actions.

Report of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

*Noted by the 147th IPU Assembly
(Luanda, 27 October 2023)*

The Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs met in plenary session on 25 and 26 October with the Vice-President Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium) in the chair, and over 40 parliamentary delegations in attendance.

The first sitting consisted of a discussion on the role of the United Nations Resident Coordinator and the UN Country Team (UNCT) vis-à-vis the Government and National Assembly of Angola, which was followed by a debate on a draft motion outlining specific actions for parliaments to advocate actively for gender equality in the UN General Assembly.

The UN Resident Coordinator in Angola, Ms. Z. Virani, started the discussion with a presentation on the United Nations presence in Angola in support of national sustainable development. The UNCT worked with the Government of Angola, the private sector, civil society, religious entities, as well as the National Assembly, in order to serve the Angolan people.

Ms. Virani referred to the evolution of the United Nations work in Angola since the country's independence in 1975, during the years of the civil war (1976–2002), and over the last twenty years. The relationship between the UN and Angola had not always been an easy one, particularly towards the end of the civil war when UN peacekeepers were asked to leave the country. However, today in 2023, the country had taken on a peace building leadership role in the region, and on the continent, and enjoyed a strong partnership with the UN. The main basis for the UN work in Angola is the *United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2024-2028*, with the 2030 SDGs being the principal driving force.

The UNSDCF vision “is an empowered, peaceful, democratic and resilient Angola where all people equitably participate in and benefit from the sustainable, inclusive and structural socio-economic transformation of the country”. It is built on four pillars: people (human capital development, hopefully by 2028 more people benefiting from education), peace (democratic governance and human rights), prosperity (economic diversification – Angola is currently very dependent on oil as its principal source of revenue, and sustainable food systems), and the planet (climate resilience – currently, the south of the country is experiencing the most serious drought in the last forty years, and sustainable natural resources management).

With regard to the UN's work directly linked to the topic of the 147th IPU Assembly *Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16)*, the UN has engaged with the National Assembly of Angola as a whole and also with some of its standing committees. Some examples of the UN's work with the National Assembly include the development of Angola's first Voluntary National Review (VNR), bringing the SDGs closer to the parliament, gender-based budgeting, as well as sectoral analyses of Angola's General State Budget. The UN system works with Angolan parliamentarians reinforcing their fundamental role in institutionalizing a people-centred development model, which responds to citizens' needs for effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), leaving no-one behind.

Ms. Virani concluded her presentation by introducing the UN entities represented in the UNCT: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The Chair warmly thanked the UN Resident Coordinator for her very interesting presentation and invited delegate questions. Due to time constraints, only seven delegates placed questions and comments. Most noted the need for better communication channels between the UNCTs and parliaments, so that the latter could play their role in achieving the SDGs. There were observations on the current lack of progress in meeting the SDGs, as well as the importance of not only empowering

youth and women, but also people with disabilities. In her response, the UN Resident Coordinator stressed that the UNCTs could offer support and tools to countries, and that parliamentarians should not hesitate to contact their UNCT.

The discussion followed up on the Manama Committee session, engaging the parliamentary community in advocating actively for gender equality in the UN General Assembly. Only one in four Permanent Representatives (ambassadors) in the General Assembly is a woman. This gender imbalance in the UN's top decision-making body gives the impression that the UN community does not practice what it preaches when it comes to gender equality. Making the General Assembly and other key UN bodies gender-equal will greatly strengthen the multilateral system and its ability to deliver to the people.

A draft motion was introduced by Mr. H. Aoyagi (Japan), member of the Committee's Bureau, who said that he, personally, was going to present the motion to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Diet of Japan.

Mr. M. Chungong, IPU Secretary General, spoke of his work as Chair of the Global Board of International Gender Champions. The Global Board includes the UN Secretary-General, diplomats, leading civil society members, all striving to promote gender equality in the relevant institutions and ensure equal opportunities for men and women. The IPU was a trailblazer with regard to gender equality, institutional structures were in place, and the IPU Governing Council had just adopted an anti-harassment policy. Following recent discussions with the current President of the UN General Assembly, the latter became a gender champion and committed to promoting gender equality. The motion was excellent and the IPU needed to be seen as walking the talk. For example, the IPU Secretary General would only accept panel invitations if there were an equal number of men and women panellists.

The Chair thanked Mr. Aoyagi and the IPU Secretary General for their contributions and noted that in his own country, Belgium, gender equality was very poor in the foreign service higher ranks. Twelve delegates took the floor to explain the work carried out in their respective countries and parliaments. The delegate from Indonesia said that since parliament approved the appointment of ambassadors it should ensure that more female ambassadors were nominated. As a male parliamentarian, he too fought for laws and policies to achieve gender equality noting "it is a fight of both men and women".

The motion was adopted by acclamation.

The second sitting took place on 26 October and focused on the reform of the United Nations Security Council. The Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations in New York, Mr. T. Albanai, participated online as co-Chair of the UN Security Council informal reform process. Included in the process for equitable representation and an increase in the membership of the UN Security Council is an informal intergovernmental negotiation group whose role it is to bring in new ideas and allow for a free discussion. Especially in light of the Summit of the Future in 2024, the need for reform was evident. The UN Security Council was not representative of the UN members.

Ms. A. Novosseloff, expert on the UN Security Council, who joined the meeting online, provided insight as a researcher on the reform of the UN Security Council. She noted the UN Security Council lacked legitimacy primarily because a decisive number of resolutions were not implemented rather than on the grounds of representation. The UN Security Council was designed to be a body for fast decision making and, in her opinion, an enlarged UN Security Council would even be more divided than the current one. An increase in transparency in the working of the UN Security Council would be beneficial for its legitimacy.

In the discussion the delegates from Qatar, Japan, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, China, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Chile, South Africa, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), India, Egypt and Ukraine took the floor.

There was unanimous agreement that reform of the UN Security Council was urgent. It was felt that the gap between the expectations and the reality of the United Nations was far too large and led to opposition and despair by young people.

In response to a question, Mr. T. Albanai, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations, suggested parliaments could support the reform process by drawing the attention of their respective governments to the reform process and by staying involved as parliaments would need to ratify any changes. The two co-Chairs of this process acted as facilitators and had identified some steps to increase the UN Security Council's efficiency and effectiveness. Nonetheless every change in the working methods of the UN Security Council required acceptance from the current 15 members. Finally, he called on the IPU to submit its vision of a UN Security Council reform.

In her concluding remarks, Ms. A. Novosseloff, expert on the UN Security Council, said that it would be of utmost importance to guarantee UN Security Council resolutions were implemented. It was not the role of the UN Security Council to be the most democratic organ of the United Nations – that was the role of the UN General Assembly, but the UN Security Council must be effective and efficient. She defended the veto power as an instrument of security as it required compromise and consensus.

The Chair thanked the two experts for their time and their insights. In concluding he informed that Ukraine had made a proposal for the Committee's next motion on this topic which the Bureau would consider for adoption in the next meeting of the Standing Committee in Geneva in March 2024.

Before the elections to the Bureau, the Chair reiterated the rules for all Bureau members, noting that after being absent twice without prior information and/or replacement by someone else in the same delegation, a Bureau member's term expires. This being the case of members from Armenia, Brazil and the Republic of Moldova, the Committee decided to terminate their membership at the current Assembly.

This being the last session with Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium) chairing, he was thanked for all his hard work.

Second Global Parliamentary Summit on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism

The Global Response to the Call of the Sahel

*Outcome document adopted by the Summit
(Luanda, 25 October 2023)*

We, the parliamentarians gathered at the Second Global Parliamentary Summit on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism,

Reaffirming our joint commitment to global efforts to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism, to work together on security and stability around the world, to closely monitor the Sahel region and pay particular attention to its development and stability,

Recalling the declaration adopted at the First Global Parliamentary Summit on Counter-Terrorism held in Vienna in September 2021 entitled the *Call of the Sahel*,

Welcoming the implementation outcomes of the *Call of the Sahel* action plan, which focuses on five main areas: environment, security, community, development and education,

Expressing deep concern at the deteriorating Sahel situation, which has reached unprecedented levels of proliferation of terrorism and instability in recent years which, in turn, threaten the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially the goals' central principle "leave no one behind",

Acknowledging that the Sahel region faces numerous challenges, such as terrorism and transnational organized crime, human and illicit drug trafficking, illegal migration and weapons proliferation, that are not only a threat to the neighbouring regions but are also a global threat to peace and security; and *acknowledging also* that the lack of development in the region directly impacts people's life opportunities, causes food insecurity, nutritional crises and internal displacement among other,

Bearing in mind the aspirations of all peoples to live in peace and security, which are the basic preconditions for the material well-being, development and progress of countries, and for the full implementation of fundamental human rights and freedoms,

Recognizing that development in parallel with a security strategy in the region is the solution to all the challenges the Sahel faces,

Convinced that good governance leads to robust, democratically organized civil societies, independent judiciaries and administrations that are close to the citizens, and enables the correct management of common resources and guarantees the realization of human rights through actions free of abuse and corruption and with due respect for the rule of law,

Emphasizing that, where applicable and upon request, the enhancement of the capabilities and capacities of state institutions to prevent and counter terrorism is a pivotal component of successful efforts against terrorism,

Reaffirming the important role of the IPU Member Parliaments and their respective national institutions in countering terrorism and addressing the concerns of their constituents,

Recognizing the support of different international organizations, United Nations agencies, the academia and civil society, as well as the essential role of the Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the G5 Sahel and other regional parliamentary assemblies, all of whom have as their ultimate aim to support the people of the Sahel region,

1. *Call upon* the global parliamentary community, international organizations, governments and civil society to renew their global commitment to strengthen their international cooperation with the Sahel countries and their peoples in preventing and combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and to reaffirm that any act of terrorism is a criminal and unjustifiable act in accordance with international law;
2. *Call upon* international organizations to coordinate their activities in line with the spirit of the *Call of the Sahel* and to seek the necessary support from United Nations organizations to implement their strategies and resolutions on the ground;
3. *Express* the need for equality of the Sahel people in a new world order, with a new regional and political contract that prioritizes the well-being and future of citizens in the Sahel countries;
4. *Emphasize* the importance of upholding human rights and of addressing critical needs of the Sahel population, such as ensuring access to clean water, quality education, food, security and primary healthcare, as well as of paying special attention to the specific needs of young people as engines of development, to education for girls and the empowerment of women;
5. *Stress* that sustainable development is the solution to many challenges the Sahel region faces;
6. *Urge* the Sahel States to enhance good governance by building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels and providing access to justice for all, thus promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development;
7. *Call upon* the international community and the United Nations Security Council to support the G5 Sahel Joint Force by recognizing it pursuant to Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations;
8. *Urge* all parliaments to raise awareness in their respective parliaments of the political situation and challenges the Sahel countries face by drafting a *Motion of the Sahel*;
9. *Request* the IPU ad hoc High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism to design, on the basis of the outcomes of the thematic meetings, the second phase of the *Call of the Sahel* that would include projects and development initiatives in the Sahel countries and act as “The Global Response of the *Call of the Sahel*”;
10. *Resolve* to create an ad hoc mechanism within the IPU High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism to coordinate, monitor and follow up on the second phase of the *Call of the Sahel*, which will include projects and development initiatives in the Sahel countries, and be carried out jointly with the Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the G5 Sahel, relevant United Nations agencies, other international organizations, academia – such as the Institute for Economics and Peace, and the civil society among others;
11. *Urge* the global community to move forward with tangible actions to implement ground projects that safeguard the human rights and well-being of the Sahel population.

Stopping the war and violations of human rights in Gaza

Results of the roll-call vote on the request of the delegations of Algeria and Kuwait on behalf of the Arab Group, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), and South Africa on behalf of the African Group for the inclusion of an emergency item

Results

Affirmative votes 607 Total of affirmative and negative votes.. 1,046
Negative votes..... 439 Two-thirds majority 697
Abstentions..... 219

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Albania		Absent		Gabon	11			Palestine	12		
Algeria	16			Gambia (The)	11			Peru			10
Andorra		Absent		Georgia		Absent		Poland		10	
Angola	15			Germany		19		Portugal		13	
Argentina			14	Ghana	15			Qatar	9		
Armenia		Absent		Greece		10		Republic of Korea			17
Australia		14		Guinea		Absent		Romania		10	
Austria		12		Guinea-Bissau	11			Russian Federation	20		
Azerbaijan	13			Guyana	10			Rwanda		Absent	
Bahamas		Absent		Hungary		12		Sao Tome and Principe			10
Bahrain	11			Iceland		10		Saudi Arabia	15		
Bangladesh		Absent		India			23	Senegal	13		
Belarus	12			Indonesia	22			Serbia	6		6
Belgium		13		Iran (Islamic Republic of)	19			Seychelles	10		
Benin		Absent		Iraq	16			Sierra Leone	8		
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	8	5		Ireland		12		Slovenia		11	
Botswana	11			Italy		17		Somalia	13		
Brazil		Absent		Japan			20	South Africa	17		
Bulgaria		12		Kenya		Absent		South Sudan		Absent	
Burkina Faso		Absent		Kuwait	11			Spain		16	
Burundi		Absent		Lao People's Dem. Republic		Absent		Sri Lanka		Absent	
Cabo Verde		Absent		Latvia		10		Suriname	10		
Cambodia			13	Lesotho		Absent		Sweden		13	
Cameroon			14	Libya	12			Switzerland		12	
Canada		15		Liechtenstein		10		Syrian Arab Rep.	14		
Chad	11			Lithuania		8		Thailand			18
Chile	3	10		Malawi		Absent		Timor-Leste		Absent	
China	23			Malaysia	15			Tonga		Absent	
Côte d'Ivoire		Absent		Maldives	10			Türkiye	19		
Croatia		Absent		Mali		Absent		Tuvalu		Absent	
Cuba	13			Malta		8		Uganda			16
Czech Republic		13		Mauritius		Absent		Ukraine		16	
DR of the Congo	19			Mexico			20	United Arab Emirates	12		
Denmark		12		Monaco		10		United Kingdom		18	
Djibouti		Absent		Morocco	15			United Republic of Tanzania		Absent	
Dominican Rep.		Absent		Mozambique		Absent		Uruguay			11
Egypt	20			Namibia	11			Uzbekistan		Absent	
Equatorial Guinea	11			Nepal		Absent		Viet Nam	10		9
Estonia		11		Netherlands		13		Yemen	13		
Ethiopia			18	Nigeria		22		Zambia		Absent	
Fiji		Absent		Norway		12		Zimbabwe		Absent	
Finland		12		Oman	11						
France		18		Pakistan	20						

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.

Towards common ground for peace

Results of the roll-call vote on the request of the delegations of Canada, on behalf of the delegations of Argentina, Austria, Croatia, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden and United Kingdom for the inclusion of an emergency item

Results

Affirmative votes 507 Total of affirmative and negative votes .. 959
Negative votes 452 Two-thirds majority 639
Abstentions 306

Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.	Country	Yes	No	Abst.
Albania		Absent		Gabon	11			Palestine		12	
Algeria		16		Gambia (The)		11		Peru			10
Andorra		Absent		Georgia		Absent		Poland	10		
Angola		15		Germany	19			Portugal	13		
Argentina	14			Ghana			15	Qatar		9	
Armenia		Absent		Greece	10			Republic of Korea	17		
Australia	14			Guinea		Absent		Romania	10		
Austria	12			Guinea-Bissau			11	Russian Federation		20	
Azerbaijan			13	Guyana			10	Rwanda		Absent	
Bahamas		Absent		Hungary	12			Sao Tome and Principe			10
Bahrain		11		Iceland	10			Saudi Arabia		15	
Bangladesh		Absent		India			23	Senegal		13	
Belarus		12		Indonesia		22		Serbia			12
Belgium	13			Iran (Islamic Republic of)		19		Seychelles	5		5
Benin		Absent		Iraq		16		Sierra Leone		8	
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	5		8	Ireland	12			Slovenia	11		
Botswana		11		Italy	17			Somalia		13	
Brazil		Absent		Japan			20	South Africa		17	
Bulgaria	12			Kenya		Absent		South Sudan		Absent	
Burkina Faso		Absent		Kuwait		11		Spain	16		
Burundi		Absent		Lao People's Dem. Republic		Absent		Sri Lanka		Absent	
Cabo Verde		Absent		Latvia	10			Suriname	5		5
Cambodia			13	Lesotho		Absent		Sweden	13		
Cameroon			14	Libya		12		Switzerland	12		
Canada	15			Liechtenstein	10			Syrian Arab Rep.		14	
Chad		11		Lithuania	8			Thailand			18
Chile	10	3		Malawi		Absent		Timor-Leste		Absent	
China		15	8	Malaysia		15		Tonga		Absent	
Côte d'Ivoire		Absent		Maldives		10		Türkiye		19	
Croatia		Absent		Mali		Absent		Tuvalu		Absent	
Cuba			13	Malta	8			Uganda			16
Czech Republic	13			Mauritius		Absent		Ukraine	16		
DR of the Congo			19	Mexico			20	United Arab Emirates		12	
Denmark	12			Monaco	10			United Kingdom	18		
Djibouti		Absent		Morocco		15		United Republic of Tanzania		Absent	
Dominican Rep.		Absent		Mozambique		Absent		Uruguay	11		
Egypt		20		Namibia		11		Uzbekistan		Absent	
Equatorial Guinea			11	Nepal		Absent		Viet Nam	5		14
Estonia	11			Netherlands	13			Yemen		13	
Ethiopia			18	Nigeria	22			Zambia		Absent	
Fiji		Absent		Norway	12			Zimbabwe		Absent	
Finland	12			Oman		11					
France	18			Pakistan		20					

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.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS ***LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS***

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President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
Président de l'Union interparlementaire

Ms./Mme Carolina Cerqueira
Speaker of the National Assembly of Angola
Présidente de l'Assemblée nationale d'Angola

Mr./M. Martin Chungong
Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
Secrétaire général de l'Union interparlementaire

I. MEMBERS – MEMBRES**ALBANIA – ALBANIE**

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Mr. Bledjon NALLBATI	Member of Parliament (PD)
Mr. Florenc SPAHO	Member of Parliament (SP)
Mr. Ervin SALIANJI	Member of Parliament (PD)
Mr. Xhelal MZIU	Member of Parliament (PD)
Mr. Genci GJONÇAJ	Secretary General of the Parliament
Member of ASGP	
Mr. Genci GOLI	Director
Secretary of the delegation	
(PD: Democratic Party)	
(PL: Freedom Party)	
(SP: Socialist Party)	

ALGERIA – ALGÉRIE

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Chef de la délégation	Membre de la Commission de la Santé, des affaires sociales et du travail
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Membre du Bureau de la Commission permanente des affaires des Nations Unies	Membre de la Commission du développement local et de l'équipement
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Membre du Groupe consultatif de haut niveau sur la lutte contre le terrorisme et l'extrémisme violent	
M. Mohamed Anouar BOUCHOUIT	Membre de l'Assemblée nationale populaire
Membre du Bureau de la Commission permanente sur la paix et la sécurité internationale	
Membre du Conseil du Forum des Jeunes parlementaires	
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Mme Fawzia BENBADIS	Membre du Conseil de la nation
Membre du Comité sur les questions relatives au Moyen-Orient	
Membre du Comité Exécutif	
Mme Farida ILIMI HADDOUCHE	Membre de l'Assemblée nationale populaire (FLN)
Membre du Bureau de la Commission permanente sur la démocratie et les droits de l'homme	
1 ^{ère} Vice-Présidente du Bureau des Femmes parlementaires	
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Mme Mouna Ahlem CHIHEB	Assemblée nationale populaire
Secrétaire du groupe	Administrateur principal
M. Ahcene DJOUAHRA	Secrétaire général, Conseil de la nation
Membre de l'ASGP	
Mme Mounia BENZIADA	Directrice, Conseil de la nation
Secrétaire du groupe	
Mr. Zahir BOUDJATIT	Diplomate
Mr. Abdelhakim MIHOUBI	Diplomate
(RND : Rassemblement National Démocratique)	
(FLN : Front de la Libération nationale)	

ANDORRA – ANDORRE

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Chef de la délégation	
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	Membre de la Commission des affaires sociales et de l'égalité
	Vice-Présidente de la Commission de la Santé
M. Carles NAUDI D'ARENY-PLANDOLIT	Membre du Conseil Général
	Membre de la Commission des finances et du budget
	Membre de la Commission des affaires étrangères

M. Marc MAGALLON

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Vice-Président de la Commission de l'éducation
de la recherche, de la culture, de la jeunesse et des
sports
Membre de la Commission des Affaires étrangères

Mme Arantxa RODRIGUEZ
Secrétaire de la délégation

(Action : Action)
(C : Concòrdia)
(DA : Démocrates pour l'Andorra)

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Mr. Rui Alberto Rita ESCORCIO
Ms. Isabel Manuela Gomes Maiato BERNARDO
Ms. Verónica Cristina Andrade RIBERRO

Ms. Nildeice Adelaide de ALMEIDA FELICIANO
Ms. Sílvia SITA

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(UNITA: The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola)
(PHA Humanist Party of Angola)

Member of the National Assembly (MPLA)

Member of the National Assembly (UNITA)
Member of the National Assembly (MPLA)
Member of the National Assembly (MPLA)
Member of the National Assembly
Member of the National Assembly
Member of the National Assembly
Member of the National Assembly, (MPLA)
Member of the National Assembly
Member of the National Assembly (MPLA)
Member of the National Assembly (UNITA)
Member of the National Assembly (PHA)
Secretary General of National Assembly

Director of Speakers Office, National Assembly
Director, National Assembly
Director, National Assembly
Adviser, National Assembly
Secretary of the Inter-Parliamentary Group of
Angola
Secretary of the Inter-Parliamentary Group Angola
Adviser, National Assembly

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Ms. Magarita STOLBIZER
Mr. Juan De Dios CINCUNEGUI
Mr. Alejandro VERDIER
Mr. Carlos Alberto MARTINEZ
(MPN: Movimiento Popular Neuquino)
PJ: Partido Justicialista
GEN : Generación para un Encuentro Nacional)

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PJ)

Member of Parliament, Senate (MPN)
Member of the Chamber of Deputies (GEN)
Adviser, Senate
Ambassador
Diplomat

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Mr. Arsen TOROSYAN

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Member of the National Assembly (CC)
Member of the Standing Committee on Economic
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Member of the National Assembly (CC)
Member of the Standing Committee on European
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Adviser, National Assembly

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Secretary of the delegation

(CC: Civil Contract)

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Mr. Julian HILL

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Secretary of the delegation

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Ms. Elise WILLIAMSON
Ms. Justine TOWNSEND

(ALP: Australian Labor Party)
(LP: Liberal Party of Australia)
(LNP: Liberal National Party of Queensland)

Speaker of the House of Representatives (ALP)
Chair, Standing Appropriations and Administration
Chair, Joint Statutory Broadcasting of Parliamentary
Proceedings

Member of the House of Representatives (LNP)
Deputy Chair, Joint Select Northern Australia
Member of the House of Representatives (ALP)
Chair, Joint Statutory Public Accounts and Audit
Chair, Representatives Select Workforce Australia
Employment Services

Member of the Senate (ALP)
Chair, Joint Statutory Corporations and Financial
Services

Deputy Chair, Senate Standing Privileges
Member of the Senate (LP) (Liberal Party of
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Deputy Chair, Senate Standing Scrutiny of
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Adviser, Senate

Program Manager, House of Representatives
Senior Research Officer, Senate
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Mr. Alexis WINTONIAK
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(ÖVP: Austrian People's Party)
(Grüne The Greens)
(NEOS The New Austrian Liberal Forum)

Member of the National Council (ÖVP)

Member of the National Council (Grüne)
Member of the National Council (NEOS)
Deputy-Secretary General, National Council

Adviser, National Council

Adviser, National Council

AZERBAIJAN – AZERBAÏDJAN

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Deputy Head of the IPU Group

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Mr. Ruslan ISMAYILOV

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Mr. Samir BEJANOV

(YAP (NAP): New Azerbaijan Party)

Member of the National Assembly (YAP)
Member of the Youth and Sports Committee
Member of the Committee for Economic Policy
Industries and Enterprising
Member of the National Assembly (YAP)
Member of the Committee on Foreign and
Interparliamentary Relations
Member of the Committee for Regional Affairs
Member of the National Assembly
Member of the Committee on Foreign and
Interparliamentary Relations
Member of the Committee for Family and Women's
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Deputy Secretary General, National Assembly

Head of the Division on Work with International
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Deputy Head of the Press and Public Relations
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(PLP: Progressive Liberal Party
FMN: Free National Movement)

Minister, Member of the House of Assembly (PLP)

Deputy Speaker of the Senate (PLP)
Member of the Senate (FMN)
Deputy Clerk
Adviser

BAHRAIN – BAHREIN

Mr. Ahmed ALMUSALLAM
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Leader of the delegation
Mr. Jamal FAKHRO
Mr. Abdulnabi SALMAN
Mr. Bassam ISMAEEL

Ms. Hala RAMZY FAYEZ
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Mr. Hasan EBRAHIM

Ms. Mariam ALDHAIN

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Mr. Adel KHADEM
Secretary of the delegation
Ms. Fawzia ALJEEB
Ms. Hanadi ALENEZI MATTAR
Secretary of the Group and of the delegation
Ms. Ameera ALQATTAF
Secretary of the Group
Ms. Sara JAWZI
Secretary of the Group and of the delegation
Secretary
Mr. Abdulrahman FARAJ
Secretary of the Group and of the delegation
Mr. Sayed Ali MOHAMMED
Ms. Sara ALBADRI
Mr. Mohammed ALJABRI
Mr. Salman MOOSA
Mr. Saleh HAMD

Speaker of the Council of Representatives

Deputy Chairman of the Shura Council
Deputy Speaker of the Council of Representatives
Member of the Shura Council
Member of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee
Member of the Shura Council
Member of the Woman and Child Affairs Committee
Chairman of the Services Committee
Member of the Council of Representatives
Member of the Services Committee
Member of the Council of Representatives
Member of the Financial and Economic Affairs Committee
Member of the Council of Representatives
Member of the Foreign Affairs, Defense and National Security Committee
Secretary General of the Council of Representatives

Advisor, Council of Representatives

Adviser, Council of Representatives
Senior Parliamentary Relations Development
Specialist, Council of Representatives
Director, Council of Representatives

Council of Representatives
Acting head of Parliamentary relation development department, Council of Representatives
Council of Representatives

Senior Media Specialist, Shura Council
Acting Head of E-Media, Council of Representatives
Director, Council of Representatives
Senior Protocol Specialist, Council of Representatives
Protocol Coordinator, Council of Representatives

BANGLADESH

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Member of the Committee on Estimates
Member of Parliament (BAL)
Member of the Standing Committee on Ministry of Public Administration
Member of the Standing Committee on Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
Member of Parliament (BAL)
Member of Parliament (JP)
Member of the Standing Committee on Ministry of Liberation War Affairs
Member of the Standing Committee on Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism

Ms. Zakia Parvin KHANAM

Mr. A K M G Kibria MAZUMDAR

Secretary of the delegation

Ms. Rubina FERDOUSHY

Ms. Samia Rubayat HUSSAIN

(BAL: Bangladesh Awami League)

(JP: Jatiya Party)

Member of Parliament (BAL)

Member of the Standing Committee on Ministry of
Post, Telecommunication & Information Technology

Adviser, Parliament, Joint Secretary, Bangladesh

Parliament Secretariat

Adviser, Parliament

Adviser, Parliament

BELARUS – BÉLARUS

Mr. Sergei RACHKOV

Leader of the delegation

Member of the High-level Advisory Group on
Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism

Ms. Maryia VASILEVICH

Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

Member of the Council of the Republic

Chairman of the Standing Committee for International
Affairs and National Security

Member of the House of Representatives

Member of the Standing Commission on Human

Rights, National Relations and Mass Media

BELGIUM – BELGIQUE

Ms. Stephanie D'HOSE

Leader of the delegation

Member of the Task Force on Ukraine

Mr. Samuel COGOLATI

President of the Group

Chair of the Committee on the Human Rights of
Parliamentarians

Member of the Group of Facilitators for Cyprus

Mr. Andries GRYFFROY

Vice-President of the Standing Committee on
United Nations Affairs

Chair of the Twelve Plus Group

Mr. Michel DE MAEGD

Member of the Standing Committee on Democracy
and Human Rights

Mr. Peter VERCAMMEN

Secretary of the Group

Mr. Liêm DANG-DUY

Deputy Secretary of the delegation

Mr. Thierry DE GHELLINCK

Secretary of the Twelve Plus Group

Mr. Maarten SWINNEN

President of the Senate (Open VLD)

Chair of the Committee on Institutional Matters

Member of the House of Representatives (Ecolo)

Member of the Committee on European Matters

Vice-Chair of the Committee on External Relations

First Vice-President of the Senate (N-VA)

Member of the Committee on Democratic Renewal
Citizenship and International Matters

Member of the House of Representatives (MR)

Member of the Committee on European Matters

Member of the Committee on External Relations

Deputy Director, Senate

Deputy Director, House of Representatives

Adviser, Senate

Chief of Staff of the President of the Senate

(N-VA: New Flemish Alliance)

(Ecolo: Green Party)

(MR: French Speaking Liberal Party)

(Open VLD: Flemish Liberal Party)

BENIN – BÉNIN

M. Sèdozan Jean-Claude APITHY

Chef de la délégation

Mme Natacha KPOCHAN

M. Constant NAHUM

M. Mathias KOUWANOU

Mme Sédami Romarique MEDEGAN FAGLA,

Mme Emmanuelle KLOUSSE DARBOUX

Secrétaire de la délégation

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (UP-R)

Membre de la Commission en charge des relations
extérieures

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (UP-R)

1er Rapporteur de la Commission de l'éducation
de la culture, de l'emploi et des affaires sociales

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (LD)

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (BR)

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale

Assistante du Secrétaire général administratif,

Assemblée nationale

(UP-R : Union progressiste le renouveau)

(LD : Les démocrates)

(BR : Bloc républicain)

BOLIVIA (PLURINATIONAL STATE OF) – (BOLIVIE (ÉTAT PLURINATIONAL DE)

Mr. Luis Alberto ZÚÑIGA ROJAS

President of Group

Leader of the delegation

Ms. Aleiza Alcira RODRÍGUEZ MONTERO

Ms. Alicia Lisseth TICONA QUISPE

Ms. Olga CAVALOTTY FORTÚN

Ms. Romina Griselda GÓMEZ JIMÉNEZ

Mr. Carlos Hernán ARRIEN CRONEMBOLD

Ms. Martha RUIZ FLORES

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (CC)

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (CC)

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (MAS-IPSP)

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (MAS-IPSP)

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (MAS-IPSP)

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (CREEMOS)

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (MAS-IPSP)

(CC: Comunidad Ciudadana)

(MAS-IPSP: Movimiento Al Socialismo)

(CREEMOS: Creemos)

BOTSWANA

Mr. Phandu Tombola Chaha SKELEMANI

Leader of the delegation

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Ms. Wilheminah N. MAKWINJA

Member of the Committee on Middle

East Questions

Mr. Palelo MOTAASANE

Mr. Dithapelo KEORAPETSE

Mr. Onneetse RAMOGAPI

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Mr. Moroka MORERI

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Secretary of the delegation

Speaker of the National Assembly (BDP)

Chairperson of the Committee of Selection

Chairperson of the Business Advisory

Member of the National Assembly (BDP)

Member, Finance, Trade and Economic Development

Chairperson, Finance and Estimates

Member of the National Assembly (BDP)

Member of the Special Select Committee on SDGs

Member of the Parliamentary Caucus on Women

Member of the National Assembly (BDP)

Member of the Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

Member of the National Assembly (UDC)

Member of the Committee of Selection

Member of the Business Advisory (UDC)

Member of the National Assembly (UDC)

Secretary General, National Assembly

Adviser

Director, National Assembly

(BDP: Botswana Democratic Party)

(UDC: Umbrella for Democratic Change)

BRAZIL – BRÉSIL

Mr. Claudio CAJADO SAMPAIO

President of the Group

Leader of the delegation

Ms. Maria Laura CARNEIRO

Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

Mr. Marcio MARINHO

Mr. Atila LINS

Ms. Ana Carolina DARTORA

Ms. Silvia ARAUJO

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Mr. Rafael VIDAL

Mr. Rafael AZEVEDO DA SILVA

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PP)

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PSD)

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PR)

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PSD)

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PT)

Adviser, Federal Senate

Ambassador

Diplomat

(PP: Progressives)

(PR: Republican Party)

(PSD: Democratic Social Party)

(PT: Labour Party)

BULGARIA – BULGARIE

Mr. Vladislav PANEV

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Member of the National Assembly (GM)

Member of the Committee on Energy

Deputy Chair of the Committee on Economic Policy and Innovation

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Member of the National Assembly (PP)
Member of the Committee on Economic Policy and Innovation
Deputy Chairperson of the Committee on the European Union Affairs, the Schengen area and the Euro area
Adviser, National Assembly

Ms. Stefka ALEXANDROVA
Secretary of the delegation

(GM: Green Movement)

(PP: Coalition we continue the change - democratic Bulgaria)

BURKINA FASO

Mme Haoua FOFANA

Vice-Président de l'Assemblée nationale

Chef de la délégation

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M. Boubacar BALBONE

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale

Mme Wendyelle Ambroise NIKIEMA

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale

M. Kalifa KABRE

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale

M. Souleymane OUEDRAOGO

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale

Mme Felicie Marie Pelagie KONSEIBO

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale

M. Armand PALM

Secrétaire général, Assemblée nationale

Membre de l'ASGP

M. Wendmissida Antoine Elise ZONG-NABA

Conseiller diplomatique, Assemblée nationale

Mr. Kountouon Bertin SOME

Directeur

(ADF-RDA : Alliance pour la Démocratie et la Fédération- Rassemblement démocratique africain)

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M. Gelase Daniel NDABIRABE

Président de l'Assemblée nationale (CNDD-FDD)

Président du Groupe

Chef de la délégation

M. Emmanuel SINZOHAGERA

Président du Sénat Burundais

Mme Sabine NTARAKUTIMANA

Vice-Présidente de l'Assemblée nationale (CNDD-FDD)

Membre du Groupe consultatif de haut niveau sur la lutte contre le terrorisme et l'extrémisme violent

Mme. Spès-Caritas NJEBARIKANUYE

Vice-Président du Sénat

M. Léonidas NAKUMURYANGO

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (CNDD-FDD)

Mme Francine MANIRAKIZA

Membre de la Commission Permanente chargée de s'affaires politiques et des relations internationales

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (CNDD-FDD)

Membre, OACP-UE

Membre de la Commission Permanente des finances et comptes publics

Mme Euphrasie MUTEZINKA

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (CNL)

Membre de la Commission Permanente chargée des affaires sociales

M. Zachée MISAGO

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (CNDD-FDD)

Membre de la Commission Permanente chargée de l'agriculture et l'élevage

M. Cyriaque NSHIMIRIMANA

Membre du Sénat

Membre de la Commission des finances, de l'Agriculture, de l'Élevage et de l'Environnement

Membre de la délégation nationale

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale

Secrétaire Général de l'Assemblée nationale

M. Jésus Marie MUKESHIMANA

M. Ferdinand SINDARIRONKA

Member of the ASGP

M. Rénovat NIYONZIMA

Secrétaire Général du Sénat

M. Jean-Claude NIMUBONA

Protocole, Sénat

M. Arsene HAKURAZO

Conseiller, Sénat

M. Benoit NGENDAKUNMANA

Conseiller chargé de la communication

M. Jean-Claude NIMUBONA

Conseiller chargé du protocole

Mme Sangwe Sonia SIMBANANIYE

Conseiller chargé de la communication, Assemblée nationale

M. Beunt NGENDAKUMARUM

Conseiller chargé de la communication, Sénat

(CNDD-FDD : Conseil National pour la Défense de la Démocratie – Force de Défense de la Démocratie)

(CNL : Congrès National pour la Liberté)

CABO VERDE

Mr. Austelino TAVARES CORREIA
President of the Group
Leader of the delegation
Mr. Francisco PEREIRA
Ms. Isa MONTEIRO
Ms. Maria SEMEDO
Secretary of the delegation

Speaker of the National Assembly

Member of the National Assembly
Member of the National Assembly
Adjunct to the Speaker's Office, National Assembly

CAMBODIA – CAMBODGE

Mr. Sem YANG
Leader of the delegation
President of the IPU Group
Mr. Kim Yeat CHHIT

Member of the Senate (CPP)
Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights,
Complaint Reception, Investigation of the Senate
Member of the Senate (CPP)
Vice-Chairperson of the Commission on Foreign
Affairs, International Cooperation, Information, and
Media

Mr. Dara SAM

Member of the National Assembly
Vice-chairperson of the Commission on Human
Rights, Reception of Complaints Investigation and
National Assembly-Senate Relations of the National
Assembly.

Mr. Sokun TY

Member of the National Assembly
Secretary of the Commission on Foreign Affairs,
International Cooperation, Information and Media

Ms. Mariyas KOP

Member of the National Assembly
Member of the Commission on Foreign Affairs,
International Cooperation, Information and Media
Secretary General, Senate

Mr. Oum SARITH
Member of ASGP
Mr. Sothkun CHHIM
Adviser
Mr. Malayvireak KOY

Director General of the Protocol and International
Relations, Senate
Director of the International Relations Department,
Senate
Chief of the International Relations Department,
Senate

Mr. Thy SENG
Secretary of the delegation

(CPP: Cambodian People's Party)

CAMEROON – CAMEROUN

Mme Marie Armande DIN BELL
Chef de la délégation

Vice-Présidente du Sénat (RDPC)
Membre de la Commission de la Défense nationale et
de la Sécurité
Membre de la Commission de la production et des
échanges

M. Isaac Nbunka Xi FON CHAFAH

Membre du Sénat, (RDPC)
Membre de la Commission des Lois
Constitutionnelles, des Droits de l'Homme et des
Libertés, de la Justice, de la Législation et du
Règlement, et de l'Administration
Membre de la Commission des Affaires Etrangères
Membre du Sénat (ANDP)

Mme Georziane Marlyse ABOUI

Vice-Président de la Commission de l'Education, de
la Formation Professionnelle et de la Jeunesse
Membre de la Commission des Affaires Culturelles,
Sociales et Familiales

Mme Edwige Ursule MEDOUANE AWOLE EPSE
ETOGA,
Secrétaire de la délégation
M. Gustave Leopold NGANE
Conseiller

Conseiller technique du Sénat

Conseiller technique au cabinet du Président, Sénat

(ANDP : Alliance Nationale pour la Démocratie et le Progrès)
(RDPC : Rassemblement Démocratique du Peuple Camerounais)

CANADA

Mr. David MCGUINTY
President of the Group
Leader of the delegation
Member of the Bureau of the Standing
Committee on United Nations Affairs
Ms. Michelle REMPEL GARNER
Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

Ms. Salma ATAULLAHJAN

Mr. Matthew GREEN

Mr. Jean-Philippe BROCHU
Ms. Natalie MYCHAJLYSZYN
Adviser
Mr. Olivier LEBLANC-LAURENDEAU
Adviser
Ms. Catherine CUERRIER
Secretary of the Group

(LIB: Liberal Party of Canada)
(CPC: Conservative Party of Canada)
(NDP: New Democratic Party)
(ISG: Independent Senators Group)
(BQ: Bloc Québécois)

Member of the House of Commons (LIB)
Member of the Joint Interparliamentary Council
Chair of the National Security and Intelligence
Committee of Parliamentarians

Member of the House of Commons (CPC)
Member of the Standing Committee on Citizenship
and Immigration
Member of the Senate (CPC)
Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Rights
Member of the Standing Committee on Rules,
Procedures and Rights of Parliament
Member of the House of Commons (NDP)
Member of the Standing Committee on Access to
Information, Privacy and Ethics
Joint Chair of the Special Joint Committee on the
Declaration of Emergency
Secretary General, House of Commons
House of Commons

House of Commons

Procedural Clerk, House of Commons

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC – RÉPUBLIQUE CENTRAFRICAINE

M. Evariste NGAMANA
Président du groupe
Chef de la délégation
Mme Marie-Christiane PATASSE

M. Ghislain Junior MORDJIM
Membre de l'ASGP
Mme Sylva Eldora KOGALAMA MAKALAMA
Secrétaire de la délégation

(CA-NE: Centrafrique Nouvel Elan)
(MCU: Mouvement Coeurs Unis)

Vice-Président de l'Assemblée nationale (MCU)
Membre, Affaires Etrangères

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (CA-NE)
Membre, Éducation
Secrétaire général
Assemblée nationale
Conseiller Assemblée nationale

CHAD – TCHAD

M. Maki MAHAMAT SALEH
Chef de la délégation
Mme Opportune AYMADJI
M. Jacques LAOUHINGAMAYE (M.)
Membre du Bureau de la Commission permanente des
Nations Unies
M. Adrien BEYOM MALO
Membre de l'ASGP
M. Alghassim KHAMIS
Secrétaire de la délégation

(PS: PUR)
(MPS: Mouvement Patriotique du Salut)

Vice-Président du Conseil national de transition (PS)

Membre du Conseil national de transition
Membre du Conseil national de transition (MPS)
Président, Politique Générale, Institution, Lois, Droits
fondamentaux et Libertés
Secrétaire général, Conseil national de transition

Conseil national de transition

CHILE – CHILI

Ms. Marcela RIQUELME
Leader of the delegation

Mr. Rojo EDWARDS
Mr. Mauro GONZALEZ

Mr. Nelson VENEGAS

Mr. Matías RAMÍREZ

Ms. Flor WEISSE

Mr. Gaston SAAVEDRA

Ms. Loreto CARVAJAL

Mr. Juan Pablo GALLEGUILLOS
Member of ASGP
Ms. Jacqueline PEILLARD
Secretary of the delegation
Mr. Juan OSES
Secretary of the Delegation

(IND: Independent Party
(PC: Communist Party)
(PPD: Partido por la Democracia)
(PS: Socialist Party / Partie socialiste)
(RN: National Renewal)
(UDI: Independent Democratic Union)

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (IND)
Member, Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
Member, Mining and Energy
Member of the Senate
Member of the Chamber of Deputies (RN)
Member, Fishing, Aquaculture and Maritime Interests
Member, Public Works, Transport and
Telecommunications
Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PS)
President, Ethics and Transparency
Member, Mining and Energy
Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PC)
Member, Fishing, Aquaculture and Maritime Interests
Member, Future, Science, Technology, Knowledge and
Innovation
Member of the Chamber of Deputies (UDI)
Member of the Women and Gender Equity
Member of the Economy, Micro, Small and Medium
Enterprises, Consumer Protection and Tourism
Member of the Senate (PS)
Member, Human Rights
Member, Working Affairs
Member of the Senate (PPD)
Member, Economics
Member, Working Affairs
Secretary General, Chamber of Deputies

Director of International Affairs, Chamber of Deputies

Adviser

CHINA – CHINE

Mr. Jinghai LI
Leader of the delegation

Ms. Tong YI
Mr. Chenghua JIANG

Mr. Gao LI

Mr. Zheyi SHEN
Secretary of the delegation
Ms. Yuyu WANG
Ms. Ting ZHU
Ms. Yan WANG
Secretary of the delegation
Ms. Qianqian HUANG
Ms. Yi ZHENG
Ms. Mo LI
Mr. Hanyang CHEN
Ms. Chenxiao ZHANG

(CPC: Communist Party of China)

Member of the National People's Congress (CPC)
Vice-chairman of the Education, Science, Culture,
Health Committee
Member of the National People's Congress (CPC)
Member of the National People's Congress (CPC)
Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee
Member of the National People's Congress (CPC)
Member of the Environmental Protection and Resource
Conservation Committee
Director, National People's Congress (CPC)

Deputy Director, National People's Congress
Deputy Director, National People's Congress
Adviser, National People's Congress

Staffer, National People's Congress
Staffer, National People's Congress
Staffer, National People's Congress
Staffer, National People's Congress
Diplomat

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

M. Adama BICTOGO
Chef de la délégation
Mme Adjoua Jeanne PEUHMONT NEE BROU

M. Toikeusse Albert Abdallah MABRI

M. Koffi Kra Paulin KOUASSI
Président du Groupe

Mme Coulibaly DAO née MACOURA

M. Wonsebeo Innocent YOUTE

M. Koffi Marius KONAN

M. Pogabaha Thomas CAMARA

M. Samy MERHY

Mr. Maimouna TRAORE NEE TRAORE
M. Aboubacar Sidiki DIOMANDE
Membre de l'ASGP
M. Amani Sébastien KOUASSI
Secrétaire du Groupe
Secrétaire de la délégation
M. Santiero Jean-Marie SOMET

(PDCI-RDA : Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire - Rassemblement Démocratique Africain)
(RHDP : Rassemblement des Houphouëtistes pour la Démocratie et la Paix)

Président de l'Assemblée nationale (RHDP)
Vice-Présidente de l'Assemblée nationale (RHDP)
Membre de la Commission des Affaires sociales et culturelles
Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (RHDP)
Membre de la Commission des Relations extérieures
Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (RHDP)
Membre de la Commission de l'évaluation des politiques publiques
Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (RHDP)
Commission de la sécurité et de la défense
Membre de l'Assemblée nationale
Commission des relations extérieures
Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (PDCI-RDA)
Commission des affaires générales et institutionnelles
Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (RHDP)
Président de la Commission des relations extérieures
Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (RHDP)
Membre de la Commission des affaires économiques et financières
Membre de l'Assemblée nationale
Secrétaire général, Assemblée nationale
Chef du Service des relations Interparlementaires, Assemblée nationale
Ambassadeur

CROATIA – CROATIE

Ms. Natalija MARTINČEVIĆ
President of the Group
Leader of the delegation

Mr. Ivan ČELIĆ
Member of the Advisory Group on Health

Mr. Stjepan VUKAS
Secretary of the delegation

(NS-Reformists: People's Party – Reformists)
(HDZ: Croatian Democratic Union)

Member of the Croatian Parliament (NS-Reformists)
Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the National Group to the IPU
Member of the Interparliamentary Co-operation Committee
Member of the Croatian Parliament (HDZ)
Member of the Health and Social Policy Committee
Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee
Deputy Director, Croatian Parliament

CUBA

Ms. Ana María MARÍ MACHADO

Mr. Rolando Miguel GONZÁLEZ PATRICIO
President of Group
Ms. Arelys SANTANA BELLO

Ms. Estela Cristina LUNA MORALES
Member of the Advisory Group on Health
Ms. Richards Martinez ORISEL

Mr. Jesus Rafael MORA,
Secretary of the Group

(CPC: Communist Party of Cuba)

Vice President of the National Assembly of the People's Power (CPC)
Member of the National Assembly of the People's Power (CPC)
Member of the National Assembly of the People's Power (CPC)
Member of the National Assembly of the People's Power (CPC)
Member of the National Assembly of the People's Power (CPC)
Member of the National Assembly of the People's Power (CPC)
Director, National Assembly of the People's Power

CZECH REPUBLIC – RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE

Mr. Viktor VOJTKO
President of the Group
Leader of the delegation
Member of the Working Group on Science and
Technology
Ms. Adéla ŠÍPOVÁ

Ms. Helena PEŠATOVÁ

Mr. Tomas KOHOUTEK

Mr. Petr FIFKA

Ms. Radka ZEMANOVA
Secretary of the delegation

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (STAN)
Member of the Committee on Public Administration
and Regional Development
Member of the Committee on Social Affairs

Member of the Senate (Piráti)
Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on EU Affairs
Member of the Senate (STAN)
Member of the Committee on Public Administration
Member of the Regional Development and the
Environment

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (ANO 211)
Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs
Member of the Committee on Constitutional and
Legal Affairs

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (ODS)
Vice-Chair of the Committee on Health Care
Vice-Chair of the Committee on European Affairs
Adviser, Senate

(Piráti: Czech Pirate Party)
(STAN: Liberal to liberal conservative -Mayors and Independents)
(ODS: Civic Democratic Party)
(ANO 211)

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO - RÉPUBLIQUE DÉMOCRATIQUE DU CONGO

M. Modeste BAHATI LUKWEBO
Chef de la délégation
M. Andre MBATA
Mme Jeannette KAVIRA MAPERA
Membre du Bureau des Femmes parlementaires
M. Boris MBUKU LAKA
Membre du Comité des droits de l'homme des
parlementaires
Mme Francine MUYUMBA FURAHA
Membre du Comité chargé de promouvoir le respect
du droit international humanitaire
Mme Vicky KATUMWA MUKALAY

M. Evariste BOSHAB MABUDJI MA BILENGE
M. Jean MUKWALA BATEKE
Membre de l'ASGP
Mme Marie Suzanne PASI VALU NDOMOLO,
Secrétaire du groupe
Mme Josée WANGATA
M. Bernard WOLA NTSHIKALA
M. Robert Ndaye

Président du Sénat (AFDC)

Vice-Président de l'Assemblée nationale (UDPS)
Membre de l'Assemblée nationale

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale

Membre du Sénat (PPRD)
Membre, Relations extérieures

Membre du Sénat (AFDC)
Membre. ECOFIN BG, Économique, Financière et de
la bonne gouvernance
Membre du Sénat (A A C)
Secrétaire général, Sénat

Directeur, Sénat

Conseillère, Assemblée nationale
Assemblée nationale
Media, Assemblée nationale

(A A C: Alliance pour les Actions Citoyennes
(AARC: Actions Alternatives pour la renaissance du Congo)
(AFDC: Alliance des Forces Démocratiques du Congo)
(PPRD: Parti du Peuple pour la Reconstruction et La Démocratie)
(UDPS: Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès social)

DENMARK – DANEMARK

Mr. Soeren SOENDERGAARD
Leader of the delegation

Mr. Thomas MONBERG

Mr. Kim VALENTIN

Member of the Danish Parliament (EL)
Member of the Cultural Affairs Committee
Vice chairman of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly
Member of the Danish Parliament (S)
Member of the Housing Committee
Member of the Cultural Affairs Committee
Member of the Danish Parliament (V)
Member of the Cultural Affairs Committee
Member of the European Affairs Committee

Mr. Kris Jensen SKRIVER

Member of the Danish Parliament (S)
Member of the Children's and Education Committee
Vice chairman of the Rural Districts and Islands Committee

Mr. Rasmus Horn LANGHOFF

Member of the Danish Parliament (S)
Member of the Health Committee
Chairman of the Climate, Energy and Utilities Committee

Mr. Jens MEILVANG

Member of the Danish Parliament (LA)
Member of the Domestic Affairs Committee
Vice chairman of the Transport Committee
Member of the Danish Parliament (LA)
Member of the Cultural Affairs Committee
Vice chairman of the Social Affairs Committee
Secretary, The Danish Parliament

Ms. Katrine DAUGAARD

Mr. Peter RIIS
Secretary of the delegation
Mr. Claudius LARSON
Secretary of the delegation

The Danish Parliament

(EL: The Red-Green Alliance)
(LA: Liberal Alliance)
(S: The Social Democratic Party)
(V: The Liberal Party)**DJIBOUTI**M. Dileita MOHAMED DILEITA
Président du Groupe
Chef de la délégation
Mme Nima BOULHAN HOUSSEIN

Président de l'Assemblée nationale

M. Elmi MAHABEH WAISS

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (RPP)
Membre de la Commission des lois et de l'administration

M. Hassan ADEN GUEDI

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (RPP)
Membre, Affaires étrangères

M. Abdallah MOHAMED ROUFFA

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (UDJ)
Membre de la Commission des finances
Membre de l'Assemblée nationale
Membre de la Commission de défense
Conseiller, Assemblée nationaleM. Mohamed DAOUD YOUSSEF
Secrétaire de la délégation
M. Idriss MOHAMED AHMED

Directeur adjoint, Assemblée nationale

(RPP: Rassemblement populaire pour le progrès)
(UDJ: Union pour la Démocratie et la Justice)**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC – RÉPUBLIQUE DOMINICAINE**Mr. Luis Alcides BÁEZ
Leader of the delegation

Member of the Chamber of Deputies

EGYPT – ÉGYPTEMr. Hanafy GEBALY
Leader of delegation
Ms. Rasha HOSNI

Speaker of the House of Representatives

Mr. Karim DARWISH
Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions
Ms. Sahar ATTIA
Member of the Working Group on Science and Technology
Mr. Ahmed SHAHEENMember of the House of Representatives (Liberal)
Member of the Energy and Environment Committee
Member of the House of Representatives (Liberal)
President of the Foreign Relations Committee
Member of the House of Representatives
Member of the Tourism and Civil aviation committeeMs. Aida Nassif AYYOUB AWADALLAH
Second Vice-President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians
Mr. Mohamed TALAAT
Mr. Ahmed ABDELHAE
Mr. Haytham NOUR ELDIN
Mr. Abdellatif FAROUKMember of the House of Representatives (Liberal)
Member of the Health Committee
Member of the Senate (Liberal)
Secretary of the Foreign Affairs CommitteeMember of the House of Representatives
Member of the House of Representatives
Director, House of Representatives
Director, House of Representatives

Mr. Sherief ELWY
Mr. Ayman NASR
Mr. Mohamed WAGIH
Mr. Ahmed MANAA
Member of ASGP
Mr. Etnan MAHMOOD
Mr. Ashraf EL-SEIDY
Mr. Mohamed HOSNI
Mr. Mohamed SAFWAT
Ms. Parihan AMER

Deputy Director, House of Representatives
Deputy Director, House of Representatives
Director, House of Representatives
Secretary General, House of Representatives

Secretary-General, Senate
Adviser
Protocol officer, House of Representatives
Ambassador
Diplomat

(Liberal: Nation's Future Party)

EQUATORIAL GUINEA – GUINÉE ÉQUATORIALE

Mr. Atanasio-Ela NTUGU NSA
Leader of the delegation
Ms. María Flavia MBA OBONO
Ms. Amparo MELE COLIFA
Mr. Bienvenido Ekua ESONO ABE
Secretary of the Group
Mr. Victorino-Nka OBIANG MAYE
Secretary of the delegation

Member of the Senate (PDGE)
Member of the Senate (PDGE)
Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PDGE)
Secretary General, Chamber of Deputies
Secretary General, Senate

(PDGE: Partido Democrático de Guinea Ecuatorial)

ESTONIA – ESTONIE

Ms. Maris LAURI
President of the Group
Leader of the delegation

Ms. Helle-Moonika HELME

Ms. Helmen KÜTT

Mr. Peeter TALI

Member of the Estonian Parliament (REF)
Deputy Chairman of the State Budget Control Select Committee
Member of the Finance Committee
Member of the Estonian Parliament (EKRE)
Member of the Cultural Affairs Committee
Member of the Estonian Parliament (SOC)
Member of the Social Affairs Committee
Member of the Estonian Parliament (E200)
Member of the Security Authorities Surveillance Select Committee
Member of the National Defence Committee
Adviser, The Estonian Parliament

Ms. Enel OTSTAVEL
Adviser

(REF: Estonian Reform Party)
(EKRE: Conservative People's Party of Estonia)
(SOC: Social Democratic Party)
(KESK: Estonian Centre Party)
(E200: Estonia 200)

ETHIOPIA – ÉTHIOPIE

Mr. Agegnehu Teshager GESSESSE
President of the Group
Leader of the delegation
Mr. Dara TESFAYE BELJIGE
Mr. Hailu Efa GONDA
Mr. Gioi MEHRETU SHANKO
Mr. Kebede Kayima SHOA
Secretary of the delegation
Member of ASGP
Dr. Mesrak MEKONNEN YETNEBERK (Ms.)
Mr. Yimer SEJFU MENGISTU
Mr. Wakitole Dadi JAWI
Adviser

President of the House of the Federation

Member of the House of Federation
Member of the House of the Federation
Member of the House of the Federation
Secretary General, House of the Federation

Secretary-General of the House of the People
Protocol
Adviser, House of the Federation

FIJI

Mr. Ratu Naiqama LALABALAVU
Leader of the delegation
Mr. Inia SERUIRATU

Speaker of Parliament

Member of Parliament (FFP)
Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources
Leader of the Opposition

Ms. Alitia BAINIVALU

Member of the Parliament (PAP)
Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social
Affairs
Secretary General, ParliamentMs. Jeanette EMBERSON
Secretary of the delegation
Member of ASGPMr. Senitieli WAI
Secretary of the delegationMs. Neomai DOLOKOTO
Secretary of the delegation

(PAP: People's Alliance Party PAP)

(FFP: Fiji First Party)

Manager Inter Parliamentary Relations and Protocol,
Parliament

Senior Media Officer, Parliament

FINLAND - FINLANDE

Mr. Sebastian TYNKKYNNEN

President of the Group

Leader of the delegation

Ms. Anne KALMARI

Member of Parliament (PS)

Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee

Deputy member of the Committee for the Future

Member of Parliament (Kesk)

Vice Chair of the Agriculture and Forestry Committee

Vice-Chair of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Finnish
Group

Mr. Markku EESTILA

Member of Parliament (Kok)

Deputy Member of the Constitutional Law Committee

Member of the Finance Committee

Ms. Fatim DIARRA

Member of Parliament (Vihr)

Member of the Constitutional Law Committee

Member of the Employment and Equality Committee

Assistant, Parliament

Ms. Outi LEHTIMAKI

Secretary of the delegation

Mr. Teemu VUOSIO, Adviser,

Ms. Maija-Leena PAAVOLA

Member of ASGP

Adviser, Parliament

Secretary General, Parliament

(Kesk.: Centre Party)

(Kok.: National Coalition Party)

(PS: The Finns Party)

(Vihr.: Green League)

FRANCE

Mme Véronique RIOTTON

Chef de la délégation

Membre du Bureau des Femmes parlementaires

M. Etienne BLANC

Membre du Comité des droits de l'homme des
parlementaires

M. Hubert Julien-Laferrière

Président du Comité sur les questions relatives
au Moyen-Orient

M. Louis-Jean DE NICOLAÏ

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (Renaissance)

Membre de la Commission des affaires culturelles et
de l'éducation

Membre du Sénat (LR)

Membre de la Commission des affaires étrangères et
des forces armées

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale

Membre du Bureau de la Commission permanente de
la paix et de la sécurité internationale

Mme Laetitia SAINT-PAUL

Membre du Sénat (LR)

Membre de la Commission des affaires européennes

Membre de la Commission de l'aménagement du
territoire et du développement durable

Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (Renaissance)

Membre de la Commission des affaires étrangères

M. Philippe DELIVET

Directeur, Sénat

Mme Capucine CAPON

Administratrice, Assemblée nationale

M. Pierre-Nicolas GUESDON

Administrateur, Assemblée nationale

Mme Cécile LAMBRECQ

Conseillère, Sénat

Mme Karine VELASCO

Assistante de direction et de gestion, Assemblée
nationale

(RDPI : Rassemblement des démocrates, progressistes et indépendants)

(LR : Les Républicains)

(NUPES : La nouvelle union populaire écologique et sociale)

(Renaissance : Parti Renaissance)

GABON

Mr. Jean-François NDONGOU
Leader of Delegation
Mr. Gabriel MALLY
Ms. Diane Dorothee MENGUE M'AKUE,
Mr. Aurelien NTOUTOUME MEBIAME
Mr. Ghislain Claude ESSABE,
Ms. Marinette MVE EBANG,
Ms. Magaly C MAKOMBO-NEMBE,
Mr. John William YOUNBI,
Mr. Thim BOULENGUE,
Ms. Marline Sonia OKISSI IGONDJO,
Ms. Isabel QUARTA,
Mr. Guy Blaise NAMBO WEZET
Mr. Stanislas NTUTUME,

President of the National Assembly

Vice President of the National Assembly
Member of the National Assembly
Member of the National Assembly
Director of the National Assembly
Adviser
Adviser
Protocol Officer
Media Officer
Staff
Staff
Ambassador/Permanent Representative,
Diplomat

GAMBIA (THE) – GAMBIE

Mr. Seedy Sk NJIE
Leader of the delegation

Ms. Fatou CHAM

Mr. Assan TOURAY

Mr. Kebba JALLOW

Mr. Musa CHAM

Mr. Sainey KONTEH
Secretary of the Group

(NPP: National People's Party

(UDP: United Democratic Party)

(PDOIS) People's Democratic Organisation for Independence and Socialism

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly (NPP)
Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Defense and Security
Member, Standing Committee on Finance and Public Accounts
Member of the National Assembly (UDP)
Vice-Chairperson of the Select Committee on Gender, Children and Social Welfare
Member of the Standing Committee on Finance and Public Accounts
Member of the National Assembly (UDP)
Vice -Chairperson of the Select Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development
Member of the Standing Committee on Public Enterprises
Member of the National Assembly (NPP)
Chairperson of the Select Committee on Trade, Regional Integration and Employment
Member of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and Constitutional Matters
Member of the National Assembly (PDOIS)
Member of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and Constitutional Matters
Member of the Select Committee on Tourism, Arts and Culture
Adviser, National Assembly

GEORGIA – GÉORGIE

Mr. Shalva PAPUASHVILI
President of the Group
Leader of the delegation
Mr. Nikoloz SAMKHARADZE

Ms. Salome KURASBEDIANI

Mr. Levan MAKHASHVILI
Adviser
Ms. Tamar KOLBAIA
Adviser
Mr. Irakli BROKISHVILI
Secretary of the delegation
Ms. Tinatin MGELADZE

(GD: The Georgian Dream)

Chairman of Parliament (GD)

Member of Parliament (GD)
Chairperson of the Foreign Relations Committee
Member of Parliament (GD)
Member of the Committee on European Integration
Deputy Chairperson of the Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Committee
Head of the Speaker's Cabinet, Parliament

Director, Parliament

Adviser, Parliament

Adviser, Parliament

GERMANY – ALLEMAGNE

Mr. Volkmar KLEIN Leader of the delegation	Member of The German Bundestag (CDU/CSU) Member of the Committee for Economic Cooperation and Development
Mr. Jürgen COSSE	Member of the German Bundestag (SPD) Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee Member of the Subcommittee United Nations, International Organizations and Civilian Crisis Prevention
Mr. Christian SCHREIDER	Member of the German Bundestag (SPD) Alternate member of the Foreign Affairs Committee Member of the Sports Committee
Ms. Elisabeth WINKELMEIER-BECKER	Member of the German Bundestag (CDU/CSU) Chair of the Legal Affairs Committee Alternate member of the Committee for Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid
Mr. Ulrich LECHTE	Member of the German Bundestag (FDP) Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee Alternate member of the Subcommittee on United Nations, International Organizations and Civilian Crisis Prevention
Mr. Petr BYSTRON	Member of the German Bundestag (AfD) Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee Alternate member of the Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Aid Secretary General German Bundestag
Mr. Michael SCHÄFER Member of ASGP	Deputy Secretary General of the German Bundesrat
Mr. Georg KLEEMANN Member of ASGP	International Parliamentary Assemblies Department, German Bundestag
Ms. Katalin ZÁDOR Secretary of the delegation	International Parliamentary Assemblies Department, German Bundestag
Ms. Claudia BRAMMER Assistant to the delegation	
Ms. Lisa-Marie REDOCK Assistant to the delegation	International Parliamentary Assemblies Department, German Bundestag
Mr. Stefan TRAUMANN	Ambassador/Permanent Representative
(CDU/CSU	Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union)
(SPD:	Social Democratic Party)
(FDP	Free Democratic Party)
(AfD:	Alternative for Germany)

GHANA

Mr. Alban Sumana Kingsford BAGBIN President of the Group Leader of the delegation	Speaker of Parliament (NDC)
Ms. Ophelia MENSAH	Member of Parliament (NPP) Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Defence and Interior, Member, House Committee
Ms. Agnes Naa Momo LARTEY	Member of Parliament (NDC) Member of the Committee on Gender and Children, Member of the Committee on Local Government and Rural Development
Ms. Abba Dzifa GOMASHIE	Member of Parliament (NDC) Member of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Committee Member of the Committee on Trade, Industry and Tourism
Mr. Ahmed IBRAHIM	Member of Parliament (NDC) Member of the Special Budget Committee Member of the Committee on Communications

Mr. Cassiel Baah FORSON	Member of Parliament (NPP) Vice Chairman of the Special Budget Committee, Ranking
Mr. Osei KYEI-MENSAH-BONSU	Member of the Finance Committee Member of Parliament (NPP) Chairman of the Special Budget Committee Chairman of the Business Committee,
Ms. Patricia APPIAGYEI	Member of Parliament (NPP) Chairperson of the Government Assurance Committee Member of the Special Budget Committee
Mr. Habib IDDRISU	Member of Parliament (NPP) Member of the Committee on Mines and Energy Member of the Business Committee Clerk of Parliament
Mr. Cyril Kwabena Oteng NSIAH Member of ASGP	
Mr. Richard Kwame ACHEAMPONG Adviser	Director, Parliament
Mr. Daniel SAM-BOSSMAN Mr. Justice NORVOR Secretary of the Group	Assistant Director, Parliament Aide to the Speaker, Parliament
Mr. Emmanuel KORANTENG Secretary of the delegation, Ms. Mavis KUSORGBOR Mr. Daniel OPOKU MENSAH	Deputy Director, Parliament Ambassador Diplomat

(NDC: National Democratic Congress)

(NPP: New Patriotic Party)

GREECE – GRÈCE

Ms. Dionysia - Theodora AVGERINOPOULOU	Member of Hellenic Parliament (ND) Chairperson of the Special Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Environmental Protection and the Subcommittee of the Watercourses of the Hellenic Parliament Member of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs Standing Committee on National Defense and Foreign Affairs Deputy Director, Hellenic Parliament
Ms. Aikaterini KARTSAKLI Secretary of the delegation	

(ND: New Democracy)

GUINEA – GUINÉE

M. Seny Facinet SYLLA Chef de la delegation Président du groupe	Vice-Président du Conseil national de transition
M. Mamadou Fadia BALDE M. Aboubacar Sidiki CISSE M. Aboubacar Sidiki MARA Mme Mama Sany BEAVOGUI M. Souleymane TOURE Membre de l'ASGP M. Sidiki CISSE Secrétaire de la délégation Secrétaire du groupe	Membre du Conseil national de transition (UFDG) Membre du Conseil national de transition (MPDG) Membre du Conseil national de transition Membre du Conseil national de transition Secrétaire Général du Conseil national de transition Assistant du Directeur des relations interparlementaires et de la coopération, Conseil national de transition

(UFDG : Union des Forces Démocratiques de Guinée)

(MPDG : Mouvement Populaire Démocratique de Guinée)

GUINEA-BISSAU – GUINÉE-BISSAU

Mr. Domingos Simões PEREIRA	Speaker of the People's National Assembly
Ms. Matilde N'DEQUI	Member of the People's National Assembly
Mr. Augusto Regalla AGNELO	Member of the People's National Assembly
Mr. José Carlos RODRIGUES DA FONSECA	Member of the People's National Assembly
Mr. Mamadu DJALO	Member of the People's National Assembly
Mr. Abdu MANE	Member of the People's National Assembly
Ms. Ruth MONTEIRO MENDES	Member of the People's National Assembly

Mr. Akia BARI
Mr. Apolinario MENDES DE CARVALHO

Adviser, First Secretary of the Assembly
Ambassador/Permanent Representative

GUYANA

Mr. Manzoor NADIR
President of the Group
Leader of the delegation

Speaker of the National Assembly
Chairman of the Parliamentary Management Committee
Chairman of the Sessional Select Committee of Privileges
Member of the National Assembly (APNU)
Member of the Assembly Committee
Chairman of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Natural Resources
Member of the National Assembly (PPP/C)
Member of the Sessional Select Committee of Privileges
Member of the Standing Orders Committee
Clerk, National Assembly

Ms. Dawn HASTINGS-WILLIAMS

Mr. Mohabir NANDLALL

Mr. Sherlock ISAACS
Secretary of the Group
Member of ASGP
Ms. Carlleta CHARLES
Secretary of the delegation

Parliamentary Executive Officer, National Assembly

(APNU: A Partnership for National Unity)
(PPP/C: People's Progressive Party/Civic)

HUNGARY – HONGRIE

Ms. Monika BARTOS
Leader of the delegation

Ms. Ágnes VADAI
Vice-President of the High-level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism
Member of the Group of Facilitators for Cyprus
Mr. Laszlo TOROCZKAI
Ms. Katalin SOMFAINE ADAM
Secretary of the Group
Mr. Zsolt Sziard MARIS
Ms. Tunde KOVACS
Ms. Katalin FARKAS

Member of the National Assembly (Fidesz)
Member of the Committee for Social Welfare
Member of the Committee for Foreign Affairs
Notary of the Hungarian National Assembly (DK)
Member of the National Assembly
Member of the Committee for Foreign Affairs
Vice-President of HLAG
Member of the National Assembly (Mi Hazánk)
Head of Hungarian IPU Office

Ambassador/Permanent representatives
Deputy Head of Mission
Diplomat

(FIDESZ:- Hungarian Civic Union)
(DK: Democratic Coalition)
(Mi Hazánk: Our Homeland)

ICELAND – ISLANDE

Ms. Hildur SVERRISDÓTTIR
Leader of the delegation

Member of the Althingi (C)
Deputy Chair of the Industrial Affairs Committee
Member of the Constitutional and Supervisory Committee
Member of the Althingi (SP)
Vice-Chair of the Constitutional and supervisory Committee
Member of the Environment and Communications Committee
Deputy Secretary General, Althingi

Ms. Thorunn SVEINBJARNARDOTTIR

Ms. Audur JONSDOTTIR
Member of ASGP
Ms. Arna Gerður BANG
Adviser

(SP: Social Democratic Alliance)
(Conservative Party (C) Independence Party)

INDIA – INDE

Mr. Shiri Vishnu Dayali RAM
Leader of the Delegation
Ms. Aparajita SARANGI
Member of the Executive Committee

Member of the Lok Sabha
Member of the House of the People (BJP)
Member of the Housing and Urban Affairs, Member of

Mr.. Sasmit PATRA (Mr.)
Ms. Sumalatha AMBAREESH
Member of the High-level Advisory Group on
Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism
Ms. Mamta MOHANTA

Mr. Kamakhya Prasad TASA

Mr. Sumant NARAIN
Mr. Abhyuday Singh SHEKHAWAT
Mr. Yogendra SINGH
Mr. Pritam KUMAR
Mr. Anurag SAINI
Mr. Nitish YADAV
Mr. Shri Niraj Kumar SINHA

(BJP: Bhartiya Janta Party)
(AITC: All India Trinamool Congress)
(BJD: Biju Janta Dal)

the Joint Committee on the Personal Data Protection
Bill, 219

Member of the Rajya Sabha
Member of the House of the People (BJP)
Member, Communications, and Information
Technology
Member of the Council of States (BJD)
Member, Rules, Social Justice and Empowerment
Member of the Council of States (BJP)
Chairman, Papers laid on Table
Member, Defence
Adviser, Rajya Sabha Secretariat
Adviser, Rajya Sabha Secretariat
Deputy Secretary, Lok Sabha Secretariat
Deputy Secretary, Rajya Sabha Secretariat
Under-Secretary, Rajya Sabha Secretariat
Private Secretary, Lok Sabha Secretariat
Senior Secretariat Assistant, Lok Sabha

INDONESIA – INDONÉSIE

Mr. Fadli ZON
Leader of the delegation
Member of the Bureau of the Standing
Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

Mr. Gilang DHIELAFARAREZ

Mr. Putu Supadma RUDANA
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on
Sustainable Development

Mr. Sukamta MANTAMIHARJA

Mr. Achmad Hafisz TOHIR

Ms. Adriana Charlotte DONDOKAMBEY

Mr. Fadhlullah FADHLULLAH

Ms. Ratih Megasari SINGKARRU
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on
Peace and International Security

Mr. Hasani Bin ZUBER

Member of the House of Representatives (Gerindra)
Member of the Commission I Defense, Foreign and
Information Affairs
Chair of the Committee for Inter-Parliamentary
Cooperation
Member of the House of Representatives (PDI-P)
Member of the Commission III Laws, Human Rights
and Security Affairs Vice-Chair of the Committee for
Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation
Member of the House of Representatives (Demokrat)
Member of the Commission VI Trade Investments,
Cooperative, SMEs and State-Owned Enterprises
Vice-Chair of the Committee for Inter-Parliamentary
Cooperation
Member of the House of Representatives (PKS)
Member of the Commission I Defense, Foreign and
Information Affairs
Vice-Chair of the Committee for Inter-Parliamentary
Cooperation
Member of the House of Representatives (PAN)
Member of the Commission XI Finance, National
Development Planning, Banking and Non-Banking
Financial Institutions
Vice-Chair of the Committee for Inter-Parliamentary
Cooperation
Member of the House of Representatives (PDIP-P)
Member of the Commission IX Demography, Health
and Labor
Member of the Committee for Inter-Parliamentary
Cooperation
Member of the House of Representatives
Member of the Commission I: Defense, Foreign, and
Information Affairs
Member of the Committee for Inter-Parliamentary
Cooperation
Member of the House of Representatives (NasDem)
Member of the Committee for Inter-Parliamentary
Cooperation
Member of the Commission X Education, Research
and Technology, Youth Affairs, Sports, Tourism, Arts,
and Culture
Member of the House of Representatives (PDI-P)
Member of the Commission VIII Religious, Social and
Women's Empowerment Affairs

Ms. Endah T.D. RETNOASTUTI
Secretary of the delegation
Ms. Elvira Dianti AMRIS

Mr. Jaka ADIWIGUNA

Ms. Miranti WIDIANI

Mr. Naufal Fakhri ERLANGGA
Secretary of the delegation
Mr. Isep Parid YAHYA

Mr. Keanu Arief Triputra RAMADHANA

Mr. Muhammad Asrian MIRZA

Mr. Alfat NUR RIZQI
Mr. Wisnu Edi PRATIGNYO
Mr. Mandala PURBA

(Gerindra: Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya)
(Golkar: Partai Golongan Karya)
(NasDem: Partai Nasional Demokrat)
(PAN: (Partai Amanat Nasional)
(PKS: Partai Keadilan Sejahtera)
(PDI-P: Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan)

Member of the Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation
Deputy Director, House of Representatives
Head of Bureau for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation
Deputy Director, House of Representatives
Head of International Cooperation Division
Deputy Director, House of Representatives
Head of International Cooperation for Session Sub-Division
Adviser, House of Representatives
Foreign cooperation Analyst Staff
Adviser, House of Representatives

Adviser of Inter-Parliamentary Bureau, House of Representatives
Adviser of Inter-Parliamentary Bureau, House of Representatives
Adviser of Inter-Parliamentary Bureau, House of Representatives
Documentation, House of Representatives (Golkar)
Diplomat
Diplomat

IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF) – IRAN (RÉPUBLIQUE ISLAMIQUE D'

Mr. Mojtaba ZOLNOURI
Head of the delegation
Mr. Mojtaba REZAKHAH
President of the Group
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security
Mr. Morteza AGHA TEHRANI

Mr. Abbas GOLROO
Member of the High-level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism
Ms. Elham AZAD
Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

Mr. Gholamreza NOURI GHEZELJEH

Ms. Somayeh RAFIEI

Mr. Mostafa TAHERI
Mr. Jalal ABOULHASSANI CHIMEH
Mr. Adel Abullahi
Mr. Seyed Mostafa SHARIFI
Mr. Ali SOLTANIFARD
Mr. Hassan ASHTARI
Mr. Mansour Hosseini
Mr. Amirreza AHMADI KHOY

Deputy Speaker of the Islamic Parliament of Iran

Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran
Member of the Program and Budget Standing Committee

Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran
Chairperson of the Cultural Standing Committee
Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran
Member of the National Security and Foreign Policy Standing Committee
Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran
First Secretary of the Standing Committee on Article 9 of the Constitution

Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran
Member of Agriculture, Water and Natural resources Standing Committee

Member of the Islamic Parliament of Iran
Member of the Agriculture, Water and Natural resources Standing Committee

Adviser, Islamic Parliament of Iran
Deputy Director, Islamic Parliament of Iran
Adviser, Islamic Parliament of Iran
Adviser, Islamic Parliament of Iran
Adviser, Islamic Parliament of Iran
Adviser, Islamic Parliament of Iran
Diplomat

IRAQ

Mr. Arshed AL-SALIH
Leader of the delegation
Member of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law
Ms. Najwa KAKY
Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions

Member of the Council of Representatives of Iraq
Chairman, Parliamentary Human Rights Committee

Member of the Council of Representatives of Iraq

Ms. Siham HAMMOOD
Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians
Mr. Muthanna Ameen NADER
Mr. Salam AL-OGAILI

Mr. Fikrat AL-MASHHADANI
Mr. Kareem Darweesh RAMADHAN
Mr. Majid ENAD
Ms. Ibtihal AL-RIKABI
Mr. Basim MUTLAK

Member of the Council of Representatives of Iraq

Member of the Council of Representatives of Iraq
Council of Representatives of Iraq
Director General of the Department of Public
Relations and Parliamentary Protocol
Adviser, Council of Representatives of Iraq
Adviser, Council of Representatives of Iraq
Adviser, Council of Representatives of Iraq
Interpreter
Chargé de affaires

IRELAND – IRLANDE

Mr. Jerry BUTTIMER
President of the Group
Leader of the delegation
Ms. Lorraine CLIFFORD-LEE
Member of the Advisory Group on Health
Mr. Denis Patrick NAUGHTEN
President of the Working Group on Science and
Technology
Mr. Martin GROVES
Member of ASGP
Ms. Bernadette Catherine MATHEWS
Secretary of the Group
Ms. Aisling HART
Ms. Mellissa ENGLISH
Member of the ASGP
Mr. Finn Marc PLEKKENPOL

(FF: Fianna Fáil)
(FG: Fine Gael)

Chairperson of the Senate (FG)
Cathaoirleach of the Committee on Parliamentary
Privileges and Oversight (Seanad Éireann)
Member of the Senate (FF)
Member of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Health
Member of the House of Representatives
Cathaoirleach of the Committee on Social Protection,
Community and Rural Development and the Islands
Clerk, Seanad

Senior Clerk, Senate

Private Secretary to the Cathaoirleach, Senate
Secretary-General

Diplomat

ITALY – ITALIE

Mr. Pier Ferdinando CASINI
President of the Group
Leader of the delegation
Honorary IPU President
Ms. Deborah BERGAMINI
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on
Peace and International Security
Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians
Ms. Ouidad BAKKALI

Member of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians
Mr. Gaetano AMATO

Mr. Roberto SORBELLO
Secretary of the Group
Ms. Susanna RADONI
Secretary of the delegation
Mr. Cristiano GALLO
Mr. Gabriele MAGNINI

(PD Democratic Party)
(FI Forza Italia)
(M5S Five Stars Movement)

Member of the Senate
Member of the Foreign Affairs and Defence
Permanent Committee

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (FI)
Member of the Foreign Affairs Standing Committee

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PD)
Member of the Transport, Post and
Telecommunications Standing Committee
Member of the Chamber of Deputies (M5S)
Member of the Culture, Science and Education
Standing Committee
Adviser, Chamber of Deputies

Adviser, Chamber of Deputies

Ambassador
Diplomat

JAPAN – JAPON

Mr. Yoshitami KAMEOKA
Leader of the delegation

Ms. Emiko TAKAGAI

Member of the House of Representatives (LDP)
Chair, Special Committee on Political Ethics and
Election Law
Member of the House of Representatives (LDP)
Chair, Special Committee on Reconstruction after
Great East Japan Earthquake

Mr. Atsushi OSHIMA	Member of the House of Representatives (CDP) Member, Commission on the Constitution Member, Standing Committee on Economy, Trade and Industry
Mr. Hitoshi AOYAGI Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs Mr. Keiichiro ASAO	Member of the House of Representatives (JIP) Director, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Member, Standing Committee on Budget Member of the House of Councilors (LDP) Member, Committee on oversight administration Member, Special Committee on Regional Revitalization and Formation of a Digital Secretary Director, Commission on the Constitution Director, Standing Committee on Financial Affairs Member of the House of Councilors (KP) Director, Committee on Health, Welfare and Labor Member, Committee on Budget Member, Standing Committee on Financial Affairs Adviser
Mr. Kozo AKINO	Adviser
Mr. Hiromitsu FUJITA Secretary of the Group Mr. Kanemitsu TANAKA Secretary of the Group Ms. Narumi NISHIHARA Secretary of the Group Mr. Ryo UENOHATA Secretary of the Group Mr. Tomoya KONDO Secretary of the Group Ms. Akiko YAZAWA Secretary of the Group Mr. Toru SUZUKI Mr. Yusuke TAKAHASHI	Adviser Adviser Adviser Adviser Adviser Ambassador Diplomat
(LDP: Liberal Democratic Party of Japan) (CDP: The Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan) (JIP: Nippon Ishin) (DPFP: Democratic Party for the People of Japan) (KP: Komeito)	

KENYA

Mr. Amason Jeffah KINGI President of the Group Leader of the delegation Ms. Catherine Muyeka MUMMA	Speaker of the Senate (UDA) Chairman of the Senate Business Committee Chairman of the Powers and Privileges Committee Member of the Senate (ODM) Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Devolution and Intergovernmental Relations, Member of the Justice, Legal affairs and Human Rights Committee Member of the Senate (UDA) Chairperson of the Committee on Roads, Transportation and Housing Member of the Committee on Trade, Industrialization and Tourism
Mr. Paul Karungo Kamunyu THANGWA	Member of the National Assembly (UDA) Chairperson, Communication, Information and Innovation,
Mr. John Kiarie WAWERU	Member of the National Assembly (UDA) Member of the Committee on National Cohesion and Equal Opportunity
Ms. Jane Wangechi KAGIRI	Member of the National Assembly (FORD-K) Member of the Committee on Agriculture & Livestock Member of the National Assembly (KANU) Member of the Budget & Appropriations Committee
Mr. Ferdinand Kevin WANYONYI	Member of the National Assembly (UDA) Member of the Committee on Education and Research
Ms. Josephine Naisula LESUUDA Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development Ms. Rebecca Noonaishi TONKEI Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs Ms. Millie Grace Akoth ODHIAMBO Member of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians	Member of the National Assembly (ODM) Member of the Budget & Appropriations Committee, Vice President

Mr. Raphael Chimera MWINZAGU

Adviser, Senate (UDA)
 Vice Chairperson, Justice, Legal Affairs and Human Rights, Member, National Cohesion, Equal Opportunity and Regional Integration
 Director, Senate
 Legislative and Procedural Services
 Third Clerk Assistant, Senate

Mr. Stephen Njenga RUGE

Principal Clerk Assistant, National Assembly

Adviser

Ms. Abigael Nabalayo WASHIALI

Assistant Secretary to the delegation

Mr. Noah Kiplangat TOO

Secretary of the delegation,

Mr. Innocent Mbaya MGHANGA

Secretary of the Group

Ms. Aurellia Chepkirui RONO

Adviser, Senate

Ms. Jane Wanja GITHENG`U

Adviser, Senate

Mr. Joshua Chepyegon KANDIE

Adviser, National Assembly

Ms. Vivian Wambui NJORGE

Clerk Assistant III, National Assembly

Assistant Secretary of the delegation

Ms. Khadija Ali JIMALE

Protocol Officer, Senate

Protocol Officer for the Speaker of the Senate

Mr. Benedict Emmanuel FURAH

(FORD-K: Forum for the Restoration of Democracy – Kenya)

(KANU: Kenya African National Union)

(ODM: Orange Democratic Movement)

(UDA: United Democratic Alliance)

KUWAIT – KOWEÏT

Mr. Fahad ALAZMI

Member of the National Assembly

Mr. Hamed ALOBAID

Member of the National Assembly

Mr. Shuaib QASEM

Member of the National Assembly

Mr. Mohammad ALAJMI

Member of the National Assembly

Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on

United Nations Affairs

Mr. Dawoud MARAFI

Member of the National Assembly

Mr. Hamad ALOBAID

Member of the National Assembly

Mr. Ahmad ALBEHBEHANI

Inter-Parliamentary Organization Department,

Secretary of the delegation

National Assembly

Mr. Husain EIDAN

Adviser, National Assembly

Mr. Mubarak ALAJMI

Adviser, National Assembly

Mr. Adel HASSAN

Adviser, National Assembly

Mr. Talal ALHARBAN

Adviser, National Assembly

Mr. Waleed ALSHARRAH

Adviser, National Assembly

Mr. Meshal ALANEZI

Adviser, National Assembly

Mr. Jasem ALMUSIF

Director, National Assembly

Mr. Mohammad ALSANAD

Adviser, National Assembly

Mr. Yousef BOHAMAD

Adviser, National Assembly

Mr. Abdullah ALSAYEGH

Adviser, National Assembly

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC – RÉPUBLIQUE DÉMOCRATIQUE POPULAIRE LAO

Mr. Chanthavong SENAMATMONTRY

Member of the National Assembly (SP)

Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee

Mr. Khemphone ANOTHAY

Deputy Director, National Assembly

(SP: Lao People's Revolutionary Party)

LATVIA – LETTONIE

Mr. Edmunds TEIRUMNIEKS

Member of Parliament (NA)

President of the Group

Member of the Sustainable Development Committee

Leader of the delegation

Deputy Chairman of the Legal Affairs Committee

Ms. Sandra PAURA

Director, Parliament

Secretary of the Group

Secretary of the delegation

(NA: National Alliance)

LESOTHO – LESOTHO

Ms. Mamonaheng MOKITIMI
Leader of the delegation

Ms. Mawinnie Mabasetsana KANETSI

Mr. Tseliso John MOLISE
Secretary of the Group
Member of ASGP
Mr. Maduma Gilbert TSEPANE
Secretary of the delegation

(DC: Democratic Congress)
(MEC: Movement of Economic Change)
(RFP: Revolution for Prosperity)

President of the Senate
Chairperson of the Standing Orders Committee
Chairperson of the Business Committee
Member of the Senate
Member of the Petitions Committee
Member of the Legislation Committee
Secretary General, Senate

Clerk Assistant, Senate

LIBYA – LIBYE

Mr. Fouzi SALIM
Leader of the delegation
Ms. Sultna ABD ULRAHIM
Mr. Musbah AWHIDA
Mr. Ramadan SHEMBESH
Ms. Rabeeah ABOURAS
Mr. Abdulla MUSSA
Member of ASGP
Mr. Abdullah AMER
Mr. Ali ALBAKOUSH
Secretary of the delegation
Mr. Ashraf ELJAAFRI

Mr. Abdelhafiz ELWALID

Mr. Ahmed HASHASH

Mr. Osama MUSMARI

House of Representatives
Head of the Parliamentary Division
Member of the House of Representatives
Member of the House of Representatives
Member of the House of Representatives
Member of the House of Representatives
Secretary General, House of Representatives

Adviser, House of Representatives
Secretary, House of Representatives

Secretary to the President of the Parliamentary
Division, House of Representatives
Secretary-General's Secretary, House of
Representatives
Parliamentary affairs adviser, House of
Representatives
Secretary, House of Representatives

LIECHTENSTEIN

Mr. Sebastian GASSNER
Leader of the delegation
Ms. Dagmar BUEHLER-NIGSCH

(FBP: Progressive Citizens' Party)
(VU: Patriotic Union)

Member of Parliament (FBP)

Member of Parliament (VU)

LITHUANIA – LITUANIE

Ms. Guoda BUROKIENE
Leader of the delegation
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on
Sustainable Development
Ms. Asta SKIRMANTIENE
Secretary of the Group

(LFGU: Lithuanian Farmers and Greens Union)

Member of Parliament (LFGU)
Deputy Chair of the Committee on European Affairs
Member of the Committee on State Administration
and Local Authorities
Adviser, Parliament

MALAWI

Ms. Catherine GOTANI HARA
President of the Group
Leader of the delegation
Ms. Esther JAILOSI JOLOBALA,
Member of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians
Dr. Benson MALUNGA (Mr.)

Speaker of the National Assembly (MCP)
Member of the Women's Caucus

Member of the National Assembly (UDF),
Member, Natural Resources and Climate Change
Committee
Member, International Relations Committee
Member of the National Assembly,
Member Parliamentary Committee on Public
Appointments
Member Parliamentary Committee on Science and
Technology

Mr. Clement Claude MLOMBWA
Member of the Standing Committee on Democracy
and Human Rights
Mr. Victor MUSOWA
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on
Peace and International Security

Mr. Misolo Mussa KAPICHILA

Mr. Peter DINBA
Mr. Alfred JIYA
Mr. Kenny Edward KANDODO

Mr. Kamlepo KALVA
Mr. Simeon SALAMBUA
Mr. Jeffrey MWENYEHILI
Secretary of the Group
Ms. Fiona KALEMBA
Member of ASGP
Ms. Nancy CHIKANDIRA
Ms. Kettie Catherine MUSUKWA
Ms. Enelles NYALE
Ms. Keffie KWALIRA
Ms. Patricia WISKES
Mr. Loxemore NYONGO
Mr. Thomas TAIMU
Mr. Gerald Dube
Ms. Gloria Dzidewra

(UDF: United Democrat Front)

DPP: (

MCP: Malawi Congress Party

Member of the National Assembly (MCP)
Member of the International Relations Committee
Member of the Legal Affairs Committee
Member of the National Assembly (DPP)
Member of the Education, Science and Technology
Committee
Member of the International Relations Committee
Member of the National Assembly (UDF)
Member of the International Relations Committee
Member of the Legal Affairs Committee
Member of the National Assembly
Member of the National Assembly (UDF)
Member of the National Assembly (MCP)
Member of the International Relations Committee
Member of the Budget and Finance Committee
Member of the National Assembly
Member of the National Assembly
Adviser, National Assembly

Secretary General, National Assembly

Adviser, National Assembly

Adviser

Adviser, National Assembly

Adviser; National Assembly

Adviser, Public Relations

Adviser

Adviser

Adviser

Adviser, Protocol

MALAYSIA – MALAISIE

Ms. Zurainah MUSA
Leader of the delegation

Mr. Tze Tzin SIM
Mr. Abd Ghani AHMAD
Ms. Nurul Fadilah IBHARIM
Secretary of the delegation
Mr. Mohamad Rameez YAHAYA

(PAS: Malaysian Islamic Party)

(PKR: People's Justice Party)

Member of the Senate
Member of the Special Select Committee of People's
Well Being
Member of the House of Representatives (PKR)
Member of the House of Representatives (PAS)
Protocol Division, House of Representatives
Assistant Secretary of the International Relations and
Diplomat

MALDIVES

Mr. Ahmed THARIQ

Member of the People's Majlis (PPM)
Member of the Judiciary Committee
Member of the Government Oversight Committee
Adviser, People's Majlis

Ms. Mariyam WAHEED

(PPM: Progressive Party of Maldives)

MALTA – MALTE

Mr. Angelo FARRUGIA
Leader of the delegation
President of the Group
Mr. Robert CUTAJAR

Mr. Randolph DE BATTISTA

Mr. Ian Paul BAJADA
Secretary of the delegation

(PN: Partit Nazzjonalista)

(PL: Parti Laburista)

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 (PL)
Member of the Social Affairs Committee
Manager II (Research), House of Representatives

MAURITIUS

Mr. Sooroojdev PHOKEER
Leader of the delegation
Mr. Patrick Gervais ASSIRVADEN
Ms. Subhasnee LUCHMUN ROY
Ms. Urmeelah Devi RAMCHURN

Speaker of the National Assembly

Member of the National Assembly
Member of the National Assembly
Secretary General of the National Assembly

MALI

M. Hamidou TRAORE
Chef de la délégation
Mme Oumou SANOGO
Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians
M. Amadou ALY
Member of the High-level Advisory Group on
Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism
Mr. Seckou DIAKITÉ
Mr. Cremer DIDAKITÉ

Vice-Président du Conseil National de Transition
Membre Commission des Affaires Etrangères
Membre du Conseil National de Transition

Membre du Conseil National de Transition

Diplomat
Diplomat

MEXICO – MEXIQUE

Ms. Cynthia Iliana LÓPEZ CASTRO
President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians
Leader of the delegation
Mr. Klaus Uwe RITTER OCAMPO

Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PRI)
Secretary of the Committee on Education
Secretary of the Committee on Gender Equality
Member of the Chamber of Deputies (MORENA)
Secretary of the Committee on Climate Change and
Sustainability
Secretary of the Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PAN)
Secretary of the Committee on Budget and Public
Account
Secretary of the Committee on Health
Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PRI)
Member of the Committee on Human Rights
Secretary of the Committee on Naval Affairs
Member of the Senate (MORENA)
Secretary, Legislative Studies
Member, Agriculture, Livestock, Fishing and Rural
Development
Member of the Senate (PAN)
Secretary of the Committee on Culture
Member of the Committee on Water Resources

Ms. Leticia ZEPEDA MARTÍNEZ

Ms. Sofía CARVAJAL ISUNZA

Mr. Adolfo GÓMEZ HERNÁNDEZ

Ms. Estrella ROJAS

(MORENA: Movimiento Regeneración Nacional)
(PAN: Partido Acción Nacional)
(PRI: Partido Revolucionario Institucional)

MONACO – MONACO

M. Fabrice NOTARI
Président du groupe
Chef de la délégation
Membre du Bureau de la Commission permanente du
Développement durable
Mme Marine GRISOUL

Membre du Conseil national (L'Union)

Membre du Conseil national (L'Union)

(l'Union : Union Nationale Monégasque)

MOROCCO – MAROC

M. Mohamed SABBARI
Chef de la délégation
M. Ahmed TOUIZI
Membre de la Commission permanente de la paix et
de la sécurité internationale
M. Mustapha REDDAD
M. Omar HEJIRA
Mme Khaddouj SLASSI

Premier vice-président de la Chambre des
Représentants
Membre de la Chambre des Représentants (PAM)
Président du Groupe Authenticité et Modernité

Membre de la Chambre des Représentants (RNI)
Membre de la Chambre des Représentants (PI)
Membre de la Chambre des Représentants (USFP)

M. Kamal AIT MIK
Membre du Conseil du Forum des Jeunes
Parlementaires

M. Hassan CHOUMAIS

M. Najib EL KHADI
Président de l'ASGP
M. Abdelwahad DRIOUCHE
Secrétaire de la Délégation
M. Said SATRAOUI
Secrétaire du Groupe

M. Oussama SOUHAIL
Secrétaire de la délégation
Mme Saadia EL ALAOUI
Mme Hibat Allah FAOUZI

(PI : Parti Istiqlal)
(RNI : Rassemblement National des Indépendants)
(USFP : Union socialiste des forces populaires)
(PAM : Parti Authenticité et modernité)

Membre de la Chambre des Conseillers (RNI)
Commission de l'intérieur, des collectivités
territoriales et des infrastructures de base
Membre de la Commission de la justice, de la
législation et des droits de l'homme
Membre de la Chambre des Conseillers (PAM)
Membre de la Commission de l'intérieur, des
collectivités territoriales et des infrastructures de base
Membre de la Commission de la justice, de la
législation et des droits de l'homme
Secrétaire général, Chambre des Représentants

Conseiller général chargé de la diplomatie
parlementaire, Chambre des Conseillers
Chef de la Division des Relations multilatérales à la
Direction des Relations extérieures, Chambre des
Représentants
Cadre au sein de la division des relations
multilatérales, Chambre des Représentants
Ambassadeur
Diplomate

MOZAMBIQUE

Ms. Esperança BIAS
Leader of the delegation
Ms. Gania MUSSAGY
Mr. Eduardo MULEMBWE,
President of Group
Ms. Lucinda MALEMA,

Ms. Verónica CUAMBE
Ms. Marília BALOI
Ms. Filomena GRACHANE
Mr. Narcisio MANJATE
Secretary of the Group
Mr. José Mazula MARCOS
Mr. José MADROBA
Mr. Salvador VENÂNCIO
Ms. Lucrécia LISSENGA
Ms. Lurdes GOMES
Ms. Joana OSVALDA
Mr. Leandro VIOLA

(FRELIMO: Front of Liberation of Mozambique)
(RENAMO: Mozambican National Resistance)

Speaker of the Assembly of the Republic (FRELIMO)

Member of the Assembly of the Republic (RENAMO)
Member of the Assembly of the Republic (FRELIMO)

Member of the Assembly of the Republic (FRELIMO)
Member of the Standing Committee
Director, Assembly of the Republic
Director, Assembly of the Republic
Director General for Legislative Business
Adviser Assembly of the Republic

Adviser Assembly of the Republic
Adviser, Assembly of the Republic
Adviser, Assembly of the Republic
Adviser, Assembly of the Republic
Adviser, Assembly of the Republic
Ambassador
Diplomat

NAMIBIA – NAMIBIE

Mr. Peter KATJAVIVI
President of the Group
Leader of the delegation

Ms. Victoria Mbawo KAUMA

Mr. Lukas Nghidipohamba HAMATA
Mr. Elder Fernando FILIPE

Mr. Bernadus SWARTBOOI

Speaker of the National Assembly (SWAPO)
Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Privileges
Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Standing
Rules and Orders and Internal Affairs
Deputy Chairperson of the National Council (SWAPO)
Vice-Chairperson of the Rules, Orders and Business
Committee
Chairperson of the Implementation and Coordination
Committee
Member of the National Assembly (PDM)
Member of the National Council (SWAPO)
Vice-Chairperson of the National Council Standing
Committee on Agriculture, Environment and Natural
Resources
Member of the National Assembly (LPM)
Member of the Landless People's Movement

Ms. Emma Tangi MUTEKA
Member of the Board of the Forum of Young
Parliamentarians
Mr. Nicodemus Jesajas MOTINGA

Ms. Fenni NANYENI
Mr. Efraim Gwai JANE
Secretary of the delegation
Ms. Lydia KANDETU
Secretary of the Group
Member of ASGP
Ms. Amalia IITA
Secretary of the Group
Ms. Wilmary Chantal TSAMAREB
Mr. Ndaningaweni Protasius NGHILEENDELE
Mr. Simon UIRAB
Mr. Petrus Muyenga KAVHURA
Mr. George SINZILA

Mr. Patrick NANDAGO
Ms. Frieda GUIOS

(SWAPO: Southwest Africa People's Organization)
(IPC: Independent Patriots for Change)
(LPM: Landless People Movement)
(NEFF: Namibia Economic Freedom Fighters)
(PDM: Popular Democratic Movement)

Member of the National Council (SWAPO)
Vice-Chairperson of the Standing Committee on
Health, Social Welfare and Labour Affairs
Member of the National Council (LMP)
Member of the Standing Committee on Agriculture,
Environment and Natural Resources
Member of the National Assembly (SWAPO)
Adviser, National Council

Secretary, National Assembly

Adviser, National Council

Adviser, National Council
Deputy Director, National Assembly
Director, National Assembly
Adviser, National Council
National Council
Information Officer
Ambassador
Diplomat

NEPAL

Mr. Ganesh Prasad TIMILSINA
President of the Group
Leader of the delegation
Mr. Kumar DASAUDI
Mr. Jeetendra Narayan DEV
Ms. Rupa SOSI CHAUDHARY
Mr. Santosh PARIYAR
Mr. Bharat Raj GAUTAM
Member of ASGP
Ms. Babita MISHRA
Secretary of the delegation
Mr. Tribikram PARAJULI
Secretary of the delegation
Mr. Durga Prasad SHARMA

(CPN (MC): Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre))
(CPN (UML): Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist))
(NC: Nepali Congress)
(RSP: Rastriya Swatantra Party)

Chairperson of the National Assembly

Member of the National Assembly (CPN (UML))
Member of the National Assembly (NC)
Member of the House of Representatives (CPN (MC))
Member of the House of Representatives (RSP)
Secretary General, National Assembly

Joint-Secretary, House of Representatives

Undersecretary, House of Representatives

Press Specialist, National Assembly

NETHERLANDS – PAYS-BAS

Mr. Hendrik-Jan TALSMAN
Leader of the delegation
Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions
Ms. Fatimsaara BELHIRCH
Ms. Monique CHRISTIAANSE
Secretary of the delegation
Mr. Tsjerd Hoekstra

(CDA: Christen-Democratisch Appèl)
(D66: Liberal Democrats)

Member of the Senate (CDA)

Member of the Senate (D66)
Adviser, House of Representatives

Ambassador

NIGERIA – NIGÉRIA

Mr. Godswill Obot AKPABIO
Leader of the delegation
Mr. Benjamin KALU

Mr. Ibrahim MOHAMMED

Ms. Kafilat Adetola OGBARA

Mr. Mark Udo ESSET

Ms. Fatima Abubakar Talba IBRAHIM

Mr. Olamijuwonlo Ayodeji ALAO

Mr. Osita Ugwu NGWU

Mr. Mohammed Danjuma GOJE

Mr. Abdulaziz Abubakar YARI

Mr. Bashir Aminu YERO
Ms. Florence Olanike FOFAH
Secretary of the delegation
IPU Desk officer
Ms. Hassana Danimoh ABDULWAHAB
IPU Desk Secretariat staff
Mr. Eduvie Peter UFUOMA
IPU Desk Secretariat / ASGP
Mr. Ugochukwu OSUAGWU
Mr. Tony Okey OKECHUKWU
Ms. Love Ojowu IDOKO ULOKO
Mr. Obinna OSISIOGU
Mr. Gololo Mohammed GARBA
Mr. Yakubu Argungu MOHAMMED
Ms. Juwarat Ndakpoto ABUBAKAR
Mr. Mohammed ABUBAKAR

(APC: All Progressive Congress)

(LP: Labour Party)

(PDP: People's Democratic Party)

Speaker of the Senate (APC)

Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives (APC)

Member of the House of Representatives (PDP)
Deputy Chairman of the House committee on Youths in Parliament

Member of the House of Representatives (APC)
Chairman of the House Committee on Women Affairs & Social Development

Member of the House of Representatives (PDP)
Chairman of the House Committee on Inter-Parliamentary Affairs

Member of the House of Representatives (APC)
Chairman of the House Committee on Women in Parliament

Member of the House of Representatives (APC)
Chairman of the House Committee on Youth in Parliament

Member of the Senate (PDP)
Chairman of the Senate Committee on Solid minerals

Member of the Senate (APC)
Chairman of the Senate Committee on Inter-Parliamentary Affairs

Member of the Senate (APC)
Chairman of the Senate Committee on Water Resources

Permanent Secretary, Senate

Deputy Director, House of Representatives

Legislative officer 1, House of Representatives

Principal Administration officer, Senate

Adviser, House of Representatives

Adviser, House of Representatives

Adviser, House of Representatives

Adviser, House of Representatives

Adviser, Senate

Adviser, Senate

Adviser, Senate

Adviser, Senate

NORWAY – NORVÈGE

Mr. Tellef Inge MØRLAND
President of the Group
Leader of the delegation

Mr. Ove TRELLEVIK

Mr. Grunde ALMELAND

Ms. Silje HJEMDAL

Ms. Ingunn FOSS

Mr. Ola BORTEN MOE

Ms. Lisbeth Merete STOCK

Secretary of the delegation

Mr. Thomas FRASER

Secretary of the Group

Mr. Bjornar Dahl HOTVEDT

Member of Parliament (Labour Party)

Member of Parliament (Conservative Party)

Member of Parliament (Liberal Party)

Member of Parliament (Progress Party)

Member of Parliament (Conservative Party)

Member of Parliament (Centre Party)

Adviser, Parliament

Adviser, Parliament

Ambassador

(Centre Party: Centre Party)

(Labour Party: Labour Party)

(Liberal Party: Liberal Party)

(Progress Party: Progress Party)

(Conservative Party: Conservative Party)

OMAN

Mr. Alkhatab AL HINAI
Leader of the delegation
Mr. Abdullah AL MAJALI
Mr. Harith AL BATTASHI
Mr. Faisal AL RUSHAIDI
Ms. Sariya AL HADI
Ms. Aisha AL DARMAKI
Mr. Ahmed AL NADABI
Member of ASGP
Mr. Khalid AL SAADI
Member of ASGP
Mr. Jalal AL HAMRASHDI
Secretary of the Group
Mr. Fahad AL HASANI
Adviser

Vice Chairman of the State 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
Secretary General, Shura Council

Secretary General, State Council

Adviser, Shura Council

Head of Procurement, Shura Council

PAKISTAN

Mr. Mushahid Hussain SAYED
Leader of the delegation
Member of the Committee on the Human Rights of
Parliamentarians
Mr. Atta UR REHMAN

Mr. Shahzad WASEEM

Ms. Saadia ABBASI
Mr. Syed Wahhaj Bin TAHIR

Mr. Murad BASEER
Mr. Umar BIN AZIZ

(PMLN: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz)
(JUIP: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan)
(PTI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf)

Member of the Senate (PMLN)
Member Climate Change
Chairperson, Defence

Member of the Senate (JUIP)
Chairperson, Planning, Development and Special
Initiatives
Member of the Senate (PTI)
Member of the Information Technology and
Telecommunication
Member of the Business Advisory Committee
Member of the Senate
Deputy Director, National Assembly

Ambassador
Embassy official

PALESTINE

Mr. Musa HADID
Leader of the delegation
Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions
Ms. Samar AWADALLAH
Mr. Bashar SULAIMAN
Secretary of the Group
Secretary of the delegation
Mr. Jubrael G. B. ALSHOMALI

(FATEH: FATEH)

Deputy Speaker of the Palestine National Council
(FATEH)

Member of the Palestine National Council
Director, Palestinian Legislative Council

Diplomat

PERU – PÉROU

Mr. Alex Antonio PAREDES GONZALES
Member of the Committee to Promote Respect for
International Humanitarian Law
Mr. Wilson SOTO PALACIOS

(AP: Popular Action)
(PPNPL: Nacional Perú Libre)

Member of the Congress of the Republic (PPNPL)

Member of the Congress of the Republic, (AP)

POLAND – POLOGNE

Ms. Margareta BUDNER

Member of the Senate
Member of the Science, Education and Sports
Committee
Member of the Health Committee

Ms. Agata WÓJCIK-PAWLICZAK
Secretary of the delegation
Ms. Agata KARWOWSKA-SOKOŁOWSKA
Adviser

Head of Unit, Senate

Director, Senate

(PiS: Law and Justice)

PORTUGAL

Mr. Augusto SANTOS SILVA
Leader of the delegation
Mr. Joaquim BARRETO
President of the Group

Speaker of the Assembly of the Republic (SP)

Mr. Carlos PEREIRA

Member of the Assembly of the Republic (SP)
Member, Agriculture and Fishing
Member, National Security
Member of the Assembly of the Republic (SP)
Member, Economy, Public Works, Planning and Housing

Mr. João AZEVEDO

Member, Budget and Finance
Member of the Assembly of the Republic (SP)
Member of the Agriculture and Fishing
Member of the Foreign Affairs and Portuguese Communities

Ms. Vera BRAZ

Member of the Assembly of the Republic (SP)
Member, Economy, Public Works, Planning and Housing

Ms. Carla SOUSA
Mr. Miguel SANTOS

Member, Budget and Finance
Member of the Assembly of the Republic (SP)
Member of the Assembly of the Republic (SDP)
Member, National security
Vice-President, European Affairs
Deputy Secretary General, Assembly of the Republic

Mr. Rui COSTA
Member of ASGP
Mr. Albino AZEVEDO SOARES
Member of ASGP
Mr. David DAMIÃO
Mr. João CAMPOS COELHO
Adviser
Ms. Suzana SANTOS
Mr. Artur REIS
Ms. Inês COROA
Mr. Francisco ALEGRE DUARTE
Ms. Ana BRITO MANEIRA

Secretary General, Assembly of the Republic

Adviser, Assembly of the Republic
Head of Division, Assembly of the Republic

Adviser, Assembly of the Republic
Adviser, Assembly of the Republic
Adviser, Assembly of the Republic
Ambassador/Permanent Representative
Diplomat

(SDP: Social Democratic Party)

(SP: Socialist Party)

QATAR

Mr. Mohammed Bin Mahdi AL-AHBABI
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on
Peace and International Security
Mr. Amair AL NAENI

Member of the Shura Council
Member of the Economic and the Financial Affairs
Committee
Member of the Shura Council
Member of the Economic and the Financial Affairs
Committee
Member of the Services and the Public Utilities
Committee

Mr. Essa AL ROMAIHI

Member of the Shura Council
Member of the Legal and Legislative Affairs
Committee
Member of the Services and the Public Utilities
Committee

Mr. Sultan AL DOSARI
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on
Democracy and Human Rights

Member of the Shura Council
Chairman of the Legal and Legislative Affairs
Committee
Member of the Services and the Public Utilities
Committee

Mr. Saad AL-MESNED
Mr. Khalid AL-EMADI

Member of the Shura Council
Member of the Shura Council
Member of the Services and the Public Utilities
Committee

Mr. Essa AL-NASSAR

Member of the Shura Council

Mr. Ali AL HAJRI	Adviser, Shura Council
Secretary of the delegation	
Mr. Hamad AL-HAMADI	Adviser, Shura Council
Secretary of the delegation	
Mr. Khalaf AL-KAABI	Adviser, Shura Council
Secretary of the delegation	
Mr. Hamad AL BUAINAIN	Press, Shura Council

REPUBLIC OF KOREA – RÉPUBLIQUE DE CORÉE

Mr. Hoon SUL	Member of the National Assembly (DPK)
Leader of the delegation	
Ms. Hyun Young SHIN	Member of the National Assembly (DPK)
	Vice Chair of Gender Equality and Family Committee
	Member of the Health and Welfare Committee
Ms. Seorin HYUn	Deputy Director, National Assembly
Ms. Minjoung KIM	Deputy Director, National Assembly
Secretary of the delegation	
Ms. Nara PARK	Staff, National Assembly
Ms. Yeun Kyeng CHA	Interpreter
Ms. So Hyun KIM	Interpreter
Mr. Kwang Jin CHOI	Ambassador
Mr. Cho Young MIN	Diplomat

(DPK: Democratic Party of Korea)
(PPP: People Power Party)

ROMANIA – ROUMANIE

Mr. Zoltán ZAKARIAS	Member of the Chamber of Deputies (UDMR)
Leader of the delegation	Member of the Committee for Health and Family, Member of the Committee on European Affairs
Ms. Mirela Elena ADOMNICĂ	Member of the Chamber of Deputies (PSD)
	Member of the Committee for Human Rights, Cults and National Minorities Issues
	Member of the Committee for Labour and Social Protection
Ms. Izabela CHENCIAN	Secretary General, Senate
Member of ASGP	
Mr. Florin TUDORIE	Ambassador

(PSD: Social Democratic Party)
(UDMR: The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania)
(USR: Union to Save Romania)

RUSSIAN FEDERATION – FÉDÉRATION DE RUSSIE

Ms. Inna SVIATENKO	Deputy Speaker of the Council of the Federation
Leader of the delegation	Member of the Federation Council Committee on Social Policy
Mr. Petr TOLSTOY	Deputy Chairman of the State Duma (UR)
Head of the delegation	
Mr. Vladislav DAVANKOV	Deputy Chairman of the State Duma (NP)
	Member of the Committee on Budget and Taxes
Ms. Elena AFANASEVA	Member of the Council of the Federation
	Member of the Federation Council Committee on Foreign Affairs
Mr. Grigorii KARASIN	Member of the Council of the Federation
	Chair, the Federation Council Committee on Foreign Affairs
Mr. Belan KHAMCHIEV	Member of the Council of the Federation
	Deputy Chair of the Federation Council Committee on Agriculture and Food Policy and Environmental Management
Mr. Andrei DENISOV	Member of the Council of the Federation
	First Deputy Chair of the Federation Council Committee on Foreign Affairs
Mr. Andrei BAZILEVSKII	Member of the Council of the Federation
	Member of the Federation Council Committee on Science, Education and Culture

Mr. Aleksei CHEPA	Member of the State Duma (JRFT) First Deputy Chairman of the Committee on International Affairs
Mr. Ivan SUKHAREV	Member of the State Duma (LDPR) First Deputy Chairman of the Committee on Property, Affairs and Land Relations Adviser, State Duma
Mr. Andrei BORZOV Secretary of the delegation	Deputy Director, State Duma
Mr. Dmitry STEPANOV Secretary of the delegation	Adviser, State Duma
Mr. Ilya GAMBASHIDZE Adviser	Adviser, State Duma
Mr. Alexander TARASOV Secretary of the delegation	Adviser, Council of the Federation
Ms. Olga SHMACHKOVA	Adviser, Council of the Federation
Ms. Mariia ZHOLOBOVA	Adviser, State Duma
Mr. Vladimir LAKIZO	Council of the Federation
Mr. Pavel KUKARKIN Secretary of the delegation	State Duma
Ms. Lidia BUKVINOVA	Ambassador
Mr. Vladimir TARAROV	Diplomat
Mr. Oleg SENCHENKO	
(NP: New People)	
(UR: United Russia)	
(CPRF: Communist Party of the Russian Federation)	
(LDPR: Liberal Democratic Party of Russia)	
(JRFT: Just Russia - For Truth)	

RWANDA

Ms. Espérance NYIRASAFARI President of the Group Leader of the delegation Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians	Vice-President of the Senate (RPF-INKOTANYI)
Mr. Lambert DUSHIMIMANA	Member of the Senate (RPF-INKOTANYI) Member of the Committee on Drafting Clerk of the Senate
Mr. Sosthène CYITATIRE Secretary of the Group Member of ASGP	
Mr. Sam MASENGESHO Secretary of the Delegation	Adviser
(RPF-INKOTANYI: Rwandese Patriotic Front- INKOTANYI)	

SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE – SAO TOMÉ-ET-PRINCIPE

Ms. Celmira SACRAMENTO President of the Group Leader of the delegation	Speaker of the National Assembly (ADI)
Mr. Jozino VEIGA	Member of the National Assembly (ADI) Member of the Committee of Human Rights, Citizenship, Cooperation and Communities
Ms. Beatrice AZEVEDO	Member of the National Assembly
Ms. Filomena MONTEIRA	Member of the National Assembly
Mr. Lourenço FREITAS	Member of the National Assembly
Mr. Domingos BOA MORTE Member of ASGP	Secretary General, National Assembly
Mr. Bettencourt Manuel FREITAS	Adviser
Ms. Nelma LIMA	Adviser
(ADI: Ação Democrática Independente)	
(MCI: Movimento de Cidadãos Independentes/Partido Socialista)	
(MLSTP/PSD: Movimento de Libertação de São Tomé e Príncipe/Partido Social Democrata)	

SAUDI ARABIA – ARABIE SAOUDITE

Mr. Abdullah ALSHEIKH President of Group Leader of the delegation	President of the Shura Council
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Mr. Mohamad ALMETAIRI Member of ASGP	Secretary General, Shura Council
Mr. Abdulrahman ALHARBI Member of the High-level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism	Member of the Shura Council
Ms. Huda AL-HELAISSI Member of the Advisory Group on Health	Member of the Shura Council
Mr. Abdullah ALSALAMAH	Member of the Shura Council
Ms. Amal ALSHAMAN	Member of the Shura Council
Mr. Khalid ALMANSOUR Adviser	Director, Shura Council
Mr. Khalid ALTURKI Adviser	Director, Shura Council
Mr. Akram HOBROM Adviser	Director, Shura Council
Mr. Ahmed ALSHAHRANI Secretary of the delegation	Deputy Director, Shura Council
Adviser, Protocol	
Mr. Turki ALSAUD	Adviser, Shura Council
Ms. Afnan ALORAIJ	Adviser, Shura Council
Mr. Abdulilah ALMUHANNA	Protocol officer, Shura Council
Mr. Khalid ALMUBARAK Secretary of the Group	Secretary to the Secretary General, Shura Council
Mr. Fahad ALOMER	Secretary of the Speaker, Shura Council

SENEGAL – SÉNÉGAL

M. Amadou Mame DIOP Président du Groupe Chef de la délégation	Président de l'Assemblée nationale (APR)
Mme Ndéye Lucie CISSE	Membre de l'Assemblée nationale
M. Moussa DIAKHATE	Membre de l'Assemblée nationale
Mme Yéya DIALLO	Membre de l'Assemblée nationale
Mme Adjii Diarra MORGANE KANOUTÉ	Membre de l'Assemblée nationale (BBY)
Mme Fanta SALL	Membre de l'Assemblée nationale
M. Yoro SOW	Membre de l'Assemblée nationale
M. Amadou THIMBO Secrétaire de la délégation	Secrétaire général, Assemblée nationale
Membre of ASGP	
M. Malick Maguèye GUEYE	Directeur du Cabinet
Aliou DAGNOKO	Protocole
M. Amadou DIOP	Ambassadeur
M. Malick NDAO	Diplomatic corp - Ambassadeur

(BBY: Benno Bokk Yakaar)

SERBIA – SERBIE

Ms. Snežana PAUNOVIĆ Leader of the delegation Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians	Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly (SPS) Member of the Committee on Kosovo-Metohija Member of the Committee on the Economy, Regional Development, Trade, Tourism and Energy
Ms. Sanda RAŠKOVIĆ IVIĆ	Member of the National Assembly (NS) Member of the Health and Family Committee
Mr. Nikola DRAGIĆEVIĆ	Member of the Committee on Kosovo-Metohija Member of the National Assembly (Serbian Party Oathkeepers) Member of the Defence and Internal Affairs Committee, Member of the Security Services Control Committee
Mr. Vladimir FILIPOVIĆ Secretary of the delegation	Adviser, National Assembly
Ms. Aleksandra MLAĐAN	Ambassador
Mr. Miloš PERIŠIĆ	

(NS: People's Party)

(SPS: Socialist Party of Serbia)

(SNS: Serbian Progressive Party)

(Serbian Party Oathkeepers)

SEYCHELLES

Mr. Roger MANCIENNE
President of the Group
Leader of the delegation
Ms. Audrey VIDOT

Mr. Waven WILLIAM
Vice-President of the Bureau of the Standing
Committee on Sustainable Development
Ms. Emma DIDON
Secretary of the delegation
Desk Officer

(LDS: Linyon Demokratik Seselwa)
(US: United Seychelles)

Speaker of the National Assembly (LDS)
Chairperson of the House Committee
Chairperson of the Assembly Business Committee
Member of the National Assembly (US)
Vice-Chairperson of the Women's Parliamentary
Caucus
Member of the Defence and Security Committee
Member of the National Assembly (LDS)
Vice-Chairperson of the Standing Orders Committee
Chairperson of the International Affairs Committee
Research Officer, National Assembly

SIERRA LEONE

Mr. Abass Chernor BUNDU
Leader of the delegation
Ms. Hawa SAMBA
Secretary of the Group
Secretary of the delegation

Speaker of Parliament

SLOVENIA – SLOVÉNIE

Ms. Mirjam BON KLANJSCEK
Head of the delegation

Mr. Zoran MOJSKERC

Ms. Tatjana PANDEV
Secretary of the Group

(SDS: Slovenian Democratic Party)
(Liberals: Svoboda)

Member of the National Assembly (Liberals)
Member of the Commission for the National
Communities
Chair of the Committee on Education, Science, Sport
and Youth
Member of the National Assembly (SDS)
Member of the Committee on Justice
Member of the Committee on European Union Affairs
Adviser, National Assembly, Head of Section for
International Relations, Protocol and Translation

SOMALIA – SOMALIE

Mr. Abdullahi Omar ABSHIR
Head of the delegation
Ms. Marwa Abdibashir HAGI
Mr. Mohamed Abdurahman NADIF
Mr. Said Mohamed MOHAMUUD
Secretary of the Delegation
Mr. Farah Moalim BISHAR

Mr. Noradin OLUJOG

Ms. Farhia Yusuf OMAR
Mr. Saed Abdi HUSSEIN

Mr. Ismail Eid MOHAMED

Mr. Yusuf Hon, Hussein AHMED

Mr. Mohamed Abdullhi ABDI

Deputy Speaker of the House of the People

Member of the House of the People
Member of the House of the People
Member of the House of the People

Member of the House of the People
Member, Information

Member of the House of the People
Member of the Committee of information, culture and
awareness

Member of the House of the People
Member of the Upper House
Member of the Committee for Justice Affairs, Religious
Affairs & Endowments Human Rights, Women and
Children

Secretary of the OC Committee
Member of the House of the People
Member of the Judiciary, Endowments and Religious
Affairs Committee

Member of the House of the People
Chair of Resources Committee
Deputy Secretary General

Mr. Abdinasir Ibrahim GULED
Secretary of the delegation
Member of the ASGP
Mr. Mohamud Hadis MOHAMED

Ms. Ayan Adan ABDULLAHI

Mr. Mahad Ahmed HAJI

Upper House

House of the People
Secretary of the Deputy Speaker
Upper House
Secretary of the Foreign Affairs committee
Member of the Womens' committee
Adviser to the Speaker, House of People
Campaign Officer

SOUTH AFRICA – AFRIQUE DU SUD

Ms. Nosiviwo MAPISA-NQAKULA
President of the Group
Ms. Sylvia Elizabeth LUCAS

Ms. Dorries DLAKUDE
Ms. Annelie LOTRIET
Ms. Fikile Andiswa MASIKO
Ms. Daisy Sindisiwe MTHEMBU
Mr. Seiso Joel MOHAI
Mr. Masibulele XASO
Member of ASGP
Ms. Zukiswa MAHABENI
Mr. Dumisani Job SITHOLE

(ANC: African National Congress)
(DA: Democratic Alliance)

Speaker of the National Assembly (ANC)

Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces
Member of the National Assembly (ANC)
Member of the National Assembly (DA)
Member of the National Assembly (ANC)
Member of the National Assembly
Member of the National Assembly
Adviser, National Assembly

Secretary to the Speaker, National Assembly
Adviser, National Assembly

SOUTH SUDAN – SOUDAN DU SUD

Ms. Jemma Nunu KUMBA
Leader of the delegation
Ms. Sandra Bona MALWAL

Mr. Okello LAWIRI
Mr. John Gai NYUOT YOH

Mr. Gabriel Guot Guot ACIEN

Mr. Samuel Buhori Lotti THEOPHILUS

Mr. Daniel Abocha Ali MALOU

Ms. Janet Aya ALEX TABAN

Mr. Makuc Makuc NGONG AKOT

Ms. Viola Harder JUMA OSMAN

(SPLM: Sudan People's Liberation Movement)

Speaker of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (SPLM)
Member of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly
Member of the Council of States (SPLM)
Member of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly (SPLM)
Member of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly
Member of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly
Member of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly
Member of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly
Secretary General of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly
Secretary General of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly

SPAIN – ESPAGNE

Mr. Agustín ALMODOBAR
Leader of the delegation
Ms. Ana MARTÍNEZ
Mr. Amaro HUELVA
Mr. Joaquín CÁBEZAS
Ms. Teresa GÓMEZ-BERNARDO
Secretary of the delegation

(PP: Popular Party)
(PSOE: Partido Socialista Obrero Español)
(VOX: National Conservative Party of Spain)

Member of the Senate (PP)

Member of the Senate (PSOE)
Member of the Senate (PSOE)
Adviser, Congress of Deputies
Administrative Secretary, Congress of Deputies

SRI LANKA

Mr. Mahinda Yapa ABEYWARDANA
President of the Group
Leader of the delegation

Mr. Mohomad Muzammil MOHOMAD FUVARD

Mr. Nalin Nilantha Bandara JAYAMAHA
HITIHAMILAGE

Ms. Rajika Priyangani MUTHUTHANTRI BESTIANGE

Mr. Chinthaka Amal MAYADUNNA

Ms. Kushani Anusha ROHANADEERA
Secretary of the delegation
Member of ASGP

(MNA: Muslim National Alliance)
(SLPP: Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna)
(SJB: Samagi Jana Balawegaya)

Speaker of Parliament (SLPP)
Chairman of the Committee on Standing Orders
Chairman of the Committee on Parliamentary Business
Member of Parliament (SLPP)
Member of the Sectoral Oversight Committee on an Open & Accountable Government
Member of the Parliamentary Caucus for Youth
Member of Parliament (SJB)
Member of the Ministerial Consultative Committee on Power and Energy
Member of the Committee on Public Enterprises
Member of the IPU Sri Lanka Group
Member of Parliament (SLPP)
Member of the Parliamentary Caucus for Children
Member of the Women Parliamentarians Caucus in Parliament
Member of Parliament (SLPP)
Member of the Ministerial Consultative Committee on Water Supply and Estate Infrastructure Development
Member of the Committee on Public Petitions
Member of IPU Sri Lanka Group
Secretary General, Parliament

SURINAME

Mr. Asiskumar GAJADIEN
Leader of the delegation
President of the Group
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights
Mr. Melvin BOUVA
Member of the Working Group on Science and Technology

Ms. Grachelle SLUISDOM

(VHP: The Progressive Reform Party)
(NDP: National Democratic Party)

Member of the National Assembly (VHP)
Chairman, Foreign affairs
Chairman, Finance and Planning

Member of the National Assembly (NDP)
Member of the Standing committee of Education, Science and Culture
Member of the Standing Committee of Transport, Communication and Tourism
Member of the National Assembly (VHP)
Member of the Education, Culture and Science
Member of the Trade and Economic Development

SWEDEN – SUÈDE

Mr. Arin KARAPET
President of the Group
Leader of the delegation
Ms. Janine Sofia ALM ERICSON
Member of the Executive Committee
Ms. Ulrika Margareta WESTERLUND

Mr. Mattias KARLSSON
Member of the High-level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism
Mr. Carl Egron Ralph HERMANSSON
Co-Secretary of the delegation

Member of Parliament (M)
Member of the Committee on the Labour market

Member of Parliament (Green)
Member of the Committee on Finance
Member of Parliament (Green)
Member of the Committee on Health and Welfare
Member of Parliament (C)

Adviser, Parliament

Mr. Bjorn SONDEN
Co-Secretary of the delegation
Mr. Lennart Eric KILLANDER LARSSON
Ms. Vibeke SKAUERUD

Adviser, Parliament

Ambassador
Diplomat

(M: Moderate Party)
(Green: The Green Party)
(SP: The Social Democratic Party)
(C: The Sweden Democrats)

SWITZERLAND – SUISSE

M. Thomas HURTER
Chef de la délégation
Membre du Groupe de travail sur la science
et la technologie
Mme Christine BADERTSCHER

Membre du Conseil national (SVP/UDC)
Membre de la Commission des transports et des
télécommunications
Membre de la Commission de la politique de sécurité
Membre du Conseil national (G/V)
Membre de la Commission des finances
Membre de la Commission de politique extérieure
Membre de la Délégation auprès de l'AP-OSCE
Membre du Conseil des États (FDP/PLR)
Membre de la Commission des affaires juridiques
Membre de la Commission de politique extérieure
Membre de la Commission judiciaire
Membre de la Commission des institutions politiques
Vice-président de la délégation pour les relations avec
le Parlement italien

M. Andrea CARONI

Membre du Conseil national (SP/PS)
Membre de la Commission des finances
Membre de la Commission des affaires juridiques
Membre du Conseil national (MC)
Membre de la Commission de la sécurité sociale et de
la santé publique
Membre du Conseil national (FDP/PLR)
Membre de la Commission de gestion
Membre de la Commission de politique extérieure
Membre de la Délégation auprès de l'APF

Mme Laurence FEHLMANN RIELLE
Membre du Comité sur les questions relatives au
Moyen-Orient
M. Christian LOHR
Membre du Bureau de la Commission permanente
de la Démocratie et des droits de l'homme
M. Laurent WEHRLI
Membre du Bureau de la Commission permanente
de la Paix et de la Sécurité internationale
Membre du Groupe de facilitateurs concernant
Chypre
M. Jérémie EQUEY
Secrétaire du Groupe
Secrétaire de la délégation
Mme Anna-Lea GNÄGI
Secrétaire adjointe du Groupe
Secrétariat de la délégation

Relations internationales
Conseil national

Relations internationales
Conseil des États

(SP/PS : Parti socialiste)
(SVP/UDC : L'Union démocratique du centre)
(M/C : Le Centre)
(FDP/PLR : Les Libéraux / Les Libéraux-Radicaux)
(G/V : Les Verts)

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

Ms. Maysa Saleh
Mr. Mohammad. Suliman ABRACH
Mr. Sameer AL KHATEEB
Ms. Shireen ALYOUSEF
Mr. Khalil KHALIL
Mr. MHD. Human MSUTI
Mr. Abdulrazak BARAKAT

Member of the People's Assembly,
Member of the Board of the People's Assembly
Member of the People's Assembly (SOCIALIST)
Observer of the Board
Member of the People's Assembly (SOCIALIST)
Chairman of the Education and Scientific Research
Committee
Member of the People's Assembly
Member of People's Assembly (SOCIALIST)
Rapporteur of the Services Committee
Member of the People's Assembly
Member of the Arab Foreign and Expatriates Affairs
Committee
Member of the People's Assembly (SOCIALIST)
Member of the National Security Committee

Mr. Nedal ALALOU
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on
Sustainable Development
Mr. Abdul Azim DIAB
Secretary of the Group
(SOCIALIST : Baath Arab Party)

Member of the People's Assembly (SOCIALIST)
Member of the Education and Scientific Research
Committee
Director, People's Assembly
Secretary of the Board

THAILAND – THAÏLANDE

Mr. Anusart SUWANMONGKOL
Member of the High-level Advisory Group on
Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism
Leader of the delegation
Ms. Suwannee SIRIVEJCHAPUN
Member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

Mr. Pakornwut UDOMPIPATSKUL

Mr. Kraisid TONTISIRIN
Member of the Working Group on Science and
Technology

Ms. Tuangthip JINTAWET

Ms. Saratsanun UNNOPPORN

Mr. Bhuntin NOUMJERM

Ms. Napaporn JAISUJJA
Secretary of the delegation
Member of ASGP
Ms. Steejit TAIPIBOONSUK
Member of ASGP
Ms. Boontarika JUNHANANDANA
Secretary of the delegation
Ms. Nisaporn WIBOONCHAN
Adviser
Mr. Tanukom BAMRUNGPON
Assistant Secretary to the delegation
Mr. Korakot KONGTHONG
Secretary to the ASGP delegation
Ms. Neeranan SUNGTO
Assistant Secretary to the Delegation
Mr. Saritpon SATAWEDIN
Assistant Secretary to the delegation
Mr. Kanon SUKPORNCHAIKAK
Assistant Secretary to the ASGP delegation
Ms. Pimpa CHAIHAN
Assistant Secretary to the delegation
Ms. Siriwong KANJANAT
Ms. Pongsuthi MANEHAREE
Mr. Mungkorn PRATOOMKAEW
Mr. Thanasak SAMAN

(Move Forward Party: Move Forward Party)
(BJT: Bhumjaithai Party)
(PTP: Pheu Thai Party)

Member of the Senate
Second Vice-Spokesperson of the Standing
Committee on Foreign Affairs, Senate

Member of the Senate
First Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Laws,
Justice and Police Affairs
Member of the House of Representatives (Move
Forward Party)
Second Vice-Chairperson of the Standing Committee
on Communication, Telecommunications and Digital
Economy and Society, House of Representatives
Member of the Senate
Third Vice-Chairperson of the Standing Committee
on Higher Education, Science, Research and
Innovation, Senate
Member of the House of Representatives (BJT)
Fourth Vice-Chairperson of the Standing Committee
on Children, Youth, Women, Older persons, Persons
with disability, Ethnic Groups and LGTBs, House of
Representatives
Member of the House of Representatives (PTP)
Secretary of the Standing Committee on Foreign
Affairs, House of Representatives
Member of the House of Representatives (Move
Forward Party)
Spokesperson of the Standing Committee on
Consumer Protection, House of Representatives
Secretary General of the Senate

Deputy Secretary General of the House of
Representatives
Director of the Bureau of the Inter-Parliamentary
Organizations
Director of the Bureau of Foreign Affairs

Director of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Division

Director of the ASGP Division

Foreign Affairs Officer, Expert level

Foreign Affairs Officer, Senior Professional Level

Foreign Affairs Officer, Practitioner Level

Foreign Affairs Officer, Practitioner Level

Official relations
Official relations
Ambassador
Diplomat

TIMOR-LESTE

Ms. Veneranda E.M. LEMOS MARTINS

President of the Group

Leader of the delegation

Mr. Saul Salvador Halleluya Judelju AMARAL

Ms. Maria Teresa DA SILVA GUSMÃO

Ms. Carminda CARLOTA

Ms. Maria Ana Bela SAVIO

Mr. Edgar SEQUEIRA MARTINS

Secretary of the delegation

Member of ASGP

Ms. Josefina SEQUEIRA DA SILVA

Secretariat of the General Secretary (ASGP)

Mr. Daniel Filipe Moacho MANAIA

Mr. Izilda PEREIRA

Mr. Joaquim C. Soares

Member of the National Parliament (CNRT)

Member of the National Parliament

Member of the National Parliament

Member of the National Parliament

Member of the National Parliament

Secretary General, National Parliament

Secretariat of the General Secretary, National
Parliament

Adviser, National Parliament

Protocol

Media

(CNRT: National Congress for the Reconstruction of Timor-Leste)

TONGA

Mr. Uhilamoelangi FASI

Leader of the delegation

Ms. Dulcie TEI

Ms. Sulia MAKASINI

Member of the Legislative Assembly

Member of the Legislative Assembly

Parliament Secretary

TÜRKİYE – TURQUIE

Ms. Asuman ERDOĞAN

President of the Group

Leader of the delegation

Mr. Mevlüt KARAKAYA

Ms. Fatma ÖNCÜ

Mr. Ali ÖZKAYA

Mr. Naim ÇOBAN

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye
(Adjust and Development Party)

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye

Member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye

Deputy Secretary General, Grand National

Assembly of Türkiye

Deputy Director, Grand National Assembly of

Türkiye

Adviser, Grand National Assembly of Türkiye

Adviser, Grand National Assembly of Türkiye

Ambassador

Diplomat

(AK Parti: Justice and Development Party)

(İYİ Parti: The Good Party)

(CHP: Republican People's Party)

(HDP: People's Democratic Party)

TUVALU – TUVALU

Mr. Samuelu Penitala TEO

Leader of the delegation

Speaker of Parliament (GOV)

Chairman of the Parliament Building Select
CommitteeChairman of the Parliament Rules Standing
Committee

Mr. Namoliki Sualiki NEEMIA

Member of Parliament (OP)

Member of the Parliament Building Select Committee,

Ms. Faitotoa KULENE

Adviser

Parliament

(OP: Opposition)

(GOV: Government)

UGANDA – OUGANDA

Ms. Anita Annet AMONG

President of the Group

Leader of the delegation

Mr. Thomas TAYEWBA

Speaker of Parliament (NRM)

Chairperson of the Appointments Committee

Chairperson of the Business Committee

Deputy Speaker of Parliament

Mr. Alex RUHUNDA	Member of the Parliament (NRM)
Mr. Abdul MUTUMBA	Member, Environment and Natural Resources Member of the Parliament (NRM) Member of the Public Accounts Committee - Local Government
Ms. Susan AMERO Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security	Member, Education and Sports Member of the Parliament Member, Climate Change Member of the Public Service and Local Government
Ms. Esther Davinia ANYAKUN Member of the Executive Committee	Member of the Parliament (NRM)
Ms. Nancy Odonga ACORA	Member of the Parliament (NRM) Member, Presidential Affairs Member of the Public Accounts Committee - COSASE
Mr. Paul AKAMBA	Member of the Parliament (NRM) Member, Budget Member, Environment and Natural Resources
Mr. Patrick Kayongo NSANJA	Member of the Parliament Member, Physical Infrastructure Member, Public Accounts Committee - COSASE
Mr. Mohammed KATO	Member of Parliament (NRM) Member, Tourism Trade and Industry, Member, Rules, Privileges and Discipline Clerk to Parliament
Mr. Adolf Kasaija MWESIGE Member of ASGP	Director, Parliament
Mr. Leonard OKEMA Adviser	Deputy Director, Parliament
Mr. Meshach NUWABIINE Secretary of the delegation	Deputy Clerk Parliament Adviser
Mr. Paul WABWIRE	Clerk Assistant, Parliament
Mr. Louislordnay BAKYENGA	Adviser, Parliament
Mr. Mohammed MPUGA Secretary of the Group	Deputy Director, Parliament
Ms. Sitnah Chemisto CHEROTICH Member of ASGP	Director, Parliament
Mr. Police Fred BUSINGE Secretary of the Group	Adviser
Mr. Louislordnay BAKYENGA	Adviser
Mr. Hassan KIRUMIRA	
Mr. Bashir LUBEGA	

(NRM: National Resistance Movement)

(NUP: National Unity Platform)

UKRAINE

Mr. Oleksandr KORNIYENKO Leader of the delegation	Deputy Chairman of the Parliament (Servant of the People)
Ms. Lesia VASYLENKO Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights,	Member of Parliament (Holos)
Ms. Olga RUDENKO Member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians	Member of the Committee on Environmental Policy and Nature Management
Mr. Oleksandr MEREZHKO	Member of the Parliament (Servant of the People)
	Member of the Committee on Foreign Policy and Interparliamentary Cooperation
	Member of Parliament, (Servant of the People)
	Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Policy and Interparliamentary Cooperation
Mr. Dmytro SHPENOV	Member of the Parliament
Mr. Zhan BELENIUK	Member of the Legal Policy Committee
	Member of the Parliament (Servant of the People)
	First Deputy Chairman of the Committee on Youth and Sports in the Parliament
Mr. Oleksandr SANCHENKO	Member of Parliament (Servant of the People)
	Member of the Committee on Humanitarian and Information Policy
Mr. Oleksii ZHMERENETSKYI	Member of the Parliament (Servant of the People)
	Member of the Committee on Anti-Corruption Policy

Mr. Yehor CHERKUN Secretary of the delegation,	Adviser, Parliament
Ms. Olha RYBAK Secretary of the delegation	Adviser, Parliament
Mr. Andrii KANIUKA	Adviser, Parliament
Mr. Artem RYZHAK	Adviser, Parliament
Mr. Andrii CHORNOPYSKYI	Diplomat
Mr. Nazarii ZHUCHKOVSKY	Diplomat
(European Solidarity: European Solidarity)	
(Servant of the People: Servant of the People)	
(Holos: Holos)	

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES – ÉMIRATS ARABES UNIS

Mr. Ali AL NUAIMI Vice-President of the IPU Leader of the delegation Member of the Executive Committee	Member of the Federal National Council
Ms. Shaikah AL TENEIJI Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions	Member of the Federal National Council
Ms. Meera AL SUWAIDI Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development	Member of the Federal National Council
Ms. Sara FALAKNAZ Member of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians	Member of the Federal National Council
Mr. Marwan AL MUHAIRI	Member of the Federal National Council
Mr. Khaled ALKHARJI	Member of the Federal National Council
Mr. Omar ALNUAIMI Secretary of the Group, Secretary of the delegation Member of ASGP	Secretary General, Federal National Council
Ms. Afra ALBASTI Secretary of the Group	Deputy Secretary General, Federal National Council
Ms. Sheikah ALTENEIJI	Adviser, Federal National Council
Mr. Abdulrahman ALSHEHHI	Adviser, Federal National Council
Ms. Sheikah ALTENEIJI	Adviser, Federal National Council
Mr. Belal ALALI	Adviser, Federal National Council
Mr. Ahmad ALAQILI	Adviser, Federal National Council
Mr. Sami ALABBOUD	Adviser, Federal National Council
Mr. Ibrahim ALZAABI	Adviser, Federal National Council
Mr. Sharaf OTTAKATH	Adviser, Federal National Council
Mr. Juma ALMHEIRI	Adviser, Federal National Council
Mr. Abdulrahman ALHAMMADI	Adviser, Federal National Council
Mr. Abdulrahman ALSHEHHI	Adviser, Federal National Council
Mr. Ahmed ALMHEIRI	Adviser, Federal National Council

UNITED KINGDOM – ROYAUME-UNI

Ms. Karen BRADLEY President of the Group Leader of the delegation	Member of the House of Commons (C) Member, Liaison Chair, Procedure
Mr. Tim LOUGHTON	Member of the House of Commons (C) Member, Home Affairs
Ms. Kate OSAMOR	Member of the House of Commons (L) Member, International Development
Baroness Lindsay NORTHOVER	Member of the House of Lords (LD)
Lord Christopher RENNARD	Member of the House of Lords (LD)
Ms. Sarah DAVIES Member of ASGP	Clerk, House of Commons
Mr. Rick NIMMO Secretary of the delegation	Director of BGIPU
Ms. Dominique REES	Deputy Director-BGIPU
Ms. Rhiannon EDWARDS	Multilateral Programme Manager, BGIPU Adviser

Ms. Elektra GARVIE-ADAMS
Joint Secretary of the ASGP
Mr. Roger STRINGER
Mr. Suleman HAROON

Senior Clerk, House of Commons

Ambassador
Deputy Ambassador

(C: Conservative)
(L: Labour)
(LD: Liberal Democrat)

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA – RÉPUBLIQUE-UNIE DE TANZANIE

Ms. Tulia ACKSON (Ms.)
President of the Group
Leader of the delegation
Mr. Mussa Azzan ZUNGU

Speaker of the National Assembly (CCM)
Chairperson, Steering Committee

Mr. Ramadhan Suleiman RAMADHAN

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly (CCM)
Vice Chairperson of the Steering Committee
Member of the National Assembly (CCM)
Deputy Chairperson, Legal Affairs
Member of the National Assembly (CHADEMA)
Member, Public Accounts Committee

Ms. Esther Nicholas MATIKO
Member of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on
Democracy and Human Rights
Mr. Elibariki Immanuel KINGU

Member of the National Assembly (CCM)
Member, LAAC
Member of the National Assembly (CCM)
Chairperson, Administration, Legal and Constitutional
Affairs

Mr. Joseph Kizito MHAGAMA

Member of the National Assembly (CCM)
Member of the Infrastructure Development Committee
Member of the National Assembly (CCM)
Member of the Deputy Chairperson, Health
Committee

Ms. Eng Mwanaisha N. ULENGE

Dr Faustine Engelbert NDUGULILE
Member of the Advisory Group on Health

Member of the National Assembly (CCM)
Member of the Budget Committee
Member of the National Assembly (CCM)
Adviser, National Assembly

Ms. Zainab Athman KATIMBA

Ms. Neema LUGANGIRA
Ms. Zainab Issa KIHANGE
Secretary of the delegation
Mr. Mathew Nionzima KILEO ndc
Ms. Ruth Stanley MAKUNGU
Ms. Nenelwa Joyce MWIHAMBI ndc
Member of ASGP
Mr. Michael Yonakimu MSOMBE
Ms. Prisca Oscar MWANJESA
Mr. Emmanuel Elinuru MBOGGO
Ms. Martha Obeid LYAFUNYILE
Mr. James Nyengwa SAPALI
Ms. Hoyce TEMU
Mr. Robert K.D. KAHENDAGUZA

Director, National Assembly
Deputy Director, National Assembly
Clerk, National Assembly

Adviser, National Assembly
Adviser, National Assembly
Adviser, National Assembly
Adviser, National Assembly
Adviser, National Assembly
Ambassador
Ambassador

(CCM: Chama Cha Mapinduzi)
(CHADEMA: Chama Cha Demokrasia Na Maendeleo)

URUGUAY

Mr. Sebastián ANDÚJAR
Leader of the delegation
Mr. Amin NIFFOURI
Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions

President of the House of Representatives (PN)

Mr. Jose Pedro MONTERO
Vice-President of ASGP
Ms. Carina GALVALISI
Secretary of the Group
Secretary of the delegation
Secretariat of GRULAC
Mr. Oscar PIQUINELA
Secretary of GRULAC Geopolitical Group
Mr. Jorge DO AMARAL

Member of the Senate (PN)
Vice-President, Salud Publica
Vice-President, Hacienda
Secretary General, Senate

Head of International Relations, House of
Representatives

Adviser, Senate

Diplomat

(PN: Partido Nacional)
(PC: Partido Colorado)

UZBEKISTAN – OUZBÉKISTAN

Mr. Akmal SAIDOV
Leader of the delegation
Vice-President of the Executive Committee
Member of the Gender Partnership Group
Mr. Alikhanov SHOXRUX

Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Chamber

Member of Parliament

VIET NAM

Mr. Nguyen KHAC DINH
Leader of delegation
Ms. Thu Ha LE

Vice President of the National Assembly

Mr. Phu Binh PHAM

Member of the National Assembly (CPV)
Vice Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee
Member of the National Assembly (CPV)
Standing Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee
Member of the National Assembly (CPV)
Standing Member of the Law Committee
Ambassador/Permanent Representative
Deputy Director, National Assembly

Mr. Minh Hieu HOANG

Parliamentary officer, National Assembly

Mr. Duong Chinh CHUC
Ms. Thi Yen LE
Secretary of the delegation,
Ms. Pham Thi NGOC HA
Secretary of the Group
Mr. Xuan Anh PHAM
Mr. Tho Luan NGUYEN
Ms. Le Thu TONG
Ms. Hong Minh LAI
Mr. Duong Chinh Chuc

Secretary, National Assembly
Protocol officer, National Assembly
Interpreter
Media
Ambassador/Permanent Representatives

(CPV: The Communist Party of Viet Nam)

YEMEN

Mr. Mohsen Ali BA SARRA
Leader of the delegation
Mr. Hamid Abdullah AL-AHMAR
Member of the Bureau of the Standing
Committee on Democracy and Human Rights
Mr. Ahmed Hasan BAHWAIRTH
Mr. Mohamed Nageeb SAIF
Mr. Ameen Ali ZUHRA
Secretary of the delegation
Mr. Mohammed Gamal BA SURRA
Secretary of the delegation

Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives

Member of the House of Representatives

Member of the House of Representatives
Member of the House of Representatives
Director, House of Representatives

Adviser, House of Representatives

ZAMBIA – ZAMBIE

Ms. Nelly Butete KASHUMBA-MUTTI
President of the Group
Leader of the delegation
Ms. Jacqueline SABAO

Speaker of the National Assembly

Mr. Oliver M. AMUTIKE
Member of the Committee on Middle East Questions

Member of the National Assembly (UPND)
Member, National Guidance & Gender Matters
Vice Chairperson, Public Accounts
Member of the National Assembly (UPND)
Member, Media, Information & Communication
Technologies
Member, Cabinet Affairs
Member of the National Assembly (Indep.)
Member, National Guidance and Gender Matters
Member, Government Assurances
Member of the National Assembly (UPND)
Member, Cabinet Affairs
Member, Government Assurances
Member of the National Assembly (PF)
Member, Transport, Works and Supply
Vice Chairperson, Legal Affairs, Human Rights and
Governance

Mr. Emmanuel BANDA

Mr. Kaliye MANDANDI

Ms. Sibongile MWAMBA

Mr. Harry KAMBONI KAZIMETE
Member of the Committee on the Human Rights of
Parliamentarians

Ms. Cecilia SIKATELE MAMBWE
Secretary of the Group
Member of ASGP

Mr. Stephen C. KAWIMBE
Secretary of the Group
Member of ASGP

Mr. Temwa S NYIRENDA
Adviser

Mr. Joseph LUNGU
Mr. Ndiwa MUTELO

Mr. Sage SAMUWIKWA
Adviser

Ms. Pauline MONGA
Secretary of the delegation
Ms. Sharon B MUTETO
Secretary of the delegation

(PF: Patriotic Front)
(UPND: United Party for National Development)
(Indep.: Independent)

Member of the National Assembly (UPND)
Member, National Guidance and Gender Matters
Chairperson, Local Government Accounts
National Assembly

National Assembly

Deputy Director, National Assembly

Adviser, National Assembly
National Assembly
Permanent Secretary
Director, National Assembly

Adviser, National Assembly

Adviser, National Assembly

ZIMBABWE

Mr. Jacob Francis Nzwidamilimo MUDENDA
President of the Group
Leader of the delegation
Member of the Executive Committee
Ms. Mabel Memory CHINOMONA
President of the Group

Speaker of the National Assembly (ZANU PF)
Chairperson of the Committee on Standing Rules and
Orders

President of Senate (ZANU PF)
Deputy Chairperson of the Committee on Standing
Rules and Orders

(ZANU PF: Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front)

DELEGATIONS PARTICIPATING IN AN OBSERVER CAPACITY / DÉLÉGATIONS PARTICIPANT EN QUALITÉ D'OBSERVATEURS

MYANMAR

Mr. Win Myat AYE
Leader of the delegation
Ms. Mya THIDA
Mr. Nay Myo HTET

Member of the House of Nationalities

Adviser, House of Nationalities
Secretary of the Financial Affairs Committee

II. ASSOCIATE MEMBERS – MEMBERS ASSOCIES**ARAB PARLIAMENT
PARLEMENT ARABE**

Mr. Adel AL ASOOMI	President of the Arab Parliament
Mr. Essa Al-NASSAR	Member of Parliament
Mr. Abdelmomen RAMADAN	Protocol Officer at the General Secretariat
Dr. Ashraf ABDELAZIZ	Political Advisor to the President

**EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (EALA)
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'EST**

Mr. Joseph NTAKIRUTIMANA	Speaker
Mr. John NJOROGÉ MUTEKA	Secretary General
Member of ASGP	
Mr. John NJOROGÉ MUTEKA	Clerk
Mr. Alex LUMUMBA OBATRE	Deputy Clerk
Ms. Priscilla AMODING	Senior Administrative Secretary to Speaker
Mr. Charles KADONYA NGELEJA	Principal Clerk Assistant
Ms. Emiliana CHANGWA TUHOYE	Administrative Assistant to Deputy Clerk
Ms. Anastasia Monica NTHENYA MBEBE	Personal Assistant to Speaker

PAN-AFRICAN PARLIAMENT / PARLEMENT PANAFRICAIN

Dr. Ashebir W. GAYO	Acting-President
Mr. Emmanuel Miles SAMPA	Member of Parliament
Ambassador Bridgett Dikeledi MOTSEPTE	PAP Ambassador of Goodwill
Ms. Josiane Mbogo Wawa MOUKHTAR	Head of Committees
Mr. Kennedy EMEANA	Protocol Officer
Mr. Mahad Shsidow	Media Officer
Mr. John KING	Staff
Mr. Luvuyu MANYI	Staff

**INTER-PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE OF THE WEST AFRICAN ECONOMIC
AND MONETARY UNION (WAEMU) / COMITÉ INTERPARLEMENTAIRE DE L'UNION ÉCONOMIQUE ET
MONÉTAIRE OUEST-AFRICAINE (UEMOA)**

Mr. Richard Kocouvi Adjihouho ALLOSSOHOUN	Deputy-Speaker
Mr. Yobate KOLANI BAKALI	Deputy-Speaker

**PARLIAMENT OF THE CENTRAL AFRICAN ECONOMIC AND MONETARY COMMUNITY (CEMAC)
/PARLEMENT DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ ÉCONOMIQUE ET MONÉTAIRE DE L'AFRIQUE CENTRALE**

M. Evariste NGAMANA	Président
M. Marcelin Venceslas NDASSIRA REMADE	Chef du Cabinet du Président

**LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN PARLIAMENT /
PARLEMENT LATINO-AMÉRICAIN ET CARIBÉEN (PARLATINO)**

Ms. Silvia GIACOPPO	Speaker
Leader of the delegation	
Ms. Maria Del Carmen ALVA PRIETO	Member of Parliament
Mr. Elias CASTILLO	Secretary General
Mr. Santiago GAMIETEA	Adviser

**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. Idris Ahmed WASE	Member of Parliament
Leader of the delegation	
Ms. Linda IKPEAZU	Member of Parliament
Mr. Edwin Melvin SNOWE JR	Member of Parliament
Mr. Senanu Koku ALIPUI	Member of Parliament
Mr. Caramo CAMARA	Member of Parliament
Mme Fatoumatta NJAI	Member of Parliament
Mr. Saa Emerson LAMINA	Member of Parliament

Mr. John AZUMAH,
Mr. Ezekiel Friday FWANGDER
Mr. Bertin Kountouon SOME
Mr. Fily DIALLO
Mr. Julius Sharka ZOKER

Secretary-General
Deputy Director
Director
Protocol Adviser
Adviser

**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF LA FRANCOPHONIE
ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE**

Mr. Bruno FUCHS

Mr. Damien CESSÉLIN
Mr. Benoît ONAMBELE

Membre de l'Assemblée parlementaire, Délégué
Général
Secrétaire général
Conseiller, appui diplomatique

III. OBSERVERS – OBSERVATEURS**UNITED NATIONS****NATIONS UNIES**

Ms. Zahira VIRANI, UN Resident Coordinator in Angola
Ms. Andrea RIVERO DE ARAUJO, Political Adviser
Ms. Maria de Fatima SANTOS, Resident Coordinator Partnerships and Development Finance
Mr. Emanuel PAIM, Coordination Officer
Ms. Carolina DALLA VALLE BEDICKS, Associate Political Officer
Mr. João Paula ROCHA, Political Officer
Ms. Natercia de ALMEIDA, Delegate, National Point Office on Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and Nutrition
Mr. David ALAMOS, Chief Parliamentary Engagement Officer, United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT)
Ms. Hege WAGAM, UNAIDS Country Director Switzerland
Mr. Mady BIAYE, UNEPA Representative

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)**ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTÉ (OMS)**

Mr. Gaundenz SILBERSCHMIDT, Director, Health and Multilateral Partnerships
Ms. Humphrey KARAMAGI

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)**PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT (PNUE)**

Ms. Aphrodite SMAGADI, Legal Officer, OiC Montevideo Coordination and Delivery Unit

UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)**CONVENTION-CADRE DES NATIONS UNIES SUR LES CHANGEMENTS CLIMATIQUES (CCNUCC)**

Ms. Tracy Tollmann, Process Management Officer

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)**HAUT COMMISSARIAT DES NATIONS UNIES POUR LES RÉFUGIÉS (HCR)**

Ambassador Mohamed AFFEY, Special envoy of UNHCR for the Horn of Africa
Mr. Andrew Harper, Special Advisor on Climate Action

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME (UNODC)**OFFICE DES NATIONS UNIES CONTRE LA DROGUE ET LE CRIME (ONUDC)**

Mr. Antonio Giovanni LUZZI, Program Management Officer
Ms. Sara DA SILVA OLIVEIRA, Human Rights Specialist

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF COUNTER-TERRORISM (UNOCT)**BUREAU DE LUTTE CONTRE LE TERRORISME DES NATIONS UNIES**

Mr. David ALAMOS, Chief Parliamentary Engagement Office,

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS (ODA)**BUREAU DES AFFAIRES DE DÉSARMEMENT DES NATIONS UNIES**

Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Office for Disarmament Affairs (ODA)

PMNCH

Dr. Flavia BUSTREO, Chair, Governance and Ethics Committee, Head of delegation
Ms. Sue MBAYA, Senior Consultant
Mr. Mohit PRAMANIK, Technical Officer

AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION (APU)**UNION PARLEMENTAIRE AFRICAINE**

Mr. Boubacar IDI GADO, Secrétaire général
Mr. Samir CHEROUATI, Administrateur

ARAB INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION (AIPU)**UNION INTERPARLEMENTAIRE ARABE (UIPA)**

Mr. Fayez AL-SHAWABKAH, Secretary-General
Mr. Samir NIHAWI, Director of Parliamentary Relations

ASIAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (APA)**ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE ASIATIQUE**

Mr. Mohammad Reza MAJIDI, Secretary-General
Mr. Mehdi GHASHGHAHI, Deputy Secretary General
Mr. Seyed Javad HASHEMI HASSHANABADI, Director for International Division

PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COLLECTIVE SECURITY TREATY ORGANISATION (CSTO PA)

Mr. Gleb BOKHANOVICH, Secretary

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION (CPA)

ASSOCIATION PARLEMENTAIRE DU COMMONWEALTH

Mr. Jarvis MATIYA, Deputy Secretary-General

Mr. Tom MARINO, Strategy, Engagement and Governance Officer

**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)**

Mr. Onyango KAKOBA, Secretary General

Ms. Violette KATYA, Administrative Assistant and Protocol to the Secretary-General

GLOBAL ORGANIZATION OF PARLIAMENTARIANS AGAINST CORRUPTION (GOPAC)

ORGANISATION MONDIALE DES PARLEMENTAIRES CONTRE LA CORRUPTION

Mr. Fadli ZON, Vice-Chair

INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENT ON TOLERANCE AND PEACE (IPTP)

PARLEMENT INTERNATIONAL POUR LA TOLÉRANCE ET LA PAIX (PITP)

Mr. Ahmed ALJARWAN, President

Mr. Zoran ILIEVSKI, Secretary General

**PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE COMMUNITY OF PORTUGUESE-SPEAKING COUNTRIES
(AP-CPLP)**

ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ DES PAYS DE LANGUE PORTUGAISE

Ms. Teresa Efua Asangono, President

PARLIAMENTARY UNION OF THE OIC MEMBER STATES (PUIC)

UNION PARLEMENTAIRE DES ETATS MEMBERS DE L'OCI (UPCI)

Mr. Mouhamed Khouraihi NIASS, Secretary-General

Mr. Aliasghar MOHAMMADI SUANI, Deputy Secretary General

PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION OF BELARUS AND RUSSIA

ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE L'UNION DU BELARUS ET DE LA RUSSIE

Mr. Andrei SAVINYKH, Deputy Chairman

Mr. Getta ANTON, Deputy Chairman, Member of the Parliamentary Assembly Commission on Agrarian Issues

Ms. Elena SUKHAREVA, Advisor of the International Relations Department

PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF TURKIC SPEAKING COUNTRIES (TURKPA)

ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DES PAYS DE LANGUE TURCIQUE

Mr. Mehmet Süreyya ER, Secretary General

Mr. Azar MAMMADOV, Legal expert

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY PARLIAMENTARY FORUM (SADC PF)

FORUM PARLEMENTAIRE DE LA COMMUNAUTE (SADC)

Ms. Boemo SEKGOMA, Secretary General

Ms. Yapoka MUNGANDI, Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Mr. Michael MUKUKA, SA Hub Coordinator

UNITE

Mr. Ricardo BAPTISTA-LEITE, President

Mr. João LEITE,

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF SUPREME AUDIT INSTITUTIONS (INTOSAI)

**ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE DES INSTITUTIONS SUPERIEURES DE CONTRÔLE DES FINANCES
PUBLIQUE (INTOSAI)**

Mr. Jorge Antonio DE OLIVERA FRANCISCO

Mr. Marcio ALVES PEREIRA DE ANDRADE

Ms. Camilla FREDRIKSEN, INTOSAI Development Initiative

SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL (SI)

Ms. Benedicta LASI, Secretary General

Mr. Carlos WALLHEAD, Projects and Programs Officer

IV. ADVISERS AND OTHER PERSONS TAKING PART IN THE WORK OF THE 147th ASSEMBLY – CONSEILLERS ET AUTRES PERSONNES PARTICIPANT AUX TRAVAUX DE LA 147^e ASSEMBLEE

MONGOLIA – MONGOLIE

Ms. Ulziisaikhan LUVSANDORJ	Secretary General, State Great Hural
Member of ASGP	
Ms. Unurmaa UUGANBAYAR	Adviser
Mr. Tuguldur GAN-ULZII	Adviser
Ms. Azjargal GANBOLD	Secretariat of the State Great H
Ms. Erdenetuya GURRENCHIN	Media

V. SPECIAL GUESTS TAKING PART IN ACTIVITIES FORESEEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE 147th ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION INVITES SPECIAUX PRENANT PART A DES ACTIVITES PREVUES A L'OCCASION DE LA 147^e ASSEMBLEE DE L'UNION INTERPARLEMENTAIRE

Mr. Parfait ONANGA-ANYANGA, Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union

General Debate / Débat general

His Excellency João Caholo, Executive Secretary, International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR)
Ms. Prisca Fenosa Maharavo, Together for a New Africa

Forum of Women Parliamentarians / Forum des femmes parlementaires

Ms. Susana CAPOBIANCO-MEINEL, Head of Women in Politics, Apolitical Foundation
Ms. Kimberly MCARTHUR, Chief Operating Officer, Apolitical Foundation

Second Global Parliamentary Summit on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism

Mr. Simon KILLELEA, CEO, Institute for Economics and Peace

Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

Ambassador Christian Guillemet-Fernandez, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica in Geneva
Mr. Jonathan GRANOFF, President, Global Security Institute
Mr. Alhatikou; DAGAMAISSA, Program Manager, International Alert
Mr. Paul Dziatkowiec, Director of Mediation and Peace Support, Geneva Centre for Security Policy

Standing Committee on Sustainable Development

Ms. Sarah Shaw, Senior Advisor, Partnerships Team, COP28
Ms. Adeyinka Badejo, Deputy Regional Director of Operations, Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, World Food Programme (WFP)

Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

Dr. Alexandra Novosseloff, Research Associate, Centre Thucydide, University of Paris-Panthéon-Assas (Paris 2)
Ms. Zahira Virani, UN Resident Coordinator
Andrea Rivero de Araujo, UN Country Team

Parity debate

Mr. Wessel Van den Berg, MenCare officer, Equimundo Centre for Masculinities and Social Justice

Workshop on Rights of Child

Ms. Sophie Kiladze, Vice-Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
Ms. Aia-Eza Nacília Gomes da Silva Troso, Chair of the Fifth Committee on Economy and Finance, National Assembly of Angola
Ms. Louise Moreira Daniels, Chief of Social Policy, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Angola

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

Mr. Ian Fry, UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change

IPU-WHO joint workshop

Mr. S. Solomon, Principal Legal Officer, Unit on International, Constitutional and Global Health Law

Andean Parliament

Mr. Juan Pablo Letelier, President, Governance Institute