



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

CL/204/SR.1
4 July 2019

Summary records of the Governing Council

204th session

7 and 10 April 2019

**Sheraton Convention Center
Doha (Qatar)**

AGENDA

	<u>Page(s)</u>
1. Adoption of the agenda (CL/204/A.1, A.1.rev and A.2)	4
2. Approval of the summary records of the 203 rd session of the Governing Council (CL/203/SR.1)	4
3. Proposals for the election of the President of the 140 th Assembly	4
4. Questions relating to IPU membership and the situation of certain parliaments	
(a) Requests for affiliation and reaffiliation to the IPU and observer status (CL/204/4(a)-P.1)	4
(b) Situation of certain parliaments	5
5. Report of the President	
(a) On her activities since the 203 rd session of the Governing Council	10
(b) On the activities of the Executive Committee	10
6. Annual report of the Secretary General on the activities of the IPU in 2018	
(a) Implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2017-2021 and cooperation with the United Nations system (CL/204/6(a)-R.1)	12
7. Reports on recent IPU specialized meetings	
(a) Parliamentary workshop on the occasion of the World Investment Forum 2018 (CL/204/7(a)-R.1)	24
(b) Parliamentary Speakers' Summit at the G20 (CL/204/7(b)-R.1)	25
(c) Regional seminar on climate change and disaster risk reduction for the Parliaments of the Caribbean (CL/204/7(c)-R.1)	25
(d) Seminar on Achieving the SDGs for the IPU's Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group and East Asia Parliaments (CL/204/7(d)-R.1)	25
(e) Follow-up regional seminar on the contribution of parliament to combat child trafficking and labour on the occasion of the ECOWAS Parliamentary session (CL/204/7(e)-R.1)	25
(f) World e-Parliament Conference 2018 (CL/204/7(f)-R.1)	26
(g) Annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO (CL/204/7(g)-R.1)	26
(h) Parliamentary Conference on Migration in the lead-up to the adoption of the Global Compact on Migration (CL/204/7(h)-R.1)	26
(i) Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP24) (CL/204/7(i)-R.1)	26
(j) Fifth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians (CL/204/7(j)-R.1)	27
(k) First meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (2020) (CL/207(k)-R.1)	27
(l) Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations (CL/204/7(l)-R.1)	27
(m) IPU-UN Regional Conference for the Middle East and North Africa: <i>The role of parliamentarians in addressing the threat of foreign terrorist fighters and associated challenges</i> (CL/204/7(m)-R.1)	27
(n) Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the 63 rd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CL/204/7(n)-R.1)	28
8. Financial results for 2018 (CL/204/8-R.1, R.2 and R.3)	12
9. Activities of committees and other bodies	
(a) Forum of Women Parliamentarians (CL/204/9(a)-R.1)	21
(b) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians (CL/204/9(b)-R.1, R.2 and P.1)	14
(c) Committee on Middle East Questions (CL/204/9(c)-R.1 and P.1 to P.3)	21
(d) Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law (CL/204/9(d)-R.1, P.1 and P.2)	22
(e) Gender Partnership Group (CL/204/9(e)-R.1)	22

	<u>Page(s)</u>
(f) Advisory Group on Health (CL/204/9(f)-R.1)	22
(g) Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU (CL/204/9(g)-R.1)	23
(h) High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG) (CL/204/9(h)-P.1)	23
(i) Group of Facilitators for Cyprus (CL/204/9(i)-P.1)	24
10. 141 st IPU Assembly (Belgrade, Serbia, 13-17 October 2019)	28
11. Future inter-parliamentary meetings (CL/204/11-P.1)	24
12. Amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules	28
13. Elections to the Executive Committee (CL/204/13-P.1)	28
14. Other business	

First sitting

Sunday, 7 April 2019

The sitting was called to order at 9.40 a.m., with Ms. G. Cuevas Barron (Mexico), President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), in the Chair.

A minute's silence was observed in memory of the late Dr. Jiko Luveni, Speaker of the Parliament of Fiji, and in commemoration of the International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

Item 1 of the agenda

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

(CL/204/A.1.rev)

The revised annotated agenda (CL/204/A.1.rev) was adopted.

Item 2 of the agenda

APPROVAL OF THE SUMMARY RECORDS OF THE 203rd SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

(CL/203/SR.1)

The summary records of the 203rd session of the Governing Council (CL/203/SR.1) were approved.

Item 3 of the agenda

PROPOSALS FOR THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE 140th ASSEMBLY

At the proposal of Ms. M.N. Mensah-Williams (Namibia), seconded by Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal), Mr. Ahmed bin Abdullah bin Zaid Al Mahmoud (Qatar), was proposed to be elected to serve as President of the 140th IPU Assembly. This proposal was endorsed by acclamation.

Item 4 of the agenda

QUESTIONS RELATING TO IPU MEMBERSHIP AND THE SITUATION OF CERTAIN PARLIAMENTS

- (a) Requests for affiliation and reaffiliation to the IPU and observer status**
(CL/204/4(a)-P.1)

The President, drawing attention to the document CL/204/4(a)-P.1 related to the request for affiliation to the IPU submitted by the House of Assembly of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, said she took it that the Governing Council wished to approve that request, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

It was so decided.

Mr. T. Jomo Sanga (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) said that, in his capacity as Speaker, he had taken the opportunity to outline the work of the IPU to his Parliament, which had then unanimously agreed that it should seek to join the membership of such an august body. It was therefore delighted that its approaches to the IPU on that score had achieved the desired outcome and looked forward to working with its fellow IPU Members to strengthen democracy and the rule of law, which must serve as guiding principles for the entire world.

The President said that she welcomed the addition of the Parliament of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as an IPU Member from her own region of Latin America and the Caribbean. She added that she was confident that the Parliament of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines would find its membership beneficial and rewarding.

(b) Situation of certain parliaments

The Secretary General, reporting on the situation of certain parliaments and additionally communicating the related courses of action recommended by the Executive Committee for approval by the Governing Council, said that progress had been achieved in some of those situations, whereas others continued to give rise to grave concerns.

The Executive Committee had first reviewed the situation in Eritrea, where violations of the human rights of parliamentarians had prompted its monitoring of that situation, albeit that the Eritrean Parliament was not an IPU Member. The Executive Committee recommended that the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians should remain seized of the cases of the 11 Eritrean parliamentarians whose whereabouts remained impossible to determine and that the IPU should continue to monitor developments in the hope that the situation would be resolved in the near future.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, long-overdue presidential and parliamentary elections had been held in December 2018 and March 2019, respectively, marking a sign of progress. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should take note of that progress and assist the country's new transitional Parliament, through capacity-building, to discharge its functions as mandated by the country's electorate.

Concerning Guinea-Bissau, the paralysis created by internal parliamentary wrangles had finally been overcome following recent legislative elections held in March 2019. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should take note of this new development and resume its capacity-building assistance to the newly elected Parliament.

In the case of Libya, the situation remained worrisome in view of the ongoing refusal of the former General National Congress to disband and accept as legitimate the authority of the internationally-recognized Tobruk-based House of Representatives elected in 2014. Mindful of the growing threat of a return to armed conflict, the Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation and offer to provide institutional capacity-building aimed at enabling the House of Representatives to function as a full-fledged parliament.

With regard to Thailand, where the parliamentary function had been exercised by the interim National Legislative Assembly since the military takeover in May 2014, the results of the general elections held in March 2019 were shortly due to be certified, paving the way for a normalization of the situation. In taking note of those positive developments, the Executive Committee recommended that the newly constituted Thai Parliament should be welcomed at the 141st IPU Assembly in Serbia and that the IPU should continue to provide the technical assistance it had delivered to previous Thai legislatures.

As to Yemen, the Executive Committee remained seized of the situation and continued to express great concern over the ongoing crisis in the country and its severe impact on the functioning of parliament. No elections had been held since 2003 and the country's sitting parliamentarians would therefore remain in office until new elections took place. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should continue to work with both parties (including dispatch of IPU letters), to encourage all concerned parties to benefit the country by building a unified parliamentary front, which was furthermore essential to ensuring the delivery of much-needed humanitarian assistance to the country. In the interim, the Committee insisted that Yemeni delegations to IPU meetings must be pluralistic.

The President said that the IPU was open to impartial dialogue with all concerned parties with a view to promoting parliamentary unity in Yemen.

The Secretary General, turning to the case of Burundi, said that the IPU had done its utmost to help in resolving the country's crisis and was continuing to monitor the situation. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should likewise continue both its work with Burundian stakeholders for a roadmap towards the goal of free and fair elections in 2020 and its provision of assistance – including gender equality and climate change – for institutional strengthening of the Burundian Parliament. The Committee also recommended that efforts be made to garner international support for the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which lacked financial resources but was endeavouring nonetheless to fulfil its mandate with the aim of preventing any recurrence of violence in the country. It finally recommended that the IPU engage with the Burundian authorities to hold them to standards upheld by the IPU.

In respect of Cambodia, the IPU had for some time been engaged with the country's authorities concerning the human rights of parliamentarians belonging to the opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), in particular its leader, who had now been freed from prison and was under house arrest. The CNRP had furthermore been prevented from participating in the most recent

elections held in 2018, giving rise to consternation about the exercise of political freedoms in the country, with the ruling party holding all parliamentary seats. A new amendment to the law on political parties potentially provided, however, for the unbanning of parliamentarians who sought a royal pardon for their alleged crimes. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should insist on the need for a fact-finding mission to the country while continuing to monitor the situation, including that of the political leaders in detention, and work with the Cambodian authorities for a resolution of such outstanding issues as the ability of Cambodian parliamentarians to perform their functions as ordained by the country's Constitution.

Mr. S. Yang (Cambodia) said that the Cambodian Parliament had begun a new mandate following the recent elections and that the Cambodian parliamentarians whose cases were under consideration by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians were now in a position to seek renewed political involvement. He therefore requested the Committee to drop those cases from its list.

The President said that an update on the cases would be provided at the next sitting of the Governing Council in the light of their further consideration in the coming days by both the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and the Executive Committee.

The Secretary General, continuing his report, said that positive developments towards normalization had occurred in the situation in Maldives following the victory of the opposition candidate, a former "client" of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, in the presidential elections held in 2018. On his election, the new President had promptly reinstated parliamentarians who had been stripped of their mandate, imprisoned or exiled under the regime of his predecessor. In the light of those developments, the Committee had conducted a review and decided to close all but seven of the Maldivian cases before it. The IPU had moreover received assurances from the new President that past mistakes would not be repeated and that steps would be taken to enhance freedoms within the country. The Committee expressed the hope that the parliamentary elections held on 6 April were free and would lead to a parliament reflecting the aspirations of the people of Maldives.

The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should continue to engage with the Maldivian Parliament and promote its strengthening through capacity-building.

It took note of the Parliament of Maldives' offer to host the next IPU South Asian Speakers' Summit on Achieving the SDGs.

Concerning Nicaragua, the situation was generally worrisome. Street protests against government measures had created political turmoil and led to repression by the authorities. The IPU had thus far received no response to its offer of support to assist the Parliament in working more robustly to resolve matters. The Executive Committee looked forward to clarifying the situation with the Nicaraguan delegation and would convey its recommendations thereon to the Governing Council before the close of the Assembly.

Mr. P.F. Casini (Italy) said that the alarming situation in Nicaragua appeared to be worsening. It should therefore be continually monitored by the IPU, which must also signal its commitment to the freedom of the Nicaraguan people, including by speaking out against the restrictions imposed on the country's intellectuals and social institutions.

The President, noting that the main issue pertained to the cause of the street protests, reiterated that the Executive Committee intended to discuss the situation further at its forthcoming meeting once it had received clarifications from the Nicaraguan delegation.

The Secretary General, referring to the situation in Palestine, said that the Palestinian Legislative Council had been dissolved in late 2018 in advance of proposed parliamentary elections and that the country's membership of the IPU was currently exercised by the Palestinian National Council, which was the legislative body of the Palestine Liberation Organization. There was continuing disagreement in Palestine, however, over the timing and process of those elections. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should urge the Palestinian authorities to organize elections as soon as possible with a view to the prompt establishment of a fully-functioning legislature. It also recommended that the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians should remain seized of the cases of Palestinian parliamentarians detained in Israeli prisons, as well as the cases of members of the Palestinian National Council whose human rights had allegedly been violated by the Palestinian Authority, and report to the Council on those cases at the 141st Assembly.

In South Sudan, the hope was that the efforts under way to resolve the civil strife and government infighting would yield success and promote an early return to normality. Having taken note of developments towards that end, the Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should encourage the country's authorities to abide by all existing and possible future peace agreements.

With regard to Sri Lanka, the Parliament was once again functioning after a period of internal wrangles prompted by the President's decision to replace his Prime Minister with the country's former president amid concerns over what were seen as attempts on his part to undermine the Parliament's authority. Some opposition parliamentarians had complained to the IPU, however, that their space in parliament was not as it should be. The Executive Committee therefore recommended emphasis on the fact that all members of represented political parties should be assured of fair and equal participation in parliamentary proceedings and that government interference in the workings of parliament was unacceptable. The Executive Committee therefore expressed strong support for the preservation of the integrity of the parliament.

Concerning the Syrian Arab Republic, an end to the ongoing conflict now appeared to be imminent. In engaging with the country's parliamentary authorities, the IPU had constantly stressed that the Parliament should play a robust role in working to resolve that conflict and always seek to represent the will of the Syrian people. The Working Group on Syria established by the IPU in 2017 had been unable to achieve its primary objectives for a variety of reasons, but hopes on that score had recently been revived with an invitation to the Secretary General of the IPU to visit the country. The Executive Committee therefore recommended that he should accept the invitation to conduct a preparatory visit to pave the way for fuller IPU engagement with the Syrian Parliament in Damascus.

As to the situation in Turkey, the focus had now shifted away from the aftermath of the coup attempt in 2016 to the human rights cases before the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. The previously agreed fact-finding mission to Turkey had not yet taken place, however, as the Turkish authorities had been otherwise engaged with the country's recent municipal elections. The hope now was that a date for the mission could be identified through interaction with the Turkish delegation during the current Assembly.

The President, commending the demonstrable commitment of the Turkish delegation to the prompt organization of the agreed mission in a spirit of openness and goodwill, said that her negotiations with the delegation in that connection were nearing completion and that she would report on the outcome at the next sitting of the Council.

Ms. R. Cavakçı Kan (Turkey) said that her delegation indeed looked forward to finalization of the date and details of the fact-finding mission and had furthermore presented information to the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians at the present Assembly.

The Secretary General, with reference to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, said that the situation had worsened dramatically after the opposition party had taken the majority of parliamentary seats in 2015, since when there had been repeated attempts to subvert the authority of parliament. The IPU had received complaints that Venezuelan parliamentarians were being prevented from travelling to participate in IPU meetings and were also denied their pay. More recently, the National Assembly had refused to recognize the country's presidency and the National Assembly Speaker had proclaimed himself interim president, winning European and United States support for his action.

The Executive Committee had recently issued robust statements condemning all attempts to prevent the attendance of Venezuelan parliamentarians at IPU meetings and expressing grave concern over the deteriorating situation. Lack of cooperation from the Venezuelan authorities, moreover, had thus far prevented the IPU from undertaking the fact-finding mission to which those authorities, in common with the Governing Council, had agreed at the previous Assembly. The Executive Committee recommended that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation and express strong support for the parliamentary institution, as well as concern over any efforts to restrict the movement of Venezuelan parliamentarians or otherwise interfere with their functions.

The President said that the complexity of the Venezuelan situation had increased in the past six months and was growing ever more acute. Since providing written confirmation of the approved fact-finding mission, the country's authorities had taken no further steps towards organizing the mission. The only way forward was therefore to engage in dialogue with all concerned parties with a view to obtaining a written invitation for members of both the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians and the Executive Committee, together with herself, to visit the country on such a mission.

Mr. P.F. Casini (Italy) said that dialogue was the ideal but that one of the parties was unwilling to engage in dialogue. The fact was that the Venezuelan Government alone was responsible for impeding the agreed mission and also for patently depriving Venezuelan parliamentarians of their fundamental rights and freedoms. The IPU must express solidarity with those parliamentarians by speaking the plain truth of the matter and denouncing the repressive measures practised by the Maduro regime.

Mr. T.I. Guanipa Villalobos (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that an IPU mission was essential to a genuine understanding of what was happening on the ground in his country. All Venezuelans wished to be represented by their elected parliamentarians, yet the Government ignored the will of the people and instead fought against them using armed violence and terrorism tactics. Venezuelans would never back down, however, until they had achieved victory in their struggle for peace, freedom, independence and human rights. They welcomed all the demonstrations of support for that cause.

Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal) said that the IPU must always express solidarity with parliamentarians worldwide in defence of their rights and freedoms, which was especially true in the case of Venezuelan colleagues who were being subjected to repression and prevented from attending the Assembly.

Ms. M.Y. Ferrer Gómez (Cuba), noting the persistence of the anti-Maduro street protests in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, said that the situation had been masterminded by the United States of America, which viewed the country as a security risk and had imposed on it economic sanctions in addition to hinting at intervention. It was akin to a terrorism attack being orchestrated from abroad on an entire people already being plundered of their natural resources. The United States had expressed support for the self-proclaimed president, whose action was unlawful and proved the involvement of members of the National Assembly in the conspiracy. The IPU was duty-bound to promote respect for the independence and sovereignty of the Venezuelan people, who were entitled to determine their country's political, economic and social future without outside interference of any kind.

Ms. W. Bani Mustafa (Jordan) said that the opportunities for dialogue must be pursued, without any outside interference. In a move that had received foreign endorsement, the Speaker of the National Assembly had effectively staged a coup against the country's legitimately elected President. A non-confrontational, impartial and balanced approach must instead be adopted in order to promote the internal dialogue needed to resolve the Venezuelan situation.

The President said that the Venezuelan National Assembly was an IPU Member and that the IPU was monitoring the Venezuelan situation in accordance with its policy of neutrality and non-interference in the internal affairs of any country. Until the agreed mission to the country took place, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians had no option but to follow up on the cases presented to it on the basis of the information available to it through other means.

Ms. M. Espinales (Nicaragua) said that the issue rested on the immutable pillars of impartiality and respect for the sovereignty of the Venezuelan people. The plurality of views must also be respected, with all parliamentarians receiving equal treatment, yet three members of the Venezuelan National Assembly had been denied participation in the current Assembly at a time when it was especially critical for their voices to be heard.

Mr. J.P. Letelier (Chile) said that the role of the IPU was not to determine the legitimacy of governments but to support its Member Parliaments. All voices in the Venezuelan conflict must be heard and any foreign attempts to intervene in the country must be condemned and rejected. Human rights transcended all political ideologies, however, and it was therefore right that the IPU should be seeking support for its vital mission from both the Venezuelan Government and the Venezuelan National Assembly. The IPU had a role to play in promoting dialogue for the country's return to normality, particularly as global attention to the domestic crisis and mass exodus of Venezuelans was lacking.

The President said that the idea behind the fact-finding mission was for members of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, together with herself and members of the Executive Committee, to engage in frank and open dialogue with all sides and gather information on the ground, including with respect to alleged violations of the human rights of Venezuelan parliamentarians. She would therefore continue to press for the mission to take place and report back on the outcome to the Governing Council.

The Secretary General, concluding his report, said that he wished to draw attention to the situation in Algeria, where President Bouteflika had finally stepped down after several weeks of public protests. The Algerian people, however, were now demanding the removal of all remnants of his regime, creating a volatile atmosphere that might ultimately affect the functioning of the country's Parliament. Indeed, the Algerian delegation to the present Assembly had already been obliged to withdraw from participation. The Executive Committee recommended that the Council should take note of the situation on the understanding that any further information of relevance would be communicated to it in due course.

The Governing Council took note of the information communicated to it in respect of the situation of the parliaments mentioned and approved the recommendations of the Executive Committee relating thereto.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

The Secretary General announced that, in accordance with Rule 34.2 of the Rules of the Governing Council, the quorum of 87 was established for the 204th session on the basis of the participation of 173 Members or substitutes in the current first meeting.

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.

Second sitting

Wednesday, 10 April

The sitting was called to order at 9.55 a.m., with Ms. G. Cuevas Barron (Mexico), President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), in the Chair.

Item 5 of the agenda

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

(a) On her activities since the 203rd session of the Governing Council

The President, in providing with the aid of a slide presentation an overview of the activities she had conducted since the previous session of the Governing Council, as well as of projects to come, said that she had worked in particular to create closer working relations with the IPU membership and had learned much from her country visits kindly hosted by many of the world's national parliaments. Full details of those activities and forthcoming projects could be found in the *Activities Report of the IPU Presidency: An accountability exercise to evaluate the first half of the 2017-2020 mandate* available on the IPU website (www.ipu.org/resources/publications/about-ipu/2019-04/activities-report-ipu-presidency-accountability-exercise-evaluate-first-half-2017-2020-mandate).

The Governing Council took note of the report of the President on her activities.

(b) On the activities of the Executive Committee

The President said that most of the subjects addressed by the Executive Committee during its three days of lively and productive discussions at its 281st session in Doha would be covered under the relevant items of the agenda. The Committee had taken note of her activities report and underlined the importance of the IPU's role in strengthening multilateralism and implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which should be prioritized in strategies for parliamentary action. It had also underlined the need for the IPU to explore in greater depth issues relating to finance, economy and trade.

In support of the IPU's efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism, the Executive Committee had unanimously agreed that a proposed memorandum of understanding between the IPU, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) (see annex to document CL/204/6(a)-R.1) should be submitted to the Council for endorsement. She took it that the Council wished to endorse the memorandum of understanding and thereby enable the Secretary General to proceed with its signature together with the two parties thereto.

It was so decided.

Concerning the situation of certain parliaments, the Executive Committee had taken note of the Secretary General's presentation and made the recommendations subsequently endorsed by the Council at its first sitting. With regard to Nicaragua, she had since reviewed the situation with a member of the Nicaraguan delegation, who had briefed her on plans for the promotion of national reconciliation and electoral reform. Both of them agreed that the IPU should continue to monitor the situation and interact with both the Nicaraguan Government and the opposition with a view to obtaining a balanced picture. The Executive Committee had endorsed that agreement, as well as in principle any requests for possible assistance to the country's Parliament. She took it that the Governing Council would wish to do likewise.

It was so decided.

She had also engaged in an open and transparent discussion with the head of the Turkish delegation and the President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians concerning the organization of the proposed fact-finding mission to Turkey. There was an agreement to allow access to all persons the mission would wish to meet. The IPU Secretariat would provide a list of

those persons. Exemplifying the positive results that dialogue could achieve, the highly productive outcome of the discussion was that the mission was likely to take place in June 2019. Both parties were now keenly focused on establishing the requirements for the mission.

Concerning financial matters, the deliberations of the Executive Committee would be reported by the Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance.

With regard to the approaching 130th anniversary of the IPU, the Executive Committee had considered proposals for its celebration from 30 June 2019 to 30 June 2020. In that context, it had approved the publication of a commemorative book featuring input from all IPU Members, as well as the organization of a global parliamentary campaign encompassing, inter alia: a serialized history of the IPU over six issues of the IPU's e-bulletin; a physical exhibition, in June and July 2019, in the Salle des pas perdus at the United Nations in Geneva and in the United Nations Visitor Centre in New York; a virtual exhibition, including a video and timeline of the IPU; dedicated branding, slogans and hashtags; direct marketing to parliaments, including a letter addressed to all parliamentarians explaining what the IPU had to offer; a menu of tools and products for parliaments, including key messaging; and a social media tool kit aimed at encouraging all Members to honour the milestone anniversary.

The Executive Committee had furthermore recommended that the IPU Secretariat should provide additional inputs to the draft charter on international parliamentarianism before it was circulated to all Members for comment. A final draft would then be prepared for consideration at the 141st Assembly and possible adoption either at the 142nd Assembly or on 30 June 2020. She took it that the Governing Council wished to approve those proposals for celebration of the 130th anniversary of the IPU.

It was so decided.

The Executive Committee had also discussed and recommended for adoption by the Governing Council a three-year IPU communications strategy aimed at positioning the IPU as a unique global resource for and about parliaments and parliamentarians. Aligned with the IPU Strategy for 2017-2021 and the vision of the IPU Presidency, the strategy had been drafted following extensive consultations with internal and external stakeholders and was designed to bring in Members and the geopolitical groups, give a voice to parliamentarians from across the world, and show that parliaments were part of the solution to global problems. It additionally contained sub-strategies for increasing the interactivity of the IPU website and digital tools with a view to creating a two-way communication channel through which IPU Members could share best practices. The draft had been revised so as to increase inclusivity and a copy had been circulated to Members. She took it that the Governing Council wished to adopt that revised draft.

It was so decided.

The Executive Committee currently had before it no amendments to the IPU Statutes and Rules but it had been informed that the Gender Partnership Group intended to submit amendments for possible adoption at the 141st Assembly in Belgrade, in accordance with the relevant procedure. The Committee had indicated its agreement with the proposals for amendments, which were aimed at imposing stricter penalties, including curtailment of voting rights, on parliaments that consistently sent single-sex delegations to IPU Assemblies.

As to the idea of establishing a high-level panel on parliamentary diplomacy, it had not been greatly favoured by the Executive Committee, which had instead recommended that existing resources, including the President and Secretary General, as well as various other IPU office holders, should be called upon to undertake parliamentary diplomacy missions on behalf of the IPU.

Concerning a proposal for the establishment of an advisory group on the economy, the Committee had preferred the alternative of reviewing the mandate and composition of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade. It had therefore requested the IPU Secretariat to elaborate on the original proposal to that end and present the outcome at the 141st Assembly in Belgrade.

The Secretary General had drawn the attention of the Executive Committee to future inter-parliamentary meetings requiring the approval of the governing bodies and had also informed it that the Rwandan Parliament had formally offered to host the 143rd Assembly, subject to approval of its request for financial assistance. The Kenyan Parliament had also offered to host the 144th Assembly and the Executive Committee had authorized commencement of the preliminary technical arrangements and visits in the event that a formal invitation was extended.

The Secretary General had also called the Committee's attention to the dates of the 142nd Assembly in April 2020. These dates would be just after the Easter holidays. It had not been possible to negotiate better dates as the *Centre International de Conférences* (CICG) would be undergoing renovations and the facilities would be restricted.

Lastly, the Executive Committee had been informed that the Preparatory Committee of the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament had decided to hold the Conference in Vienna during the week of 17 August 2020, at the invitation of the Austrian Parliament.

The Governing Council took note of the report of the President on the activities of the Executive Committee. It endorsed the related recommendations of the Executive Committee.

Item 6 of the agenda

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE IPU IN 2018

(a) Implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2017-2021 and cooperation with the United Nations system
(CL/204/6(a)-R.1)

The Secretary General, in providing with the aid of a slide presentation an overview of the implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2017-2021 on the basis of each of the eight objectives embodied therein, said that the report contained in document CL/204/6(a)-R.1 should be read in conjunction with the [Annual Report 2018/19](#) that had been circulated to Members. He drew attention to annex I to the document, containing a checklist of activities undertaken with the United Nations; annex III, containing a summarized logframe for 2018; and annex IV, covering the memorandum of understanding between the IPU, UNODC and UNOCT, which sent a strong political message concerning the desire of parliaments to increase their involvement in the important work of counter-terrorism already being actively pursued by the IPU.

The Governing Council took note of the annual report of the Secretary General.

Item 8 of the agenda

FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR 2018
(CL/204/8-R.1, R.2 and R.3)

Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland), Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance, reporting on the work of the Sub-Committee and the discussions of the Executive Committee relating to the financial management of the IPU, said that, at its recent meeting in Doha, the Sub-Committee had reviewed the IPU's financial results for 2018, as set out in the financial report and audited financial statements (CL/204/8-R.1), the report on the financial situation of the IPU at 31 January 2019 (CL/204/8-R.2) and the internal auditor's report (CL/204/8-R.3). Approximately one month earlier, the Sub-Committee had also participated together with the IPU's internal auditor in a telephone conference with the Swiss Federal Audit Office, which had briefed them on the outcome of its external audit and provided requested clarifications.

Concerning revenue, there had been an unrealized investment loss of 4.8 per cent but the amount had been offset by a rise in the value of the IPU's investments. Owing to the holding of two Assemblies in Geneva and two additional sessions of the Executive Committee, expenditure had grown to create an operational deficit of CHF 607,000, as compared with an operational surplus of CHF 767,000 in 2017. At the same time, the total amount of voluntary contributions earned and spent had risen to over CHF 3 million, representing an increase of 6 per cent since 2017.

The external audit had given an unqualified opinion concerning the IPU's financial statements, book-keeping methods and financial health. It had also noted the IPU's implementation of its previous recommendation relating to the accounting of voluntary contributions; the integrity of the IPU's internal control system to its financial management; and the IPU's compliance with the new International Public Sector Accounting Standard (IPSAS) 39, concerning employee benefits. Its conclusion was that the financial statements fairly reflected the financial situation of the IPU at 31 December 2018, together with its financial performance and cash flows, in accordance with IPSAS and the Financial Regulations of the IPU. It had furthermore confirmed that its report was complete, that all matters had been transparent and that there were no "hidden" problems, highlighting in addition the smooth functioning of the IPU Secretariat and the exemplary quality of the financial statements.

With regard to Members liable to suspension of their rights owing to arrears in their assessed contributions, the Executive Committee had decided that the Parliaments of Honduras, Mauritania and Papua New Guinea would forfeit those rights if they did not pay their dues by 1 October 2019. Given the relatively modest amounts in question, other Members might wish to consider assisting those Parliaments in the settlement of their dues.

The Executive Committee had also approved the administrative arrangements for the IPU Presidency, which set out the related travel budget and honorarium in a spirit of transparency and flexibility. It had furthermore favourably welcomed the request of the Parliament of Rwanda for financial assistance of up to CHF 100,000 if it were to host the 143rd Assembly, noting the precedents set for such assistance to other parliaments in developing countries, specifically Cuba and Burkina Faso. In that event, it recommended that an allocation be made for that purpose in the budget for 2020 to be submitted for approval at the next Assembly in October 2019.

Mr. V. Macedo (Portugal), *internal auditor*, presenting his report (CL/204/8-R.3), said that the internal audit process was critical to assessing the efficiency of the governance of the IPU. In that process, he had focused in particular on transparency, as exemplified by his observations concerning the hiring of interpreters on the basis of both price and quality for meetings held outside Geneva. The IPU was fully committed to the ambition of increasing its transparency and accountability to Members, to which end he had proposed the annual preparation of a report documenting measures taken to maintain and strengthen transparency within the IPU. He believed it to be a constructive proposal that would add value to and enhance understanding of the financial statements.

Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland), *Chair of the Sub-Committee on Finance*, said that the Sub-Committee operated in accordance with the international standards relating to transparency and was open to that proposal, which could include the establishment of an income and expenditure register. It also agreed with the spirit of the observation concerning interpreters, whom the IPU always recruited, including locally where possible for meetings outside Geneva, on the basis of language combinations and the criteria of quality and cost.

Mr. P. Dallier (France), recalling the expectation that there would be no increase in assessed contributions for 2019/20, said that the IPU might wish to focus on low-risk investments in order to protect its capital. It should also find a way of reducing what he considered to be the excessive cost of producing the commemorative book proposed in connection with the 130th anniversary of the IPU.

The Secretary General said that the IPU had taken on board the observations of the internal auditor and would spare no effort in seeking to enhance its accountability and the efficiency and transparency of its financial management. As to interpretation services, the IPU would continue to procure such services in keeping with international standards relating to efficiency and quality. Concerning investments, the IPU had always tended towards lower-risk options in order to protect its capital, averaging reasonable returns in spite of the current low interest rate climate. It would furthermore explore the possibility of instituting a transparency report and establishing a register of interests for senior IPU staff and the IPU leadership.

With regard to the IPU's financial situation, the Executive Committee had concluded from its analysis that the IPU was in good health. Nonetheless, the amount of arrears in contributions should not be allowed to increase each year. The geopolitical groups were therefore encouraged to work with their members to secure the payment of any outstanding arrears. As to the assessed contributions for 2019/20, it was indeed the understanding that there would be no increase other than a small amount agreed for covering the cost of organizing the Fifth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, which would be accounted for in preparing the budget for 2020.

Concerning voluntary funding, the documents before the Council showed that extrabudgetary resources currently constituted some 25 per cent of the budget and emanated from identified sources in conformity with the relevant conditions. He thanked the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency for its ongoing support, which was set to rise to CHF 4.8 million, and called on the Canadian delegation to assist in the IPU's negotiations with the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development concerning the renewal of its funding for gender-equality-related activities. Similar negotiations with Irish Aid were likewise in progress.

Fundraising plans and strategies were being developed in addition with a view to expanding the work under way in the context of the cooperation agreement signed in 2018 with the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health hosted by the World Health Organization. The IPU much appreciated the support received from China, which had provided US\$ 1.5 million for capacity-building and US\$ 1 million for counter-terrorism activities, and from the European Union for Djibouti, also for

capacity-building, in an amount totalling 260,000 euros. IPU projects were being implemented in Myanmar, Tunisia, Turkey and Vanuatu with funding from the United Nations system, which had also recently confirmed its allocation of US\$ 2.2 million in support of the IPU/UN joint programme for counter-terrorism and violent extremism. For their part, parliaments were encouraged to follow the example of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, which continued to provide in-kind support through its secondment of staff to the IPU. Lastly, the Qatar Foundation had been approached to support activities for the promotion of maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health, as had the Qatari authorities for assistance towards the implementation of activities under the IPU Strategy for 2017-2021. The Executive Committee had recommended that such fundraising efforts should continue, subject to the approval of the Governing Council.

As also recommended by the Executive Committee and likewise subject to the approval of the Governing Council, the IPU was poised to explore with the Swiss authorities the possibility of extending its premises in Geneva so as to accommodate the expanding number of staff. Recalling that those authorities had generously provided financial and material assistance for building the current premises, he expressed the hope that similar extrabudgetary funding for the design and implementation of any such project could be obtained from other potential sources, among them China and Qatar.

The President said that, in the light of the positive assessments of the IPU's financial situation, she took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the Secretary General's financial management of the IPU for 2018.

It was so decided.

The President said she also took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the recommendation of the Executive Committee that the IPU should draw from its working capital fund to cover to the tune of between CHF 80,000 and CHF 100,000 the cost of staff assigned to the 143rd Assembly were it to be hosted by the Rwandan Parliament.

It was so decided.

The President said she further took it that the Governing Council wished to approve the proposed continuation of the IPU's fundraising efforts and the Secretary General's request to pursue preliminary consultations with a view to possible extension of the IPU headquarters building in Geneva through funding from extrabudgetary sources, including partly from Qatar and China.

It was so decided.

Mr. V. Macedo (Portugal), internal auditor, supported by **Mr. D. Pacheco (Portugal)**, requested clarification as to whether his report and the recommendations contained therein had been approved.

The Secretary General reiterated his earlier welcome of those recommendations and said that he would do his utmost to implement them.

The President said she took it that the Governing Council wished to approve those recommendations for implementation by the Secretary General.

It was so decided.

The President expressed the hope that the internal auditor would lend his assistance to the IPU in developing a road map for the implementation of his recommendations, including with respect to the important issue of strengthening transparency.

Item 9 of the agenda

ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES

(b) Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

(CL/204/9(b)-R.1, R.2 and P.1)

Ms. A. Jerkov (Serbia), President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, reporting on the activities of the Committee at its recent session in Doha and presenting the cases and related draft decisions set out in document CL/204/9(b)-R.2, said that the Committee had had on its

agenda the cases of 187 parliamentarians in 12 countries. Of those parliamentarians, 35 per cent were from the Americas, 32 per cent from Europe, 24 per cent from Africa and 9 per cent from Asia. Some 25 per cent of the cases concerned women parliamentarians and 84 per cent concerned opposition members.

The decisions to be presented to the Council concerned 145 parliamentarians in 8 countries. Of those 145 parliamentarians facing violations around the world, 64 were from Venezuela and 61 from Turkey. It was deeply regrettable that the number of colleagues facing repression due to their parliamentary work was constantly on the rise.

AFRICA

Côte d'Ivoire

The Committee was presenting the new cases of two parliamentarians from Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Jacques Ehouo and Mr. Alain Lobognon. Mr. Ehouo had been charged by the Prosecutor even though the Bureau of the National Assembly had requested the suspension of proceedings against him. With regard to Mr. Lobognon, he had been sentenced in the court of first instance to a one-year prison term, and subsequently on appeal to a six-month suspended prison sentence, for having tweeted his concern about Mr. Ehouo's situation.

The Committee had held a constructive hearing with the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire and noted with satisfaction that the Bureau of the Ivorian National Assembly had taken the necessary steps to protect the fundamental rights of Mr. Ehouo and Mr. Lobognon. The Committee trusted that the country's parliamentary authorities would maintain their commitment with respect to those two cases and keep the Committee informed in a timely manner.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the draft decision relating to the cases of Mr. Alain Lobognon and Mr. Jacques Ehouo.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

With regard to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Committee was presenting decisions on the situations of Mr. Diomi Ndongala and Mr. Franck Diongo, both of whom had now finally been released, and Mr. Pierre-Jacques Chalupa. The country's parliamentary authorities had been invited to hold a hearing with the Committee but had expressed the wish that "such a hearing take place at the next session of the IPU, given that the Assembly delegation will then be adequately equipped by the permanent Bureau, which will have received the complete file of our dealings with the Committee".

A video message from Mr. Ndongala was screened in which he expressed his gratitude for the tireless efforts of the IPU to secure his release from unjust imprisonment.

The Committee called on the Congolese authorities to grant Mr. Ndongala an effective and definitive release and to end the restrictive conditions attached to his release, as it considered that they undermined his civil and political rights.

As to Mr. Diongo, he had received a presidential pardon and been released. The Committee, however, deplored the fact that no action had been taken to investigate the acts of torture inflicted on him at the time of his arrest. It therefore called on the authorities to ensure that those acts did not go unpunished.

With regard to former parliamentarian Mr. Chalupa, he had died from the cancer diagnosed during his detention. The Committee's conclusion was that Mr. Chalupa had been unlawfully deprived of his nationality and that the authorities were responsible for violation of his fundamental rights. In view of his death and as it was now impossible to reach a satisfactory solution, the Committee was suggesting that the case should be closed.

The Governing Council adopted unanimously the three draft decisions relating to, respectively, the cases of Mr. Pierre-Jacques Chalupa, Mr. Eugène Diomi Ndongala and Mr. Franck Diongo.

Niger

The Committee had held a hearing with the delegation of Niger, led by the Speaker of the National Assembly, in order to discuss the cases of Mr. Amadou Hama and Mr. Seydou Bakari. Following the hearing, the Committee had decided not to adopt a decision in either of the cases. The concerns reflected in the previous decisions of the Governing Council nonetheless remained.

While expressing his reservations about both cases, the Speaker of the National Assembly had said that he was willing to cooperate with the Committee in order to resolve both cases. The Committee continued to hope that a delegation of its members would be authorized to go to Niger in order to hold discussions with all parties involved. It had made a similar request to the Minister of Justice of Niger but had as yet had no response.

THE AMERICAS

Ecuador

The Committee was presenting the case of former Ecuadorian parliamentarian, Mr. José Cléver Jiménez, who had been prosecuted for having strongly criticized the then President Correa's handling of a mutiny by groups of police officers in September 2010. Mr. Cléver had been found guilty and sentenced to a prison term. He had evaded his sentence, which ultimately had never been executed and could no longer be implemented under Ecuadorian law. In more recent years, he had been subjected to new criminal proceedings for having denounced an alleged conflict of interest between the Ecuadorian Government and certain law firms. In 2018, however, the charges against him had been set aside, meaning that he was no longer facing any criminal action.

The Committee therefore proposed that his case should be closed, but that the Council should clearly confirm the Committee's conclusion that the legal proceedings to which Mr. Cléver had been subjected ran counter to his right to freedom of expression.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. José Cléver Jiménez.

Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

It was sad to have to report again on the dire situation of an ever-increasing number of members of the Venezuelan National Assembly against the backdrop of their country's worsening political situation. Clearly, the Committee's role was not to take sides in the larger political conflict, one that had pitted countries, large and small, and in and outside the region, against each other and with opposing views on who was in charge of the country. Its mandate was to look at how the human rights of individual members of the National Assembly were respected and how the situation of the National Assembly as a whole was affecting those rights.

In that regard, the draft decision before the Council made for grim reading. The harassment of opposition members, in a variety of ways, continued unabated. Two members of the National Assembly had been prevented from taking their plane in Caracas to Doha after being told that their passports had been annulled, evidently on spurious grounds. Unfortunately, that was not an isolated incident but part of a wide and systematic pattern of intimidation of the opposition. The Committee asked the authorities once more to stop that harassment and allow the members of the National Assembly to do their work without fear of reprisals. It also again urged the authorities to allow the National Assembly to discharge its functions fully, including by giving it the required resources.

The Committee continued to believe that an IPU mission to the country was crucial to addressing its human rights concerns and to help find a solution to the ongoing political crisis. It deeply regretted that it had yet to receive assurances in writing from the Venezuelan Government that such a mission could take place. Unfortunately, the Committee's meeting in Doha with members of the National Assembly of the Bloc of the Motherland had offered no further indication that the Committee would soon receive such assurances. The Committee therefore called again on the Government to confirm to it, in clear terms, that the mission could finally go ahead.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft decision relating to the cases of 64 Venezuelan parliamentarians.

ASIA

Cambodia

No new decision would be presented in relation to Cambodia; the Committee had expressed its concerns on a number of occasions in the past. The IPU Secretary General had had a very fruitful meeting with the Cambodian delegation in Doha, which had included a discussion on the human rights cases. The Chair invited him to elaborate on the outcome of that meeting.

The Secretary General, recalling that he had reported on the Cambodian situation at the first sitting of the Council, said that his discussions with the delegation had been very productive. Premised on the understanding that dialogue was the means to arrive at satisfactory solutions to the human rights cases before the Committee on the basis of known facts, those discussions had been conducted in a welcome spirit of openness. With the proviso that there must be no interference in judicial processes, the delegation had given assurances that the members of the proposed fact-finding mission to Cambodia would have full access to individuals whom they wished to meet, including opposition leaders, in order to gain a balanced picture of the situation on the ground. The IPU looked forward to receiving written confirmation of the mission so that it could take place at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. S. Yang (Cambodia) said that an IPU mission to his country was always welcome and that his Parliament would do the utmost within its capacity to facilitate such a mission with a view to achieving optimum results.

Maldives

Ms. A. Jerkov (Serbia), *President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians*, continuing her report, said that the Committee had previously always presented a long list of some 50 Maldivian parliamentarians whose human rights were either at risk or had been violated. In light of the recent positive developments in many of those cases, the Committee had concluded in February 2019 that they had been satisfactorily resolved. As a result, only seven cases remained on the Committee's books by the time of its meeting in Doha. The Maldivian parliamentary authorities had now informed the Committee that those seven parliamentarians, with the exception of one, namely Mr. Abdulla Riyaz, were no longer subject to legal proceedings. It therefore proposed to close their cases and express the hope that the proceedings against Mr. Riyaz would be completed swiftly.

At the same time, the Committee wished to encourage the Government and the new Maldivian Parliament to address some of the underlying factors that had led over the years to a lack of respect for the human rights of parliamentarians and touched on the very foundations of Maldivian democracy. It believed that it was important for the IPU to support any efforts by the Maldivian authorities to address those factors and to offer its expertise to them should they so wish.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft decision relating to the cases of seven Maldivian parliamentarians.

Mongolia

In Mongolia, the Committee had been pleased to hear from the Mongolian delegation – and from the Deputy Speaker himself – about significant new developments in relation to the case. It had been informed that the Mongolian Parliament and Minister of Justice had publicly acknowledged that significant deficiencies had occurred in the case and that, only a few days earlier, a new working group had been set up by the Speaker to review the situation following the disclosure of a video allegedly showing the torture of the three persons convicted of the assassination of Mr. Zorig Sanjasuuren in 2016. The video in fact confirmed the Committee's own findings following its mission to Mongolia in 2017.

The Committee hoped that those developments would soon lead to progress in the case, including the release of the three persons who had been falsely convicted. It also hoped that the real perpetrators, organizers and instigators of the assassination of Mr. Zorig would finally be identified and tried without further delay pursuant to fair, impartial and transparent judicial proceedings.

The Committee intended to send a trial observer to the retrial, if and when it took place. It also intended to conduct a follow-up mission to Mongolia as soon as possible once it received the 2016 court decisions and written assurances that the delegation would be able to meet the three convicted persons.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft decision relating to the case of Mr. Zorig Sanjasuuren.

Philippines

The first of the three different cases in the Philippines concerned Senator de Lima, who had been a staunch human rights defender and critic of President Duterte's handling of the war on drugs. She had been detained for two years on accusations of complicity in drug-trafficking. The Committee

continued to believe that her arrest and prosecution were meant to silence her. It therefore called again for her release and for proceedings against her to be dropped. Until that happened, it would send an IPU observer to Senator de Lima's trial.

The second case concerned Senator Trillanes, who had been amnestied in 2011. In 2018, however, President Duterte had suddenly concluded that Senator Trillanes had never fulfilled the conditions for amnesty at the time and should therefore be prosecuted on the old charges. One court had now concluded with regard to the first of the two old charges that Senator Trillanes had fulfilled the conditions for amnesty at the time, whereas another court had decided that criminal proceedings should go ahead against him on the other charge. Those matters were now in the hands of the Court of Appeal and the Committee would follow its deliberations very closely.

As to the third case in the Philippines, the note was more positive. The Committee had been examining the case of the Batasan Four for a number of years, which had consisted of a variety of legal proceedings against four then opposition parliamentarians. Recently, the proceedings against three of them had been dropped, which was why the Committee was proposing to close their cases. It nevertheless hoped that the legal proceedings against Mr. Ocampo would be completed swiftly.

The Governing Council unanimously adopted the draft decisions relating to the cases of six Filipino parliamentarians.

EUROPE

Turkey

In Turkey, the Committee continued to believe that an IPU mission would help it to make progress on the cases. It hoped that the mission could take place soon and that it would include a meeting with some of the former parliamentarians in prison.

The Committee remained very concerned about the cases and saw that the parties continued to hold opposite views about the allegations and the underlying issues of concern and their causes, particularly with regard to the situation in south-eastern Turkey. A sticking point was that the situation was viewed by one side as a conflict bred by unjust, discriminatory and violent State policies against the Turkish population of Kurdish origin and its representatives, and by the other side as a serious terrorism issue. The Committee was convinced that the resumption of a constructive political dialogue between the Turkish Government and the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) – and also between the majority coalition and all opposition parties – was crucial to making progress in the cases and that the IPU should act in support of such dialogue.

The Committee was pleased that the Turkish delegation had started to provide it with detailed information on the judicial proceedings. Thanks to that information, it could suggest closing the cases of four individuals who had been acquitted by the courts. It would continue to review and, possibly, reconsider existing concerns in other cases if new information that became available required it to do so.

The Committee was submitting to the Council the report of the IPU observer of the trials of Ms. Figen Yüksekdağ and Mr. Selahattin Demirtaş (CL/204/9(b)-R.1) and was deeply concerned about the report's findings. The Turkish delegation had not yet provided its written observations on the report and was intending to do so at a later date. The Committee wished to recall that the report had been shared with both parties on 6 March 2019 and that they had been asked to submit their observations ahead of the IPU Assembly. The complainant had submitted observations in writing and found that the report was "objective and captures well the arbitrary decisions and political motivations that shape the legal proceedings". The Turkish delegation had informed the Committee orally a few days previously that it rejected significant parts of the trial observation report on the grounds that the report included partial value judgements and false factual information. The Committee regretted that the delegation had declined to provide it in Doha with a short written summary of its main observations, which could have been included at the present stage, pending more detailed observations. It had therefore included the views the Turkish delegation expressed orally, together with the observations of the complainant, in the report before the Council. By providing that detailed explanation, the Committee wished to reassure both the Council and the Turkish delegation that due consideration had been given to the delegation's wish to delay the presentation of the trial observation report. The Committee considered, however, that the Turkish authorities had been given sufficient opportunity to share their views at the present stage. It would of course review their detailed observations when it received them and keep the Council informed.

The Council would now see the testimony of Mr. Ertuğrul Kürkcü, a former HDP parliamentarian whose case was before the Committee. Mr. Kürkcü, who was 72 years old, had been granted political asylum abroad. He had little hope of returning to Turkey. The testimony was not the position of the Committee. It was Mr. Kürkcü's testimony and his own opinion about what had happened. The Committee was showing the video as part of its long-standing practice of giving a voice, whenever possible, to the victims in the cases before it.

The video testimony of Mr. Kürkcü was screened in which he cited his own experience in condemnation of the Turkish judicial authorities for their arbitrary and biased treatment of Turkish parliamentarians stripped of their immunity from prosecution.

Ms. R. Cavakçı Kan (Turkey), noting that her delegation had been doing its utmost to respond to the Committee's information requests, said it was regrettable that the Council had not been shown the video testimony of her colleague whose son had been killed by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) or of others who had been threatened by the PKK and the HDP.

Concerning the complaint made against the Turkish authorities, the Turkish delegation had received no response to its request for detailed information until March 2019, to which it had prepared a detailed response that it would be submitting in due course. Nor had it received any information about the complaints of HDP colleagues named in the report setting out the Committee's draft decisions, which it had seen for the first time only shortly before the present meeting. Her delegation rejected that report and also the report on the two trial observations, together with the annex thereto, considering that it presented personal observations as facts and appeared to prejudge the guilt of the Turkish authorities. Her delegation nonetheless hoped that its faith in the objectivity of the Committee would be restored following the IPU mission to Turkey, which would host the mission to the best of its abilities and in a spirit of openness. It expected, however, to be given fair treatment and the equal opportunity to present its side of the case.

A delegate from Turkey said that the facts on the ground would be best determined through an IPU fact-finding mission. Turkish parliamentarians should be working to address domestic issues relating to security and terrorism instead of being imprisoned for political motives.

Ms. R. Cavakçı Kan (Turkey) said that parliamentarians had a duty to denounce PKK terrorism and not to express sympathy for the loss of suicide bombers who killed innocent civilians, including children.

Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland), commending the Committee on the thoroughness of its work, said that she fully endorsed the two reports relating to the cases of Turkish parliamentarians and cited the figures for those currently imprisoned, often in violation of the Turkish Constitution. As a former member of the Committee, she had been part of its previous mission to Turkey in 2014, which had conducted visits to prisons. Recalling that jailed Kurdish leader Mr. Öcalan had declared a truce with the Turkish Government during that time, she called for his release from isolation in the interest of progress in the Turkish-Kurdish peace negotiations. Her hope was that the IPU mission would take place imminently and that it, too, would be granted access to the country's prisons.

Mr. S. Soendergaard (Denmark), expressing that same hope, said that trial observers from the Danish Parliament had unfortunately been denied entry to public court hearings in Turkey, which was not only problematic but also contrary to Turkish law. He called on his Turkish colleagues to obtain assurances that IPU and other trial observers would not be denied such entry in future.

Ms. R. Cavakçı Kan (Turkey) said it was disappointing and beyond belief that the IPU should be used as a platform for the expression of concerns about the rights of leaders of internationally-recognized terrorist organizations. PKK leader Öcalan was primarily responsible for the death of many thousands of innocent civilians in Turkey. There was no Kurdish issue in Turkey, where ethnic identity was not a consideration. Her delegation would now take its leave of the meeting and consider its stand while nonetheless preserving the hope that its discussions with the IPU were set to continue.

Ms. A. Jerkov (Serbia), *President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians*, regretting the turn taken by the discussion, said that the Committee was deeply concerned about all cases of human rights violations concerning which it received complaints, whether with respect to false charges, isolation or the denial of rights. She thanked the Danish delegation for the information it had contributed, which was reflected in paragraph 8 of the draft decision under consideration.

With regard to comments made by Ms. Kan, the Committee scrupulously considered all information – oral, written or filmed – provided to it by all parties, whether victims, complainants or national authorities. The intention behind the earlier screening of the two video messages had been to ensure that victims and complainants were given a voice. Concerning the exchange of information, the Secretary General had responded in under two days, on 6 March 2019, to the Turkish request received on 4 March 2019. Complainants had taken the opportunity to submit comments on the report, whereas the Turkish authorities had not.

The Governing Council adopted by consensus the draft decision relating to the cases of 61 Turkish parliamentarians.

The President said that significant progress had been made towards obtaining the information requested from the Turkish authorities and finalizing an IPU mission to Turkey with a view to hearing all perspectives and thereby enabling the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians to reach an informed decision concerning the Turkish cases before it. She herself would participate in the mission, as already mentioned, and looked forward to reporting on its findings at the next Assembly in Serbia.

Ms. A. Jerkov (Serbia), *President of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians*, concluding her report, said that when parliamentarians were threatened, the active solidarity of colleagues not only had a very positive impact on individual cases but also consolidated the institution of parliament itself. She therefore encouraged Members to keep parliamentary solidarity in mind and to use their powers as members of parliament to help their fellow colleagues in difficult situations.

The President, on another note, said the Executive Committee had recommended at its previous day's meeting that two presidential statements should be issued: one on the Golan Heights and the other on parliamentary diplomacy. The latter statement had been developed with a view to emphasizing that parliamentarians, as representatives of the people, should not be subjected to sanctions, which were a major impediment to dialogue and peace. After reading out the two statements, she said she took it that the Council wished to approve both for posting on the IPU website.

It was so decided.

The President, drawing attention to document CL/204/9(b)-P.1 and the annex thereto, which contained details of the candidature submitted by Mr. J. Kim (Republic of Korea) to serve in an individual capacity as a member of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, said she took it that the Council wished to elect Mr. Kim to that position.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.

Third sitting

Wednesday, 10 April

The sitting was called to order at 2.45 p.m., with Ms. G. Cuevas (Mexico), President of the IPU, in the Chair.

Item 9 of the agenda (continued)

ACTIVITIES OF COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES

(a) Forum of Women Parliamentarians (CL/204/9(a)-R.1)

Ms. R.B.M. Al-Mansoori (Qatar), *President of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians*, presenting the report contained in document CL/204/9(a)-R.1, said that the Forum had held a panel discussion on equality at work, during which participants had underscored the importance of ensuring women's representation in all sectors of the economy. Emphasis had been placed on the need to strengthen education for girls, especially in science, technology, finance and trade, and on the importance of propagating a culture of parity and equality. Women must be involved in political and economic decision-making, and must be better equipped to take leadership roles. To that end, men must take equal responsibility for domestic matters and the upbringing of children. The panel had drawn attention to the forthcoming adoption, by the International Labour Organization (ILO), of the first international text/tool on violence and harassment in the workplace, which was due to take place at the 108th session of the International Labour Conference in June 2019.

The Forum had discussed the draft resolutions for consideration by the standing committees on peace and international security, and sustainable development, finance and trade; both standing committees had accepted the Forum's proposed amendments. The Forum had been briefed on women's political participation; there had been a one per cent increase in the number of women in parliament over the past year. Greater efforts were therefore needed to break the glass ceiling. Lastly, the Forum had heard about the IPU's efforts to eliminate gender-based discrimination and violence, and had held elections to its Bureau.

The President said that the Governing Council was required to elect a member of the Bureau of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians to represent the African Group. The candidature of Ms. K. Bukar Abba Ibrahim (Nigeria) had been received. The Forum had elected Ms. A. Al-Basti (United Arab Emirates) to serve as its first Vice-President and Ms. A. Tolley (New Zealand) to serve as its second Vice-President.

The Governing Council took note of the report and approved the candidatures for membership of the Bureau of the Forum.

(c) Committee on Middle East Questions (CL/204/9(c)-R.1 and P.1 to P.3)

Ms. S. Atallahjan (Canada), *President of the Committee on Middle East Questions*, delivered the report on the work of the Committee, as contained in document CL/204/9(c)-R.1, and said that the Committee had examined the situation in the Middle East region, with a particular focus on Israel, Libya, Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. The Committee had committed to undertake a mission to Israel and Palestine to assess the situation following the dissolution of the Knesset and the Palestinian Legislative Council, and to monitor forthcoming elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council. The Committee had emphasized the importance of complying with international resolutions, in particular on the two-State solution.

The Committee had stressed the need to allocate more time to discuss the situation in Yemen. It had been briefed by the Head of the Libyan delegation to the Assembly, and had also heard presentations from students from schools run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, underscoring the importance of guaranteeing education for Palestinian students as a means of fostering mutual respect and lasting peace. A presentation had also been delivered by Mr. M. Larive (France), who had highlighted a proposal to establish a permanent scientific structure within the IPU, with a view to strengthening links between the parliamentary and scientific communities.

The President said that the Governing Council was required to elect two female members of the Committee on Middle East Questions. Candidatures had been received from Ms. M. Mokitimi (Lesotho) and Ms. A.P. Boateng (Ghana), referred to in the documents CL/204/9(c)-P.1 and P.3 respectively.

The Governing Council took note of the report and approved the candidatures for membership of the Committee.

(d) Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law
(CL/204/9(d)-R.1, P.1 and P.2)

Ms. A. Vadai (Hungary), *President of the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law*, presented the report on the Committee's work, as contained in document CL/204/9(d)-R.1, and underscored that the Committee had been suffering from low attendance and lack of a quorum. She therefore called on all Committee members to uphold their responsibilities. A dialogue had been held with the delegation of the Parliament of Myanmar to enhance the Committee's understanding of the complex situation of the Rohingya people. The Committee had encouraged the Parliament of Myanmar to play its role in monitoring government activities and in reaching out to the population to lay the foundations for justice and reconciliation. The Committee was keen to continue that dialogue and wished to send a mission to Myanmar. The Committee had also held an exchange with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the issue of statelessness; without nationality, people were invisible and deprived of their basic rights, including to education, health care and work. There were over 10 million stateless persons around the world. Parliaments must push their governments to take the necessary steps to end that situation. Productive discussions had also been held with representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The application of international humanitarian law made a meaningful difference to the lives of people around the world on a daily basis. Respect for the Geneva Conventions was the core of humanity. A special session on the Geneva Conventions would be held at the 141st IPU Assembly to mark the 70th anniversary of their adoption.

The President said that the Governing Council was required to elect one female Committee member from the Asia-Pacific Group and one male Committee member from the Eurasia Group. Candidatures had been received from Mr. H. Hovhannisyan (Armenia) and Ms. F. Hosseini (Islamic Republic of Iran), referred to in the documents CL/204/9(d)-P.1 and P.2 respectively.

The Governing Council took note of the report and approved the candidatures for membership of the Committee.

(e) Gender Partnership Group
(CL/204/9(e)-R.1)

Mr. K. Lusaka (Kenya), *Rapporteur for the Gender Partnership Group*, said that the Gender Partnership Group had met twice to assess participation in the 140th Assembly and had found women's participation to be at its lowest since 2015, with 16 male-only delegations present. The Group was preparing proposed amendments to the Statutes of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Rules of the Governing Council, with a view to strengthening sanctions against single-sex delegations, and further reducing their voting rights. The Group was also considering preparing a dedicated framework against sexism and sexual harassment at IPU Assemblies and other organized meetings. A dialogue had been held with the delegation of Oman; the Group had been encouraged by the delegation's commitment to enhancing women's participation in the Parliament of Oman.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

(f) Advisory Group on Health
(CL/204/9(f)-R.1)

Mr. A. Gryffroy (Belgium), *Rapporteur for the Advisory Group on Health*, read the report contained in document CL/204/9(f)-R.1, which outlined the work of the Advisory Group. The Group had heard a report from the IPU Secretariat about health-related activities, and members had shared experiences of parliamentary measures taken to promote health at the national level. They had agreed to write a letter to the Secretary General of the IPU and the Director-General of the World Health

Organization (WHO), requesting closer collaboration in support of parliaments implementing the forthcoming IPU resolution on universal health coverage. The Group had provided guidance on accessibility of data and information and incentivizing parliamentary action at the national level, for inclusion in the forthcoming IPU handbook for parliamentarians on women's, children's and adolescents' health. Discussions had been held on the effects of criminal law on women's, children's and adolescents' health, highlighting the role of parliamentarians in amending discriminatory law. Lastly, the Group had suggested that options might be explored for a field visit during the 141st IPU Assembly in Belgrade, Serbia, and for the organization of a side event at that Assembly on a topic related to universal health coverage.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

(g) Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU
(CL/204/9(g)-R.1)

Ms. M. Osoru (Uganda), President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU, presented the report on the work of the Forum, as contained in document CL/204/9(g)-R.1, and said that young people remained worryingly underrepresented, not only in delegations to IPU meetings but also in national parliaments; only 2.2 per cent of the world's parliamentarians were below 30 years of age. Such low representation was due in particular to age-related requirements for running for office. Measures must be taken, such as the application of quotas and targets, as adopted by the Forum at its previous meeting in October 2018, to ensure that the representation of young people in parliament was proportionate to their representation in society.

The Forum had discussed the main theme of the Assembly's general debate, and had expressed concern regarding the large number of young people prevented from pursuing education as a result of conflict and natural disaster. A special segment on youth engagement in parliament had been held; parliaments that had not yet done so had been encouraged to set up a youth caucus. The Forum had also discussed potential use of social media for encouraging young people to engage in politics. It had taken note of an offer from Paraguay to host the next Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians. The Forum had elected the following members of its Board: Ms. M. Tiendr  b  go (Burkina Faso) and Mr. F. Fouti (Gabon) for the African Group; Ms. R. Al Manthari (Oman) and Mr. O. Altabtabaee (Kuwait) for the Arab Group; Mr. S. Durrani (Pakistan) for the Asia-Pacific Group; Ms. E. Afanasieva (Russian Federation) and Mr. B. Maken (Kazakhstan) for the Eurasia Group; Ms. C. Lopez Castro (Mexico) and Mr. M. Bouva (Suriname) for the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean; and Ms. M. Grande (Italy) and Mr. U. Lechte (Germany) for the Twelve Plus Group. The Board had agreed to appoint Mr. M. Bouva (Suriname) as its President.

The Governing Council took note of the report and approved the election of the members and President of the Board.

(h) High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism (HLAG)
(CL/204/9(h)-P.1)

The President said that according to the Terms of Reference of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism, endorsed by the Governing Council at its 203rd session, the Group would have 21 members of national parliaments. Its composition would be gender balanced, in accordance with the IPU Statutes. The President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and the President of the Board of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians would be ex officio members. The following candidatures had been received: Ms. M.N. Mensah-Williams (Namibia), Mr. O. Tinni (Niger), Mr. A. Tuyaga (Burundi) and Ms. J. Oduol (Kenya) for the African Group; Ms. A.A. Al Qubaisi (United Arab Emirates) and Mr. A. Abdel Aal Sayed Ahmed (Egypt) for the Arab Group; Ms. S. Jannat Marri (Pakistan), Mr. A. Husin (Malaysia), Mr. K. Jalali (Islamic Republic of Iran) and Mr. G. Chen (China) for the Asia-Pacific Group; Ms. I. Passada (Uruguay), Mr. V.V. Su  rez Diaz (Dominican Republic) and Mr. J.F. Merino (El Salvador) for the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean; and Mr. R. Lopatka (Austria), Mr. R. del Picchia (France), Mr. G. Migliore (Italy), and Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland) for the Twelve Plus Group. Two vacancies remained to be filled for the Eurasia Group, and one further vacancy remained to be filled for the Twelve Plus Group.

The Governing Council approved the candidatures for membership of the High-Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism.

(i) Group of facilitators for Cyprus
(CL/204/9(i)-P.1)

The President said that the Governing Council was called on to elect one facilitator for Cyprus. A candidature had been received from Ms. L. Quartapelle (Italy). She took it that the Governing Council wished to elect Ms. Quartapelle.

It was so decided.

Item 11 of the agenda

FUTURE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MEETINGS
(CL/204/11-P.1)

(a) Statutory meetings

The Secretary General drew attention to the list of future inter-parliamentary meetings, contained in document CL/204/11-P.1, according to which the 141st IPU Assembly and related meetings would be held from 13 to 17 October 2019 in Belgrade, Serbia, and the 142nd IPU Assembly would be held from 15 to 19 April 2020 in Geneva, Switzerland. Invitations had been received from the Parliaments of Rwanda and Kenya to host the 143rd and 144th Assemblies respectively.

The Governing Council approved the list of future statutory meetings.

(b) Specialized and other meetings

The Secretary General recalled that the Council had already approved the majority of future specialized meetings on the list before it. Those pending approval would be funded from external sources and thus would not have any financial implications for the Organization.

Mr. S. Suzuki (Japan), drawing attention to the Speakers' Summit to be held alongside the G20 Summit in Osaka, Japan, said that his Parliament had not received a request to co-host the Speakers' meeting. A formal request from the IPU would be required for the Japanese Parliament to consider hosting such an event.

The President, recalling the outcome of the previous P20 Speakers' Summit in Buenos Aires, assured the Council of the IPU's commitment to holding a parliamentary meeting in the context of the G20 summit in 2019 and said that a formal letter would be sent to the Parliament of Japan, requesting its assistance in co-hosting the meeting. The venue and date would remain to be confirmed, pending a response from Japan.

The Governing Council approved the list of future specialized and other meetings.

Item 7 of the agenda

REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED MEETINGS

(a) Parliamentary workshop on the occasion of the World Investment Forum 2018
(CL/204/7(a)-R.1)

Ms. S.-M. Dinică (Romania) drew the Governing Council's attention to document CL/204/7(a)-R.1, containing the report on the workshop for parliamentarians held in the context of the 2018 World Investment Forum. The workshop, which had been jointly organized by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Office at Geneva, had focussed on how parliamentarians could ensure the availability of adequate resources to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and attain the SDGs at the national level. Three moderated panel discussions had been held: building leadership for the mobilization of public resources to attain the SDGs; emerging opportunities with respect to private sector engagement; and examples of good practices of evidence-informed budgeting for the SDGs.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

(c) Regional Seminar on climate change and disaster risk reduction for the Parliaments of the Caribbean
(CL/204/7(c)-R.1)

A short film was shown highlighting the main aspects of the regional seminar, which had been jointly organized by the Parliament of Suriname and the IPU. The discussions had focused on the challenges posed by climate change and the role of parliaments in mitigating them, in particular in the Caribbean region. A field visit had been conducted to look at efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change on the ground in Suriname. A panel discussion had been held, and the seminar had culminated in the adoption of the Paramaribo Declaration on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction, through which participants had pledged to take further action to address climate change, and to legislate to reduce the risk of disasters. The Speaker of the Parliament of Suriname had closed the seminar, saying that climate change must be stopped; the lives of those in the Caribbean depended on it.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

(b) Parliamentary Speakers' Summit at the G20
(CL/204/7(b)-R.1)

Mr. J.C. Romero (Argentina), presenting the report contained in document CL/204/7(b)-R.1, said that as representatives of the people, parliamentarians had a crucial contribution to make to G20 summits and their voices must be heard. Some 200 participants had attended the Parliamentary Speakers' Summit at the G20 in Buenos Aires. They had called for more concerted efforts to seek sustainable solutions to global problems, such as improving the management of migratory flows, promoting gender equality, fostering women's empowerment, reducing inequality, strengthening the multilateral trading system and promoting decent work. It was hoped that the Parliamentary Speakers' Summit would continue to support the G20 process, and that Japan, in its role as current (2019) President of the G20, together with the IPU, would co-host such a meeting in the context of the next G20 Summit.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

(d) Seminar on Achieving the SDGs for the IPU's Twelve Plus Geopolitical Group and East Asia Parliaments
(CL/204/7(d)-R.1)

Ms. H. Martins (Portugal), presenting the report contained in document CL/204/7(d)-R.1, said that the seminar had focused on how science, technology and innovation could advance the transformative impact of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The seminar had focused on the SDGs related to water, renewable energy, gender equality and climate change, emphasizing the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups. Participants shared their experiences and good practices, discussed the role of parliaments, and concluded that parliamentary institutions and decision-making processes must be examined to ensure they were fit for purpose. Participants had also been invited on two field visits, to a centre working on technological solutions for persons with disabilities, and to a desalination plant, both of which were demonstrating the advantages of innovation as an engine of development and prosperity.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

(e) Follow-up regional seminar on the contribution of parliament to combat child trafficking and labour on the occasion of the ECOWAS Parliamentary session
(CL/204/7(e)-R.1)

Ms. N.A. Owusu Afriyieh (Ghana) presented the report contained in document CL/204/7(e)-R.1 and said that the seminar had been jointly organized by the IPU and ILO, in line with the IPU Strategy 2017–2021 and its emphasis on promoting the rights of the child. According to ILO estimates, 72 million children in the world were being forced to work. Parliamentarians must be at the forefront of efforts to stop child labour. The seminar had focused on exchanges of good practice and had identified the main axes of interventions against the scourges that compromised children's futures. Legislation should be regularly updated, and brought into line with international standards, including

on the rights of the child. Parliamentarians also had a responsibility to ensure effective implementation of the law. Greater awareness-raising was needed to ensure popular support for measures to counter trafficking in children and child labour. Opportunities for education should be provided for all children, in particular those from disadvantaged and marginalized communities. Efforts should also be made to facilitate youth employment. West African parliaments had pledged to do their best to implement the recommendations of the meeting.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

(f) World e-Parliament Conference 2018
(CL/204/7(f)-R.1)

A short video was shown highlighting the results of the World e-Parliament Conference 2018, a biennial event focussing on how parliaments use technology to improve democratic processes. Around 70 per cent of parliaments were using social media, and there had been a significant rise in the use of instant messaging services to connect parliamentarians. Email remained the primary means of communication between constituents and their representatives. Artificial intelligence had been the subject of some discussion, as well as fake news and disinformation, which were particularly topical. Participants had been briefed on how to run hackathons, and had shared information on the use of technology in parliamentary activities, such as e-voting, social media and modern means of communicating with constituents, mobile applications for consulting documents and bills before parliament and for watching parliamentary television.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

(g) Annual session of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO
(CL/204/7(g)-R.1)

A video report was shown, giving highlights of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, during which discussions had focused on improving cooperation and linking the executive with the people through parliaments. Parliaments had a key role regarding oversight, and should therefore increase their cooperation with the WTO. Trade wars were affecting all countries; parliaments should consider how the policies they adopted could promote international cooperation. Parliamentarians had a responsibility to ensure accountability to bring about a more effective trading system that worked for everyone. Trade had changed over time; standards, regulatory cooperation and working conditions were increasingly important and parliamentarians had a role to play in monitoring their implementation.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

(h) Parliamentary Conference on Migration in the lead-up to the adoption of the Global Compact on Migration
(CL/204/7(h)-R.1)

Mr. A. Omari (Morocco) presented the report contained in document CL/204/7(h)-R.1 and said that the Parliamentary Conference had taken place prior to the conference to adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and had been organized by the Parliament of Morocco with the assistance of the IPU. The Conference had addressed the crucial role of the IPU in encouraging parliaments to legislate for migration management. It had afforded an opportunity to discuss the Global Compact, and to draw attention to the links between migration and security matters, while underscoring the importance of ensuring that those links were not exploited to undermine peace and security. The outcome declaration from the meeting would serve as a roadmap for future efforts to address the challenges related to migration and ensure that parliaments would uphold their responsibilities and proceed with the ratification of the Global Compact.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

(i) Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP24)
(CL/204/7(i)-R.1)

Mr. M. Sewerynski (Poland) presented the report of the parliamentary meeting held during COP24. Participants had discussed how to proceed with implementation of the Paris Agreement and how to create enabling environments for the transition to renewable energy sources. The Meeting had been briefed on effective economic instruments for national environmental law and policies.

Participants had shared experiences of their work on climate change at the national and regional levels. They had also welcomed the launch of a new toolkit to help set up the legal frameworks necessary for implementing the Paris Agreement. The meeting had culminated in the adoption of an outcome document containing guidelines on future actions on climate change for parliamentarians, in particular for lowering greenhouse gas emissions.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

(j) Fifth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians
(CL/204/7(j)-R.1)

Mr. S. Ismayilov (Azerbaijan) presented the report on the Fifth Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, contained in document CL/204/7(j)-R.1, and said that the Conference had discussed climate change and the need for urgent action. Before decisions were taken, consideration must be given to their potential impact for the coming generations. Participants had also noted that, with regard to education, the time for talking was also over. Account must be taken of the impacts of technological advancement; flexibility in the labour market must be promoted. Technology would not cause mass unemployment but rather mass redeployment. Efforts must be made to ensure that the rights and interests of future generations were given due consideration. The Conference had culminated in the adoption of an outcome document containing tangible recommendations that could be implemented immediately to make a concerted move from words to action.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

(k) First meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Fifth Conference of Speakers of Parliament (2020)
(CL/204/7(k)-R.1)

The President said that the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Fifth Conference of Speakers of Parliament had taken place at IPU Headquarters in Geneva and had been attended by representatives of several United Nations entities and by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva. The next meeting of the Preparatory Committee would be held from 18 to 19 November in Geneva. She encouraged all its members to participate actively in this meeting.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

(l) Annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations
(CL/204/7(l)-R.1)

Mr. A. Al Amri (Oman), presenting the report contained in document CL/204/7(l)-R.1, said that the parliamentary hearing had met to discuss emerging challenges to multilateralism. Panel discussions had been held on the role of parliamentarians in strengthening multilateralism, promoting global goals, engaging young people and increasing women's political participation. The hearing emphasized the need for multilateralism in a world dealing with increasingly complex cross-border challenges. The international system must become more responsive, credible and transparent, including by encouraging participation of women and young people, and by embracing new technologies and modern communications tools to engage with the public. Parliamentarians had a key role in that regard, as the bridge between ordinary citizens, local governments and global institutions. As a close partner to the United Nations, the IPU must continue to bring parliaments closer to the United Nations, bringing the voices of the people to all decisions and reforms and ensuring stronger accountability for their implementation.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

(m) IPU-UN Regional Conference for the Middle East and North Africa: *The role of parliamentarians in addressing the threat of foreign terrorist fighters and associated challenges*
(CL/204/7(m)-R.1)

Ms. M. Kiener Nellen (Switzerland), presenting the report contained in document CL/204/7(m)-R.1, said that the Regional Conference had focused on questions related to foreign terrorist fighters and the challenges related to their return, which was increasingly relevant in the light of the recent overthrowing of former Islamic State strongholds in several areas. None of the countries

represented at the Conference had legislation in place to address the issue of foreign terrorist fighters. The primary purpose of the Conference had been to discuss the ways in which parliaments could meet the challenges posed by terrorism and prevent violent extremism, particularly the threats posed by foreign terrorist fighters. The Conference had allowed for an exchange of good practice and had strengthened regional parliamentary cooperation. The Conference had culminated in conclusions that parliaments should take legislative and policy measures to tackle the root causes of the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism, and reaffirm the fundamental values of humanity.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

**(n) Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the 63rd session of the
UN Commission on the Status of Women
(CL/204/7(n)-R.1)**

A short video report was shown. The joint IPU-United Nations parliamentary meeting had been addressed by the President of the IPU, who had emphasized the importance of increasing women's participation in politics. Discussions had focussed on the need to bridge the gender gap; women's participation in parliament being likely to increase the uptake of social issues and children's issues on the parliamentary agenda. Women were peacemakers and peacekeepers, who believed that more resources should be directed to health and education and fewer directed to the military. The question of women's participation was a matter of justice. Consideration was given to how to raise male parliamentarians' awareness of gender issues and to make the parliamentary and political environment more inviting for those who currently did not or could not participate, and thus make parliaments more inclusive.

The Governing Council took note of the report.

Item 10 of the agenda
141st IPU ASSEMBLY

The President announced that, as previously agreed by the Governing Council, the 141st IPU Assembly and related meetings would be held in Belgrade, Serbia, from 13 to 17 October 2019.

It was so agreed.

Item 12 of the agenda
AMENDMENTS TO THE IPU STATUTES AND RULES

The President informed the Governing Council that there were no proposals to amend the IPU Statutes and Rules. The Gender Partnership Group would submit proposed amendments to the Governing Council at its next session, in October 2019.

Item 13 of the agenda
ELECTIONS TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
(cf. Article 21(k) of the Statutes and Rules 37, 38 and 39 of the Rules of the Governing Council)
(CL/204/13-P.1)

The President announced that the Governing Council was required to elect one member of the Executive Committee to replace Ms. A. Habibou (Niger). The candidature of Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal) had been received from the African Group as per the document CL/204/13-P.1.

The Governing Council approved the candidature of Ms. Mergane Kanouté to serve on the Executive Committee.

CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

Following the customary exchange of courtesies, **the President** declared the 204th session of the Governing Council closed.

The sitting rose at 4.40 p.m.