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ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT – SECOND SESSION

REPORT OF THE KENYA DELEGATION TO THE 131<sup>ST</sup>, 130<sup>TH</sup>  
AND 129<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLIES OF THE INTER – PARLIAMENTARY  
UNION (IPU) AND RELATED MEETINGS HELD IN GENEVA,  
SWITZERLAND FROM 12<sup>TH</sup> TO 16<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2014, 16<sup>TH</sup> TO  
20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2014 AND 7<sup>TH</sup> TO 9<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2013  
RESPECTIVELY

Clerk's Chambers  
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NOVEMBER, 2014

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## • FOREWORD

Hon. Members,

The Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU), the world organization of parliaments, is a global forum for parliamentary dialogue, cooperation and action. It advances democracy and assists parliaments and parliamentarians throughout the world to fulfill their mandates. The IPU facilitates political parliamentary debate, dialogue and cooperation. It promotes and defends democracy and the rule of law and assists parliaments in coping with a growing international agenda and in contributing a parliamentary dimension to the work of the United Nations and similar multilateral institutions.

The IPU Assembly is the principal statutory body that expresses the views of the Inter Parliamentary Union on political issues. It brings together parliamentarians to study international problems and make recommendations for parliamentary and governmental action. The Assembly meets twice a year and is held each time in a different country, providing participants with an opportunity to see various national realities.'

Hon. Members,

The 131st Assembly was held at the in Geneva, Switzerland, from 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2014. It was organized and hosted by the IPU and the Kenya delegation comprised the following Members:-

1. The Hon. Sen. David Ekwee Ethuro, EGH, EBS, M.P – Speaker of the Senate & Leader of the Delegation.
2. The Hon. Kabando Wa Kabando, M.P.;
3. The Hon. David Pkosing, M.P.;
4. The Hon. Sen. Catherine Mukiite Nabwala, M.P.;
5. The Hon. Sen. Stephen Sang, M.P.;
6. The Hon. Boniface Gatobu, M.P.;
7. The Hon. Shukran Hussein Gure, M.P.;
8. The Hon. Alice Wahome, M.P.;
9. The Hon. Wafula Wamunyinyi, M.P.; and
10. The Hon. Leonard Sang, M.P.

The 131st Assembly of the IPU met under the theme, “*Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women*” which sought to provide an opportunity for parliamentarians to exchange views on fundamental questions with regard to women’s issues and for Member Parliaments to provide strategies and actions that had been implemented in their countries in order to achieve gender equality and combat violence against women. The theme also offered an opportunity for parliamentarians to strengthen their national activities and to prepare a joint message from parliaments and the IPU, given that 2015 would see the establishment of new sustainable development goals (SDGs).



Hon. Members,

The 130th Assembly took place in Geneva, Switzerland from 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014. It was organized and hosted by the IPU. The Kenya delegation comprised the following Members;

1. The Hon. Ekwere Ethuro, EGH, EBS, M.P. – Speaker of the Senate & Leader of the Delegation
2. The Hon. Kabando wa Kabando, M.P. – National Assembly
3. The Hon. David Pkosing, M.P. – National Assembly
4. The Hon. Boniface Gatobu, M.P. – National Assembly
5. The Hon. Alice Wahome, M.P. – National Assembly
6. The Hon. Mishi Juma, M.P. – National Assembly
7. The Hon. Shakeel Shabbir, M.P. – National Assembly, Representing GOPAC
8. The Hon. Sen. Stephen Sang, M.P. – Senate
9. The Hon. Sen. Catherine Mukiite, M.P. – Senate

The Assembly was a particularly significant one, as it was marking the 125th anniversary of the IPU. The General Debate running throughout the Assembly would focus on the theme of “*The IPU at 125: Renewing our commitment to peace and democracy*”.

The Assembly was also a significant one as elections to the Bureaux of the four (4) plenary Standing Committees of IPU saw two (2) Members of the Kenyan Parliament namely, the Hon. David Pkosing, Member of the National Assembly and the Senator Catherine Mukiite elected to the Bureaux of the Committee on Democracy and Human Rights; and Committee on United Nations Affairs respectively. The Hon. David Pkosing, M.P. is the Member for Pokot South Constituency and a Member of the Departmental Committee on Defence and Foreign Relations. Sen. Catherine M. Nabwala is a nominated Senator and is a Member of the Departmental Committees on Finance, Commerce and Budget; and Health in the Senate.

Hon. Members,

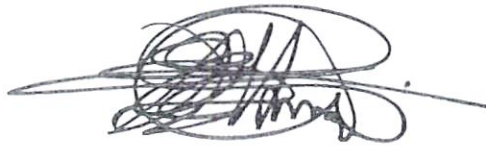
The 129th Assembly was organized and hosted by the IPU in Geneva Switzerland, from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2013 and the Kenya delegation comprised the following Members:-

1. The Hon. Sen. Ekwere Ethuro, EGH, EBS, M.P. – Speaker of the Senate & Leader of the delegation;
2. The Hon. Justin B. Muturi, EGH, M.P. – Speaker of the National Assembly;
3. The Sen. G. G. Kariuki, EGH, M.P.;
4. The Sen. Catherine M. Nabwala, M.P.;
5. The Sen. Stephen Sang, M.P.;
6. The Hon. David Pkosing, M.P.;
7. The Hon. Joyce Wanjalay Lay, M.P.; and
8. The Hon. Dawood Rahim, M.P.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Parliament of Kenya on behalf of the delegation for bestowing upon us the important task of representing the country in one of the most important forum for global parliaments.

It is therefore my pleasure and humble duty to submit this report, summarizing the proceedings and resolutions of the 131st, 130th and 129th Assemblies of the Inter Parliamentary Union and related meetings held on 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2014; 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014; and 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2013 respectively, in accordance with Article 7 of the Statutes of the IPU.

I thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Ekwere Ethuro', written in a cursive style with a horizontal line through the middle.

**THE HON. SEN. EKWEE ETHURO, EGH, EBS, MP**  
**SPEAKER OF THE SENATE & LEADER OF THE DELEGATION**

November, 2014.

## BACKGROUND

The Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU), established in 1889, is the focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue and works for peace and co-operation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representative democracies.

To this end, the IPU

- 1) Fosters contacts, co-ordination, and the exchange of experience among parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries;
- 2) Considers questions of international interest and concern and expresses its views on such issues in order to bring about action by parliaments and parliamentarians;
- 3) Contributes to the defence and promotion of human rights an essential factor of parliamentary democracy and development;
- 4) Contributes to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions and to the strengthening and development of their means of action.

The IPU supports the efforts of the United Nations, whose objectives it shares, and works in close co-operation with it. The Union also co-operates with regional inter-parliamentary organizations, as well as with international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations which are motivated by the same ideals. Promoting the concepts of peace and international arbitration, the IPU provided the origins for today's form of institutionalized multilateral co-operation and advocated the establishment of corresponding institutions at the inter-governmental level, which eventually came into being as the United Nations.

The IPU was also instrumental in setting up what is now the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague. The IPU has transformed itself from an association of individual parliamentarians into the international organization of the Parliaments of sovereign States. It is a centre for dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy among legislators representing every political system and all the main political leanings in the world, constituting a unique platform for observing political opinions and trends around the world.

The IPU Assembly also has over the years served to provide the backdrop for parliamentary diplomacy and on numerous occasions, when relations between the executive branches of government have reached a stalemate, parliamentarians have managed to negotiate a way out of the impasse.

To achieve the above goals, the IPU organizes conferences at which parliamentarians discuss political, economic, social and cultural issues the results of which are included in resolutions and recommendations for implementation by member parliaments.

IPU statutory Assemblies and specialized meetings serve as a testing ground for new ideas and initiatives leading to important breakthroughs in the search for peace and advancing international co-operation.

The IPU is financed primarily by its members out of public funds. It is a public organization funded in a transparent way by Member Parliaments and Associate Members, whose annual fees are assessed in accordance with a scale of contributions approved by the Governing Council. In addition, a growing



- volume of financial resources is mobilized through voluntary contributions, most of which are provided by donor governments.

## PART ONE: THE 131<sup>ST</sup> ASSEMBLY

### OF THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU), 12-16 OCTOBER, 2014

#### 1. OPENING OF THE 131<sup>ST</sup> ASSEMBLY

The 131st Assembly, held at the Geneva International Conference Centre (CICG), opened on the morning of Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2014. In his opening remarks, Mr. Abdelwahad Radi, President of the Interparliamentary Union (IPU) said that 2014 marked the 125th anniversary of the IPU, a fact that made the current Assembly very special. In addition, on a more personal note, he would be presiding over the deliberations as IPU President for the last time.

Mr. Radi said he was proud to have been at the helm of a body that had grown from a handful of parliamentarians, at its inception in 1889, into a truly global organization comprising 166 national parliaments. During his term of office, the IPU had adopted its first ever Strategy, co-published the ground-breaking *Global Parliamentary Report* dealing with the evolving relationship between citizens and parliaments, adopted the *Plan of Action for Gender-Sensitive Parliaments*, implemented structural reforms and established the Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

The President however, cautioned the participants against complacency. Democracy was very much a work in progress and was clearly ailing; as evidenced by the conflicts and terrorist attacks in many parts of the world.

The President said he was especially pleased with the choice of the theme for the General Debate at the current Assembly: *Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women*. That issue had been particularly important to him throughout his term of office. Gender equality was still an issue open to debate and that no country could claim to have achieved it.

He stressed that the achievement of gender equality was a prerequisite for progress, global peace and security, poverty eradication and sustainable development. The unequal balance of power between the sexes provided grounds for violence against women, a scourge which spared no nation and which must be strongly condemned and combated. That effort would require a change in mentality and a solid, rigorously implemented legal framework.

Mr. M. Moller, Acting Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, was concerned at the threats to peace and stability in, *inter alia*, the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq, Ukraine, Gaza and South Sudan. The violent extremism perpetrated by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) marked a dramatic change in the terrorist threat, and the spread of Ebola had added another layer of complexity to the political, economic and humanitarian challenges of the day.

He stated that the common denominators linking many of those challenges included poor governance, human rights abuses, disenfranchised individuals and groups, injustice and failed leadership, all of which led to an unravelling of the social fabric. As institutions, parliaments represented avenues for the

inclusion of views from all sectors of society; and as individuals, parliamentarians could serve as advocates of moderation, agents of empowerment and guardians of human rights and the rule of law.

Further, in 2015, the United Nations would be celebrating its 70th anniversary and the IPU would be holding the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament. A major challenge for both Organizations would be to establish a universal and transformative post-2015 development agenda, a project on which the United Nations looked forward to collaborating with the IPU.

While concluding his remarks, Mr. Moller stated that reaching out to and empowering youth would be critical given the record number of unemployed young people and their overwhelming sense of disenchantment and frustration. He welcomed the theme of the General Debate and made a compelling case for gender equality, saying: "There can be no peace without the full engagement of women – it is as simple as that".

## 2. CHOICE OF AN EMERGENCY ITEM

*The role of parliaments in supporting an immediate and robust international response to the Ebola epidemic and in enacting laws ensuring an effective response to and preparedness for Ebola and other infectious disease outbreaks.*

The Secretary General of the IPU, Mr. Martin Chungong informed the Assembly that the delegations of Morocco and the Islamic Republic of Iran withdrew their proposals and that the delegations of Ecuador and the United Arab Emirates had merged their proposals to one.

The requests before the Assembly for a vote were therefore as follows:

1. The role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in addressing the terrorism and extremism of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al Nusrah Front (ANF) and other terrorist groups, proposed by the Syrian Arab Republic;
2. The role of the IPU in encouraging and supporting an initiative aimed at ensuring international protection for the Palestinian people under occupation until a two-State solution is achieved, in the light of the latest Israeli military aggression on Gaza, proposed by Palestine;
3. Commitment by the world's parliamentarians to promote a multilateral legal framework for restructuring countries' sovereign debt with a view to achieving a more stable and predictable international financial system, proposed by Argentina;
4. The role of parliaments in supporting implementation of UN Security Council resolution 2178 and international support to address the humanitarian disaster caused by the terrorist attacks in Iraq and Syria, proposed by Chile;
5. The role of parliaments in supporting an immediate and robust international response to the Ebola epidemic and in enacting laws ensuring an effective response to and preparedness for Ebola and other infectious disease outbreaks, proposed by Belgium and Zambia and
6. The role of parliamentarians in countering terrorism, terrorist groups such as the so-called Daesh and massive violence against civilians and in building an international partnership through the United Nations and other international organizations by Ecuador and the United Arab Emirates.



The Assembly held a roll-call vote on the final list of the above six items and the proposal put forward jointly by Belgium and Zambia (5 above), which had received the required two-thirds majority and the highest number of positive votes, was adopted and added to the Agenda of the Assembly.

### 3. PARTICIPATION

Delegations from the parliaments of the following 147 countries, including four non-Members attending as Observers with a view to future affiliation, took part in the work of the Assembly: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The following Associate Members also took part in the Assembly: the Andean Parliament, the Arab Parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE).

Observers comprised representatives of: (i) the United Nations system: the United Nations, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the International Labour Office (ILO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UN Women and the World Health Organization (WHO); (ii) the World Trade Organization (WTO); (iii) the Council of Europe, the International Organization for Migration (IOM); (iv) the African Parliamentary Union (APU), the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), the Association of Senates, Shooras and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World (ASSECAA), the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), the Maghreb Consultative Council, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries (TURKPA), the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and Russia and the Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Member States (PUIC); (v) Socialist International; (vi) the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the World Future Council (WFC) and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND).



Of the 1,410 delegates who attended the Assembly, 707 were members of parliaments who included 47 presiding officers, 48 deputy presiding officers and 227 women (32.1%).

#### 4. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION DURING THE 131<sup>ST</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY

The following were the major topics for discussion during the 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly. In addition, one emergency item was discussed in the Governing Council.

- i) The General Debate: *Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women.*
- ii) Cyber warfare – A serious threat to peace and global security (*First Standing Committee on Peace and International Security Subject item at 132<sup>nd</sup> Assembly*)
- iii) Shaping a new system of water governance: Promoting parliamentary action on water (*Second Standing Committee Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade Subject item at 132<sup>nd</sup> Assembly*)
- iv) International law as it relates to national sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and human rights (*Third Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights Subject presentation of draft resolutions*)
- v) Interactive debates on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order; the question of corporate influence on UN decision-making; and the process leading up to the 2016 UN General Assembly Special Sessions on Drugs (*Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs*)
- vi) The Emergency Item:

#### 5. DEBATES OF THE 131<sup>ST</sup> ASSEMBLY AND ITS COMMITTEES

##### 5.1 The General Debate: *Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women.*

The General Debate was introduced with a short video message from the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, who said that the UN “He For She” campaign brought together men from all walks of life to end violence against women. He applauded the IPU for advocating greater political representation of women and counted on the Organization to help bring the voices of women and girls to the legislatures of the world.

The General Debate provided an opportunity for parliamentarians to exchange views on fundamental questions in order to strengthen their national activities and to prepare a joint message from parliaments and the IPU, given that 2015 would see the establishment of new sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Members described the strategies and actions that had been implemented in their countries in order to achieve gender equality and combat violence against women and vowed to become agents of change.

On 13 October, 2014, the Assembly heard a video message from Ms. E. Watson, UN Women Goodwill Ambassador, launching the “He For She” Campaign. The Campaign was an effort to create a widespread movement of support for gender equality by encouraging men and boys to advocate for women’s rights, support the movement towards gender equality and combat discrimination.

Ms. P. Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, addressed the Assembly and called on parliamentarians to continue to adopt and implement policies aimed at empowering women, intensify the fight against discrimination, create an enabling environment for women's full participation in economic and political life, facilitate strict application of the legislation criminalizing violence against women and ensure regular monitoring in those areas.

She urged the participants to seize the opportunity to ensure the success of the fight for gender equality, including by working to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda included ambitious, measurable targets in that regard.

In his address to the Assembly, the Speaker of the Senate of Kenya, Senator Ekwee Ethuro, M.P. highlighted the legislative interventions by the Parliament of Kenya towards achieving equality for women and girls. He informed the Assembly that among legislative measures passed by the Parliament of Kenya included the Children Act (2001), the Sexual Offences Act (2006), the Employment Act (2007), the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act (2010), the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2011) and more recently, the Marriage Act (2014).

Senator Ekwee Ethuro, also informed the Assembly that a number of programs were being implemented in Kenya to address gender disparities and curb violence against women included; lower grade requirements to join tertiary institutions and gender programs in education which have resulted in an increase of approximately 5% in girls' secondary school enrolment, retention and exam candidacy between 2012-2013; the Women's Enterprise Fund has resulted in the growth of women-owned enterprises with increments in overall gross business worth, turnover, gross profit, and the number of employees; the Uwezo Fund which is a Kshs. 6 billion (\$67 million) fund for micro-credit with specific emphasis on the youth and women; the Women Representative Fund; (Kshs. 2.03 billion (\$288 million); the Beyond Zero Campaign initiated by the First Lady of Kenya, Mrs. Margaret Kenyatta, geared towards improving maternal and child health outcomes in the country and also to accelerate the implementation of the national plan towards the elimination of new HIV infections among children; and an initiative by the Deputy President's wife, H.E. Mrs. Rachael Ruto named Table Banking, a concept meant to empower Kenyan women economically and enhance household food security and livelihoods.

Mr. M. Paymar, Member of the Minnesota House of Representatives (USA), addressed the Assembly on the "Duluth Model", which called for a coordinated community response to domestic violence based on the need to ensure the victims' safety and prosecute the perpetrators. That model was effective and saved lives by ensuring coordinated action by first responders – the police, the civil and criminal justice systems and the medical and social professions – and holding them responsible for implementation of the law. He said that it was urgent to break the silence about our societies, which produced violent men and turned a blind eye to trafficking in children and women, and to convince men and boys to engage in non-violent and respectful relationships with women.

Ms. C. Compaoré, First Lady of Burkina Faso, who had received on behalf of her country, a World Future Policy Award for exemplary policies to combat violence against women, addressed the Assembly and focused on the elimination of female genital mutilation (FGM), a harmful practice that violated the fundamental rights of women and girls and, in particular, their right to life, to physical, psychological and mental integrity and to health, including sexual and reproductive health.



She called on the participants to surmount the reluctance to completely ban FGM evidenced by its medicalization and its practice outside the borders of countries that had prohibited it.

## 5.2 The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security – The First Standing Committee

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security held two sittings on 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2014. At its first sitting, the Committee held a hearing on the implementation of the 2008 IPU resolution; *The role of parliaments in striking a balance between national security, human security and individual freedoms, and in averting the threat to democracy*, which had been adopted in Cape Town, South Africa during the 118<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly.

The hearing opened with the statements of two speakers, Ms. B. Jónsdóttir (Iceland), who spoke as an expert on individual freedoms and human security, and Mr. P. Martin-Lalande (France), who focused on counter-terrorism and the effective implementation of paragraph 5 of the resolution.

At its second sitting, the Committee had a panel discussion on *Cyber warfare – A serious threat to peace and global security*, the topic of a resolution that was expected to be adopted at the 132<sup>nd</sup> IPU Assembly in Hanoi, Viet Nam in March-April, 2015. The experts, who made presentations on the subject, included Mr. A. Cederberg, Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Mr. D. Kerimi, World Economic Forum, Mr. L. Gisel, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Mr. M. Obiso, International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

The Bureau of the Standing Committee met on 14 October 2014. It established the Committee's work programme for the 132<sup>nd</sup> IPU Assembly. With regard to the preparation of a longer-term work plan, the Bureau decided to take time to consider the matter and, in a month, prepare a summary of ideas in order to submit a comprehensive proposal to the Committee at its next session. The Bureau was informed of the candidatures received for the vacant seats and decided to recommend Mr. J.R. Tau from South Africa for the post of President of the Committee and Mr. A. Omari from Morocco for Vice-President.

On 15 October 2014, the Committee approved the above proposals. One vacancy on the Bureau, from the Asia-Pacific Group, remained unfilled because no nomination had been received from that Group. Following the election to the Executive Committee of the representative from the African Group, the seat for that group became vacant. The Bureau therefore comprised 16 members.

## 5.3 Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade – The Second Standing Committee

The Standing Committee held two sittings on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2014. At the first sitting, the Committee discussed the draft Outcome Document of the Parliamentary Meeting to be held in conjunction with the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Peru in December, 2014. The Rapporteur of the Parliamentary Meeting, Mr. S. Tejada Galindo from Peru, submitted the pre-draft of the Outcome Document to the Committee for comments. The IPU Secretariat took note of the feedback provided and undertook to incorporate into the draft document to be presented to the Parliamentary Meeting in Lima, Peru.



The first sitting also introduced an innovative element: an interactive debate with private sector representatives. The debate focused on corporate investment in sustainable development and was organized jointly with the World Investment Forum of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The panelists included Ms. L. Schreve, Head of Sustainable Lending at ING Bank, Mr. R. Milliner, B20 Sherpa for Australia, Mr. N. Boateng, Chief Executive Officer of Empretec, Ghana, Mr. S. Chowdhury from Bangladesh and Mr. D. Carter from New Zealand.

At its sitting on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2014, the Committee had a preliminary exchange of views on the subject item of the resolution to be adopted at the next IPU Assembly, *Shaping a new system of water governance: Promoting parliamentary action on water*. The topic was introduced by Mr. A. Iza, Head of the Environmental Law Programme, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Ms. E. Tranchez of Waterlex, Ms. N. Marino from Australia and Mr. F. Bustamante from Ecuador.

There were four vacancies to be filled on the Standing Committee Bureau: one for the Asia-Pacific Group; one for the Twelve Plus Group; and two for the Eurasia Group. The Committee approved the candidatures of Ms. S. Tioulong from Cambodia and Ms. S. de Bethune from Belgium. No candidatures had been received from the Eurasia Group.

The Committee Bureau met in the morning of 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 to discuss its current work and its work programme for 2015. The Bureau endorsed the proposal to organize a Parliamentary Meeting at the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, in March 2015 in Japan, subject to the availability of financial resources. The Committee also unanimously endorsed its members' activities outside IPU Assemblies, particularly field visits to assess the impact of IPU resolutions. It decided to organize a dedicated session on water governance at the 132<sup>nd</sup> Assembly in Hanoi, Viet Nam.

#### 5.4 Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights – The Third Standing Committee

The Committee held sittings on 13<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2014. At its first sitting, the draft resolution: *International law as it relates to national sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and human rights* was presented to the Committee by the co-Rapporteurs, Mr. A.J. Ahmad from the United Arab Emirates and Mr. P. Mahoux from Belgium.

The Committee started its deliberations on the text of the draft resolution where it had before it, 102 amendments submitted by 14 parliaments and five amendments proposed by the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians. The Committee initially worked in plenary but then decided to set up a drafting committee to pursue its work on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2014.

The drafting committee was chaired by the President of the Committee and was composed of parliamentarians from Algeria, Bahrain, Canada, China, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Jordan, Namibia, Peru, Switzerland, Thailand and Venezuela. The drafting committee considered most of the amendments that were before it, but decided to send four paragraphs back to the full Committee for its consideration.

At its plenary sitting on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2014, the Committee took a decision on the outstanding paragraphs, but was not in a position to go through the entire text of the resolution. That review was deferred to a supplementary sitting convened for 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2014. At the Committee's final sitting, a number of delegations reintroduced amendments that had been proposed within the statutory

deadline, but which had been rejected during the drafting process. The Committee was consequently unable to conclude its work within the allocated time and decided to pursue its proceedings at the 132<sup>nd</sup> Assembly in Viet Nam, on the basis of the text that had been agreed on by close of business on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2014.

The Bureau met on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 to consider proposals for the Committee's agenda at upcoming Assemblies. It heard presentations from the delegations of Canada, Iceland, San Marino and Viet Nam. After discussion, the Bureau resolved to propose four subjects for the future agenda of the Committee.

At its third sitting on 16<sup>th</sup> October, the Committee agreed to the Bureau's proposal that the subject of the next resolution should be *Democracy in the digital era and the threat to privacy and individual freedoms*. The Committee endorsed the proposal to appoint Ms. B. Jónsdóttir from Iceland as co-Rapporteur, and requested the IPU President to carry out consultations with a view to identifying a second co-Rapporteur.

The Committee also agreed to the Bureau's proposal to place the following items on its agenda for the 132<sup>nd</sup> and 133<sup>rd</sup> Assemblies:

- i) Follow-up on implementation of the 2012 IPU resolution on *Access to health as a basic right: The role of parliaments in addressing key challenges to securing the health of women and children*
- ii) Interactive debate on *The Convention on the Rights of the Child 25 years on: Are children's lives better? And*
- iii) Interactive debate on *Human trafficking and migration*.

### 5.5 The Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

The Standing Committee held three sittings, two on 14<sup>th</sup> and one on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2014. At the first sitting, the Committee held an interactive debate with the UN Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, Prof. A. de Zayas.

At its second sitting, the Committee held another interactive debate, on the question of corporate influence on UN decision-making. The panel consisted of Ms. P. Bayr from Austria, Mr. J. Kakonge, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations Office at Geneva and Mr. J. Martens, Director of the Global Policy Forum. The Committee also engaged in a third interactive debate at its last sitting on the process leading up to the 2016 UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs, which would review progress on the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

In her contribution during the debate, Senator Catherine Mukiite, MP highlighted that the UN and its member states need to reinstate their over-riding prerogative to serve the public interest. The UN should overhaul its decision making processes to ensure that civil society has a more prominent role and that industry's influence is limited. Also, that the United Nations and the private sector must actively collaborate around the world to address issues related to Economic and social development, Human rights, peace and security, humanitarian assistance and environment, by focusing any engagement on building markets, combating corruption, safeguarding the environment, increasing food security and ensuring social inclusion.

The panel comprised Mr. L. de Alba, Mexico's Ambassador to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Mr. J.-L. Lemahieu, UNODC Director, Policy Analysis and Public Affairs, and Swedish journalist Mr. E. de la Reguera.



The Committee Bureau met on 13<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 to discuss the Committee's current work and its 2015 work programme as well as the annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations in New York, which would take place on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2014.

The Bureau decided to gather ideas for the 2015 programme of work and make a final decision at an extraordinary session to be convened on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2014. It also decided to hold a joint meeting with the Sub-Committee on the future IPU-UN cooperation agreement, on 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2014.

For its sittings at the 132nd Assembly in Hanoi, the Committee had two initial items for discussion: follow-up of an earlier field mission to Viet Nam and review of UN work with parliamentarians, particularly through parliamentary networks and associations.

The Standing Committee Bureau had five vacancies, one for the African Group and two each for the Eurasia Group and the Asia-Pacific Group. The Committee accepted the proposals received from the Geopolitical Groups for new Bureau members as follows: Mr. S. Chiheb from Algeria, Ms. E. Nursanty from Indonesia and Mr. J. Jahangirzadeh from Islamic Republic of Iran. The Committee had received no candidatures from the Eurasia Group.

#### 5.6 Debate on the Emergency Item.

*The role of parliaments in supporting an immediate and robust international response to the Ebola epidemic and in enacting laws ensuring an effective response to and preparedness for Ebola and other infectious disease outbreaks.*

The debate on the emergency item was held in the morning of Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 with sixteen speakers taking the floor during the debate.

Speakers expressed deep concern over what was one of the worst health disasters in recent history, affecting not only five countries in West Africa (Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Sierra Leone) but also several countries in Europe and North America. They underscored that Ebola was a global challenge and that the international community should therefore act swiftly to combat the epidemic.

The speakers reiterated the need for immediate and coordinated action to support the countries affected, especially those with limited resources for fighting the epidemic effectively. They raised concerns about the Ebola patients in poverty-stricken communities and deplored the fact that many were dying even before being treated. Several participants underscored the need to isolate the Ebola virus rather than the countries affected, and urged other countries not to impose travel bans.

The participants also focused on the need to develop an effective vaccine and treatments, so as to prevent and cure Ebola, in cooperation with specialized international organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), and with the pharmaceutical industry. Others called on developed countries to help the countries affected develop effective health care infrastructure. One participant called on the international community to make trial medicines available to all countries affected by the virus.



The delegation from Guinea, thanked the parliamentarians for having voted to adopt the emergency item on Ebola. The leader of the delegation called for further support and immediate action from the international community, underscoring that Ebola was not just a health concern; it was undermining already fragile economies and becoming a public safety issue.

At the end of the debate, the Assembly referred the emergency item to a drafting committee made up of representatives of Belgium, Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Iran, Mexico, Sudan, Sweden and Zambia. The drafting committee met on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 to finalize the draft resolution and on 15 October, 2014 the Assembly adopted the resolution unanimously.

## 6. 195<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

### 6.1 Election of the President of the Inter Parliamentary Union

The term of the IPU President, Mr. Abdelwahad Radi, from Morocco came to an end on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 at the 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly, after serving an illustrious three year term in office. In this regard, Bangladesh MP and former Amnesty International “prisoner of conscience” Saber Chowdhury was elected as the new President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

Mr. Chowdhury emerged triumphant against three other candidates: Speaker of Australia’s House of Representatives Bronwyn Bishop, Indonesian MP Nurhayati Ali Assegaf and former Speaker of the Maldives Parliament Abdulla Shahid in an election on the concluding day of the 131<sup>st</sup> IPU Assembly on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2014. He becomes the 28th president of the Organization in its 125-year history. President Chowdhury is the third IPU president from South Asia after Najma Heptulla (1999-2002) and Gurdial Singh Dhillon (1973-1976).

President Chowdhury is a firm believer in the rule of law and human rights. He was involved in ground-breaking legislation to criminalize custodial torture in Bangladesh and to address domestic violence. He is also an active national politician who has also pioneered community initiatives on a range of social and economic issues targeting women and youth in particular and has similarly been active on the international stage for a number of years.

Climate change, disaster-risk reduction, sustainable development and nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament have been the focus of much of his international political work. Within the IPU and as a former president of IPU’s Committee on Peace and International Security, he had played an important role on issues relating to key objective of the IPU.

In his acceptance speech, President Chowdhury said, “...politics and public service is about helping people to solve their problems, to live their dreams. He added that his belief is to always improve upon what he finds and leave a better, more peaceful world.”

### 6.2 Membership and Permanent Observers of the IPU

At its sitting on 13<sup>th</sup> October, the Governing Council approved requests for reaffiliation from the National Assemblies of Madagascar and Guinea, thus bringing the overall membership of the IPU to 166 national parliaments. The Council also approved a request for Permanent Observer status from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean (PA-UfM).

It took note of the fact that the Executive Committee had reviewed the situation of observers based on an analysis of their actual participation in IPU Assemblies over the previous four years. It approved a set of recommendations by the Executive Committee made in the light of that analysis.

More specifically, the Council approved a revised list of Permanent Observers that would be invited automatically to all IPU Assemblies. That list would be amended in the future only when and if necessary. The revised list did not include a number of organizations previously invited as observers that had not attended IPU Assemblies or engaged in any substantive dialogue or cooperation with the IPU for four or more consecutive years.

Council decided that relevant invitations would be issued at the discretion of the IPU President, who would inform the Executive Committee accordingly. Regional intergovernmental organizations could be invited by the Council on an ad hoc basis, for example during the second Assembly of the year held in Geneva. The Council approved a number of related amendments to the text of the Practical modalities of the rights and responsibilities of observers at IPU meetings

Lastly, the Council endorsed the recommendation that the IPU should facilitate regular interaction with parliamentary organizations, assemblies and networks represented at IPU Assemblies, with a view to discussing issues of common interest, including cooperation with the United Nations. Such informal meetings should be integrated into the work programme of IPU Assemblies as a permanent feature having no financial implications for the Organization.

### **6.3 Cooperation with the United Nations system**

The Council took note of the activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system since the 130<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly. The Secretary General underscored the significance of UN General Assembly Resolution 68/272 on *Interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union*, which had been adopted with broad support in May 2014. The resolution welcomed inter alia the convening of the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments at UN Headquarters in 2015, as part of the series of high-level meetings leading up to the UN Summit on the post-2015 development agenda.

The Council was also informed of the consultations on a new cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the IPU and the preparations for the annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations (19-20 November), which would focus in 2014 on ensuring a people-centred approach to the new SDGs. As part of its work to follow and inform global processes, the IPU was involved in shaping parliamentary input to, and holding parliamentary meetings on the occasion of, two important conferences to be held in December: the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Lima, Peru (COP20/CMP10) and the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons.

### **6.4 Recent specialized meetings**

The Governing Council took note of the results of the International Parliamentary Conference on *Parliaments and the rights of indigenous peoples*, the Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, the World e-Parliament Conference 2014, the event to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the IPU, the Regional follow-up seminar on *The role of parliamentarians in the implementation of Universal Periodic Review*



*recommendations*, the Parliamentary meeting at the 20th International AIDS Conference, the Review of the draft Common Principles for Parliamentary Development, the Ninth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament, the Regional seminar for Asia-Pacific Parliaments on *Ending the cycle of violence against girls in Asia-Pacific*, the Seminar for African parliaments on *Translating international human rights commitments into national realities: The contribution of parliaments to the work of the United Nations Human Rights Council*, and the First IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, on *Taking Democracy to Task*.

### 6.5 Reports of plenary bodies and specialized committees

At its sitting on 16<sup>th</sup> October, the Governing Council took note of the reports on the activities of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, the Committee on Middle East Questions, the Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law, the Gender Partnership Group and the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU. The Council also endorsed 15 decisions taken by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

### 6.6 Tribute to the outgoing IPU President

Ms. N. Motsamai (Lesotho), speaking on behalf of the Executive Committee, paid tribute to the outgoing President, Mr. A. Radi. She was followed by representatives of the six Geopolitical Groups of the IPU, who praised Mr. Radi's long political career nationally and internationally, including as the Speaker of the House of Representatives of Morocco. His long-standing public service had been appropriately recognized by His Majesty the King of Morocco, Mohammed VI, who had bestowed upon him the nation's highest order. It was during Mr. Radi's term of office as the IPU President that the Organization had adopted its Strategy for 2012–2017, implemented structural reforms and established the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU.

The Secretary General, speaking on behalf of the Secretariat, also paid tribute to President Radi for his leadership and said that he and his colleagues had been privileged to work with him. Having expressed its deep gratitude to President Radi for his unwavering devotion to the cause of the Organization, the Governing Council made him an Honorary President of the IPU.

## 7. FIRST GLOBAL CONFERENCE OF YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS (10-11 OCTOBER, 2014)

Young men and women parliamentarians from 61 of the world's countries gathered in Geneva on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> October 2014 at the first IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians in order to take stock of youth participation in parliament.

The 180 participants (average age 37) were joined by some 20 leaders of youth parliaments and of the Pacific Forum of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). The Conference was organized with support from the Worldwide Support for Development (WSD) foundation, which made it possible for the IPU, among others, to establish a programme on youth participation in parliament.

The first IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians, on the theme *Taking Democracy to Task*, allowed participants to focus on young people's expectations of democracy. While careful to avoid

generalizing, the Conference agreed to say that young people are taking a stand against corruption, malfunctions in the economic and financial systems, political ossification and the inequalities of which members are victims.

Members noted that there was genuine imbalance between the way that politics is being done today and the way that young people are living. The connectivity, immediacy and globalization that make up ordinary lives seem far removed from national political processes. The way that we vote the long debates and the length of time needed for policies, once implemented, to bear fruit must all be reconsidered in order to bring more young people on board.

The Conference summed up young people's expectations of politics and political leaders in three words: *openness, transparency and effectiveness* and affirmed that it was time for politics to become genuinely open to youth, to become clean and above moral reproach and to deliver at last on its promise of development, equity and equality. The Conference noted that young people's expectations were fully consistent with the guidelines advocated by the IPU in its publication *Parliament and democracy in the twenty-first century: A guide to good practice*.

The Conference stated that while it is crucial for young people to be included in politics, their involvement must never be viewed as a gift to youth. Youth participation is beneficial to democracy and to the proper functioning of politics, the economy and society. Young people's talents, ideals, energy and skills, as well as their capacity to question, are essential if society is to run smoothly.

A number of challenges for young people in politics were identified as follows:-

- a. Not being taken seriously and considered immature and inexperienced;
- b. Financial challenges vis-à-vis their elders who have been in politics for several years;
- c. Legal obstacles to their involvement in politics since the minimum voting age and/or the minimum age of eligibility to run for office is high in some countries;
- d. Access to networks, in which it is difficult for newcomers to find a place;
- e. Young people's perception of politics (as divisive, corrupt and so on) and the image presented by political leaders are not always appealing to youth.

The Conference drew up a list of robust measures to be taken immediately in order to strengthen young people's involvement in politics, which included:-

- a. Set quotas for young people in parliament and in political parties;
- b. Set quotas at the local level so that a new political class can emerge and establish itself at the national level;
- c. Reduce the minimum voting age and the minimum age of eligibility to run for office;
- d. Bring the minimum age of eligibility to run for office into line with the minimum voting age;
- e. Form youth political parties, if feasible under the country's constitution and legislation;
- f. Include more young people in political parties' lists of candidates and executive bodies;
- g. Establish youth committees in parliaments and empower them to consider every piece of draft legislation and every policy, whether or not it has a direct bearing on youth;
- h. Monitor the implementation of youth policies; allocation of funds to youth, education and training policies among others;
- i. Include young people in international debates, and not only in forums that focus on youth;
- j. Launch training programmes for young politicians in order to address young people's overall lack of political experience;



- k. Include youth involvement in political decision-making, governance and peace among the sustainable development goals, as requested by the Youth Forum of the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Through the IPU, the Conference requested the WSD to continue to support young people's involvement in politics and platforms that allow them to meet.

## 8. MEETING AND COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

The Twentieth Meeting of Women Parliamentarians took place on 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2014. A total of 133 women and 12 men from 86 parliaments attended.

The President of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia), chaired the Meeting, which was opened by the IPU President, Mr. A. Radi. Ms. B. Amongi (Uganda) summed up the work of the Committee at its thirty-third session, held in Geneva in June 2014 on the eve of the celebration to mark the IPU's 125th anniversary, and at its thirty-fourth session, which had been held that morning. During the sessions, the Committee had prepared the contribution of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians to the 131st Assembly and heard the candidates for the post of IPU President.

The Meeting heard a report from the Gender Partnership Group, delivered by Ms. S. Atallahjan (Canada).

The participants were joined by the Secretary General of the IPU and the Secretary-General of International IDEA for a debate on electoral quotas for women. Quotas were one of the measures used to accelerate progress towards gender equality in politics. To be successful, however, they needed to be ambitious, adapted to the national electoral system and accompanied by sanctions mechanisms. Political parties had to play a greater role in paving the way for the election of women by fielding them as candidates, placing them in winnable positions on lists and appointing them to party leadership positions. The debate ended with the presentation of the *Atlas of Electoral Gender Quotas*, a publication produced jointly by the IPU, International IDEA and Stockholm University.

The participants discussed the future of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and agreed on actions to be taken to: (a) enhance the role of the Meeting, (b) give it greater visibility, and (c) use it to better mainstream gender at the IPU. They also agreed to launch a campaign to celebrate the Meeting's thirtieth anniversary in 2015. The Vietnamese delegation informed the participants that, as Viet Nam would be hosting the next Assembly, it would be preparing a special event to celebrate the Meeting in Hanoi.

As a contribution to the Assembly, the participants considered the subject item on the agenda of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, *International law as it relates to national sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and human rights*, from a gender perspective. The discussion was held in plenary and resulted in proposed amendments that were presented to the Standing Committee by Ms. B. Amongi (Uganda) and Ms. E. Abdulla (Maldives).

The afternoon session included a panel discussion on *The influence of women in parliament*. The panel began with statements by Ms. A. Ocles Padilla (Ecuador), Mr. M. Traoré (Burkina Faso), Ms. L. Alansari (Saudi Arabia), Ms. M. André (France), all parliamentarians, and Ms. M. Krook, Professor at Rutgers University.

It was chaired by Ms. U. Karlsson (Sweden), Vice-President of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, and moderated by Ms. G. van Hall, a journalist with *Svenska Dagbladet*. The panellists stressed that women's political participation was a democratic imperative. Men and women should have the same political opportunities and the same say in political decision-making processes. However, it was also important to shed light on the influence of women on parliament. Progress had been made in terms of women's rights and gender equality, as evidenced by the legislative reforms, often driven by women legislators and adopted by many parliaments. More and more women were being elected to parliament and occupying leadership positions. However, cultural barriers, direct and indirect discrimination and stereotypes continued to challenge women's influence in parliament.

The Meeting then heard the candidates for the post of IPU President to obtain a better idea of the part gender issues would play in the programme of each of the candidates. All of the candidates undertook to advance gender equality at the IPU with a view to empowering women and promoting the women's agenda on the international scene.

The Meeting held a brief question-and-answer session with a member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Ms. P. Schultz, who highlighted recent developments regarding the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and some of the initiatives that parliaments could take in order to enhance national implementation.

Ms. S. Atallahjan (Canada) was elected substitute member of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians for the Twelve Plus Group. Vacant seats for members from the Asia-Pacific Group and the African Group were not filled as no candidatures had been submitted on time.

The Coordinating Committee met again on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2014. It discussed at length the steps to be taken to enhance the role of both the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and the Coordinating Committee. It also began preparations for the next Meeting of Women Parliamentarians.



9. RESOLUTIONS AND OUTCOME DOCUMENTS OF THE 131<sup>ST</sup> ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU)

9.1 Outcome document on the General Debate on the theme; Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women

*Endorsed by the 131<sup>st</sup> IPU Assembly in Geneva on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2014*

In October 2014, we members of parliament gathered at the 131st IPU Assembly on the theme: *Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women.*

Gender equality is at the heart of progress, peace and development. If we are committed to achieving peace and security in the world, ending poverty and achieving sustainable development, we must tackle this issue head-on.

No country today can claim to have achieved gender equality. Women account for half the world's population, yet they make up only 21.8 per cent of parliamentarians worldwide, they continue to earn systematically less than men for the same work, and over 31 million girls are prevented from attending primary school. Gender inequality holds all our countries back, and the struggle to overcome it must therefore be a priority for each and every one of us, both men and women.

Today, the scourge of violence against women is a key issue in every country and internationally. No nation is spared; the latest global and regional estimates by the World Health Organization show that one out of every three women worldwide has experienced intimate partner violence or sexual violence by someone other than a partner.

Whether in the public or the private sphere, violence against women and girls in all its forms and manifestations robs them of their dignity, violates their fundamental rights, damages their health, reduces their productivity and prevents them from achieving their full potential. It also has significant consequences for peace and security and a negative impact on development. We strongly condemn all forms of violence against women and girls.

Gender inequality and violence against women feed on each other. On the one hand, it is impossible to achieve equality between men and women without putting an end to violence against women; on the other, women's vulnerability to violence is heightened by unbalanced power relations between men and women. In order to address this problem, we must take into account the broader context of women's lives and the need to secure respect for all their fundamental rights.

Addressing violence against women is a complex issue that requires profound change. It means looking at power relations; confronting patriarchy, which permeates all aspects of our societies; changing mentalities; and challenging the social roles and stereotypes that we have internalized, including those related to men. It also means enabling women to take ownership of their lives, their bodies and their destinies since women who are empowered, including economically, are less vulnerable to abuse.

There is no one solution for achieving gender equality and putting an end to violence against women; instead, there are a variety of approaches that reflect the diversity of situations and national experiences. It is nevertheless within the reach of parliaments to develop key strategies and responses. If we have the commitment and the will, progress is an achievable goal.

The commitment to achieving gender equality and eradicating violence against women must first translate into the development of strong, comprehensive legislation that is non-discriminatory, supports women's empowerment and addresses all forms of discrimination. This means a legal framework with no loopholes, one that provides for the implementation of temporary special measures to level the playing field and facilitates gender mainstreaming. It also means a framework that is consistent with States' commitments under the international instruments on human rights and gender equality to which they are parties, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Inter-Parliamentary Union – Agenda, resolutions and other texts of the 131st Assembly 32 We need comprehensive legislation that criminalizes all forms of violence against women and includes provisions on prevention, protection and support for the survivors and prosecution and punishment of the perpetrators. It must also take into account and meet the needs of different groups of women, especially the most vulnerable, including girls, migrant women and refugee women. This is an area in which progress has been achieved; for example, two thirds of the world's countries now have laws criminalizing domestic violence.

Putting laws into practice remains the key challenge. Appropriate mechanisms must be envisaged in domestic law and budgets must be scrutinized to ensure that adequate financial and human resources are allocated to the effective implementation of legislation. In order for laws to meet the needs of the survivors of gender-based violence, easily accessible services are fundamental. Several States have established women's shelters, hotlines and "one-stop crisis centres" that provide survivors of gender-based violence with legal, medical and counselling services. Investment in a justice system based on the protection of women survivors and their rights is vital; specialized courts on domestic violence and sexual offences are invaluable in that regard.

In addition, law enforcement agencies must be trained to focus on the protection and dignity of the survivors and to secure criminal evidence so that more women will feel that it is safe for them to report violence and seek justice. Enhanced implementation requires a coordinated community-based response to violence in which all stakeholders – including governments, parliaments, police, prosecutors, judges, health-care providers, social workers, women's organizations and religious and community leaders – have a role to play.

Awareness of the laws is also crucial. Legislation must be disseminated and made easy for people to obtain and understand, including through education, translation into local languages and public debates. For policies to be successful, sustained and effective awareness-raising campaigns are vital. All citizens, whether men or women, boys or girls, must understand that there is nothing private about violence and that it cannot be truly eliminated without an understanding that its tolerance in any form is unacceptable. In some countries, the support, cooperation and understanding of traditional leaders will be key to the success of any awareness-raising campaign.

It is essential to monitor the implementation of laws and policies. The oversight role of parliamentarians is key and must be strengthened, including by building partnerships across parties and with civil society movements. Information is also essential to the drafting and



enactment of effective laws and the assessment of their impact. To that end we, as legislators, need to build our national statistical capacities and gather sex-disaggregated data and to focus particularly on the number of reported cases of violence against women and on the implementation of household surveys.

The specific situation of vulnerable groups should be taken into account and addressed as a priority. In particular, women's vulnerability to abuse and violence rises sharply in times of crisis. Women and girls are the main victims of situations of armed conflict, which, together with terrorist acts, insecurity and violence linked to drug trafficking, heighten their vulnerability and place them at greater risk of gender-based violence and abuse in the form of rape, kidnapping, forced and early marriage, exploitation and sexual slavery. Women's bodies are directly targeted by these horrifying crimes and by the increasing use of sexual violence as a weapon of war.

In light of the alarming reports of current violations of women's rights in conflict situations, we must condemn such acts publicly and denounce the use of religion and culture to justify them. We must also take urgent action at the national, regional and international levels to protect women and ensure that the survivors are given support, that they have access to justice and reparation and that the perpetrators are prosecuted. In this context, States must continue to fulfil their international obligations under the relevant human rights instruments and must implement in full United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the Council's other resolutions on women, peace and security and general recommendation No. 30 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

Girls constitute another vulnerable group and face additional forms of violence, including female genital mutilation and other harmful practices, forced and early marriage, and murder in the name of so-called "honour". In developing countries, one third of all girls will be married before they turn 18 and 3.3 million girls are at risk of genital mutilation. In 50 per cent of cases, sexual attacks target girls aged 15 or even younger. Tailored responses to the specific needs of girls must be developed. As parliamentarians, we have the obligation to speak on their behalf and defend their right to a childhood free from fear and violence.

Change starts at birth. Education is a powerful equalizer; it is the key to transforming mentalities, addressing stereotypes and discrimination and building a culture of equality and tolerance. Girls' access to education is essential for their social and economic empowerment and security. Educating boys and girls on human rights and gender equality from an early age – for example, through the use of appropriate games, plays and stories – would help to instil non-violence and respect in relations between the sexes.

Teaching and learning materials used in the schools must also be reviewed in order to remove stereotypes, and families must be engaged in order to raise awareness about women's rights and challenge social stereotypes. Parental education on women's rights and gender equality is also needed.

The media, including social media, can be major allies in educating and raising awareness. They must not perpetuate stereotypes and gender inequalities or appear to condone violence against women. With today's media reporting on acts of violence against women around the world, more and more people are becoming outraged by these crimes and calling for an end to impunity.

Achieving gender equality and ending violence against women is the responsibility of both men and women. The potential is there, and men are part and parcel of the solution; they should take an active part in the debate and stand up for women's rights. The silent majority of non-violent men must speak out now and assume their responsibilities alongside women.

Women's voices must also be heard. Women in leadership positions have the power to take specific action in response to the interests of and challenges faced by other women whose voices are not being heard or taken into account. However, women are still poorly represented in leadership positions and their presence in decision-making bodies must be increased; to that end, the adoption of temporary special measures should be considered.

Effective change requires both a strong institutional framework and national bodies with the power to take action. We must build our parliaments' capacity to put an end to violence against women and to achieve gender equality. Implementation of the IPU Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments should serve as a reference as we introduce reforms and strengthen our institutions.

In 2015, we will turn the page on the Millennium Development Goals and celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action. The period 2015 to 2030 must be the final battle in the centuries-old fight for gender equality, and we must meet the challenge. As members of parliament, we vow to make that goal a reality.

## 9.2 Resolution on the Emergency Item:

*The role of parliaments in supporting an immediate and robust international response to the Ebola epidemic and in enacting laws ensuring an effective response to and preparedness for Ebola and other infectious disease outbreaks.*

*Resolution adopted by consensus by the 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly in Geneva on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2014.*

The 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly of the Inter Parliamentary Union, *expressing concern* at the unprecedented Ebola outbreak that has affected West Africa in the past months, and *alarmed* at the numerous deaths that have resulted, especially of multiple members of the same family and in the most vulnerable groups, such as health-care workers and women;

*Also expressing concern* at the high risk that the virus will spread around the world;

*Aware* that the Ebola outbreak in West Africa may, according to the United Nations, become a humanitarian disaster with immeasurable consequences;

*Recalling* that the Ebola outbreak in West Africa has been designated a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the World Health Organization (WHO) and declared a threat to international peace and security by the United Nations Security Council;

*Also recalling* that, on 19 August 2014, the African Union Peace and Security Council invoked Article 6(f), on humanitarian action and disaster management, of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, and authorized the immediate deployment of ASEOWA (African Union Support to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa);



*Further recalling* that, on 18 September 2014, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 69/1 approving the establishment of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) to stop the outbreak, treat the infected, ensure essential services, preserve stability and prevent further outbreaks;

*Aware* that the non-governmental organizations at the forefront of the fight against Ebola, such as Doctors Without Borders and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, deem the international response dangerously insufficient;

*Acknowledging* nevertheless that many countries have already increased their funding and material support for the countries affected in West Africa and deployed personnel on the ground to help contain the outbreak;

*Noting* the measures taken by the States affected in response to the Ebola epidemic, but *aware* that the means that the governments concerned are able to mobilize may be insufficient, and that the shortcomings brought to light by the Ebola epidemic have revealed an urgent need for support;

*Concerned* that many countries continue to have poorly funded and weak health systems, outdated or inadequate health laws and regulations, and insufficient capacity under the International Health Regulations, and that this hamstrings national and international efforts to respond to outbreaks of infectious disease,

*Bearing in mind* that the countries concerned are already suffering shortages of food and drinking water and that their economies are collapsing as a result of disruptions to trade, commercial flights and agricultural activity;

*Expressing concern* that, as a result of inadequate investment in research, there is as yet no vaccine or effective specific treatment against the Ebola virus;

*Taking into consideration* that the achievements of the worst affected countries in terms of consolidating peace and development risk being wiped out by the Ebola epidemic, and *underscoring* that the epidemic is compromising the stability of those countries, Inter-Parliamentary Union – Agenda, resolutions and other texts of the 131st Assembly 50

*Noting* the WHO advisory opinion on the negative consequences of the Ebola response, namely the isolation and stigmatization of the countries and region affected, and on the need for all countries, especially neighboring States, to keep their borders open to goods and people, maintain air routes, strengthen national and regional preparedness, increase the exchange of information and reinforce their health systems;

*Stressing* that national, regional and international action and cooperation are required to check epidemics of serious infectious diseases and that a coordinated international response to the Ebola epidemic is therefore a vital and immediate need;

1. *Depllores* all loss of life in the Ebola epidemic;
2. *Expresses support* for the governments and populations concerned in West Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which have been severely affected by the Ebola outbreak;

3. *Demands* that all political parties in the countries concerned work together in unity and harmony to facilitate, without delay, free and safe access for humanitarian organizations and their staff to areas where the population needs them;
4. *Recognizes* that national leadership and ownership of the Ebola response in the countries concerned remains the guiding principle for international support, in keeping with their right to self-determination under the Charter of the United Nations;
5. *Applauds* the commitment and contribution of those battling the epidemic on the front lines, notably national and international humanitarian relief workers;
6. *Deeply regrets* the international community's slow and generally insufficient response and the time lost in drawing up an effective and coordinated strategy, while *acknowledging* that a number of States and international organizations have already provided critical assistance;
7. *Urges* the relevant United Nations bodies, especially WHO, which must play a lead role, to take all necessary emergency measures to reinforce their contribution to local, national, regional and international efforts to halt the outbreak of the Ebola virus;
8. *Welcomes* the establishment of UNMEER, which must work in close coordination with regional organizations such as the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States;
9. *Calls on* the countries affected, responding countries and the international organizations active on the ground to work together closely and share information so as to enhance coordination and ensure effective control of the current outbreak;
10. *Calls on* the States that have the requisite means and on international donors to mobilize without delay essential financial resources and capacities, including medical and logistical means that can be deployed on the spot (personnel, supplies, means of transport), paying particularly close attention to the protection of women and children and of health workers entering into contact with infected persons;
11. *Vigorously condemns* the stigmatization of the countries concerned and their citizens, as this may exacerbate their humanitarian plight and have a negative impact on their economies;
12. *Appeals* to States, in particular those in the region, and all competent stakeholders providing the assistance required to deal with the Ebola epidemic to redouble their efforts to heighten public awareness, apply security and health protocols, and correct the misinformation circulating about the disease's transmission and the scope of the epidemic;
13. *Invites* parliaments to promote effective policies to combat the Ebola epidemic at national and international level;
14. *Also invites* parliaments to enact the legislation needed to improve health systems and emergency preparedness, with a view to boosting the capacity to deal with the serious public health and humanitarian crises that may result from an infectious disease outbreak;



15. *Urges* the pharmaceutical industry, the private sector, research institutions, philanthropic organizations and governments to invest in research on viable treatment options and vaccines to treat and prevent Ebola and to make them available at an affordable cost to affected populations, especially the poorest victims;
16. *Recommends* that plans be drawn up to help the countries affected recover quickly from the negative effects of the Ebola crisis based on the lessons currently being learnt;
17. *Also recommends* that the international community set up a rapid health response unit to cope with health crises of this kind and *urges* it to learn from the management of earlier epidemics/pandemics;
18. *Urges* States and the international community to conduct worldwide awareness campaigns to prevent fresh outbreaks of Ebola;
19. *Suggests*, with regard to international development cooperation, that public health – and the prevention of health crises – be added as a core priority to cooperation programmes.

### 9.3 Report of the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security – The First Standing Committee;

*Noted by the 131<sup>st</sup> IPU Assembly in Geneva on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2014*

The Standing Committee on Peace and International Security met in Geneva from 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 during the 131<sup>st</sup> IPU Assembly. At its first meeting, the Committee held its first hearing on implementation of the IPU resolution on *The role of parliaments in striking a balance between national security, human security and individual freedoms, and in averting the threat to democracy*, adopted in Cape Town in 2008.

The discussion was preceded by the statements of two speakers. First, Ms. B. Jónsdóttir (Iceland) spoke as an expert on individual freedoms and human security. She stressed that the digital age and private life could be mutually exclusive and that, without privacy, there could be no functional democracy since the pillars on which it rested included private life, transparency, responsibility and freedom of expression. She herself had been a victim of human rights violations after co-producing a video that had been disseminated by Wikileaks.

Drawing a parallel between the ability of governments to spy on the citizens of other countries and the implementation of the 2008 resolution, she regretted the failure to implement paragraph 24 thereof, in which the Assembly “*Calls on parliaments to monitor the scope of surveillance and the amount of data collected by public and private organizations, to gauge any changes in the balance between the citizen and the State, and, in this process, to ensure that laws are framed and enforced in such a way as to take account of fast-moving technological developments*”. If that provision had been implemented by every parliament in the world, her privacy would not have been violated.

Mr. P. Martin-Lalande (France) spoke about counter-terrorism and his country’s legal framework, which evidenced the desire and the need to adapt continually to new forms of terrorism and to deal with its growing intensity. It was important to implement paragraph 5 of the resolution, in

which the Assembly. He also spoke of the need for strict monitoring of restrictions on public freedoms since counter-terrorism legislation was closely linked to the highly sensitive issue of individual freedoms. Legislators always sought to strike a balance between the prevention of crimes against the public order, including the safety of persons and property, and the exercise of constitutionally protected freedoms, including freedom of movement, the inviolability of the home, the confidentiality of correspondence and respect for private life.

The discussion gave all the participants an opportunity to express their views regarding the various aspects of the resolution. Several of them said that it was difficult to find the balance called for in the resolution, while others described the systems that their countries had put in place and the implications of those systems for national security and the protection of public freedoms.

At the close of the hearing, Ms. Jónsdóttir called on her colleagues to ensure that their countries' laws were respected and that universal laws, such as the 2008 resolution, were implemented in order to defend the right to privacy and to protect citizens from universal surveillance.

Mr. Martin-Lalande, for his part, proposed that the IPU should continue to monitor the implementation of the 2008 resolution, including by drawing up an implementation scoreboard. Thus, the resolution could be discussed on a regular basis and kept alive by requesting Members to submit periodic reports.

The Committee met for the second time on the afternoon of 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 with a panel discussion on the theme of cyber warfare, which was also the topic of the resolution that was expected to be adopted by the IPU at the 132<sup>nd</sup> Assembly in Hanoi, Viet Nam. The purpose of the discussion was to give Committee members an opportunity to learn about current issues related to cyber warfare and to exchange views with experts in the field. Ms. Z. Drif Bitat (Algeria), Vice-President, opened the meeting and introduced the experts who would make presentations during the two-and-a-half-hour discussion:-

- i) Mr. Aapo Cederberg, Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP)
- ii) Mr. Danil Kerimi, World Economic Forum (WEF)
- iii) Mr. Laurent Gisel, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- iv) Mr. Marco Obiso, International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

The moderator, Mr. Cederberg, introduced the topic. He described various aspects of the subject, explaining that cyberspace was an interactive domain made up of digital networks used to store, modify and communicate information. It included not only the Internet, but also the other information systems that supported businesses, infrastructures and services. It therefore included not only hardware, software, data and information, but also people, networks and the entire infrastructure that made social interaction possible. He then defined cyber security, which comprised five levels – civil, technical, economic, political, and military – and sought to overcome the problems that arose at each of those levels using effective tools for preventing and combating cyber warfare; cyber terrorism; cyber espionage; cybercrime and cyber activism.

The other panelists were given the floor in order to address additional aspects of cyber warfare. In order to focus the debate on the main topic, the representative of the ICRC informed the Committee that international humanitarian law should be used to place limits on cyber warfare in order to protect civilians. He explained the concepts of “cyber-attack” and “cyber warfare”, which could be used by different people to mean different things.



The term “cyber-attack” referred to broad data collection operations, such as industrial espionage, and other cybercrimes occurring outside the context of armed conflict. That kind of cyber-attack was not covered by international humanitarian law. The term “cyber warfare”, on the other hand, referred to large data stream operations employed as methods of warfare. Those operations were intended to cause death, suffering and destruction during an armed conflict and thus fell within the scope of international humanitarian law.

The representative of the ICRC expressed concern that cyber warfare might have dramatic humanitarian consequences, resulting in high numbers of civilian casualties and significant property damage. Recalling the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts of 1977, he said that there was no legal vacuum in cyber-space since, under article 36 of that instrument, any new weapon, means or method of warfare was subject to international humanitarian law.

One challenge lay in the anonymity of cyberspace, which made it difficult for States to attribute acts of aggression to the perpetrators in a timely manner. A second challenge was the interconnectedness of cyberspace: the same networks, routes and cables were shared by civilian and military users, making it impossible to determine who owned what. It was therefore strongly recommended that States should apply the law of armed conflict under international humanitarian law to cyber warfare and should review their existing legislation in light of the development of new weapons.

The representative of the WEF recalled that cyberspace not only carried potential risks and threats to society; it also offered opportunities that had been unthinkable before the development of the Internet. The hyper-connectivity of the Web had had unintended consequences, and security had not yet caught up to its technological potential. Moreover, the costs of risks and product security had been overlooked at the outset. Since most network infrastructures are privately owned, it was crucial to include private stakeholders in its regulation.

The representative of the ITU stressed the need to take a bottom-up approach and to ensure coordination at the national level in securing infrastructures. Unless countries had mechanisms for including all stakeholders at the national level, all efforts at the international level would fail. The solution lay in a combination of national coordination and international cooperation. It was also necessary to synthesize the various national perspectives and bring them to the international level.

The statements made by Committee members focused on the following issues:

- 1) Legal considerations, the importance of defining the terms “cyberspace” and “cyber warfare” in new national legislation and the need for new international conventions;
- 2) The need for international cooperation and, in particular, the role of international organizations and the importance of confidence-building measures at the national, bilateral and global levels;
- 3) Especially in the case of developing countries, the need for capacity-building programmes so that they could provide adequate technological responses;
- 4) The difficult balance between State security and individual freedom; young populations, in particular, would reject close regulation of the cybersphere;

- 5) The problematic issue of false information, especially in countries in conflict, where the Internet was often used to threaten opponents, spread panic and disseminate false information to the public.

There was general agreement on the need to take legislative measures at the national and international levels to secure the cyber sphere. As an agent of change, the IPU was requested to promote best practices and facilitate discussions that would increase parliamentary awareness and lead to the drafting of relevant legislation.

The Bureau of the Standing Committee met on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2014. It established its work programme for the 132<sup>nd</sup> IPU Assembly, to be held in Hanoi, Viet Nam, in March 2015. At that Assembly, the Committee would first discuss the draft resolution on *Cyber warfare – A serious threat to peace and global security*. It would then consider the proposed amendments to the draft resolution in plenary with a view to submitting it to the Assembly for adoption. With regard to the preparation of a longer-term work plan, the Bureau decided to take time to consider the matter and, in a month, to prepare a synthesis of their ideas in order to submit a comprehensive proposal to the Committee at its next session.

The Bureau also considered the question of the successor to Mr. G. Schneemann (South Africa) as President of the Committee and proposed the election of Mr. J. R. Tau (South Africa) to replace him. It also proposed that Mr. A. Omari (Morocco) should be confirmed as Vice-President. On 15 October 2014, the Committee approved these proposals. One vacancy on the Bureau, from the Asia-Pacific Group, remained unfilled because no nomination had been received from that Geopolitical Group. Following the election to the Executive Committee of the representative from the African Group, the seat for that group became vacant. The Bureau therefore comprised 16 members.

#### 9.4 Report of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade- The Second Standing Committee

*Noted by the 131<sup>st</sup> IPU Assembly in Geneva, 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2014.*

The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade held two sittings (14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2014) during the 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly. At the first sitting, the Committee discussed the draft Outcome Document of the Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Peru in December. The Rapporteur of the Parliamentary Meeting, Mr. S. Tejada Galindo (Peru), submitted the pre-draft of the Outcome Document to the Committee for comments. The Parliamentary Meeting will be organized by the IPU and the Congress of the Republic of Peru, with the support of the IPU Geopolitical Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC). The Outcome Document adopted at the Parliamentary Meeting would be presented to the United Nations Climate Change Conference.

The first sitting also comprised, for the first time ever at an IPU Assembly, an interactive debate with private sector representatives. The debate focused on corporate investment in sustainable development and was organized jointly with the World Investment Forum of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The participants included Ms. L. Schreve, Head of Sustainable Lending at ING Bank, Mr. R. Milliner, B20 Sherpa for Australia, Mr. N. Boateng,



Chief Executive Officer of Empretec, Ghana, Mr. S. Chowdhury (Bangladesh, MP) and Mr. D. Carter (New Zealand, MP).

The debate highlighted the private sector's growing role in funding for development and called for closer interaction with parliamentarians to make development more sustainable, not just financially, but also in social, environmental and ethical terms. The participants agreed that parliamentarians in all countries had a critical role to play in creating stable and enabling environments for investment and private sector development. They underscored the importance of taking account of risks, particularly disasters, and the need for the private sector and governments to include a risk mitigation component as a key underlying component of sustainable development.

The panel emphasized that, in developing countries, the State had a central role in devising strategies to support the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as key drivers of development, particularly in Africa.

SMEs today faced many obstacles, ranging from inadequate management skills to access to funding and technology. It was important for parliamentarians to understand the role of SMEs and their potential to spur growth, so that they could come up with strategies and plans to support their development. Such strategies should include access to financing, but also business advice, education, mentorship and other support programmes. Strong government strategy in this regard, accompanied by clear and transparent laws and policies, would also leave commercial banks more comfortable about dealing with start-ups.

The exchanges also included a useful reflection on the sometimes low capacity of parliaments to engage with the private sector and stimulate investments and private sector development. The private sector panelists admitted that they were not aware of those obstacles and acknowledged that the private sector had a relatively poor understanding of parliaments and vice versa and both parliamentarians and the private sector representatives welcomed opportunities for further exchanges and expressed the hope that the IPU would continue to create them. Such exchanges were also critical in order to tackle other hindrances to development, such as corruption and illicit financial flows and trade.

The sitting on 15 October was dedicated to the debate on the subject item of the Committee's next resolution, *Shaping a new system of water governance: Promoting parliamentary action on water*. The subject item was introduced by Mr. A. Iza, Head of the Environmental Law Programme, International Union for the Conservation of Nature, Ms. E. Tranchez of Waterlex, Ms. N. Marino (Australia, MP) and Mr. F. Bustamante (Ecuador, MP). A total of 35 parliamentarians from 34 countries took part in the debate, highlighting different aspects of water governance at national, regional and international level and stressing the important role that parliaments played in all of them.

At the end of the debate, the co-Rapporteurs reflected on the Committee deliberations and provided initial insight into how they would incorporate the input provided during the debate into the draft resolution. The participants observed that the planet was running out of water, our most important resource for sustaining life and all ecosystems. The adoption of middle class lifestyles by developing countries moving up the income ladder, climate change and population growth would only exacerbate the water crisis. A strong water governance system was critical to

supporting much needed conservation measures while making water accessible to all equitably and fairly.

Most of the world's water reserves, whether situated in individual countries or across borders, were not being actively managed. One way to ensure they would be was to implement two key international conventions that most parliaments had already ratified; access to clean and affordable water should be considered a human right. Water itself had the right to be preserved, so that aquifers would have enough time to replenish themselves. As several countries had reported, lax regulations were at the root of water overconsumption. Concern to secure vital water supplies was a root cause of conflict between and within countries.

As most water was used for agriculture, it would be important to shift to crops that were less water-intensive and generally reform agricultural practices with an eye to the best practices that traditional agriculture and modern methods had to offer.

Water governance must be established at all levels, from national to local. There was no single model of water governance and the overall context had to be considered. One approach that many speakers alluded to was based on the notion that water was a public good belonging to everyone and requiring strong government regulation to make sure it did not become a mere commodity. That model valued strong community involvement through water councils that included representatives of minority groups and the most vulnerable in society. In Ecuador, for example, water rights had been enshrined directly in the Constitution, and all essential water services had to be provided directly by the government or at least guaranteed by it.

Although several countries had achieved the water target of the Millennium Development Goals (many fewer had achieved the closely related sanitation target), much stronger action worldwide would be required to turn the tide. The current draft Sustainable Development Goals therefore included a stand-alone water goal. Parliaments were encouraged to actively support that goal as negotiations of the draft began in earnest next year.

In addition to the debates, the Standing Committee Bureau had four vacancies to fill, one by the Asia-Pacific Group, one by the Twelve Plus Group and two by the Eurasia Group. The Committee approved the candidatures of Ms. S. Tioulong (Cambodia) and Ms. S. de Bethune (Belgium). No candidatures were received from the Eurasia Group.

## 9.5 Report of the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

*Noted by the 131<sup>st</sup> IPU Assembly in Geneva on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2014*

The Committee held three panel discussions over a two day period; on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2014. The first discussion took the form of an interactive debate with the UN Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, Mr. A. de Zayas. He drew from his reports to the UN Human Rights Council to argue for a deeper, more participatory form of democracy at both national and international level. He said that representative democracy had its limitations; it only worked if parliamentarians were held accountable to their constituents.



In too many countries, however, politicians fell prey to the influence of lobbies and other organized interests that were at variance with the popular will.

There were numerous illustrations of this, such as military and defence budgets that were not fully disclosed to the people and adopted without debate in parliament on the need to, for example, reduce military expenditure in order to invest more in education, health care and other public goods.

Mr. de Zayas suggested that measures to strengthen representative democracy should include providing more real choices when it came to candidates running for election and weakening the grip of party leaders on elected representatives. Referendums should be used more frequently to allow people to have a direct say in government.

The same democratic deficit found in many countries, both developed and developing, permeated the institutions of global governance, from the United Nations to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization. Those institutions should all be regrouped under the UN umbrella, and the United Nations itself needed to be made more accountable to the people. According to Mr. de Zayas, the constitution of a world parliamentary assembly of elected representatives would contribute to making the United Nations more responsive to the real concerns of people around the world. While that idea was accepted by one delegation in the room, it was rejected by another. The Committee President reminded participants of the core mandate of the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, i.e. to hold hearings with UN officials, shape parliamentary input to major UN processes, and examine UN operations with a view to enhancing accountability.

Questions were raised about the democratic deficit at the global level, which included a Security Council that did not fairly represent the global community, the fact that developing countries were not members of key international bodies, and the growing influence of unaccountable transnational corporations at the United Nations and other global institutions. None of that was likely to change unless parliaments acquired stronger oversight capacities and the political will to hold governments to account.

The Committee's second panel discussion dealt with the question of corporate influence on UN decision-making. The panel consisted of Ms. P. Bayr (Austria), Mr. J. Kakonge, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations Office at Geneva, and Mr. J. Martens, Director of the Global Policy Forum.

The overall conclusion of the discussion was that parliaments ought to pay closer attention to the growing relationship between the United Nations and corporations. While there might be some scope for the United Nations to partner with the corporate sector either at the global level or within countries, it was imperative that all partnership agreements be subject to strict mandatory guidelines and to regular reviews.

UN agencies and programmes should adopt a common standard for dealing with the corporate sector. Corporate funding of UN offices and field operations needed to be made more transparent through mandatory disclosure and conflict-of-interest rules. The United Nations lacked a proper vetting system to make sure that the corporate entities it worked with upheld the highest standards, which must go well beyond the 10 core principles of the Global Compact.

It was contradictory for corporations that did business with the United Nations to follow those core principles at the same time as they undermined development goals by looking for tax havens or advocated policies (e.g. oil and gas subsidies) that affected climate change and development efforts. It was agreed that good corporate citizenship should be defined in terms of respect for tax laws and government regulations, human rights and public goods.

A more fundamental problem was the United Nations' growing reliance on the corporate sector to help establish global norms by including corporations on key advisory boards and other such decision-making bodies. Concomitant to that was the rising number of multi-stakeholder forums at the United Nations in which partners were invited to discussions with governments as if they were all on the same footing.

Governments needed to better differentiate between partners and clarify that, in the final analysis, they were accountable to the people via their elected representatives. The institutional relationship between the United Nations and the IPU as a parliamentary organization could help strengthen that essential link between global and national levels of governance. By all accounts, the United Nations invested more resources in the relationship with the corporate sector than in that with parliaments. In an ideal scenario, the reverse should be the case.

The recent exponential growth in the number of corporate partnerships was closely linked to government cuts to the UN budget. The United Nations was being starved for resources, prompting it to reach out to the corporate sector for support for development-related initiatives. Corporations, for their part, tended to regard this as a good exercise in public relations and a way to ensure that the global regulatory framework remained fundamentally skewed in their favour. Corporations had long preferred a regime based on the principle of voluntary compliance with respect to human rights and other standards. It was also possible that some corporate partners wished to ensure that a market-based approach remained the preferred policy option when it came to guaranteeing fundamental rights such as access to water or food.

In what might amount to an important shift on the part of the United Nations, a 2014 Human Rights Council resolution called for a human rights instrument that was legally binding on transnational corporations and other business enterprises. If properly implemented, the resolution would also help fill a gap in many national jurisdictions where legislation on corporate behaviour was lax. Ultimately, it was at the national level that action was needed to strengthen the legal frameworks for good corporate behaviour at all levels and in all jurisdictions. Here again, parliaments had a central role to play.

The Committee's third, interactive, panel discussion considered the process leading up to the 2016 UN General Assembly Special Session that would review progress on the goals set in the 2009 *Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem*. The discussion was co-moderated by Mr. A. Avsan (Sweden) and Ms. L. Rojas (Mexico). The panel comprised Mr. L. de Alba, Mexico's ambassador to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Mr. J.-L. Lemahieu, UNODC Director, Policy Analysis and Public Affairs, and journalist Mr. E. de la Reguera, and examined the tension between the law enforcement versus the prevention and rehabilitation approach.

The moderators pointed out that failure to discuss the issue nationally and internationally meant that serious problems – deaths in developed and developing countries; incoherent regional policies that had an unintended impact on neighboring States; collateral damage on women and



children in poor communities; flourishing money laundering, corruption and organized crime – were not being addressed. Criminal enterprises were described as akin to multinationals in their scope and impact. Inaction was leading to greater inequality within and between nations.

In the ensuing discussion, the participants pointed out that, while some nations were discussing legalization to reduce harm and generate tax revenues, others bemoaned the lack of debate and understanding in parliaments, among the general public and in the media. They referred to the need for access to proper basic health care, pharmaceutical products, treatment and pain mitigation, and suggested that new policies had to be predicated on individual human rights and be solidly grounded in the post-2015 development agenda. Account had to be taken of economic and social issues, and regional approaches adopted.

International conventions on drugs did not allow national frameworks the flexibility to tackle drug issues in the light of the local context, history and traditions. The capacity of public health systems to deal with opiates and pain management had to be enhanced.

The participants expressed concern for transit countries that dealt with the consequences of inaction in consuming and producing countries, even though the distinction between the two was becoming less relevant in the wake of new developments, such as synthetic drugs that could be produced anywhere. They expressed a desire for further input, a flexible framework and the establishment of a coalition of the willing to work towards coherent strategies and implementation.

The United Nations should involve more of its agencies, such as the World Health Organization, in tackling the problem, and each country should adopt a comprehensive approach, reducing consumption through education, treatment, supply restrictions, civil society awareness, enhanced security to combat corruption and a better legal framework. The impact of national policies at the grassroots level needed to be considered. Mr. Lemahieu suggested that the IPU report on the panel discussion on *The legalization of drugs: Can it help curb organized crime?*, held at the 128th IPU Assembly in March 2013, should also be posted there.

Mr. de Alba noted that the current panel discussion was the first global meeting he was aware of that included the views of parliamentarians from a cross-section of Member States. He expressed frustration at the growing tendency to negotiate international agreements by consensus through the UN process, as the result was agreements aimed at the lowest common denominator.

It was recommended that the IPU provide a forum for further engagement leading up to the UN General Assembly Special Session. Parliamentarians wanted to be involved and explicitly referenced in the relevant UN documents.

## 9.6 Implementation of the IPU Strategy For 2012-2017

**Common Principles for Support to Parliament: Strategic Objective 1, Strengthen Democracy through Parliaments.**

*Adopted by the IPU Governing Council at its 195th session in Geneva on 16 October 2014*

The suite of 'Common Principles for Support to Parliaments' set out below, comprising one over-arching General Principle and nine further focussed Principles, is designed to achieve two main objectives:

- i) Assist partners engaged in the front line of parliamentary support and parliaments worldwide to work together with improved relevance, sensitivity and effectiveness, and,
- ii) Enable partners and parliaments to work towards sharing a fundamental approach for the design and implementation of parliamentary support.
- iii) Support available to parliaments has grown significantly in recent years. As a result, there is now extensive experience in this field shared between a range of organisations and individuals partnering with parliaments. This has made the present distillation of Common Principles possible. The aim has been to capture the fundamentals of parliamentary support for the benefit of all parliaments and their partners<sup>3</sup> in a single, accessible document.

The Principles are intended to provide an inclusive and enabling framework for partners which:

- i) Reflects an effective, practical approach to support for parliaments.
- ii) Takes full account of the uniqueness of each parliamentary institution, while recognizing emerging international standards encompassing all democratic parliaments.
- iii) Emphasizes inclusive parliamentary ownership over its development and change process.
- iv) Advances a culture of partnership, trust and mutual respect.

In particular, the Principles are designed to promote good communication and co-operation at local, regional, and global levels and to assist in ensuring that partners' roles and responsibilities in providing parliamentary support are transparent, mutually agreed, and complementary. The present Principles will undoubtedly evolve. Their likely future evolution will take account of partners' and parliaments' experience and development, thereby ensuring their continuing relevance to effective parliamentary support.

Adoption of these Principles by parliaments and partners as a common framework for parliamentary support should ensure, therefore, that support activities are made progressively more effective and efficient. This, in turn, will increase the capacity of parliaments to fulfil their core functions.

## **Parliamentary Support – Rationale and Nature**

### ***Rationale***

Well-structured and resourced parliaments are essential to a vibrant democracy, maintaining peace, upholding the rule of law and human rights, gender equality, increasing economic prosperity, and promoting social justice. Parliaments' growing legislative, oversight and representational responsibilities in these areas mean that all citizens have a vital stake in the institution.



There is a strong desire on the part of many parliaments to develop their capacities in response to the growing expectations of the people for more efficient and effective service from their representative and this primacy needs to be acknowledged in all support work.

Democracy in its widest sense however is a world community and it is therefore appropriate that parliaments should be able to draw upon appropriate, excellent, external technical support from an international community with a common interest and stake in the functioning of all key democratic institutions. This common purpose provides the rationale for parliamentary support.

### *Nature*

Parliaments are complex organisations with distinct political, procedural and administrative aspects, and this complexity presents significant challenges when devising effective external support.

Parliaments comprise elected politicians, assisted by a range of supporting procedural officials and administrators. They often have a shared goal of ensuring that parliament manages competing social priorities, passes sound laws, holds the government to account, and provides members of parliament with resources to represent their constituents. While these roles are interlinking capacity requirements are often very distinct. Effective parliamentary support needs to be sufficiently sophisticated and responsive to reflect these complex requirements adequately.

To meet the growing requirements for parliamentary support, a range of partners have emerged over the last two or three decades. Established parliaments have provided support to assist their more recent counterparts. In addition, specialized international organizations, training institutes, donors, civil society groups and consultancy firms have come forward to provide niche resources. Parliamentary support has emerged as a recognized field of expertise, and the resources dedicated to it have increased, while the potential of parliaments to promote sound governance, political inclusion, economic prosperity, and social justice has become more widely appreciated.

Parliamentary support requires local, as well as international, input. Just as there has been a growth of international actors recognizing the importance of strong effective parliaments to democratic development, civil society organizations in many countries of the world have also recognized the fundamental importance of parliament to the health of their own democracies, and are increasingly engaged in monitoring parliamentary performance and supporting issues of parliamentary development and reform. Engagement of national actors in parliamentary development is often vital to the success of parliamentary support work.

The fundamental objective of parliamentary support is to assist parliaments to develop to the full, the capacity to perform their basic legislative, oversight and representational roles. This support must also take account of parliaments' potential to aggregate input from individual citizens, civil society organisations, and subordinate oversight and governance bodies such as sub-national legislatures and major municipalities (where those exist). It must also take account of parliament's potential to take the lead nationally in promoting the rule of law, human rights (including women's rights and protection for children) and democracy in their country, and establish themselves as credible national institutions for the peaceful resolution of conflict.

The difficulties inherent in these parliamentary functions, and the complexity of parliamentary institutions, raise many challenges for effective parliamentary support. These include the need to

adequately appreciate the national socio-political context, understand the parliament's wider institutional and governance environment, and encourage sound local support. Understanding how to operate effectively within parliaments, and overcoming those challenges, is possible only with strong support from within the country particularly that of parliament itself, at all levels.

Successful parliamentary support journeys therefore need to be led strongly and consensually by the 'family' of stakeholders surrounding a parliament. Internally, this includes both government and opposition parties, leadership and backbenchers, and members and staff. Externally, it also includes citizens and civil society stakeholders that engage with parliament. Whether internal or external, support should be based firmly on parliament's own well defined priorities. A parliament's close and consensual partnership with external support partners in this process will help facilitate the full identification of these priorities, and additionally allow ready access to relevant international norms expected of 21st century democratic parliaments.

The last twenty years has seen increasing demands on parliaments and parliamentarians from ordinary citizens. This pressure for parliaments to live up to their central place within the institutional structure of countries, through demonstrating improved business efficiency and progressively higher standards of personal probity on the part of parliamentarians, is likely to increase in future. Parliamentary support also offers parliaments help in meeting those challenges.

Parliaments are at the heart of political events and parliamentary support activities frequently take place and develop as a result of changing political priorities and dynamic alignments. The range of technical support mechanisms must therefore be designed progressively more imaginatively and appropriately if they are to result in a positive outcome within parliaments.

Multi-party political championing for both the substance and form of parliamentary support will always be essential to a positive outcome. Finally, successful interventions are unlikely to be achieved except as a function of support that is both long-term and matched in sophistication by parliaments' own complexities.

## **Common Principles – Process and Form**

### *Process*

Acknowledging these challenges, a number of parliaments and parliamentary support partners met in Geneva in October 2013 and agreed that it was timely to find out if devising a set of Common Principles to provide a framework for parliamentary support work would be possible. The Principles were developed through a consultative process. A five-member working group<sup>4</sup>, convened by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), led the process with support from an independent consultant. Parliaments provided input during the process through the Association of Secretaries General of Parliament and the governing bodies of the IPU. Partners in parliamentary support provided comments on successive drafts.

### *Form*

The document below is the product of that initiative and comprises one over-arching Principle and nine specific Principles, each of which crystalizes one common aspect of parliamentary support. The first Principle provides a rationale for parliamentary support generally. Each



Principle is accompanied by a commentary. Parliaments and parliamentary support partners will wish to interpret the Principles in the context of their own work.

The Principles are designed to apply to all activities aimed at strengthening parliament. In addition, the Principles are intended to be relevant to all countries and contexts where support is made available to assist parliaments in strengthening themselves, and to be applicable to the work of all parliamentary support partners.

### General Principle of Support to Parliaments

Effective parliaments are essential to democracy, the rule of law, human rights, gender equality, and economic and social development. Parliaments require access to excellent technical support in order to contribute fully in these areas.

#### *Parliaments and democracy*

Democracy has many forms but is usually predicated upon an effective separation of powers between executive, judiciary, and parliament in order to spread power and maintain checks and balances. This structure requires a democratic parliament broadly rooted in society, and with internal business structures of sufficient capacity to undertake its functions.

The core legislative, oversight and representational functions of parliaments provide an essential contribution to the quality of a country's overall governance by: adding value to government policy in areas of modern state activity, providing additional legitimisation for government actions and activities, initiating policy independently of government, and enabling policy to be translated into social reality by means of laws.

Underpinning these functions, and providing a benchmark for decision making, a democratic parliament ensures that the rule of law predominates, guards the primacy of human rights, promotes the goal of gender equality, regulates the economy to promote sustainable growth, and is responsive to changes in society requiring social development and modernisation. While aspects of work in these areas are shared with the executive and judiciary, the absence of a strong, effective democratic parliament will deny the state legitimacy.

Democratic parliaments also provide the opportunity for all sections of society to be heard through their representatives, for disputes and disagreements over the direction of policy and issues of national importance to be debated, and for peaceful resolutions to be arrived at and sustained within the rule of law.

#### *Support for parliaments from partners*

Many parliaments seek external assistance in helping fulfil the complex role of a parliament. External assistance whether in bilateral form or multilateral programmes must be (a) fully appropriate to the requirements of parliament; and (b) of an excellent quality commensurate with the importance of parliament within national governance.

Support to parliamentarians and parliamentary officials should therefore be available across all areas of parliamentary activity both from internal and local sources, and also from other parliaments and the international parliamentary support community. Such international links

should stress the integrity and independence that underpins all successful parliamentary institutions. Such support will be conveyed at times through formal meetings, events and processes, at others by means of informal contacts.

Finally, parliamentary support must reflect the reality that irrespective of how long or short the pedigree of a parliament, all parliaments, whether new or long established, are able to learn from each other. Beyond the vital role parliamentary partners have in fulfilling the specialized requirements for support from individual parliaments, the reciprocal sharing of experience among parliamentarians and parliamentary staff is invaluable to the development of democracy throughout the world and should be strongly encouraged.

### **Specific Principles of Support to Parliaments**

#### **Principle 1: Parliamentary support partners are guided by the needs of parliament.**

A pre-requisite for successful parliamentary support is a trustful, open, and inclusive relationship between parliament and the support partners. This trust must be reflected in the practical implementation arrangements for parliamentary support, for example, the inclusive and open management of activities.

Support to a particular parliament must fully reflect the parliament's needs, and these needs are best articulated through an inclusive process that reflects the diversity of a parliament's members, political parties, parliamentary officials and others. Parliament alone is in the best position to articulate its needs and to define broad strategic objectives, as well as tactical approaches for particular activities - although external partners can often also be helpful in facilitating a strategic planning process.

Parliaments are not stand-alone institutions, but rather intrinsic parts of wider institutional and other contexts. It follows therefore that interest in the development of parliament and future external support normally extends well beyond parliament. In these circumstances, the views of external institutions and bodies are also relevant, including the executive.

Good national governance depends upon the main state institutions working cooperatively. While it would be inappropriate for the executive to play a direct role in the development of parliamentary support given separation of powers considerations, the development of constructive legislative-executive relations is an important aspect of parliamentary support. Timely consultations with the executive can be helpful in informing parliamentary development efforts.

Parliaments are busy places with often intense and competing daily pressures especially when sitting, and therefore parliamentary support needs to fit well with the demands of a working institution.

Indeed, long term parliamentary support may best be approached through embedding it within an overall parliament 'owned' strategic plan, developed through an inclusive process. Such a plan may cover all areas of a parliament's work and may usefully identify priority areas for intervention, the interests of those in parliament, and the best entry points for support. (The drafting of such a strategic plan might itself be a feature of external support.)

While recognizing that parliamentary support must be driven by the parliament's needs, the relationship between parliament and partners should also help to ensure that the latter's expertise



is used well and given full weight and that advice offered is carefully considered. Parliamentary support partners often possess deep knowledge of, and reflect extensive experience with, parliaments. It is therefore clearly in the best interests of the overall work of developing parliament that such expertise is utilized to the maximum degree.

The basic conditions identified above are important both in determining a successful overall outcome for parliamentary support activities and also in identifying the practical arrangements required to drive that success. Practical arrangements for successful implementation 'on the ground' include:

- i) Establishing sound management, (including financial and administrative management) for activities, in which the diversity of parliamentary perspectives are appropriately represented. Such management structures should be the minimum required and should be streamlined within parliament's existing administrative architecture, to the extent possible.
- ii) Fully reflecting the structure of parliament (e.g., its unicameral or bicameral structure), in program design and engaging the secretariat in the delivery of parliamentary support.
- iii) Encouraging the practical involvement of parliament where possible in support activities including periodic staff participation, sharing costs, or in-kind contributions.
- iv) Ensuring that support activities are coordinated with the daily work of parliament, and the work of members and parliamentary officials who most closely determine parliament's program. This will normally mean, for example, the close involvement of the Speaker and Secretary General or their representatives, though the input of other parliamentary stakeholders is also vital.
- v) Pacing support activities at a rate with which all partners and parliament are comfortable, and avoiding over-ambitious plans or timetables.
- vi) Frequently reassessing the strategic objectives of support and the tactical approaches adopted to ensure that the quality of outputs is progressively improved.
- vii) Conducting 'final' evaluations of specific interventions to assess value for money and impact and to inform future support work.

**Principle 2: Parliamentary support partners are attentive to the multiple, overlapping social, economic and political contexts in which parliaments operate.**

However complex parliaments may appear their fundamental rationale resides in the role of transforming the political, economic, and social aspirations of citizens into legal and social realities by means of legislation, oversight, and representation.

The more deeply embedded a parliament is in society's fabric, and the more sensitive to its multiple contexts, the greater will be its capacity to contribute peaceful and politically acceptable solutions to the country's urgent challenges.

Parliamentary support partners have a role in assisting parliaments to work towards developing a positive profile within their contextual environments by encouraging a parliament's efforts to deepen its relevance to all citizens.

Therefore, successful parliamentary support operations take close account both of the interior constitutional, institutional, and procedural architecture of parliament, but also the multiple exterior social and political contexts in which parliaments are situated, and which act upon parliament and parliamentarians on a daily basis. Sound support will involve assistance to parliament in its drive to be inclusive and to reach out to and engage within all social and political contexts.

There is an important role for parliamentary outreach activity in providing opportunities to demonstrate a parliament's relevance to citizens. In particular, partners require a keen appreciation of a country's political economy context, including the nature and role of political parties, in addition to understanding the country's constitutional position.

*Parliamentary outreach – the country as context: engaging all citizens*

Parliaments functioning optimally are highly accessible national centres where the issues of national and often individual significance for citizens, irrespective of sex, ethnic background, social status, or political beliefs, may be debated and resolved.

This is unlikely to be possible in the absence of substantial, vigorous parliament-driven outreach programmes in which citizens and civil society organizations are strongly encouraged to relate to their parliament, and where parliaments and parliamentarians are expected to be outward looking and responsive both to their constituents and the overall national interest.

Parliamentary outreach is relatively new to many parliaments (including some long established) but is now considered a normal part of parliamentary life. Outreach may take a variety of forms, from straightforward reciprocal visits to complex engagement on issues of policy.

It will always be important to consider outreach from the point of view of gender relations and the particular challenges to women and youth, and to reflect carefully on ways in which such development support may be offered. Women's participation may be encouraged by systematically engaging with women's grassroots organizations, women leaders of the community, gender-focused research institutes and think-tanks.

Equally important is youth outreach. Youth may be drawn into a parliamentary environment including the establishment of parliamentary internships for students at national universities and colleges as a means of promoting openness, cooperation and learning, and the creation of youth parliaments.

Parliaments also have a special responsibility to ensure that the voice of minorities and the marginalized are heard, and support activities should take strong account of the requirement to reach out to those vulnerable constituencies. Where a country has a challenging geography, a fragile transport system, or contains far flung and distinct ethnic groups, strong outreach will be of especial importance.

There are a multitude of practical ways in which outreach can be conducted and supported, and the priorities agreed will depend largely on the national and regional modes of communication



habitually used: radio, television, dedicated parliamentary media channels, a meaningful parliament website, newsletters in the relevant range of languages, inward and outward visits by citizens and local and international parliamentarians respectively, seminars, and conferences.

Whatever the exact forms of the outreach engagement appropriate in particular cases, parliamentary support partners should invariably consider a parliament's capacity to engage with its citizenry as a foremost priority for action.

Outreach support activities should:

- i) Promote a strong spirit of parliamentary inclusiveness, and strengthen links to the citizens.
- ii) Ensure that participation in support activities reflects national diversity.
- iii) Include specific training to address diversity issues in parliament where required.
- iv) Assist parliaments and parliamentarians in promoting an awareness of equal opportunities and tackling discrimination in all forms in its legislative, oversight and representational work, and within its own secretariat administration.

#### *Constitutional and political economy contexts*

Parliaments are a part of, and operate within a formal constitutional and institutional context. At the same time, parliaments are a dynamic part of a less transparent, overlapping political economy context extending beyond parliament.

Support partners must always seek to take account of both the surface constitutional/institutional and political economy contexts within which a parliament exists. Appropriately designed activities to assist parliaments to design suitable support programmes will be contingent on such understanding.

Parliamentary support partners have an obligation, therefore, to inform themselves about the country's institutional history; and should also appreciate the country's general political environment (electoral system, political parties, relevant provisions of the constitution, human rights situation, gender equality, recent experience of conflict), the budgetary and fiscal situation, the economic context and national development plans.

Partners also need to consider international and regional issues (trade, political, economic, cultural regional relations) and disputes, and the country's international and regional obligations, all of which are likely to be continuing features of parliament's interest and concern.

The institution of political parties is the bridge between organized political opinion and the institutions of the state, including parliament. Parliament is where major national political tendencies are represented, in line with the country's electoral law, and political parties are vital features of a country's political economy.

The capacity of a parliament to operate well rests partly on well-designed procedural rules, but to a considerable extent upon the stability, disciplines and capacities of the political parties,

groupings, and alignments. Where parties are weak or even non-existent, parliament is unlikely to be able to effectively represent its citizens. The political parties, as crucial players in national democratic life and parliamentary democracy, are therefore an additional key context and focus for support. It will be important for partners to be aware of the history and political background of the main parties represented in parliament.

### **Principle 3: Parliamentary support aims for sustainable outcomes.**

Sustainability of parliamentary support means that the benefits of external assistance continue to accrue to the institution after the assistance ceases. This implies that parliaments develop the capacity to manage change and renewal processes.

Parliamentary support should focus on tools to sustain development assistance and on institutionalizing a process for continued institutional development. These tools include (1) a strategic approach to development; and (2) deepened effectiveness of parliamentary staff.

#### *Strategic planning for sustainability*

While parliaments may be functionally unique, they behave in many ways like other institutions, in particular they demonstrate evolution, whether planned or not. Parliaments should therefore invariably be encouraged to adopt strategic and corporate management techniques to exert control over their own development by: prioritizing activities, managing external support and, in the context of overall institutional objectives, revisiting and revising previous initiatives and reforms, ensuring resources are used with value for money, accountability and transparency. Such techniques also provide parliaments with the opportunity to showcase to citizens progress in agreed national institutional targets and objectives, and therefore to develop a progressively more positive public image for parliament.

Strategic planning is the main tool a parliament has for managing rational and sustainable change by establishing consensus over strategic objectives and consequential annualized corporate and operational planning.

Where no parliament strategy exists, therefore, support partners should encourage parliaments to agree to an early assessment of whether it is timely to begin planning for one, and stand ready to assist with the lengthy process of embedding a strategic outlook in Parliament. Where there is a strategy, then a priority will be review and update where required.

#### *Staff and institutional continuity*

Parliaments exist to enable members to exercise their democratic mandate. This cannot be carried through effectively in the absence of a cadre of permanent staff. The main potential resource for continuity and sustainable change in a parliament is the permanent secretariat, although many other actors, namely, the Speaker and party leaders, and members (especially those re-elected) also have extremely important roles.

Strong parliaments need impartial, highly professional and qualified staff that are loyal to the parliamentary institution. Parliamentary support activities may help achieve this aim by promoting staff selection and careers based on merit and by ensuring that employment contracts or regulations contain appropriate employee protection guarantees. Parliamentary support may



promote measures intended to encourage women's promotion to leadership positions in the secretariat.

Every parliament finds an institutional memory invaluable; that memory invests primarily in the staff, mainly in senior procedural positions. This does not necessarily mean that all individuals will stay in the secretariat for their entire working lives. Indeed, taken to extreme this could result in an institution resistant to evolution. A balance of continuity and change in parliament staff is required.

Assistance in the form of ongoing training and mentoring of procedural staff, possibly the development of a parliament research or training centre, the production of handbooks or facilitating parliament's access to independent qualified expertise are all initiatives in which partners might engage with parliamentary staff, alongside targeted support for members of parliament.

#### *Partners' role in promoting sustainable parliamentary development*

To promote sustainability, partner support activities must be a clear part of the development process agreed and driven by parliament itself. Such a position:

- i) Ensures that partners are genuinely supporting parliament's own development vision and confirms the legitimacy of this support.
- ii) Allows the closest co-ordination between activities and parliament's overall development, and
- iii) Enables a holistic approach to be taken to parliamentary support in which all parts of parliament gain from partners' support. Sustainable parliamentary support activities imply capacity building that benefits the whole institution, its different components, members and staff.

Members and staff are normally substantially more likely to enter willingly and enthusiastically into partner sponsored activities, contribute to their success, and take real ownership of the results if those are part of a process of sustainable development owned and directed locally. That said, there are often instances where when there may be demands for support activities which might not be foreseen as part of a longer-term planning document. Not all parliaments may have had the opportunity to develop a long-term development plan through an inclusive process. Even where this exists, there are often gaps between an election and the development of a new parliamentary development plan, and institutional development priorities may sometimes change with new political leadership. Legislatures are often in the position of adapting their schedule and priorities in response to emerging needs of the country, as well as to new political developments. To be effective, parliamentary support activities must also be responsive to emerging needs expressed by parliament and parliamentarians, even if not reflected during a long-term strategic planning document.

#### **Principle 4: Parliamentary support is inclusive of all political tendencies.**

Parliament is where all political tendencies are represented, in line with the country's electoral law. Political parties are crucial players in democratic life, and parliamentary democracy is intended to

give a voice to all groups with significant electoral support. While the primary focus of parliamentary support must be the effective functioning of parliament as a whole, it is important for parliamentary support partners to be aware of the history and political background of the main parties represented in the parliament in question.

Inclusiveness means providing opportunities, wherever possible, for support and assistance to all political tendencies represented in parliament, to the extent that they abide by generally accepted democratic practice, such as respect for the rule of law and for the rights and privileges of political opponents. Members of the majority and of the opposition should both benefit from parliamentary support activities, and no group should be entitled to veto support for others.

Some foundations and organizations involved in parliamentary support are tied to specific political parties. While there is an appropriate role for party-to-party assistance and exchanges among parties sharing similar ideology or affiliations, political inclusiveness should be reflected in the design and implementation of parliamentary support activities -- recognizing that the overall goal of parliamentary support is to strengthen the democratic functioning of parliament as a whole.

Inclusiveness does not require that identical assistance be provided to each political party group, since the needs and priorities of these groups may differ substantially depending on their role in parliament (ruling party, opposition, junior coalition partner, etc.). In some contexts, parliamentary support partners need to have an understanding of and engage with significant political groups or tendencies that are absent from parliament, for example because they did not meet the threshold to sit in parliament or were unable to fully participate in the electoral process.

**Principle 5: Parliamentary support is grounded in emerging international democratic parliamentary standards.**

National democratic parliaments are each unique, made so by their evolution, the place they hold in their national governance structure, and their individual and characteristic conventions and procedures. Nevertheless aspects of parliamentary practice are universal, and it is this that enables us to refer to a genuine international parliamentary community.

Parliamentary support partners recognize the unique character of each parliament but also seek to reinforce these universal practices that are grounded in emerging international standards for democratic parliaments. The commendable efforts of the IPU, of parliamentary associations such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) to develop such international standards have been significant and should be expanded.

Any tendency for parliamentary support partners to approach parliamentary democracy in terms of a single model or system is likely to be harmful. The strength of democracy is its ability to fulfil fundamental aspects of inclusion and engagement within a shared political process while respecting the wide variety of traditions across the world.

The emerging international standards for democratic parliaments, which ultimately come from parliaments themselves facilitated through organizations like the CPA, IPU, SADAC and APF, will help avoid any tendency for parliamentary support to focus on a single model of parliamentary democracy, and instead base support efforts on those elements of parliamentary practice that are universal across constitutional systems.



### *Purpose of international standards*

International standards are a common language that enables the parliamentary community to find common pathways for future development in response to the changing needs of national populations.

A number of publications in recent years have provided sophisticated analyses of parliaments and parliamentary democracy with the objective of seeking broad discussion of, and emerging consensus on, relevant standards for democratic legislatures,<sup>9</sup> identifying benchmarks for democratic legislatures,<sup>10</sup> providing innovative approaches to parliamentary accountability in developing countries.

Other important work enables parliaments to commence the process of self-development by providing a rational and universal approach to self-assessment, the first, essential stage in identifying the starting point for current and future needs.

There are many other enhancements to democratic parliamentary life that may arise from this work. Agreed international guidelines, standards and assessment frameworks can, for example:

- i) Enable parliaments to check the state of their own development and to provide clarity about the nature of support required.
- ii) Provide an objective measure of the effectiveness of parliament.
- iii) Constitute useful reference points for conducting evaluations.
- iv) Help establish a baseline for support work with a parliament.
- v) Assist in developing a roadmap for future support.
- vi) Contribute to parliaments' self-evaluation and reform efforts.

Those involved in parliamentary support, led by parliaments themselves, should promote the emerging international norms and standards for democratic parliaments, based on universal parliamentary practice and support their further development.

**Principle 6: Parliamentary support addresses the needs and potential of women and men equally in the structure, operation, methods and work of parliament.**

### *Rationale*

The political enfranchisement of women constituted one of the greatest changes to democracy around the world in the 20th century. Responding to this change continues to require support; both in working towards the goal of gender balance in women's parliamentary representation, and in ensuring that the legislative and oversight work of parliaments reflect the principle of gender equality.

Where women's contributions are blocked, educational and working opportunities denied, or barriers placed to women's participation in governance leadership and decision-making institutions, countries deny themselves the full potential capacities of roughly half the population.

Gender equality is therefore a crucial factor in driving sustainable development, economic growth and poverty reduction.

The importance of gender equality for parliaments is threefold:

First, democratic parliaments derive their legitimacy from the ability to represent all the citizens of their country. Therefore where the role of women is constrained overall institutional legitimacy suffers.

Second, the small number, or even absence of women in some parliaments undermines parliaments' institutional ability to take full account of the needs and interests of a major part of the population when undertaking its core legislative, oversight and representational tasks. This seriously degrades the quality of a parliament's legislative and other core output.

Third, parliaments are a country's mirror to the international community. Most countries seek to demonstrate and promote the operation of international norms in social and economic policy and benefit fully from participating actively in the community of nations. Parliaments reflecting gender imbalance present a distorted image of their country.

These are powerful incentives for parliamentary authorities to promote measures to transform the institution into a gender-sensitive one, that ensures balanced participation in parliament, sets the example by ensuring respect for gender equality in its functioning and mainstreams gender throughout its work so as to deliver on gender equality goals.

Where women are under-represented in parliaments, or the means for their voices to be heard are weak, as they are in many parliaments, it is essential for parliamentary support partners to seek to assist parliaments in promoting activities to encourage more equal gender participation and mainstreaming of gender in parliament's work.

#### *Action*

Conducting an assessment of a parliament's gender sensitivity can be a useful first step in establishing the facts and identifying actions to encourage and improve the participation of women – both as members and as parliamentary staff – and to ensure that parliament's outputs address the needs and interests of men and women equally.

Parliament's strategic plans should be written with the objective of mainstreaming gender awareness and equality work throughout all parliamentary objectives. The strategy itself should be an exemplar of the objective of gender equality. Drafting plans in this way will assist enormously partners' work with parliaments in legitimizing tactics to promote a gender balance in all aspects of parliamentary life and work, particularly core parliamentary business outputs.

Mainstreaming gender throughout all aspects of parliamentary support and securing equal participation by men and women in activity design, implementation and results monitoring and evaluation processes results in more effective programmes because objectives and results will take into account and meet the needs of both women and men.

Parliamentary support activities should address gender equality issues from at least two distinct, complementary points of view. First, activities should aim to support and respond to the current



specific needs of women parliamentarians, secretariat staff, and specific parliamentary bodies working on gender equality/women's rights issues such as a women's parliamentary caucus or parliamentary committees dedicated to gender equality.

Second, activities should aim to advance gender equality and women's rights into the future by supporting the efforts of both men and women, and the institution of parliament as whole, to develop ever stronger policies and working cultures to that end. Parliamentary support partners should assist all parliaments' efforts to review and assess how they function, their internal rules, as well as their facilities and infrastructure procedures and practices, from a gender perspective, on a regular basis, and to ensure that these are gender-sensitive and non-discriminatory.

In carrying out activities, partners need to work hard to ensure that women and men are well represented in all support activities at equivalent levels, including in project decision-making structures.

Support activities should have as constant objectives the following:

- i) Ensure that both women and men are effectively represented in parliament at all levels, both as members and parliament secretariat staff.
- ii) To increase the number of women elected to parliament and to strengthen their effectiveness once elected.
- iii) To ensure that parliament's secretariat reflects gender balance at directing as well as in middle and junior ranks.
- iv) Ensure that dedicated gender mainstreaming mechanisms such as committees or caucuses have a legitimate and inclusive role in the overall institutional framework of the parliament.
- v) Ensure that parliaments are willing and have the capacity (including financial and human resources) to develop public policies tackling gender-based discrimination. For example, activities aiming to promote gender-sensitive/disaggregated statutory impact assessments of bills and budgets, and include a gender approach in the evaluation of public policy implementation, should be adequately resourced.

It is essential that parliamentary support partners assist parliaments in their objective of becoming gender-sensitive institutions, i.e. institutions that respect and embody gender equality in the way they function and that advance gender equality in their work and outputs. The *Plan of Action for Gender-Sensitive Parliaments*, adopted by the IPU's Member Parliaments in 2012, is a useful reference tool.

**Principle 7: Parliamentary support utilizes locally and regionally available expertise.**

#### *Rationale*

External support to any parliament, however well informed and expert, requires guidance and practical assistance from within the immediate operating environment.

Long term partner engagement will require contracted national staff and resources to complement the sharing of international experience and enhance the knowledge of international

staff on the local context. National expertise within partner sponsored work normally permits a much richer mix of support than would be available from the international experts alone. Parliamentary support cannot be effective without a genuine local/international partnership at the heart of the support delivery mechanism whether *ad hoc*, project, programme, or in some other mode.

#### *Parliament as a resource*

It goes without saying that parliament is also a source of local expertise which should be effectively integrated into parliamentary support activities, where possible. Such support should not be confined to one source within parliament but should be widely drawn from amongst administrative and political stakeholders whose 'championing' of activities will be essential to their success.

Ultimately, the doors of the Speaker, Secretary General and others should be open to the partners to seek support for specific activities where required, or to overcome particular challenges.

#### *Non-parliamentary sources of local expertise*

Parliamentary partners should also help vibrant and independent civil society organizations to work effectively with parliaments. They should seek to work with and support such organizations where they exist, first taking care to understand the existing dynamics between parliament and such civil society organizations in order to create the best conditions for success.

They should also foster or reinforce strong links between parliament and local universities, national and foreign experts based in the country, and think tanks, to help parliament benefit from local expertise.

Looking further out from parliament, parliamentary support partners should strive to harness the expertise available not only in the country but, where politically and practically acceptable, promote regional cooperation, especially with parliaments of neighbouring countries, relevant regional parliamentary and governance co-operation structures, and parliamentary training centres of excellence.

While great care needs to be taken over the involvement of the national government and national judicial bodies in parliamentary support work, such involvement does reflect the aspiration of 'joined up government' and institutional harmony which, if implemented, help enormously to promote better overall national governance.

Linking local parliamentary support goals to regional programmes may help increase national awareness of the common institutional challenges and weaknesses faced by all parliaments.

#### *National staff*

Finally, the ways in which national resources may be utilized and developed is almost infinite and there is an obligation to encourage national partners to adopt exciting and imaginative roles when engaging in parliamentary development.

National staff can act in many roles: resource staff, mentors, facilitators and committee advisors. Where capacity of national staff is limited, parliamentary support should contribute to the personal and professional development of talented national staff.



There is often unhealthy competition between parliaments, international support organizations, and governments for the services of trained and talented staff. Partners need to take a broad view of such challenges recognizing the undesirability of "hiring away" talent from national institutions. There is also a need to work to expand the general pool of trained individuals in the national interest, and that the departure of one person provides a development opportunity for another.

**Principle 8: Parliamentary support partners and parliaments commit to excellent co-ordination and communication.**

Using aid resources well is a continuing international priority.<sup>14</sup> Aid provided for parliamentary support is no different, and good co-ordination of effort and 'open door' partner communications pays dividends in improving the quality of outputs.

The interests of parliaments are clearly served by co-operation amongst support partners from different organizations, not competition. Parliamentary support partners should, therefore, engage in close co-operation to avoid duplication and cross-purposes.

The mechanisms to provide an opportunity for good 'on the ground' co-operation include:

- i) Harmonization of activities and best practice.
- ii) Promotion of a complementary approach to support and activity provision through formal and informal communication structures (regular joint meetings, information sharing, dissemination of lessons learned, reciprocal assistance, and co-ordinated activities).
- iii) Parliament-driven activities with parliament co-ordinating all partners and self-supporting the partnership process effectively.

However, meetings 'on the ground' between local partners are often insufficient to improve the delivery of activities because, too frequently, the objectives of the partners are set in headquarters. Too often, the degree of room for manoeuvre in making adjustments towards enhancing rational delivery between support partners throughout the period of support is frequently unclear, often leading to continuing inefficiencies. Traditional delivery mechanisms, programmes and projects, are themselves normally characterized by structural rigidities of objective and time.

While there are no simple solutions to the challenge of fully rationalizing support resources it is important for partners to continue promote co-operation and co-ordination both at the national and headquarters level. Parliamentary support partners must engage in regular and transparent communication amongst themselves, and with the parliament concerned. Regular meetings are important, and partners should be encouraged and support provided to them when required to take a lead in this. At headquarters level, coordination is also vital, especially where the number of partners interested in working with a particular parliament is high.

The earlier discussions are opened, and the more comprehensive the partner constituency for such discussions, the more likely it is that the opportunity for a well-targeted allocation of resources will be possible, and also that the front line supporters will be able to implement complementary and comprehensive activity packages 'on the ground'.

### **Principle 9: Parliamentary support partners act ethically and responsibly.**

Just as the design and staffing of parliamentary support activities will have a significant effect upon the success of the partnership, similarly, the ethical position of partners in carrying forward such activities bears significantly on the relative success of their work.

Parliament's role and responsibility as a national exemplar of integrity, an institution adhering to and acting upon a comprehensive and transparent code of ethics, is absolutely fundamental to its democratic purpose and has never been more needed around the world, where many countries suffer the blight of corruption.

Scrutiny of parliament from civil society and media means that apparent lapses in ethical standards are likely to erode public trust in confidence in parliament as a whole.

Parliamentary support programming has as one of its major aims the promotion of parliamentary integrity and reference may be made to relevant documents for comprehensive treatments on parliamentary ethics. It follows therefore that partners must adhere to and demonstrate the same high standards of ethical behaviour and integrity that they themselves are advocating. Parliaments and partners should be fully in step with each other in maintaining an exemplary standard of ethical and responsible behaviour. There are several aspects to ethical and responsible behaviour on the part of parliaments and parliamentary support partners.

The following examples are intended to be a helpful, though not exhaustive, illustration of the behaviour required of partners:

- i) Parliamentary support partners must adhere to principles of financial probity, especially since one of the primary purposes of parliamentary support is to improve parliamentary financial accountability and openness.
- ii) Parliamentary support activities should not be used to advance commercial interests. While for-profit players may have a role to play in parliamentary development, their activities should be limited in the interests of probity and transparency and should be driven by the goal of parliamentary support, not by a business or profit motive.
- iii) Parliamentary support activities should be inclusive of all political tendencies in the parliament.
- iv) Parliaments and parliamentary support providers should be transparent about the types of assistance received and provided. The effectiveness and efficiency of such support requires parliaments to deal fairly with all stakeholders, and not to use one against the other or seek similar assistance from multiple partners without disclosure.
- v) Parliamentary support partners should abide by the general principles embodied in the internal codes of conduct of parliaments, for example by not engaging in nepotism or other practices that are inconsistent with the standards of conduct that parliaments have defined for themselves.



- vi) Parliamentary support partners should promote the sustainable enhancement of parliament's capacities. This implies that they should avoid "hiring away" existing parliamentary staff to work for parliamentary support programmes.

Establishing parliamentary ethical codes of behaviour and ensuring good implementation is one of the most demanding, as well as an important element of parliamentary support.

Where no such parliamentary code presently exists, support partners should encourage the drafting and adoption in an inclusive and locally led process. Where a code is in place, they should consider support for its effective implementation in parliament and support partners should also set an example by adhering to the strictest norms of ethical behaviour.

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PART TWO: THE 130<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY OF THE INTERPARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU),  
16-20 MARCH, 2014

## 1. OPENING OF THE 130<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY

The 130<sup>th</sup> Assembly, held at the Geneva International Conference Centre (CICG), was officially inaugurated by the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Mr. Abdelwahad Radi, who welcomed the participants and declared the Assembly officially open. He then chaired the Assembly's deliberations.

In his opening statement, the President underscored the fact that the Assembly was a particularly special one, as it was marking the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the IPU. It was therefore only appropriate that the General Debate running throughout the Assembly would focus on the theme of **"The IPU at 125: Renewing our commitment to peace and democracy"**.

The President recalled that the IPU, founded on the fundamental precept that peace could only be achieved through dialogue, negotiation and international arbitration, had laid the groundwork for today's institutionalized multilateral cooperation. It had advocated the establishment of corresponding institutions at the intergovernmental level, which had eventually led to the creation of the United Nations, had engaged as a neutral facilitator of parliamentary diplomacy, and had helped to bridge the democracy gap in international relations.

Referring to the role of parliament in promoting peace and democracy in the world, the President stressed: "What our Founding Fathers had envisioned over a hundred years ago is still as valid and true today as ever before. History has taught us many important lessons over the years, not least that lasting peace and security can only be achieved through inclusive and participatory processes embodied in a representative and elected parliament. From the French Revolution to the Arab Spring, whose aftershocks can still be felt today, there are valuable lessons to be learned about people power".

Turning to the main issues on the Assembly agenda, the President underscored the crucial importance of parliamentary action in pursuit of a world free of nuclear weapons. He added that there was also a need for parliamentary action in the area of risk-resilient development, linked to demographic trends and natural constraints, as well as in protecting children's rights -especially the rights of unaccompanied migrant children and preventing their exploitation in situations of armed conflict. The world was rife with multiple conflicts, as in the Central African Republic, Syrian Arab Republic and Ukraine, which also needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

President Radi welcomed the participation at the inaugural ceremony of Mr. Michael Møller, Acting Director General of the United Nations Office at Geneva. It was only natural for the United Nations to join the IPU on such an auspicious occasion, given the growing strategic partnership between the two organizations in the key areas of peace, development, democracy and human rights.

President Radi paid a formal tribute to the outgoing Secretary General, enumerating his long list of accomplishments and lauding Mr. Johnsson's dedication and commitment to the IPU. He presented him with a token of appreciation in the form of a painting of the House of Parliaments, which was very much Mr. Johnsson's brainchild. "This House of stone and stained glass", he said, "will stand as a lasting reminder of the tremendous legacy you bequeath to this organization".



The leaders of the six geopolitical groups of the IPU then took the floor: Ms. M. Nasha (Botswana) on behalf of the African Group, Mr. M. Al-Ghanim (Kuwait) on behalf of the Arab Group, Ms. B. Boupha (Lao People's Democratic Republic) on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group, Ms. V. Petrenko (Russian Federation) on behalf Inter-Parliamentary Union – 130<sup>th</sup> Assembly 5 of the Eurasia Group, Mr. D. Vivas Velasco (Venezuela) on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, and Mr. R. delPicchia (France) on behalf of the Twelve Plus Group. All expressed their gratitude and deep appreciation for the tireless efforts and remarkable achievements of Mr. Johansson during his tenure as IPU Secretary General. Those included: developing an effective IPU programme for building strong democratic parliaments; transforming the IPU into a truly gender-sensitive organization; promoting the IPU's flagship gender equality programme; as well as formulating the IPU's first Strategy and shaping the parliamentary dimension which the IPU currently brought to international cooperation and to the work of the United Nations.

Acting Director General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Mr. Michael Møller observed that the United Nations continues to see on a daily basis the critical role that parliaments play in promoting a better world for all. He added that Parliaments are the voice of their constituents; they translate their needs into action. United Nations also continues to see a lack of trust in governance structures and traditional ways of doing business. This lack of trust has manifested itself in protests across the world, in some countries even in conflict and violence. The message was clear: people want responsive governments and institutions, and accountable leaders, a challenge he observed would feature prominently in the Assembly's discussions. He welcomed the IPU's promotion of greater international involvement of parliaments and paid tribute to the contribution made by the outgoing Secretary General of the IPU, Mr. Anders B. Johansson, to that process.

## 2. CHOICE OF AN EMERGENCY ITEM

*Helping to restore peace and security and consolidate democracy in the Central African Republic: The contribution of the IPU.*

The President informed the Assembly that the following four requests had been received for the inclusion of an emergency item: -

- 1) The role of parliaments and the IPU in fighting terrorism and achieving international peace and security through a peaceful political solution to the situation in Syria and respect for resolutions with international legitimacy and the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, proposed by the Syrian Arab Republic;
- 2) *Helping to restore peace and security and consolidate democracy in the Central African Republic: The contribution of the IPU*, proposed by Morocco;
- 3) Russian Federation aggression against Ukraine, proposed by Ukraine; and
- 4) The crisis in Ukraine, proposed by Canada. Canada's initial proposal, The crisis in Ukraine, had been revised to Aggression against Ukraine following consultations with Ukraine.

An emergency item previously proposed by the delegation of Uruguay on cyber warfare was withdrawn and re-submitted as a proposal for a subject item to be taken up by the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security. After taking the floor, the delegation of Ukraine decided to withdraw its proposal in favor of the revised proposal from Canada. Following a roll-call vote, the proposal put forward by Morocco was adopted and added to the agenda of the Assembly.



### 3. PARTICIPATION

Delegations from the parliaments of the following **145 countries** took part in the work of the Assembly: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Palestine, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, 1 Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The following Associate Members also took part in the Assembly: the Arab Parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), the Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Latin American Parliament (Parlatino) and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). Observers comprised representatives of: (i) the United Nations system: United Nations, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Labour Office (ILO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), World Health Organization (WHO), World Bank, Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), World Trade Organization (WTO); (ii) International Organization for Migration (IOM); (iii) African Parliamentary Union (APU), Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC), Inter-Parliamentary Union of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IPU-IGAD), Maghreb Consultative Council, Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE PA), Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic-Speaking Countries (TURKPA), Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and Russia, Confederation of Parliaments of the Americas (COPA), Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUIC); (iv) Socialist International; (v) Association for the Prevention of Torture (APT), Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), World Future Council and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND).

Of the 1,349 delegates who attended the Assembly, 705 were members of national parliaments. The parliamentarians included 47 presiding officers, 34 deputy presiding officers and 214 women (30.4%).



#### 4. 130<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY TOPICS

There were several major topics for discussion during the conference, and one emergency item which was discussed after resolutions in the Governing Council.

- i) The General Debate on The IPU at 125: *Renewing our commitment to peace and democracy*
- ii) Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: The contribution of parliaments (*First Standing Committee on Peace and International Security*)
- iii) Towards risk resilient development: Taking into consideration demographic change and natural constraints (*Second Standing Committee Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade*)
- iv) The role of parliaments in protecting the rights of children, in particular unaccompanied migrant children, and in preventing their exploitation in situations of armed conflict (*Third Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights*)
- v) Cooperation between the United Nations, National Parliaments and the IPU (*Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs*)
- vi) The Emergency Item:

#### 5. DEBATES OF THE ASSEMBLY AND ITS STANDING COMMITTEES

##### 5.1 The General Debate on The IPU at 125: *Renewing our commitment to peace and democracy*

Over three days, representatives of 97 Member Parliaments, including 34 Speakers of Parliament, and nine regional parliamentary assemblies and Observer delegations, took the floor to address the anniversary theme of the General Debate. The debate was particularly rich and substantive, concluding with a Summary by the Chair, endorsed by the membership at the last sitting of the Assembly.

In the afternoon of 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 the Speaker of the National Constituent Assembly of Tunisia, Mr. Mustafa Ben Jaafar, addressed the Assembly. It was in Tunisia that the Arab Spring had begun, and today Tunisia was succeeding in the transition to democracy. After the fall of the old regime, parliament had played a key role in leading the country out of crisis. It was parliament – the first legitimate institution – that had elected the President of the Republic, established the government, and drafted and adopted the new Constitution. That was tangible proof of the important and strategic role of parliaments in all societies aspiring to democracy and peace.

Tunisia's new Constitution, adopted by an overwhelming majority in January 2014, was one of consensus. It took account of the various groups and wide range of beliefs in Tunisian society. It met the needs of the Tunisian people and guaranteed fundamental individual and collective rights. It also guaranteed freedom of conscience and gender equality. The Constitution contained a provision guaranteeing equal representation of men and women in parliament and other elected bodies. The example set by Tunisia, in both form and substance, could well serve as an inspiration to other countries affected by the Arab Spring in their efforts to overcome the difficulties they faced.

In the morning of 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2014, the Speaker of the Senate, Parliament of the Republic of Kenya, Sen. Ekwee Ethuro, MP. addressed the Assembly. He congratulated the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) on its 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the Secretariat for organizing this 130<sup>th</sup> Assembly. He observed that over the past 125 years, the IPU has achieved a number of important milestones and without doubt has been able to achieve its set objectives of among others, being the focal point for world parliamentary dialogue working for peace and co-operation among peoples and for the establishment of representative democracy in all countries of the world. He expressed Kenya's appreciation to the outgoing Secretary General for his invaluable contribution towards the union.

He also observed that in 2010, Kenya adopted one of the most progressive constitutions in the world. Among the highlights of this Constitution, is a comprehensive Bill of Rights which provides for among others rights and fundamental freedoms; to life, equality and freedom from discrimination, human dignity, freedom and security of persons, privacy, freedom of expression, conscience, religion, belief and opinion, access to information, political rights and access to justice. Further, the Constitution provides for non-discrimination on the basis of gender, age, race, color and political affiliation.

With regard to representation the Constitution provides for adequate safeguards in the democratization process with regard to representation by women at both the National and County legislative units, the youth, persons with disability and other special interest groups.

The Constitution further provides for Constitutional Commission and Independent Offices which are *independent* and not subject to the direction or control by any person or authority in the governance of the country. The objectives of these Commissions and Independent Offices are to protect the sovereignty of the people, secure the observance by all state organs of democratic values and principles, promotion of constitutionalism.

As a Parliament, Kenya has taken deliberate steps to enact legislation with regard to the promotion of democracy and human rights of persons. Such legislation include, the Sexual Offences Act to protect the rights of persons against rape, pornography and other sexual offences, the Internally Displaced Persons Act to protect the rights of women, children and vulnerable groups in times of internal turmoil, arising out of the 2007/08 post-election violence, the Anti-Female Genital Mutilation Act to protect the rights of women and girls against female genital mutilation and the Political Parties Act to provide for the registration, regulation and funding of activities of political parties.

He added that the Constitution provides for the safeguards of the interests of the common citizen by providing for public participation in the legislation process by ensuring that Parliament invites interested members of the public to submit any representations that they may have on the on any legislation and any other business of Parliament and its Committees. This not only strengthens democracy but further enhances transparency and accountability.

Sen. Ekwee Ethuro, MP. urged delegates not to forget the struggle towards peace and sustainable democracy in the greater Eastern African Region with respect to the people in Somalia and South Sudan. He noted that Kenya was instrumental in the negotiations that brought about the Comprehensive Peace Agreement which resulted in the independence of South Sudan in 2011. With regard to Somalia, Kenya has been instrumental in the stabilization process of Somalia through its contribution to the AMISOM forces and the establishment of governance and administrative structures in that country.



He called upon the membership of the IPU to assist the efforts already exhibited by a number of countries in assisting the people of Somalia and South Sudan to achieve lasting peace and stability.

In conclusion, he said that the Parliament of Kenya will continue to fully support the all the activities of IPU in sustaining our commitment to peace and democracy in member states.

In the morning of 18 March, IOM Director General, Mr. William Lacy Swing, addressed the Assembly as part of the series of open debates organized by the IPU with heads of UN specialized agencies and other international organizations. Mr. Swing delivered a passionate and compelling presentation on why migration was inevitable, necessary and – if managed well – desirable. He underscored how migration, historically, had been an overwhelmingly positive process: providing an engine for growth in the ageing societies of the North, ensuring an essential inflow of money in the form of remittances for the countries in the South, and generally becoming an undeniable trend of the 21st century. Mr. Swing gave a frank account of the challenges that needed to be addressed: the forced migration from areas of conflict such as the Central African Republic, South Sudan and Syria, or from countries struck by major natural disasters, such as Haiti and the Philippines, the danger faced by migrants in their journey to new destinations, and the rise in anti-immigration sentiment in many countries, fostered by an appalling lack of political leadership. Mr. Swing then engaged in an interactive debate with participants, focusing on what parliamentarians could do to better address the inevitable reality of migration.

## 5.2 The Standing Committee on International Peace and Security – The First Standing Committee

### *Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: The contribution of parliaments*

The Committee held two sittings, on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 with its President, Mr. S.H. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), in the Chair. Along with the explanatory memorandum and draft resolution prepared by the co-Rapporteurs, Ms. Y. Ferrer Gómez (Cuba) and Mr. B. Calkins (Canada), the Committee had before it amendments to the draft resolution submitted by the following delegations: Canada, China, Cuba, France, Hungary, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Mongolia, Russian Federation, Switzerland, Turkey, Venezuela and Senator María de los Angeles Higonet of Argentina.

At the beginning of the first sitting, the two co-Rapporteurs presented the explanatory memorandum and the draft resolution, which they had jointly prepared. The Committee heard a presentation by the Executive Secretary of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission, Mr. L. Zerbo. A total of 29 speakers from various parliaments took the floor during the discussion, after which the Committee appointed a drafting committee comprising representatives of the following countries: Bahrain, Canada, Cuba, France, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Mali, New Zealand, Pakistan, Russian Federation, South Africa, Venezuela and Zambia. The co-Rapporteurs participated in the work of the drafting committee in an advisory capacity.

The drafting committee met in the afternoon of 17 March and the morning of 18 March. It appointed Mr. K. Graham (New Zealand) as chairperson and Ms. C. Guittet (France) as rapporteur. It considered 77 amendments, some of which it adopted.

The Standing Committee considered the consolidated draft at its afternoon sitting on 18 March. Several delegations took the floor to express their support for the text and to propose that it be adopted by acclamation, which the Committee followed. Reservations were expressed at that stage by the delegations of Cuba, India, Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. The Committee also agreed to the proposal that the rapporteur of the drafting committee present the draft resolution to the Assembly.

The draft resolution was submitted to the Assembly at its plenary sitting in the afternoon of 20 March, and adopted by consensus. Reservations were expressed by the delegations of India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and the Russian Federation.

In line with the new Rules of the Standing Committees, the 18 members of the Bureau of the Standing Committee on International Peace and Security were elected at the sitting on 17 March 2014. The Bureau met on 18 March to choose the Committee's next subject item and discuss its work plan. It had before it a document on the activities which the Committee was proposing to carry out during Assemblies at which no resolution was adopted. Of the four proposed subject items before it, the Bureau chose *Cyber warfare – A serious threat to peace and global security*. This proposal was subsequently approved by the Standing Committee as a whole and by the Assembly.

With regard to the Standing Committee's work plan, the Bureau decided to devote three hours during the 131st IPU Assembly to an interactive panel discussion on cyber warfare. However, it preferred to defer its decision on which activities to organize during the remaining time of three hours.

Lastly, the Bureau discussed the election of the President and the Vice-President of the Committee. Mr. G. Schneeman (South Africa) was appointed President, with the vice-presidency being held by the Arab Group. The Standing Committee on International Peace and Security approved the Bureau's proposals.

### 5.3 The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade – The Second Standing Committee

#### *Towards risk resilient development: Taking into consideration demographic change and natural constraints*

The Committee held sittings on 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 with its Vice-President, Mr. F.-X. de Donnea (Belgium), in the chair. On 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2014, the Committee elected the new Bureau, which consisted of 16 members. Two positions remained vacant, for the Eurasia (a woman member) and Asia-Pacific Groups. On the same day, 31 speakers took the floor in the plenary debate on the subject item. The Committee also heard a presentation by Ms. M. Wahlström, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, about preparations for the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

Senator Catherine Mukiite from Senate of Kenya Parliament observed that disaster risk-resilient development is not only about protecting people's lives and livelihoods, but also about social,



economic and environmental sustainability, aiming to reduce socio-economic vulnerabilities to natural hazards. It is about building social economic and environmental resilience through systematic integration of disaster risk reduction into overall development planning, policy and programs.

Disaster risk-resilient development requires a clear paradigm shift from a risk-insensitive development model to a risk-sensitive one, with disaster risk assessment recognized as a prerequisite for development planning. Disaster reduction must be integral part of development planning, policy and programs. By so doing, development will avoid generating new risks for people and communities by building instead their resilience to disasters.

The Senator added that resilience, the central goal of disaster risk reduction, is now becoming a guiding concept for the post-2015 development agenda as the global community plans beyond the Millennium Development Goals. The year 2015 offers a golden opportunity to strengthen the development agenda through a more explicit commitment to disaster risk reduction. More needs to be done to prioritize action on disaster risk-resilient development of dire humanitarian and economic and environmental consequences are to be avoided.

Countries should place both disaster risk reduction and governance at the centre of disaster risk-resilient development, with increased political commitment and financial investment in the post-2015 development agenda, and a clear focus on family planning and population dynamics. Parliament's role includes legislation and allocation of more funds towards risk resilient development.

The Committee started its deliberations on the draft resolution on 19 March. In addition to the explanatory memorandum and the draft resolution prepared by the co-Rapporteurs, Mr. S.H. Chowdhury (Bangladesh) and Mr. P. Mahoux (Belgium), the Committee had before it 42 amendments to the draft resolution submitted by Bahrain, Canada, China, Finland, France, Germany, India, Jordan, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, and five amendments proposed by the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians. It adopted about two thirds of the amendments either in full or in part. Kenya delegation was in full support of the draft resolution.

The Committee examined the consolidated draft resolution and adopted the text as a whole on the morning of 20 March. In the afternoon of the same day, the draft resolution was submitted to the Assembly, which adopted it unanimously.

The Bureau of the Committee met on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2014. It proposed that the current President, Mr. R. León (Chile), continue to serve in that position and that Mr. O. Hav (Denmark) become the new Vice-President. The Bureau's recommendation was subsequently approved by the full Committee.

The Bureau also examined the proposals submitted for the item to be debated by the Committee at the 132nd Assembly. It proposed the subject item *Shaping a new system of water governance: Promoting parliamentary action on water*, which was subsequently approved by the plenary Committee and the Assembly for inclusion in the agenda of the 132nd Assembly. The Assembly appointed one co-Rapporteur, Mr. J. Mwiimbu (Zambia), and asked the Secretariat to hold consultations with the members in order to identify the second, possibly from the North.

The Bureau proposed, and the full Committee agreed, that part of the Committee's work at the 131st Assembly be linked to the World Investment Forum, which would be convened by the

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva at the same time. The Secretariat was asked to start preparations to that end in cooperation with UNCTAD.

#### 5.4 The Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights - The Third Standing Committee

*The role of parliaments in protecting the rights of children, in particular unaccompanied migrant children, and in preventing their exploitation in situations of armed conflict.*

The Committee held sittings on 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2015 with its President, Mr. O. Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu (Ghana), in the chair. At its first sitting, the draft resolution on *The role of parliaments in protecting the rights of children, in particular unaccompanied migrant children, and in preventing their exploitation in situations of war and conflict* was presented to the Committee by the co-Rapporteurs, Ms. J. Nassif (Bahrain) and Ms. G. Cuevas Barrón (Mexico). In the ensuing debate, 34 speakers took the floor, of whom 14 (41%) were women.

The Committee started its deliberations on the text of the draft resolution on 18 March. It had before it 62 amendments submitted by seven parliaments (Argentina, Canada, Finland, France, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland), and six amendments proposed by the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians. It adopted a significant proportion of the amendments and made further sub-amendments during the drafting process. Among the amendments adopted by the Committee was a proposal to modify the title of the resolution, by replacing the words “in situations of war and conflict” by “in situations of armed conflict”.

The Committee examined the revised draft resolution and adopted the text by consensus at its final sitting on 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2014.

The revised draft resolution was presented to the Assembly on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 by the Committee’s Rapporteur, Ms. J. Nassif (Bahrain). The Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution, including the modification to the title.

At its first sitting on 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 the Committee elected the members of its Bureau for a two-year term, based on the nominations provided by the geopolitical groups. The new Bureau consisted of 17 members: nine women and eight men. The position for a male member from the Eurasia Group remained vacant. The Hon. David Pkosing, Member of the Kenya National Assembly was elected to the Bureaux. The Hon. David Pkosing, M.P. is the Member for Pokot South Constituency and a Member of the Departmental Committee on Defence and Foreign Relations.

The newly elected Bureau met in the morning of 19 March to consider nominations for the President and Vice-President of the Committee, and proposals for the subject item for the 131st Assembly.

The Bureau nominated Ms. F. Naderi (Afghanistan) as President of the Committee and Mr. J. Galán Pachón (Colombia) as Vice-President. The nominations were unanimously approved by the Committee at its final sitting in the afternoon of 19 March.



The Bureau proposed three subject items for the 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly to the Committee at its last sitting. The Committee voted to adopt the proposal made by the United Arab Emirates, on *International law as it relates to national sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and human rights*, and to appoint Mr. A. J. Ahmad (United Arab Emirates) as co-Rapporteur.

The Assembly confirmed the Committee's choice of subject item, and appointed Mr. P. Mahoux (Belgium) as the second co-Rapporteur.

## 5.5 The Committee on United Nations Affairs

The Committee met in plenary session in the morning of 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 under the chairmanship of its outgoing President, Mr. M. Traoré (Burkina Faso). It elected its new Bureau from among the candidatures submitted by the geopolitical groups. Sen. Catherine Mukite, a Senator in the Parliament of the Republic of Kenya was elected to the Bureau. She is a nominated Senator and is a Member of the Departmental Committees on Finance, Commerce and Budget; and Health in the Senate. The Bureau later elected Ms. D.-T. Avgerinopoulou (Greece) as the Committee President and Mr. M. El Hassan El Amin (Sudan) as Vice-President.

The Committee commenced its session with a keynote address by Mr. M. Møller, Acting Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, on cooperation between the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU. In the ensuing interactive debate, the participants highlighted the good practices developed thus far and the opportunities to further strengthen the partnership between the two organizations.

The Committee also examined the relationship between parliaments and UN Country Teams at the national level. It heard a presentation by the Committee President and the Speaker of the Haitian Senate, Mr. S. Desras, of the main findings of a field mission to Haiti recently undertaken by the Committee Advisory Group. The recommendations formulated as a result had highlighted the specific needs for political dialogue and a fully functional institution of parliament in the country. The mission report would be shared with the Government of Haiti and the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), and the IPU would continue to examine how best to support the parliament of Haiti during the process ahead.

The Committee next examined the draft UN General Assembly resolution on interaction between the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU, a stand-alone agenda item to be taken up by the UN General Assembly during its current session. The draft would serve as a basis for the intergovernmental consultations convened at UN Headquarters in New York by the Permanent Mission of Morocco, as the country holding the IPU Presidency. The Committee proposed a few further improvements to the text and encouraged all Member Parliaments to actively engage with their Foreign Ministries and Permanent Missions to the United Nations, so as to secure the broadest possible support for a strong consensus on the resolution in May.

The Committee discussed the parliamentary contribution to the UN process of devising the next generation of development goals. The topic was introduced by Mr. F. Bustamante (Ecuador), Mr. D. McGuinty (Canada) and Mr. C. Chauvel (UNDP) and sparked a robust debate among Committee members.

The Report of the Committee was presented by Mr. M. Traoré to the Assembly at its last sitting in the afternoon of 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2014.

## 6. DEBATE ON THE EMERGENCY ITEM

### *Helping to restore peace and security and consolidate democracy in the Central African Republic: The contribution of the IPU.*

The debate on the emergency item was held in the afternoon of Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> March, with the President of the 130<sup>th</sup> Assembly and of the IPU, Mr. A. Radi, in the Chair. Mr. T.-B. Gurirab (Namibia), former President of the IPU, replaced him in the middle of the debate.

Ten speakers took the floor during the debate. They voiced deep concern about the major humanitarian crisis in the Central African Republic and deplored the horrific violence being inflicted on civilians, in particular children, the elderly and women. That violence took the form of shameful and unacceptable ethnic and religious cleansing. The situation was desperate and risked spreading to neighbouring countries, or even the entire region.

Calling for the immediate cessation of the hostilities, the speakers deplored the fact that cruelty was supplanting humanity and emphasized the urgent need to ensure that all people had a place where they could live in peace.

They also deplored the fact that too few peacekeepers had been deployed too late to resolve the crisis and called for more peacekeeping troops to be committed to the military operation. The international troops on the ground had to remain neutral, however. Another, equally important priority was the provision of basic necessities, such as food, shelter and security. The African Union and the international community had to mobilize adequate funds in support of the Central African Republic; at present, only 50 per cent of the resources pledged had been made available.

Some of the participants shared long borders with the Central African Republic. They emphasized that the flood of refugees was affecting neighbouring countries as well and that the ensuing crisis might destabilize the entire region. Others said that they did not have means to assist the refugees without international support.

The delegation of Morocco, which had submitted the draft resolution, then took the floor. It echoed the concerns expressed and urged parliamentarians to think about what they could do to help the Central African Republic restore normality and bring the refugees home. It warned that the situation was barbarous beyond description, on a par with the ethnic cleansing in Rwanda, and appealed to the international community, including the United Nations and the European Union, to free up funds in support of the Central African Republic and help it organize free and fair elections with a view to restoring democracy.

The Assembly referred the emergency item to a drafting committee made up of representatives of Cambodia, Chad, Finland, France, Germany, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Senegal, Sudan, Uruguay and Zimbabwe. The drafting committee appointed Ms. T. Mushelenga (Namibia) as its chair and rapporteur. It met on 19 March to finalize the draft resolution.



At its last sitting, on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 the Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution.

## 7. 194TH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

### 7.1 Election of the Secretary General

At its sitting on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 the Council heard a brief presentation by the following three candidates for the post of Secretary General of the IPU proposed by the Executive Committee: Mr. Martin Chungong (IPU Deputy Secretary General), Ms. Shazia Rafi (Pakistan) and Mr. Geert Versnick (Belgium). A vote was held by secret ballot, with the following results:

Total number of ballots: 352  
Blank or void ballots: 0  
Valid ballots: 352  
Absolute majority: 177  
Votes obtained:  
Mr. Martin Chungong: 199  
Ms. Shazia Rafi: 79  
Mr. Geert Versnick: 74.

Mr. Martin Chungong was accordingly elected Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union for a period of four years commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2014 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

### 7.2 Cooperation with the United Nations system

The Council took note of the activities undertaken in cooperation with the United Nations system since the 129<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly. One delegate took the floor to urge greater involvement by the IPU in support of the global climate change agreement to be adopted in 2015.

The Council was informed of preparations for the debate in the United Nations General Assembly in May 2014 on cooperation between the United Nations, national parliaments and the IPU. The Executive Committee and the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs had reviewed and finalized a draft resolution that would be proposed to UN Member States for adoption by the UN General Assembly. The Council urged delegates to mobilize support from their respective governments by inviting them formally to sponsor the resolution.

### 7.3 Implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2012-2017

The Council took note of the report of the Executive Committee and endorsed its recommendations, presented by Ms. S. Ataullahjan (Canada), on the external mid-term evaluation of the IPU Strategy for 2012-2017.

The Council was informed of the preparations being made to develop a common set of principles for practitioners in the field of parliamentary strengthening. The principles would be refined at a meeting of some of the main parliaments and organizations active in that field and submitted for

endorsement by Member Parliaments in the course of the 131st IPU Assembly (Geneva, October 2014).

#### 7.4 Amendments to the Statutes and Rules

As a follow-up to the series of amendments to the Statutes and Rules approved at its 193rd session with a view to modifying the format of IPU Assemblies, improving the functioning of the Standing Committees and their Bureaux, and placing the IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs on an equal footing with the Standing Committees, the Council approved amendments to the Rules of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians and the Rules and Practices of the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians. The Council also approved the Rules and Working Modalities of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU.

### 8. MEETING AND COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

The Nineteenth Meeting of Women Parliamentarians took place on 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2014. A total of 103 women from 81 countries attended. The President of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, Ms. N. Ali Assegaf (Indonesia), chaired the Meeting's session on 16 March, which was opened by the IPU President, Mr. A. Radi.

Ms. Assegaf briefly summed up the work carried out by the Committee at its previous two sessions, which included preparations for the contribution of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians to the 130th Assembly and the hearing of the candidates for the post of IPU Secretary General.

The Meeting adopted amendments to its Rules and those of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians, reflecting the fact that the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians would henceforth convene at each IPU Assembly.

The participants heard a presentation on *Women in Politics: 2014*, a map produced jointly by the IPU and UN Women, and on progress and setbacks with regard to women's participation in parliament in 2013. While welcoming the progress made (the global average proportion of women in parliament had reached 21.8% by the end of 2013), they emphasized that several obstacles continued to hamper women's participation in politics, including education, political and electoral culture, economic inequality and difficulties related to election campaign funding.

As its contribution to the Assembly, the Meeting considered the following Standing Committee agenda items from a gender perspective:

- i) *Towards risk-resilient development: Taking into consideration demographic trends and natural constraints* (Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade); and
- ii) *The role of parliaments in protecting the rights of children, in particular unaccompanied migrant children, and in preventing their exploitation in situations of war and conflict* (Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights).

The participants then split into two discussion groups, one per topic. The first group was chaired by Ms. B. Amongi (Uganda), who also acted as rapporteur; the second was chaired by Ms. S. Moulengui-Mouélé (Gabon). Ms. L. Alansari (Saudi Arabia) was elected as rapporteur. In the first working group, the subject was introduced by Mr. P. Mahoux (Belgium), co-Rapporteur of the



Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade, while Ms. G. Cuevas Barrón (Mexico) and Ms. J. Nassif (Bahrain), co-Rapporteurs of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, addressed the members of the second discussion group.

Each group's report gave rise to proposed amendments to the draft resolutions of both Standing Committees. All of the proposed amendments were incorporated into the draft resolutions.

The afternoon session included a panel discussion on "*What priorities for women in the next ten years?*" The event began with statements by Ms. A. van Miltenburg, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Netherlands, Ms. F. Diendéré Diallo, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Burkina Faso, Ms. N. Chaabane, Member of the National Constituent Assembly of Tunisia, Ms. P. Cayetano, Philippines Senator, and Mr. A.B. Johnsson, the IPU Secretary General. Journalist Gunilla von Hall moderated the discussion, inviting participants to identify three areas on which to focus their work in the coming years.

Women accounted for more than half of the world's population but remained by far the most disadvantaged group in all spheres of life. They also had the largest untapped potential for progress. The current discussion of the post-2015 development agenda offered a significant opportunity to ensure that gender equality was a central component of the new development framework. It was therefore important to ensure that women's voices were heard. The discussion identified the following main priorities: ensuring respect for women's fundamental rights, eliminating violence against women and girls, improving women's enjoyment of economic rights and their economic emancipation, overcoming stereotypes and strengthening women's participation in politics.

The Hon. Alice Wahome, Member of the Kenya Parliament on behalf the delegation identified the following three (3) priorities for Kenya women in the next ten (10) years:

*i. Equality and Freedom from all forms of discrimination*

She observed that the two-thirds gender principal in the Kenyan Constitution that provides that no more than two-thirds of members of the same gender shall occupy elective or public appointments should be implemented.

In Kenya Parliament, there are 86 women both nominated and elected in the National Assembly and the Senate, which is 26% falling short of the gender quarter of 33.3%. There was need to amend Kenya's electoral laws to have a mechanism in place to assist women be elected or nominated to parliament.

The Hon. Alice Wahome, M.P. also observed that there was need ensure women are represented in all decision making platforms. In addition, there was need to enact the Marriage Bill, 2014 into law to give women more voice in matters relating to marriage. Further, there is also need to ensure that the electoral laws enforce the electoral conduct and punish electoral violence against women.

She added that women elected in Parliament and County Assemblies must be facilitated through training and availing resources for their programmes so as enable them remain relevant and make in the Constituencies/Counties

*ii. Economic Empowerment*

The Hon. Alice Wahome, M.P. observed that Kenya is addressing the economic empowerment of women through creation of three (3) funds that are giving money/capital to women without requiring the traditional collaterals asked by the commercial banks. The funds are *Uwezo*, Women Enterprise, and the Youth Funds (for Youth, Men and Women)

The Country is also supporting the informal self-help women groups to access money for various economic activities.

In addition, all the 86 women parliamentarians will access some funding raised by H. E. the President to support projects at their Constituencies/Counties. Further, 30% of all procurement from Government procuring agencies tenders and contracts will be awarded to women and youth. The evaluation of women business companies shall apply a genders/youth sensitive or responsive approach.

*iii. Maternal and Child Mortality*

This aims at eliminating maternal and child deaths to zero. The First lady H. E. Margaret Kenyatta has taken up this as a project and is fund raising on the same. H. E. targets to purchase mobile clinics/vans to cater for maternal health services for each of the 47 counties.

Towards elimination of child/maternal mortality by 201, the Government has introduced free maternal services for mothers delivering at government health facilities since 2013.

At the end of the discussion, the Meeting paid tribute to Mr. Johnsson and underscored the exceptional work he had done during his mandate to strengthen the role of women in the IPU and in parliaments, and to mainstream the gender perspective into the structure, functioning and work of the organization.

The Meeting then heard the candidates for the post of IPU Secretary General, in order, among other things, to obtain a better understanding of the role that gender issues would play in the new Secretary General's programme.

The second session of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, on Tuesday, 18 March, was dedicated to the election of the regional representatives on the Coordinating Committee and its Bureau. The session was chaired by Ms. B. Amongi (Uganda). The election results are provided on page 23. Ms. M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia) was elected as President of the Committee, Ms. U. Karlsson (Sweden) as First Vice-President and Ms. F. Al Farsi (Oman) as Second Vice-President.

The newly composed Coordinating Committee met on 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2014. It began preparations for the next Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and discussed its contribution to several ongoing projects being carried out by the IPU Gender Partnership Group.<sup>7</sup>

## 9. CONCLUDING SESSION

At the closure of the Assembly, representatives of all the geopolitical groups took the floor to reiterate their support for and commitment to the IPU. They underscored the important work that the IPU carried out both at the national level - in support of parliaments and in developing



standards for democratic practice - and at the international level, bringing the voice of parliaments and parliamentarians to major processes such as the negotiations on the next generation of development goals. They also congratulated Mr. Martin Chungong on his election as Secretary General of the IPU, and expressed their confidence in his ability to build on the excellent work of his predecessor and take the IPU to new heights.

President Radi, in turn, thanked all the Members for their hard work during what was undeniably a very successful Assembly. A new President of the IPU would be elected at the 131st Assembly in October 2014, but in the meantime, he was looking forward to working closely with both the outgoing and incoming Secretary General and securing a smooth transition process.

## 10. OTHER MEETINGS

### 10.1 Panel discussion on promoting the child's best interest: The case of migrant children

Although migration could be a positive experience for children, affording them access to a better quality of life, migrant children faced considerable challenges that they struggled to overcome because of their young age, and which made them particularly vulnerable. In order to protect the best interests of the child, therefore, all activities, including at parliamentary level, should be conducted with a view to supporting those children through the various stages of their journey as migrants.

With that in mind, a panel discussion was held in which about 60 parliamentarians and parliamentary advisers participated.

The aims of the discussion were to:

- i. inform parliamentarians about current migratory movements of children, the opportunities and difficulties involved in migration and the measures needed to provide a better future for migrant children;
- ii. exchange views on how parliaments and parliamentarians could meet the challenges posed by child migration, particularly by exercising their legislative, policymaking and oversight authority; and
- iii. discuss various ways of mobilizing parliamentarians around the world, sharing best practices and promoting cooperation between parliamentarians, on the one hand, and between parliaments and other relevant players, on the other.

The panel discussion was moderated by Ms. A.G. Guevara (Mexico), Chairperson of the Committee on Immigration in the Mexican Parliament. The panellists were Ms. A. Fonseca, Chief Adviser, Migrant Assistance Division, IOM, Mr. D. Ponet, Parliamentary Specialist, UNICEF, and Mr. R. Widmer, Director, International Social Service, Switzerland, who had been invited to take part in the discussion in their capacity as experts.

The participants talked about recent developments in migration flows. Of the 33 million migrants in the world aged under 20, 11 million were between 15 and 19 years old, and 9 million were

between 10 and 14 years old. Those statistics, however, did not give a clear idea of the number of unaccompanied minors.

In order to define the measures to be taken in countries of destination and countries of origin, the participants began by discussing the main challenges faced during the various stages of migration.

In countries of destination, participants considered it would be useful to take the following measures:

- i. adapt protection, shelter and care assistance;
- ii. identify guardians;
- iii. strengthen child protection systems;
- iv. find out the age of the children hosted; and
- v. strengthen cooperation with countries of origin in order to increase the success of searches for family members.

In countries of origin, the following measures would be useful:

- i. guarantee protection to nationals abroad and to returning migrant children;
- ii. establish local centres for children; and
- iii. ensure sustainable reintegration, taking account of the age of those concerned.

At the end of the discussion, the participants agreed to recommend that parliaments should:

- i. adopt laws granting access to basic services for all children;
- ii. make the necessary budget allocations relevant to those laws;
- iii. oversee respect for international commitments;
- iv. organize forums for discussion and sharing of best practices at international level;
- v. pay greater attention to the needs of migrant children in development programmes;
- vi. set clear standards and guidelines for guardians; and
- vii. encourage greater cooperation between countries of destination and countries of origin, in order to find appropriate responses and comprehensive solutions.

## **10.2 Panel discussion on Reasons for the high turnover of parliamentarians at elections**

The panel discussion opened with remarks by Mr. A. Burt (United Kingdom) and Ms. M.-A. Rose (Seychelles), after which the participants discussed the reasons for the high turnover of parliamentarians and the consequences thereof during an exchange of views moderated by Mr. J.C. Mahía (Uruguay).

Only a few decades ago, it was anticipated that elected officials entering parliament would stay there. Parliamentarians also had a better image. Today, they were less likely to become “institutionalized”. Many chose not to run for a second term because of the complexity of the job. Others chose to serve one or two terms as part of a more diverse career path. The face of parliamentarians was also changing, with new people from outside the political class – actors, and sports personalities – entering parliament.

Citizens had far higher expectations of parliamentarians than before, particularly at the local level. Technology, in particular social media, was reshaping the political world. Constituents could use social media to make their voices heard to a wider audience. The political debate was shifting



towards citizen responsibility, as parliamentarians seldom took bold or unpopular decisions for the good of the people, for fear that they would not be re-elected.

Driven in part by social media, more parliamentarians were finding themselves responding to their constituents' expectations by making promises they were unable to keep. Politicians competing for votes might lead the public to believe that they could achieve what the opposition had not. It was important to strike a balance between responsibility, change and the ability to deliver on promises. Parliamentarians had fewer tools than executives for implementing policy and therefore had greater difficulty keeping their promises.

Political parties also played a role in the turnover of parliamentarians. They tended to put forward candidates according to their "winability", nominating those less likely to win, in particular women, for riskier seats.

The discussion also covered women's participation in politics, particularly in parliament. Many parliaments were introducing quotas or other mechanisms to promote women's participation. Even with those mechanisms, however, women parliamentarians frequently decided not to run after completing their first term, inter alia because, even in a world seeking greater equality, women continued to bear the brunt at home. In addition, parliamentary procedures were often not in women's favour.

The participants also considered the advantages and disadvantages of the turnover in parliamentarians. The advantages included a representative parliament that more closely mirrored society, greater participation by women and young people, representation of diverse ideas and views, fresh perspectives and different attitudes, and an enhanced capacity for reform and procedural change. One example given was the reinforcement of parliamentary committees, which had previously been established by the whips but were now elected by the parliamentarians themselves.

The participants nevertheless struck a cautionary note: high turnover could lead to a loss of experience and a less effective institution. Moreover, while the arrival of a fresh intake of parliamentarians provided the opportunity to examine long-standing practices, it was equally important to uphold some of the structures and traditions that were essential to the work of parliament.

Several participants spoke about the importance of a strong institution to serve parliamentarians, including a professional and neutral cadre of parliamentary officials.

The moderator concluded his summary of the discussion by quoting a Chilean philosopher: "The future is not what it used to be."

## 11. RESOLUTIONS AND OUTCOME DOCUMENTS OF THE 130TH ASSEMBLY INTER PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU)

## 11.1 The Standing Committee on International Peace and Security– The First Standing Committee

### Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: The contribution of parliaments

*Resolution adopted by consensus by the 130th IPU Assembly in Geneva, on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2014*

The 130th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

*Convinced* of the need to achieve and maintain a nuclear-weapon-free world,

*Affirming* the key role of parliaments and parliamentarians in addressing nuclear risks and building the legislative and political framework needed to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world,

*Recalling* previous IPU resolutions on the disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, in particular the resolution adopted by the 120th IPU Assembly (Addis Ababa, April 2009),

*Noting with grave concern* that more than 17,000 nuclear weapons exist worldwide, constituting a serious threat to international peace and security, and that any use of nuclear weapons, whether by accident, miscalculation or intent, would have devastating humanitarian and environmental consequences,

*Welcoming* the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo, Norway, in 2013 and in Narayit, Mexico, in February 2014, and the conference to be held in Vienna, Austria, in 2014,

*Underscoring* the mutually reinforcing nature of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation,

*Recognizing* the importance of the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which embodies the international consensus on the need to pursue the interrelated pillars of disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy,

*Reaffirming* that all States must ensure compliance with their nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation obligations, especially those under the Non-Proliferation Treaty,

*Also reaffirming* the nuclear disarmament obligations of nuclear-weapon States under Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, notably to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to urgent cessation of the nuclear arms race and to nuclear disarmament, and the obligation of all NPT States Parties to pursue negotiations on general and complete disarmament,

*Mindful* of the 64-point Action Plan adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which, inter alia, “calls on all nuclear-weapon States to undertake concrete disarmament efforts and affirms that all States need to make special efforts to establish the necessary framework to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons”,

*Noting* its strong support for the essential work of the International Atomic Energy Agency and for the universal implementation of its system of safeguard agreements and their additional protocols as essential tools for strengthening the non-proliferation regime,

*Also noting* its strong support for the work of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and its monitoring system,



*Further* noting the partial contribution made by unilateral and bilateral disarmament initiatives, reaffirming the continued importance and relevance of multilateral frameworks and action, and underlining the urgent need for progress,

*Noting* the United Nations Secretary-General's five-point proposal for nuclear disarmament and his address on nuclear disarmament, of the opening Public Plenary of the Conference on Disarmament, held on 21 January 2014,

*Also noting* the New START Treaty and efforts made by the Russian Federation and the United States of America to implement it,

*Affirming* the key role of the Conference on Disarmament in the negotiation of multilateral agreements to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world,

*Acknowledging* the significant contribution made by a number of countries to realizing the objective of nuclear disarmament by establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones and voluntarily renouncing nuclear weapon programmes or withdrawing all nuclear weapons from their territories,

*Affirming* that all States must ensure unconditional respect for such nuclear-weapon-free zones,  
*Welcoming* the first ever High-Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament, held on 26 September 2013,

*Encouraged* by the emergence of other multilateral initiatives, including the United Nations General Assembly's decision to establish a group of governmental experts to begin discussion of possible elements of a fissile material cut-off treaty and to set up the United Nations Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations,

*Welcoming* the Geneva interim agreement of 24 November 2013 between the Islamic Republic of Iran, on the one hand, and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and Germany, on the other, which paves the way for the gradual lifting of economic sanctions against the Islamic Republic in exchange for an in-depth review of its nuclear programme; *inviting* all the parties to the agreement to apply all its provisions faithfully and speedily,

*Determined* to work with governments and civil society to generate and mobilize the political will needed to achieve a world without nuclear weapons,

1. *Calls on* all Member Parliaments and parliamentarians to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as objectives of the highest priority and urgency;
2. *Encourages* parliamentarians to engage in dialogue and to build multiparty networks and coalitions at all levels in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation;
3. *Appeals* to parliamentarians to educate citizens and raise awareness about the continuing dangers of nuclear weapons and the need for and benefits of their total elimination;
4. *Calls on* all parliamentarians to promote and commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons each year on 26 September, in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 68/32;

5. *Calls on* parliaments to encourage their governments to advance the goal of a sustainable nuclear-weapon-free world in all appropriate international forums and treaty bodies and to take the necessary concrete steps to that end;
6. *Calls for* the universalization of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and *appeals* to parliaments to ensure that States that have not signed and ratified the Treaty do so without further delay or any conditions;
7. *Highlights* the importance of securing the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and *urges* those States identified in Annex 2 of the Treaty, in particular nuclear weapon States, that have not yet done so to accelerate the process of signing and ratifying it, as a matter of priority and an indication of their political will and commitment to international peace and security, and in the meantime to respect their moratoria on nuclear tests;
8. *Calls on* all States to refrain from conducting any kind of nuclear weapon test;
9. *Stresses* the need for parliamentarians to work with their governments to ensure full compliance with all provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and all commitments under the 2000 NPT Review Conference (the 13 practical steps) and the 2010 NPT Review Conference (the Action Plan);
10. *Calls on* parliaments to work together and with governments and civil society to build momentum for a constructive NPT Review Conference in 2015;
11. *Urges* parliaments to strengthen the safety of all nuclear materials, including those intended for military use, notably by monitoring the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), and by ensuring the ratification of relevant multilateral treaties such as the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and its 2005 Amendment;
12. *Calls on* parliaments in States that have not yet done so to bring into force, as soon as possible, a comprehensive safeguards agreement and additional protocol, which, together, constitute essential elements of the International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards system;
13. *Calls on* parliamentarians to use all available tools, including committees, closely to monitor national implementation of the above commitments, including by scrutinizing legislation, budgets and progress reports;
14. *Recommends* that parliaments urge their governments to start negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention or on a package of agreements to help achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world, as outlined in the United Nations Secretary-General's five-point proposal and noted in the 2010 NPT Review Conference Action Plan;
15. *Also recommends* that parliaments urge their governments to start multilateral negotiations on a verifiable, robust, non-discriminatory and multilateral treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;
16. *Encourages* parliaments in States possessing nuclear weapons to demand, in keeping with Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, deeper and faster action on disarmament and increased transparency



from their governments in relation to nuclear weapons arsenals, stockpiled fissile material, and information on related programmes and spending;

17. *Invites* parliaments, pending a fissile material cut-off treaty, to encourage their governments who have not yet done so to establish a moratorium on the production of fissile material by unilaterally ceasing such production and dismantling their production facilities;
18. *Encourages* parliaments to work with their governments in the pursuit of confidence-building measures, including by eliminating the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines and policies;
19. *Also encourages* the parliaments of nuclear-weapon-possessing States to demand, in accordance with Action 5(e) of the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, a reduction in the operational status of nuclear weapons;
20. *Further encourages* parliaments to strengthen existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and to support their expansion and the establishment of new zones;
21. *Calls on* parliamentarians to support the convening, at the earliest possible date, of a conference for a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction, to be attended by all States in the region on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at;
22. *Urges* parliaments to demand the return to substantive work of the United Nations Conference on Disarmament;
23. *Reiterates* the need to reach an early agreement in the Conference on Disarmament on an effective, universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument in order to give assurances to non-nuclear States regarding the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons;
24. *Calls on* parliamentarians to use the IPU as a global forum to focus political attention on the need for effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament, and on concrete and practical actions that can be taken in the immediate future to advance this goal.

## 11.2 The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade – The Second Standing Committee

### Towards risk-resilient development: Taking into consideration demographic trends and natural constraints

*Resolution adopted unanimously by the 130th IPU Assembly in Geneva on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2014*

The 130th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

Expressing deep concern at the continued mounting impact and risk of disasters worldwide, which threaten people's lives and livelihoods, derail socio-economic development and damage the environment,

Noting that development patterns, including poorly planned and managed urbanization, population growth in high-risk areas, endemic poverty, weak governance and institutions, and environmental degradation, are important drivers of disaster risk,

Also noting that disasters, especially those resulting from climate change and exacerbated by population growth and distribution and other factors, such as poor use and management of resources, have been identified by the international community, for instance in the Outcome Document of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), as major challenges for sustainable development,

Reaffirming the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disaster, and underscoring the need to accelerate its implementation at international, regional, national and particularly local level,

Recognizing the urgent need to integrate and build stronger linkages between policies and programmes relating to disaster risk reduction and disaster recovery, climate change, long-term economic and social development, urban planning, demographic dynamics and environmental protection, so as to be able to address the underlying causes of disaster risk,

Also recognizing that global population growth, which is expected to continue for several more decades, and demographic distribution, especially increased population density and urbanization, heighten vulnerability to disasters and that the demographic factor has a direct effect on food security and self-sufficiency in areas that are prone to drought-induced famine and malnutrition,

Underscoring that demographic dynamics are a significant contributor to climate change and disaster risk insofar as they place additional stress on natural resources, heighten the vulnerability of communities to natural hazards and add to the human impact on ecosystems, primarily by increasing demands for food, fresh water, timber and fuel,

Affirming that all women have the right to plan their own lives, including when and whether to have children, and stressing that unintended pregnancy is the factor of continued population growth most amenable to policy intervention,



Convinced that governments are a critical stakeholder when it comes to addressing disaster risk resilience and population dynamics in the context of sustainable development, which is a matter of political responsibility, and that parliamentarians have a critical role to play in ensuring that the political will exists to achieve results through legislation, policy oversight and the allocation of resources,

Noting that women and children are more likely to suffer physically and psychologically in disasters and during the post-disaster recovery and reconstruction period,

Acknowledging that women have to be part of disaster management, from prevention to rehabilitation,

Underscoring the need for education at all levels and the importance of winning over local players in order to raise awareness of disaster risk resilience and related demographic issues and to galvanize public support for the measures needed to build resilience,

1. Calls on all members of parliament to acquire information on and knowledge of issues related to disaster and risk trends, so as to enhance their oversight role with regard to reducing the impact and risk of disasters, building resilience, protecting people and safeguarding development gains from disasters and the effects of climate change, while guaranteeing that this becomes an important issue on the national agenda and that the relevant measures are implemented;
2. Also calls on all members of parliament to take immediate action to review existing legislation related to disaster risk reduction in the light of community realities and considering their environment, natural habitat and people as the main resources for developing relevant processes, and to determine whether it is sufficient to hold key players, including policymakers and the private sector, to account for the consequences of risk-intensive development policies or investments;
3. Invites the United Nations to formalize the principle of reparation for victims of natural disasters and reparation for damage caused by States with development strategies that run counter to the recommendations made by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development;
4. Appeals to all governments to take immediate action to review national policies and regulations so as to ensure that socio-economic development is balanced against the need to reduce the risk, to the population and the economy, of disasters in the long run, as more engagement is needed to keep development policies and practices coherent and aligned with those for disaster risk reduction, environmental protection and adaptation to climate change;
5. Also appeals to all governments to improve and enhance their mechanisms for disaster risk reduction and ensure that development policy and strategies build the disaster risk resilience of their people and the economy by drawing up a map of at-risk areas by nature of risk, by putting in place early warning systems and guaranteeing construction safety, and by improving legislation, institutional frameworks, policy and accountability and increasing budgetary allocations for disaster-resilient development, with due regard for the specific needs of women and particular attention to those of people with disabilities;

6. Urges parliaments and governments to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women when it comes to land and livestock ownership and to facilitate women's access to credit as means of strengthening women's resilience;
7. Calls on governments and parliaments to integrate gender and age perspectives into the design and implementation of all phases of risk management;
8. Encourages governments and parliaments to evaluate risk and build resiliency to disasters by investing in shock-resistant infrastructure and inclusive social protection systems, particularly for vulnerable and at-risk communities;
9. Calls on governments and parliaments to advance food security and to promote sustainable agricultural development, with a particular emphasis on strategies that prioritize the needs and circumstances of rural communities, as key components of resilient communities;
10. Urges governments and parliaments to invest in early warning systems and to ensure that those systems are integrated into their disaster risk reduction strategies, relevant governmental policy and decision-making processes, and emergency management systems;
11. Urges the United Nations system and other international and intergovernmental organizations to promote the building of resiliency to disasters and shocks as a fundamental aspect of development, to ensure that resiliency and risk assessments are integrated into international efforts targeting poverty reduction and sustainable development, and to be a role model for improved governance for disaster risk reduction by advocating the key principles thereof and acting transparently and with accountability for the consequences of decisions on country-level programmes and investment;
12. Also urges the United Nations system to provide special support to developing countries so that the findings of relevant reports can be implemented and solutions found to facilitate the financing of mitigation works in those countries;
13. Urges governments to integrate factors of population growth, family planning and demographic dynamics into policy measures for sustainable development, which should also promote resilience to disasters and to climate change;
14. Calls on parliaments to work, at national, regional and international level, for the inclusion of a reproductive health indicator as part of the post-2015 development goals in the areas of health, equity and women's empowerment, to promote a rights-based approach to reproductive health and to take appropriate measures, through legislation and budget allocations, to provide universal access to voluntary family planning services;
15. Urges governments to participate actively in the ongoing consultations on the post-2015 development agenda and the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction in order to gain information, knowledge and technical support for the development of a national post-2015 disaster risk-resilient development agenda, as the post-2015 development agenda and framework are both indissociable from the promotion of sustainable and risk-resilient poverty reduction and development;



16. Also urges governments and the United Nations system to ensure that the post-2015 development agenda and framework for disaster risk reduction are mutually reinforcing;
17. Calls on all parliaments to support government efforts to develop disaster-resilient development policies and strategies that give serious consideration to disaster risk assessment, including population factors, at the planning and programme stages, as development without disaster resilience is not sustainable;
18. Calls on governments, when they develop disaster risk reduction legislation, policies and plans, to take into consideration the specific role of women, in particular women holding office in local government and councils and women in grassroots organizations, in risk reduction, planning, relocation, housing and infrastructure development efforts;
19. Reiterates that reducing disaster risk and protecting people's lives are the legal responsibility of all elected representatives, and thus encourages all parliaments to develop a national forum for legislators on disaster risk reduction and risk-resilient development;
20. Calls for the involvement, together with governments and parliaments, of civil society, the private sector and the scientific community, with a view to reducing disaster risks and promoting measures to fight problems arising from climate change;
21. Calls on parliaments to scrutinize government policy and actions with regard to disaster risk reduction, climate change and sustainable development, and to use all available instruments, including legislation and in particular environmental and public policy impact studies, to ensure that disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation measures are integrated into national planning and budgeting processes;
22. Calls for the establishment of specific committees to study climate change in those parliaments where they do not exist, so that they are aware of and analyse all the problems related to sustainable development in order to promote measures and strategies to prevent and alleviate them;
23. Urges donor countries and international development agencies to take a responsible approach and play a leading role in integrating disaster risk reduction and reproductive health measures, in particular consideration of the rights to sexual and reproductive health of each individual, into development planning and programmes, to ensure that aid-supported development activities contribute to disaster risk-resilient development;
24. Calls on all parliamentarians to make combating corruption and illegal financial flows a priority, as these significantly affect the mobilization and proper allocation of resources to the detriment of the environmental components of sustainable development programmes;
25. Urges donor and recipient countries to focus increasingly on promoting national resource management, particularly management of water and energy resource supplies and use, in order to prevent and mitigate high disaster risks, strengthen resilience and ultimately contribute to sustainable development;

26. Urges governments, parliaments and international organizations to enhance international cooperation in support of risk identification and management and resilient development, by providing technical assistance and capacity-building, as appropriate, in developing countries;
27. Calls on all parliaments to drive the process for political ownership and will at the governmental level in order to achieve tangible results in sustainable development and to contain human-induced environmental changes that contribute to the occurrence or severity of natural disasters, especially as a result of climate change; in particular, calls for the conclusion by 2015 of an ambitious global agreement that has legal force under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and is applicable to all the Parties thereto;
28. Invites all IPU Member Parliaments to take urgent action to follow up on the recommendations made in this resolution in their respective countries and regions.



### 11.3 The Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights – The Third Standing Committee

The role of parliaments in protecting the rights of children, in particular unaccompanied migrant children, and in preventing their exploitation in situations of armed conflict

*Resolution adopted unanimously by the 130th IPU Assembly in Geneva on 20 March 2014*

The 130th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

*Considering* that Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as “every human being below the age of eighteen years”,

*Acknowledging* that efforts have been made globally to promote the protection of and respect for the human rights of unaccompanied migrant children, separated children and children involved in armed conflicts pursuant to the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child,

*Recognizing* the fundamental principles and rights that must be guaranteed to all children, especially unaccompanied or separated children, boys and girls, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and States’ other obligations under international law, including the best interests of the child; non-discrimination; non-punishment; non-detention; non-refoulement; family unity; the right to physical and legal protection; the right to an identity, the right to life, survival and development; the right to be heard and to participate in decisions that affect them; the right to be protected from violence; the right to education; the right to due process guarantees and the right to access to health care and psychological support, reintegration assistance and legal aid,

*Recalling* that paragraph 7 of General Comment No. 6 (2005) on the Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children Outside their Country of Origin, issued by the Committee on the Rights of Child, defines “unaccompanied children” as those “who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so”, while paragraph 8 defines “separated children” as “children who have been separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver, but not necessarily from other relatives”,

*Also recalling* that paragraph 13 of General Comment No. 13 (2011) on The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence, issued by the Committee on the Rights of Child, states that “Addressing and eliminating the widespread prevalence and incidence of violence against children is an obligation of States parties under the Convention. Securing and promoting children’s fundamental rights to respect for their human dignity and physical and psychological integrity, through the prevention of all forms of violence, is essential for promoting the full set of child rights in the Convention”,

*Recognizing* the importance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the general recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, UN Security Council resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions on women, peace and security calling for special measures to protect girls from trafficking, sexual and gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and many forms of harmful practice, such as child/early marriage, forced marriage and female genital mutilation, the incidence of which increases in conflict and post-conflict situations,

*Considering* that the international legal framework dealing with children and armed conflict includes instruments such as Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (1977); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2000),

*Also considering* that the international legal framework dealing with children and transnational organized crime includes instruments such as the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000), the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (2003), the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air (2004), and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2002),

*Aware* that, in accordance with the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (Paris Principles, 2007), a child associated with an armed force or armed group is “any person below 18 years of age who is or who has been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys and girls, used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes”,

*Recalling* that, in accordance with Articles 26 and 27 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1969), any State party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child must ensure that the rights and principles enshrined in the Convention are fully reflected and given legal effect in relevant domestic legislation,

*Recognizing* that parliaments have a crucial role to play in ratifying international legal instruments on the protection of children and accordingly, in implementing domestic legislation,

*Underscoring* that the role of parliaments in protecting the rights of children, in particular unaccompanied migrant children and children in situations of armed conflict or affected by organized crime, must be in line with international law and based on the best interests of the child,

*Considering* that policies criminalizing migrant children have a negative impact on children’s access to basic rights,

1. *Invites* the parliaments of States which have not yet signed the three Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to urge their governments to proceed with their signature and full accession;



2. *Urges* parliaments to prohibit all forms of violence and discrimination against children and to pass enabling domestic legislation in order to give full effect to the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
3. *Calls* on parliaments, especially those in countries experiencing situations of armed conflict, internal conflict or occupation, to amend their existing legislation so as to prevent and punish the recruitment of children for direct participation in hostilities and other forms of exploitation of children in such situations; also *calls on* parliaments to prevent, suppress and punish the exploitation of children by organized criminal groups, in line with relevant international law;
4. *Also calls* on parliaments to design efficient legislative tools for the legal protection of minors, thus establishing a legal framework effectively guaranteeing the rights of children and to enact legislation aimed at establishing comprehensive and effective protection systems with adequate resources and coordinated by a high-ranking government official in order to ensure the best interests of the child;
5. *Urges* parliaments to enact specific legislation aimed at protecting unaccompanied migrant girls and girls in armed conflict and post-conflict situations from trafficking, sexual exploitation, sexual and gender-based violence, including rape, and many forms of harmful practice, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation;
6. *Encourages* parliaments to enact legislation aimed at addressing the special needs of separated and unaccompanied children and children involved in armed conflicts which, as a minimum, should provide for specific procedures in keeping with the rule of law;
7. *Urges* governments to take action so that separated and unaccompanied children fleeing illegal recruitment by armed forces or groups can cross borders and exercise their right to request asylum and so that no child in this category is returned to the border of a State where his/her life is truly at risk;
8. *Also urges* parliaments of countries with compulsory military service to raise the minimum age to 18 years and to ban the voluntary recruitment of children under the age of 18; *further urges* parliaments to take appropriate steps to have amendments made to Article 2 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, Article 77 of Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, and Article 4 of Protocol II additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts, with a view to banning the voluntary recruitment of persons under the age of 18;
9. *Encourages* parliaments to underscore the importance of working together with United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations and other entities in order to collect accurate and reliable data on the number of separated or unaccompanied migrant children and children involved in armed and internal conflicts and situations of organized crime in their respective countries;

10. *Also encourages* parliaments to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of children involved in demonstrations and political rallies, including their right to protection from violence and to freedom of association and expression;
11. *Urges* parliaments to discourage the premeditated use of children in violent demonstrations;
12. *Calls on* the parliaments of countries involved in armed conflict to urge their governments, in close collaboration with the United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, to release child combatants or prisoners of war and seek lasting solutions, such as family unification, where possible signing relevant action plans to this end;
13. *Invites* parliaments to share best practices on the protection of children from the perspective of restorative justice with the governments, parliaments and human rights organizations of countries where armed conflict and situations involving organized crime are developing;
14. *Calls on* parliaments to ensure compliance with international standards for the protection of separated or unaccompanied migrant children, including the principles of non-discrimination and non-punishment, prohibition of inappropriate detention of the child, the best interests of the child, the right of the child to life and development, and the right of children to participate in decisions that affect them;
15. *Also calls on* parliaments to ensure that adequate resources are allocated from national budgets to enforce laws, implement policies and improve practices related to the protection of children, especially separated or unaccompanied migrant children and children in situations of armed conflict, and to guarantee that these budgets are gender-sensitive;
16. *Invites* parliaments to hold hearings and consultations so as to assess the effectiveness of existing laws, policies, and practices on protecting children, especially separated or unaccompanied migrant children and children in situations of armed conflict, collect age- and sex-disaggregated data on the scope of the problem, and identify appropriate responses to combat it; and
17. *Also invites* parliaments, in partnership with UNICEF and in consultation with Interpol, to promote the establishment of a comprehensive international and up-to-date register of foreign separated or unaccompanied minors as an efficient tool for safeguarding the rights of such children, and to entrust the responsibility for coordinating such data to a single national authority;
18. *Urges* parliaments to hold governments to account for their humanitarian duty to provide children, especially separated or unaccompanied migrant children and children in situations of armed conflict, with the necessary services, in order to guarantee basic human rights such as education, medical treatment, counselling, rehabilitation and reintegration, child care, accommodation and legal assistance, bearing in mind the special needs of girls; *also urges* them to support the establishment of national referral mechanisms to this end;
19. *Calls on* governments to ensure that minors under the age of 18 recruited illegally into armed forces who are accused of crimes under international law are considered first and foremost as victims, rather than perpetrators, of international law violations;



20. *Invites* parliaments to support awareness-raising efforts, especially by working with the media to address xenophobia and violations of the rights of children, especially separated or unaccompanied migrant children and children in situations of armed conflict, and *notes* that Universal Children's Day, 20 November, provides a favourable framework for mobilizing and sensitizing public opinion to the protection of minors;
21. *Also invites* parliaments to support efforts aimed at raising awareness of discrimination against children who have been exploited in armed conflicts and of the importance of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process;
22. *Further invites* parliaments to support initiatives aimed at training, educating and continuously building the capacities of child protection professionals, specifically offering training in international human rights law to all members of the armed forces, law enforcement and immigration officials, border guards and other individuals and agencies involved in protecting the rights of children, especially separated or unaccompanied migrant children, children in situations of armed conflict and children affected by organized crime;
23. *Encourages* parliaments to support implementation of the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action and ensure that they are integrated into official policies to protect children, especially separated or unaccompanied migrant children and children in situations of armed conflict, so that all stakeholders, including government officials, UN agents and civil society representatives, are aware of them;
24. *Requests* parliaments to promote action to prevent the migration of separated or unaccompanied minors from their countries of origin, by strengthening cooperation and promoting bilateral conventions with countries of origin;
25. *Calls on* parliaments to adopt the necessary legal instruments, such as memoranda of understanding and bilateral and multilateral agreements on collaboration with international organizations and technical and financial assistance, so as to enhance international cooperation on the protection of the rights of separated and unaccompanied children, especially migrant children and children in situations of armed conflict;
26. *Also calls on* parliaments to promote the establishment of an international legal framework guaranteeing that States and corporations, non-governmental groups and individuals who exploit children in demonstrations and armed conflicts, in time of war or peace, are held to account for their actions and compensate the victims of these imprescriptible crimes and their families;
27. *Calls for* a review of international law and international humanitarian law conventions with a view to harmonizing the provisions on special guardianship for minors under 18 years of age;
28. *Urges* parliaments to take appropriate measures to ensure that an effective birth registration system is in place for all children, including separated or unaccompanied migrant children and children in situations of armed conflict;

29. *Requests* parliaments to promote an international protocol for unaccompanied minors establishing basic and unified action lines that take account of gender concerns, regardless of the country where the minor is, and enabling coordination of the work of all relevant institutions and departments, and to facilitate the early identification of children at risk, boys and girls, especially separated or unaccompanied migrant children and children in situations of armed conflict, so that they can be looked after and brought into a comprehensive protective structure that will guarantee all their rights and facilitate their reunification with their families;
30. *Invites* parliaments and governments to raise awareness of children's rights in receiving communities and to work actively for the most efficient coordination between agencies responsible for receiving unaccompanied children, in recognition of the high incidence of post-traumatic stress among unaccompanied children and in order to take every measure to help them;
31. *Calls on* parliaments and governments to open borders based firmly on values such as the rule of law, democracy, respect for human rights and international conventions, especially when so many victims are children, and to find a way to combine respect for border protection and the right to seek asylum;
32. *Also calls on* parliaments to ensure proper and qualified evaluation of whether unaccompanied minors should return to their country of origin, and to find ways to ensure the humane and safe return of those who must return after receiving a final rejection of their asylum application, so that no minor returns home without a safe and appropriate reception, acknowledging that an important step in the process is to make sure that minors are reunited with their parents, bearing the child's perspective in mind in every case and ensuring the rights of each individual child;
33. *Invites* parliaments and other institutions to share with the IPU their best practices in the protection of children's rights, in particular the rights of separated or unaccompanied migrant children and children in situations of armed conflict, with a view to developing a relevant model law;
34. *Further invites* parliaments to work closely with the IPU, in particular its geopolitical groups, to promote the organization of regional forums to address specific situations requiring customized solutions, thus promoting the establishment of comprehensive protection systems;
35. *Calls on* governments and parliaments to assume their responsibility for protecting the rights of children, in particular separated or unaccompanied migrant children, children in situations of armed conflict or occupation and children affected by organized crime, and to fulfil their obligations to protect child refugees and asylum-seekers;
36. *Urges* parliaments and governments to incorporate the perspective of minors and to place greater emphasis on children in legislation, budgets and policymaking, with a view to ensuring that the voices of young people and children are better heard; and
37. *Calls on* parliaments and governments to enact all provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in national legislation in order to guarantee equal rights for all children.



11.4 Resolution on the Emergency Item:

*Helping to restore peace and security and consolidate democracy in the Central African Republic: The contribution of the IPU*

*Resolution adopted unanimously by the 130th IPU Assembly in Geneva, on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2014*

The 130th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

*Deeply concerned about* the security situation in the Central African Republic, which continues to deteriorate and is characterized by a breakdown in public order, a decline in the rule of law and a rise in interreligious and intercommunity tensions,

*Also deeply concerned about* the proliferation and intensification of violations of international humanitarian law and the widespread human rights violations and abuses – including extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and detention, acts of torture, sexual violence against women and children, and the recruitment and use of children – that have been committed both by former elements of Séléka and by militia groups, in particular those referred to as the “anti-balaka” and the Lord’s Resistance Army,

*Reaffirming* that some of these acts may constitute crimes under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, to which the Central African Republic is a party, and that the perpetrators must be held to account,

*Considering* the risk that interreligious and intercommunity tensions in the country might degenerate into religious and ethnic conflict on a nationwide scale and imperil national unity and territorial integrity, with potentially grave repercussions throughout the Central African region,

*Underscoring* that the alarming situation in the country threatens to create a climate conducive to transnational criminal activity, including arms trafficking and the illicit exploitation of natural resources,

*Considering* that the situation in the Central African Republic constitutes a threat to national and regional stability and to international peace and security,

*Noting* that the European Union expressed the intention, at the Council meeting of 20 January 2014, to consider establishing an operation to provide temporary support for the International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA), and that the transitional authorities in the Central African Republic have agreed to that operation,

*Recalling* United Nations Security Council resolutions 2134 (2014) of 28 January 2014, 2127 (2013) of 5 December 2013, and 2121 (2013) of 10 October 2013,

1. *Affirms* its support for the Libreville Agreement of 11 January 2013, for the N’Djamena Declaration of 18 April 2013, for the Brazzaville Appeal of 3 May 2013 and for the

Declaration on the Central African Republic, adopted by the International Contact Group at its third meeting, held in Bangui on 8 November 2013;

2. *Strongly condemns* the continuing violations of international humanitarian law and the widespread human rights abuses and violations perpetrated by armed groups in the Central African Republic, in particular by former elements of Séléka, the forces referred to as the “anti-balaka” and the Lord’s Resistance Army, which imperil the population; *underscores* that the perpetrators must be held to account for their acts; Inter-Parliamentary Union – Agenda, resolutions and other texts of the 130th Assembly;
3. *Also condemns* the escalation of interreligious and intercommunity violence in the Central African Republic and *demands* that the protagonists immediately halt all acts of violence, whatever their motivation, in particular those said to be grounded in religion, ethnicity or gender;
4. *Further demands* that all parties to the conflict facilitate safe and free access for humanitarian organizations and their personnel, without delay, to areas where populations are in need so that they may swiftly provide the necessary humanitarian assistance in accordance with United Nations guiding principles on humanitarian assistance;
5. *Calls upon* the Member Parliaments of the IPU to press their respective governments to respond rapidly to appeals for urgent humanitarian action and to the pressing and growing needs of the populations affected and of refugees who have fled to neighbouring countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo and Sudan; *encourages* international organizations and their partners to execute their humanitarian projects without delay;
6. *Expresses support* for the role played by the country’s religious authorities at national level in an attempt to calm relations and prevent violence between religious communities, and *believes* that their message should be vigorously relayed at local level;
7. *Applauds* the action of MISCA, of the countries providing contingents for it and of the French armed forces, which, since the adoption of Security Council resolution 2127 (2013), have worked to protect civilians and stabilize the security situation, and *thanks* the partners that have provided air assets to speed the deployment of troops to the area;
8. *Welcomes* the appointment by the National Transition Council, on 20 January 2014, of the transitional Head of State and of the transitional Prime Minister, and *expresses support* for the transitional government; *underscores* that the transitional authorities of the Central African Republic bear primary responsibility for protecting the population and guaranteeing the country’s security and national and territorial unity;
9. *Expresses support* for the creation, on 22 January 2014, of an international commission of inquiry into the violations of international humanitarian and human rights law perpetrated in the Central African Republic, by no matter which party, since 1 January 2013;
10. *Demands* that all parties to the current armed conflict in the Central African Republic, former elements of Séléka as well as the groups referred to as the “anti-balaka” and the Lord’s Resistance Army, put an immediate stop to violations and abuses committed against women



and children, acts of sexual violence and acts of extremism and sectarian violence; *requests* the transitional authorities to make and fulfil a firm and explicit commitment to ensure that investigations are conducted as soon as possible when violence against women or children is alleged and that the perpetrators are prosecuted and held to account for their acts;

11. *Welcomes* the decision of the United Nations Security Council to prepare plans for the imposition of targeted sanctions, including a travel ban and freezing of the assets of individuals having acted to undermine peace, stability and security, in particular those who have violated human rights and international humanitarian law, recruited and deployed children in armed conflict, committed acts of sexual violence, or lent their support to illegal armed groups or criminal networks involved in the illicit exploitation of natural resources in the Central African Republic;
12. *Urges* the transitional authorities to develop and implement disarmament, demobilization and reintegration or repatriation programmes; *underscores* the importance of strengthening the institutional capacity of the police, the judiciary and the penitentiary system to uphold the rule of law;
13. *Also urges* the transitional authorities to establish an inclusive national dialogue between all stakeholders in the country – political, social and religious – with a view, in the near future, to restoring State authority and to institutionalizing a credible and fair process of national reconciliation;
14. *Welcomes* the establishment of a special fund through which States and international, regional and subregional organizations can contribute to the MISCA, and *expresses support* for the organization of an international donors conference as soon as possible to request contributions, in particular through this fund;
15. *Also welcomes* the establishment of a national electoral authority on 16 December 2013 and *underscores* how important it is for the transitional authorities, with support from the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA), to organize free and regular elections, providing in particular for the participation of women and without delay (during the second half of 2014, if possible, and by February 2015 at the latest);
16. *Recommends* that the United Nations Security Council deploy, by the earliest possible date, a UN peacekeeping mission to the Central African Republic with an expanded mandate covering support for the political transition, the restoration of State authority throughout the country, the organization of elections, protection for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the return of refugees and of persons displaced by the violence;
17. *Takes note* that the IPU has already conducted a needs assessment and requests it to take urgent follow-up action with the National Transition Council, including by offering advisory expertise in the recently launched process of constitutional reform;
18. *Entrusts* the Secretary General with the task of conveying this resolution to all IPU Members, Associate Members and Observers and to the other international organizations.

## 11.5 Statement by the President

*Endorsed by the 130th IPU Assembly (Geneva, 20 March 2014)*

This Assembly in Geneva has taken place at a time of crisis in many parts of the world. Numerous statements have been made referring to the situation in the Central African Republic, the Syrian Arab Republic and Ukraine, to mention but three salient examples.

The Assembly decided by a majority of affirmative votes to add an emergency item on the situation in the Central African Republic to its agenda and adopted unanimously a resolution calling for an end to the hostilities and greater international support. The other crises are no less urgent.

Since the start of the crisis in Syria, the IPU has called for restraint. It has condemned the acts of violence committed by all parties and has urged the international community to provide support and assistance to the millions who have been displaced by the conflict within Syria and beyond its borders.

The IPU has reiterated on numerous occasions the need for the parties to end hostilities and to negotiate a solution to the conflict. War and destruction will only deepen the suffering of the people of Syria and will do nothing to bring them closer to a solution. Only an inclusive political dialogue can achieve that.

The events unfolding in Ukraine are worrying. The IPU was founded on the concept that crises need to be resolved peacefully. It advocates inclusive political dialogue based on mutual respect and understanding. This is no less important in Ukraine than elsewhere.

The debate during the Assembly demonstrates that the Members of the IPU remain committed to these fundamental precepts. The IPU therefore continues to call on parties to conflict and crisis in the Central African Republic, the Syrian Arab Republic and Ukraine to find peaceful solutions through dialogue.



PART THREE: THE 129<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY OF THE  
INTERPARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU), 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2013

1. OPENING OF THE 129<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY

The 129th Assembly, held at the Geneva International Conference Center (CICG), on the morning of Monday, 7 October 2013. The President of the IPU, Mr. Abdelwahad Radi, welcomed the participants and declared the Assembly officially open. He then chaired the Assembly's deliberations.

In his opening statement, the President, referring to the terrorist attack perpetrated in Kenya and to the Syrian conflict, recalled that the IPU had "always taken an unequivocal stance on all conflicts: only dialogue and negotiation can bring lasting peace". He then referred to the subjects on the agendas of the Assembly's various bodies, in particular the Committee on United Nations Affairs, which would discuss the recently adopted Arms Trade Treaty and the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Referring to the Treaty, he said that this Treaty goes to the very heart of the IPU's work to further dialogue, peace and cooperation. Parliaments and parliamentarians thus have a particular responsibility to ensure its early entry into force and implementation. Turning to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be defined by the international community beyond 2015 he said that since the adoption earlier this year of the Quito Communiqué, he observed that, the IPU had been lobbying hard at the United Nations and in other relevant international forums for the inclusion of democratic governance in the post-2015 development agenda, both as a stand-alone goal and as a theme permeating all other sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Indeed, it had sent a loud and clear message that governments must agree a goal with clear targets and measurable indicators. Parliamentarians were urged to attend the forthcoming Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations, aptly entitled "*Rethinking sustainable development: The quest for a transformational global agenda in 2015;*" it promised to be an extraordinary event and to provide a unique opportunity for them to make their voices heard by those who would have the final say on the SDGs.

The IPU was furthermore set to achieve yet another milestone at the 129<sup>th</sup> Assembly, poised as it was to adopt a gender mainstreaming policy document through which it would lead by example and practice what it had preached over many years of tireless work to promote gender equality and women's participation in politics. It also looked forward to the adoption of proposed amendments to its Statutes and Rules with a view to enhancing its Inter-Parliamentary Union, overall efficiency and injecting new energy into its work through the welcome presence of the new Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU in its activities.

Notwithstanding such proud achievements, democracy was a work in progress and much remained to be done. Wishing participants fruitful deliberations in the interest of building a better future for all, the President called on them to make the 129th Assembly a memorable event as they debated the pressing issues of the day and reformed their own way of working at the IPU.

2. CHOICE OF AN EMERGENCY ITEM DURING THE 129<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY

### *The role of parliaments in supervising the destruction of chemical weapons and the ban on their use*

The President invited the Secretary General to introduce the requests submitted for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda. The Secretary General, referring to the requests set out in the Assembly guiding documentation, informed the Assembly that the items proposed by the delegations of Morocco and Palestine had now been combined, with consequent amendments to the wording.

A request submitted by the delegation of Kenya had since been withdrawn on the understanding that a presidential statement would be issued during the Assembly in condemnation of the terrorist attack on Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya on 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2013 which had been the subject of its proposed item. The proposal from Mexico on the universal ratification of the new Arms Trade Treaty had also been withdrawn.

The six requests now before the Assembly for a vote were therefore as follows:

1. Addressing criminal acts of deliberate destruction of world cultural heritage in countries in a situation of armed conflict or fighting terrorism: The role of parliaments (Morocco and Palestine);
2. Action by parliaments to safeguard the fragile democracy in Haiti (Haiti);
3. Cyber warfare – A serious threat to peace and global security (Uruguay, with the support of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC));
4. Enhancing the role of parliaments in maintaining international peace and security through support for a political settlement:
  - (1) by refusing any manner of aggression, or threat of aggression, violation of State sovereignty and interference in Syria's affairs that exceeds the framework of international legitimacy;
  - (2) by applying all international community resolutions on the fight against terrorism (Syrian Arab Republic);
5. The security and humanitarian crisis in the Central African Republic: Facilitating assistance for the population and promoting the transition to democracy (France); and –
6. The role of parliaments in supervising the ban on the use and the destruction of chemical weapons (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden);

Following a roll-call vote, the item put forward by Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden was adopted and added to the Agenda of the Assembly.

### **3. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION DURING THE 129<sup>TH</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY**

The following were the major topics for discussion during the 129<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly and one emergency item which was discussed in the Governing Council.

- i. The General Debate: Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women.
- ii) Panel Discussion - Towards a nuclear weapons free world; The contributions of Parliaments (First Standing Committee on Peace and International Security Subject item at 130<sup>th</sup> Assembly)



- iii) Panel Discussion - Towards risk-resilient development: Taking into consideration demographic trends and natural constraints (Second Standing Committee Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade Subject item at 130<sup>th</sup> Assembly)
- iv) Panel Discussion - The role of parliaments in protecting the rights of children, in particular unaccompanied migrant children, and in preventing their exploitation in situations of war and conflicts (Third Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights Subject item at 130<sup>th</sup> Assembly)
- v) Cooperation at the national level between parliaments and UN country teams, the implementation of major commitments in the area of arms control, and the human rights of vulnerable groups (Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs)
- vi) The Emergency Item

#### 4. PARTICIPATION

Delegations from the parliaments of the following 132 countries took part in the work of the Assembly: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In addition, the following Associate Members also took part in the Assembly: the Arab Parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly, the European Parliament, the Inter-Parliamentary Committee of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Latin American Parliament and the Parliament of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC).

Observers comprised representatives of: (i) the United Nations system: the United Nations, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Women, International Labour Office (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), World Health Organization (WHO), World Bank, Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), World Trade Organization

(WTO); (ii) African Union; (iii) African Parliamentary Union (APU), Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union (AIPU), Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA), Association of Senates, Shooraa and Equivalent Councils in Africa and the Arab World (ASSECAA), Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the Eurasian Economic Community (EURASEC), Inter-Parliamentary Union of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IPU-IGAD), Maghreb Consultative Council, Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE PA), Parliamentary Assembly of the Turkic-Speaking Countries (TURKPA), Parliamentary Assembly of the Union of Belarus and the Russian Federation, Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUIC); (iv) Socialist International; and (v) Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH).

Of the 1,191 delegates who attended the Assembly, 539 were members of national parliaments. The parliamentarians included 40 presiding officers, 36 deputy presiding officers and 168 women who were 31.2% of the delegates.

## 5. DEBATES OF THE ASSEMBLY AND IPU COMMITTEES

### 5.1 Debate on the Emergency Item - The role of parliaments in supervising the ban on the use and the destruction of chemical weapons

The debate on the emergency item was held in the morning of Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 with the President of the 129<sup>th</sup> Assembly and of the IPU, Mr. A. Radi, in the Chair.

The debate was preceded by a brief introduction by the delegation of Finland, speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries that had submitted the draft resolution deploring and condemning the established use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. That incident confirmed that there continued to exist stockpiles of chemical weapons that some parties were willing to employ and had prompted the delegations from the Nordic countries to ask the following question: What could parliaments do to support and guarantee the goals of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention), and to completely eliminate chemical weapons?

Thirty speakers took the floor during the debate. They underscored the importance of the Chemical Weapons Convention, which enjoyed quasi universal support; it had been ratified by 189 States Parties, whose combined populations accounted for 98 per cent of the world's people. With regard to the draft resolution, some delegations expressed reservations about preambular paragraph 7, which referred to the IPU resolution entitled *Enforcing the responsibility to protect: The role of parliament in safeguarding civilians' lives*.

The Assembly referred the emergency item to a drafting committee made up of representatives of Belarus, Burkina Faso, Finland, Germany, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Uruguay and Zambia.

The drafting committee appointed Ms. M. Lohela (Finland) as its chair and rapporteur. It met on 8 October to finalize the draft resolution.



At its last sitting on 9 October, the Assembly adopted the resolution by consensus. The delegations of Algeria, Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lebanon, Nicaragua, Palestine, Peru, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic and Venezuela expressed reservations on preambular paragraph 7. In their view, the concept of responsibility to protect was not clearly defined, leaving the door open to interference in the internal affairs of other States, selective and abusive implementation, and violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.

## 5.2 The Standing Committee on International Peace and Democracy – The First Standing Committee subject item at the 130<sup>th</sup> Assembly

### Panel Discussion - Towards a nuclear weapons free world; the contributions of Parliaments

The panel discussion was held in the afternoon of 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2013 with the President of the First Standing Committee, Mr. S. H. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), in the Chair.

Before commencing the discussion, the participants watched a documentary on the history of the nuclear arms race made available by the delegation of Kazakhstan and providing a clear presentation of the subject. The documentary was followed by keynote addresses by the Ambassador of Costa Rica, Mr. M. Dengo, Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations, Baroness Miller, a member of the House of Lords, and Mr. A. Ware, Global Coordinator of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND). Lastly, the co-Rapporteurs, Ms. Y. Ferrer Gómez (Cuba) and Mr. B. Calkins (Canada), presented their draft reports, which focused on the dangers of nuclear weapons and the need for parliamentarians to make sure that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was applied so as to ensure general and comprehensive nuclear disarmament in the long term.

Taken together, the presentations provided an accurate picture for the ensuing debate on the need to work towards nuclear disarmament, given the obvious health and security risks involved. Delegates from 31 parliaments and one Observer organization took the floor. With very few exceptions, they underscored that, despite the international commitments made, nuclear weapons continued to proliferate and several countries were pursuing, strengthening and even modernizing military nuclear programmes. Some delegates pointed out that countries that had previously possessed nuclear weapons had got rid of them, showing that it was possible to dismantle nuclear arsenals. The establishment of denuclearized zones, covering a country or a region, was among the best practices to be encouraged. Several speakers reaffirmed that only determined political will would prompt military powers worldwide to control, limit and reduce their nuclear arsenals, and that the fact that negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament had been blocked for over 10 years showed that such determination was lacking.

Some speakers pointed out that it was perfectly possible to produce nuclear energy under controlled conditions and for non-military purposes, and that, in any event, States had to work as transparently as possible with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in particular to ensure that nuclear weapons did not end up in the hands of terrorist organizations. It was also crucial to protect the planet and shield future generations. The participants highlighted the health implications of using nuclear energy, whether for military or civilian purposes. They also considered the financial aspect of a nuclear

policy. The participants outlined the economic argument against the development of arsenals, especially in the current period of crisis, which they considered as wasteful given that funds were needed to finance the MDGs and the future SDGs.

- When it came to the role of parliaments, many delegates gave examples of best practices and suggested ways in which parliamentarians could advance global nuclear disarmament. They all agreed that the IPU-PNND Handbook entitled *Supporting Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament* was one of the best instruments they had at their disposal. They also stressed the need for concerted action and proposed that it be organized within the IPU. In conclusion, they emphasized the need to resume negotiations and asked parliamentarians to exert pressure on their respective governments to sign the NPT and to pledge, for their part, to ratify it.

### 5.3 The Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade - Second Standing Committee subject item at the 130<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly

#### Panel Discussion - Towards risk-resilient development: Taking into consideration demographic trends and natural constraints

The panel discussion took place in the afternoon of 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 with Mr. R. León (Chile), President of the Standing Committee, in the Chair. For a part of the session, he was replaced in the Chair by Mr. F. Bustamante (Ecuador), a member of the Standing Committee Bureau.

The two co-Rapporteurs appointed at the 128th Assembly, Mr. P. Mahoux (Belgium) and Mr. S.H. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), presented their joint background note. Ms. M. Wahlström, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, and Ms. M. Temmerman, Director of the Department of Reproductive Health and Research at the World Health Organization (WHO), renowned experts in the fields of disaster risk reduction and reproductive health, respectively, provided additional insight. Those introductory statements were followed by an exchange of views, with a total of 34 delegates from 32 countries taking the floor.

The background note prepared by the co-Rapporteurs offered a broad overall framework for the debate on the need for sustainable patterns of production and consumption and for action on population dynamics. Within this broad context, the co-Rapporteurs paid particular attention to the cost-effectiveness of policies governing risk preparedness and response, reproductive and sexual health and the promotion of access to family planning services, and to the need for disaster risk reduction to be mainstreamed into overall development planning, policy and programmes.

The ensuing discussion focused on disaster risk reduction and how population growth, inadequate planning, unpredictable weather and climate change patterns, and urban development heightened the risk of disasters. The delegates made a number of proposals concerning issues that the future draft resolution should address, including the question of political responsibility for risk governance, the importance of gender-sensitive risk-resilient policies, the role of local governments, and the need for formal and informal education at all levels.

The panel discussion also recalled that parliaments had an important role to play in fostering the sustainable development agenda that would be agreed by the international community in 2015. It drew



particular attention to the concept that a holistic approach to development was needed – one that strengthened vital synergies between development economics, social protection and democracy – if sustainable development was to be successful and deliver results.

#### 5.4 The Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights - Third Standing Committee subject item at the 130<sup>th</sup> Assembly

Panel Discussion - The role of parliaments in protecting the rights of children, in particular unaccompanied migrant children, and in preventing their exploitation in situations of war and conflicts

The panel discussion took place in the morning of 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 with Mr. O. Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu (Ghana), President of the Standing Committee, in the Chair. The two co-Rapporteurs appointed at the 128<sup>th</sup> Assembly, Ms. G. Cuevas (Mexico) and Ms. J. Nassif (Bahrain), presented their background papers on the subject.

Two experts also made introductory statements. Ms. L. Aubin, Coordinator of the Global Protection Cluster led by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), provided an overview of the risks faced by children on the move. She underlined how important it was to ensure that children had proper documentation, starting with birth records. An integrated national child protection system and child-friendly migration and asylum policies were other key tools for reducing the vulnerability of children. Professor M. Mattar, Executive Director of the Protection Project based at The Johns Hopkins University, presented a model law on child protection developed through extensive research into national legislation and expert consultation. He proposed constitutional protection for vulnerable children as a good starting point for addressing the issues, and called on parliaments to review existing legal mechanisms in order to identify gaps in implementation or coverage.

These introductory statements were followed by an exchange of views, with 43 delegates taking the floor. Many delegates referred to the vulnerability of children who had been displaced by conflict, for example in the Syrian Arab Republic. Such children often lacked access to basic rights, such as education, and were at greater risk of physical and sexual abuse. Many delegates also highlighted the risks faced by children migrating between countries. Migrant children might not be accompanied or might become separated from their parents, exposing them to a variety of dangers and preventing them from fulfilling their potential. Many parliaments had enacted child protection laws, but their implementation remained a challenge.

Adequate funding for implementation and suitable training in child protection issues for law enforcement agencies were just two of the issues highlighted. The participants showed that they had the political resolve to bring about an appropriate parliamentary response to the challenges.

#### 5.5 The IPU Committee on United Nations Affairs

The Committee on United Nations Affairs met in Geneva on 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2014 with three full sittings devoted to cooperation at the national level between parliaments and UN country teams, the implementation of major commitments in the area of arms control, and the human rights of vulnerable groups.

All three sittings enjoyed strong and active participation by IPU Members and benefited from valuable input provided by senior UN officials. These included the UN High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Mr. G. Acharya, the UNDP Resident Coordinator in Burkina Faso, Mr. P. Karorero, the Deputy Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Disarmament, Mr. J. Sareva, and experts from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). A number of ambassadors leading important UN processes also contributed to the discussions: Ambassador J.M. Ehouzou of Benin, in his capacity as Representative of the African Union to the United Nations Office at Geneva, Ambassador P. Woolcott of Australia, who had served as President of the UN Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, Ambassador Oh Joon of the Republic of Korea, in his capacity as Chair of the UN Security Council 1540 Committee, and Ambassador L. Gallegos of Ecuador, who had spearheaded negotiations on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Committee also welcomed the substantive contributions of a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and leading academic institutions, including Amnesty International, the World Future Council, New York University and the Verification, Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC). Through their expertise and field work, many of those organizations not only provided parliamentarians with information and analysis, they also forged a valuable link between citizens and parliamentarians and could serve as an engine for progress and change.

The outcome of the Committee's deliberations, which included a number of findings and recommendations for follow-up action by the IPU and its Member Parliaments, was presented to the Assembly at its closing sitting in the afternoon of 9 October. At that time, the Committee President, Mr. M. Traoré (Burkina Faso), set forth a number of proposals to bridge existing gaps and further enhance interaction between national parliaments and UN country teams, including in terms of implementing international commitments such as the 2011 Istanbul Programme of Action.

Mr. E. Ethuro, Speaker of the Senate of Kenya, after referring to the devastation caused by the unregulated flow of conventional weapons in his country and throughout Africa, firmly urged all parliaments to give due consideration to and lend their support for the enforcement of major arms control and non-proliferation instruments, including the newly adopted Arms Trade Treaty and Security Council resolution 1540.

Mr. M. Tomassoni (San Marino) and Mr. D. Sánchez Heredia (Bolivia), speaking on behalf of parliamentarians with disabilities and indigenous peoples, respectively, presented the outcome of the Committee's session on defending the rights of vulnerable groups and urged all parliamentarians to take the action needed for the relevant international commitments to be translated into national realities.

In tandem with the Assembly, the Advisory Group of the Committee on United Nations Affairs also met on 8 October, to review the status of IPU reform, in particular from the perspective of the Committee's transformation into the fourth IPU Standing Committee. This would mean that, as of March 2014, the Committee would have its own expanded Bureau, which in turn would replace the current Advisory Group. Several members of the Advisory Group expressed an interest in continuing to support the Committee's work and encouraged other colleagues to do likewise. The Advisory Group decided to meet again on 15 November in New York, on the occasion of the annual Parliamentary Hearing at the United Nations. Among other things, it would then discuss future operational activities, including a possible field mission to Uruguay in early 2014.



## 6. PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT ON THE TERROSIST ATTACK IN KENYA

At the closing sitting of the Assembly, the President read out a statement expressing deep concern at the recent terrorist act on the Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, and extending the sympathy of the IPU and its Members to the Parliament and people of Kenya in the face of that national tragedy. The statement also expressed deep concern at the rise in terrorist acts plaguing Kenya and other East African countries, and strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms.

The Assembly endorsed the following statement:-

“On behalf of the members of parliament attending the 129th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, I express our deep concern over the recent terrorist act on Westgate Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, which claimed the lives of 67 persons and left 175 injured.

We extend our sympathy to the Parliament and people of Kenya in the face of this national tragedy.

We also express our deep concern over the rise in terrorist acts that have plagued Kenya and other East African countries, such as Burundi, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, and which continue to threaten the lives of innocent civilians.

We strongly condemn terrorism in all its forms. We express our outrage at such cowardly and reprehensible acts, which cannot be justified on any political, religious or ideological grounds.

We reiterate that the only way to achieve lasting peace and understanding is through dialogue and negotiation.

We appeal to national parliaments to ensure that counter-terrorism laws are in place and, more importantly, are enforced. Impunity for the perpetrators of terrorist acts will only beget further acts of terrorism. It is time to break the cycle of violence while upholding the principle of non-violent settlement of conflicts.”

## 7. 193<sup>RD</sup> SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL

### 7.1 Cooperation with the United Nations system

The Governing Council took stock of recent developments in IPU-UN cooperation and was informed of activities carried out in collaboration with or in support of the United Nations.

It noted that the IPU had commissioned a legal opinion on the existing cooperation agreement with the United Nations and that the Executive Committee had decided to establish the Sub-Committee on the future IPU-UN cooperation agreement in the wider context of examining the IPU's international legal status.

In the framework of cooperation between the two organizations, the Council heard a presentation by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. A. Guterres, as part of the Special debate on the humanitarian impact of the Syrian crisis. It also heard a presentation by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. N. Pillay.

## 7.2 Implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2012-2017

The Governing Council adopted a landmark document on Gender Mainstreaming at the IPU. The document set out the IPU's general position on gender equality, defined gender mainstreaming and outlined the strategy through which the IPU would achieve its objectives of institutionalizing gender equality at the IPU, promoting equality in representation and participation, building capacity and developing mechanisms for gender mainstreaming. The document also contained provisions for ensuring implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

The Council took note of the decision taken by the Executive Committee to adopt a modified colour version of the current IPU logo with a strap line, "For democracy, for everyone".

It approved amendments and sub-amendments to the Rules of the Standing Committees in keeping with the decision it had taken at its previous session in Quito to improve the functioning of the Assembly and its Standing Committees. It also expressed a favourable opinion on the proposed amendments to the Statutes.

## 8. COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

The Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians met on 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2013 to discuss the contribution of women to the deliberations of the 129th Assembly and to prepare the work of the 19th Meeting of Women Parliamentarians. The meeting opened with Ms. N. Ali Assegaf (Indonesia), President of the Coordinating Committee, in the Chair; she was later replaced in the Chair by Ms. B. Amongi (Uganda), the Committee's Second Vice-President.

The Committee started by considering its contribution to the 129th Assembly. It discussed the draft reports to be examined by each of the three Standing Committees, broaching them from a gender perspective.

Next the Committee discussed the preparations for the 130th IPU Assembly (Geneva, March 2014), in particular for the election of its own members and the members of the Standing Committee Bureaux. It reviewed all the vacancies and resolved to ensure that women candidates emerged from the geopolitical groups.

The Committee next exchanged views on the means of improving the work of the Meeting and Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians. Given that the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians would convene twice a year starting in 2014, the Committee wished to see the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) figure on its agenda every year, so as to give greater visibility to the necessary work of parliaments to monitor the Convention's application. The Committee also discussed strategies aimed at encouraging men to take part in discussions of gender issues and at guaranteeing that the point of view of women parliamentarians was reflected in the subjects dealt with by the IPU, notably by providing input to the resolutions adopted by



the Assembly. It decided to set up a working group to consider those questions and examine the Rules of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and the Coordinating Committee, which would have to be amended in line with the changes made to the IPU Statutes. Ms. E. Abdulla (Maldives), Ms. B. Amongi (Uganda), Ms. M. André (France) and Ms. F. Diendéré Diallo (Burkina Faso) were appointed to the working group.

With regard to the preparations for the 19th Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, the Committee decided that the Meeting would examine the agenda items to be deliberated by the Second and Third Standing Committees at the 130th Assembly, namely: *Towards risk-resilient development: Taking into consideration demographic trends and natural constraints*, and *The role of parliaments in protecting the rights of children, in particular unaccompanied migrant children, and in preventing their exploitation in situations of war and conflict*.

The Committee further decided that the Meeting's afternoon session would debate women in politics and hear the candidates for the post of IPU Secretary General. The aim of the hearing was to obtain a clear picture of the importance the future Secretary General would give to gender issues in his or her programme.

Following a presentation by a UNICEF representative, the Committee decided to organize a panel discussion at the 130th Assembly on the challenges posed by migration and unaccompanied child migrants and on the means needed to provide such children with an education.

Lastly, the Committee was informed about recent and future IPU activities in the field of advancing gender equality. It also held a lengthy discussion of the *Guidelines on Women's Caucuses* and the IPU online database on women's caucuses worldwide, which are to be published and launched, respectively, in November 2013.

## 9. COMMITTEE TO PROMOTE RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

The Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law met on Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2013. Representatives of the ICRC and UNHCR also attended. The Committee discussed the report on its mission to Jordan in June to assess the impact of the Syrian crisis on refugees and host communities. The mission members stressed that they had been overwhelmed by the magnitude of the human tragedy taking place, the scale of the resulting needs, the scope of the response, and the generosity of the host country, Jordan. They laid particular emphasis on the plight of children and the need to better document their situation, to protect them from abuse and exploitation and to empower them through education. They also stressed the importance of addressing gender-based violence.

The Committee welcomed the mission report and thanked UNHCR for its support. It recalled that, in follow-up to the mission, the IPU had appealed to parliaments to back funding efforts in support of Syrian refugees and host countries. It welcomed the recommendations made in the mission report and invited IPU Member Parliaments to act on them.

The Committee welcomed the production of the Handbook for Parliamentarians entitled *Internal displacement: Responsibility and action*. It recommended that the Handbook be widely disseminated and that parliaments make use of it to develop or amend legislation. It thanked UNHCR for its cooperation in developing the Handbook.

The Committee was briefed on recent developments with regard to statelessness. By UNHCR estimates, there were up to 12 million stateless individuals worldwide. Following the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness in 2011, more than 60 States had made statelessness-related pledges relating to accession, the adoption of stateless status determination procedures and the revision of nationality laws. UNHCR briefed the Committee members on the pledges made.

The Committee also discussed updating the 2005 IPU-UNHCR publication, *Nationality and Statelessness: A Handbook for Parliamentarians*, in time for the 60th anniversary of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.

The ICRC representative briefed the Committee on the latest developments with regard to international humanitarian law, notably the Arms Trade Treaty and issues related to the national enactment of IHL and to the protection of the rights of people deprived of freedom. The Committee agreed to begin working with the ICRC on updating the 1999 IPU-ICRC *Handbook for Parliamentarians: Respect for International Humanitarian Law*.

The Committee members also attended an interesting and useful briefing at ICRC Headquarters.

The Committee discussed the draft rules developed to facilitate its work, which were subsequently approved by the Governing Council.

## 10. FORUM OF YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE IPU

The Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU met on 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2013. Close to 50 participants were in attendance. The meeting was chaired by Mr. K. Dijkhoff (Netherlands).

The main item on the agenda was the Forum's draft Rules and Working Modalities. The young parliamentarians agreed on the Forum's terms of reference, objectives and working methods. They also agreed on the rules for the composition of the Forum and its Board. After a lengthy discussion, they voted to set the upper age limit at 45 years.

The age limit was decided based on the average age of parliamentarians (53 years) established in the *Global Parliamentary Report*, a 2012 joint IPU-UNDP publication. It also took into consideration the age of eligibility, which was high in several countries.

Many participants considered that the age limit should be 40 years, so as to encourage parliaments to include young parliamentarians in their delegations to IPU meetings, and so that the Forum would be a legitimate counterpart for other national and regional youth organizations. In addition, the Forum would stand out from other IPU bodies for its obvious specificity.

The Forum decided to establish its own decision-making body, the Board of Young Parliamentarians of the IPU. Members of the Board would be elected by the Forum of Young Parliamentarians. The Board would be composed of two representatives of each geopolitical group and equal numbers of men and



women, and would have a two-year term. The maximum age limit for election to the Board would be 43 years. The President of the Board of Young Parliamentarians would be selected from among its members based on a system of mandatory rotation by sex and by region.

The Forum's draft Rules and Working Modalities would be submitted for adoption to the IPU's governing bodies at the 130th IPU Assembly (Geneva, March 2014).

## 11. OTHER MEETINGS

### Panel discussion on *addressing internal displacement: The responsibility of parliaments*

The panel discussion on *Addressing Internal Displacement: The Responsibility of Parliaments* was held on 8 October. It brought together men and women parliamentarians to discuss the current crisis of internal displacement, highlight the plight of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in several parts of the world and identify specific initiatives taken by parliaments. Participants heard from Mr. E. Ethuro, President of the Kenyan Senate, Mr. J. Riera, Senior Adviser to the Director of International Protection, UNHCR, and Mr. A. Zamudio, Director, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC).

The panel began by discussing the plight of IDPs. It noted that when people were forced to leave their homes because of conflict, human rights violations or disasters, their lives were uprooted, even if they remained in their own country. They left behind their property and livelihoods, and in many cases were separated from their families and communities.

The participants heard that, as a result of internal displacement, citizens and residents found themselves in situations of extreme vulnerability. In search of a better place, IDPs, especially women and children, risked their safety and security. Wherever they chose to settle, they often had severely limited access to basic amenities. The physical and mental toll on displaced individuals and families was overwhelming.

Despite being a very personal experience, internal displacement was occurring on a massive scale. The populations of over 50 countries had, to some degree, experienced internal displacement caused by armed conflict and violence. Many others had faced such displacement in the context of flooding, storms, earthquakes and other natural disasters, with tens of millions of displaced persons finding themselves in need of the protection and assistance of their governments. In 2012, it had been estimated that 28.8 million people were internally displaced.

The panellists explained that the impact of internal displacement on the State could be equally devastating. Formerly self-sustaining populations found themselves requiring protection and assistance, which the State might have neither the capacity nor the infrastructure to provide.

The protection of IDPs was primarily a State responsibility. Yet experience had shown that existing laws – which were generally not designed for situations of humanitarian crisis – were often unable to cope with the challenges of internal displacement. It was therefore necessary to establish effective national protection systems to address situations of internal displacement and strengthen national responses by developing an appropriate legal framework backed by proper enforcement. That was where parliaments had a crucial role to play.

The panel provided the perfect opportunity to launch the IPU-UNHCR Handbook entitled *Internal displacement: Responsibility and action* (<http://www.ipu.org/PDF/publications/Displacement-e.pdf>). The purpose of the Handbook was to help members of parliament develop an adequate legal framework for supporting IDPs and protecting their rights.

#### **Panel discussion on *Political party control over parliamentarians: Striking the right balance***

The panel provided an opportunity for delegates to discuss the relations between parliamentarians and their political party. Following opening remarks by Ms. M. André (France), Ms. B. Amongi (Uganda) and Mr. J.C. Mahía (Uruguay), 27 members of parliament took the floor in a lively, interactive exchange of views ably moderated by Mr. M. Gonzi (Malta).

The participants agreed that the issue of party control was complex and multifaceted. There was a clear potential for tension between the individual mandate to represent citizens that each parliamentarian held, and the loyalty owed to the political party on whose platform the MP had been elected. Resolving that tension was a primary concern of all parliamentarians.

The discussion covered both the ordinary situation of everyday political life and extreme situations where sanctions were imposed on parliamentarians by the party.

The need for intra-party democracy was clearly highlighted. When a party group had clearly defined rules and procedures, met regularly and allowed its members to participate effectively in decision-making, then it was reasonable to expect that members would abide by the decisions of the party group and refrain from acts of rebellion. In reality, however, political parties had many different practices. In some cases, party leaders sought to impose their decisions on all members of the party. In others, the party had no clear ideology or platform, and there was little to bind members to the party and prevent them from moving from one party to another.

Party whips played an important role in enforcing party discipline, and the discussion brought out many examples in different political systems. One was the "three-tier" whipping system, which defined different levels of discipline for party members and categorized votes in three groups: one in which members had to vote in accordance with party instructions; one in which members were expected to vote along the party line but dissident voices were tolerated; and free votes, where no party line was fixed. The notion of "conscience" votes on societal subjects such as abortion was widely felt to be important.

The electoral system had a big impact on relations between parliamentarians and their political party. In party-list proportional systems, the parliamentarian was elected purely on a party ticket and was accountable first and foremost to the party. In constituency-based majoritarian systems, parliamentarians were elected both with support from their party and with the votes of their constituents. This created a dual accountability. In certain cases, parliamentarians would argue that it was reasonable not to follow the party line when they considered that doing so was not in the best interests of their constituents.

When there was conflict between a parliamentarian and the party, the party might impose sanctions such as expulsion. Some countries had legal provisions whereby parliamentarians who were expelled from the party also lost their parliamentary seats. But that was not common to all jurisdictions, and raised many issues concerning parliamentarians' freedom of expression. An IPU study on *The impact of political party control over the exercise of the parliamentary mandate* (2012) provided a detailed overview of the legal provisions in existence around the world.



Given the richness of the debate, there could be no single conclusion. Among the main principles, however, the following could be singled out:

- i. Parties were essential to democracy. Yet it was also essential for parties to have their own internal democratic organization, and that they respect democratic principles and procedures.
- ii. Parliamentarians were – in most cases – elected with the support of a political party and had a general duty towards voters and the party to work for implementation of the political platform on which they had run.
- iii. To maintain the necessary balance, parliamentarians needed to work permanently with their party, and not for their personal interests. In certain circumstances, however, such as when a party moved away from the policy platform on which it had been elected, or acted in an undemocratic manner, it might be acceptable – or even necessary – for the parliamentarian to speak out against such behaviour.

## 12. RESOLUTIONS AND OUTCOMES OF THE 129<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER PARLIAMENTARY UNION AND RELATED MEETINGS.

### 12.1 Resolution on the Emergency Item:

#### The role of parliaments in supervising the destruction of chemical weapons and the ban on their use

*Resolution adopted by consensus by the 129th IPU Assembly in Geneva on 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2013*

The 129th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

*Saddened* by the latest use of chemical weapons claiming hundreds of lives,

*Condemning* the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons,

*Welcoming* the constant hard work done by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to oversee and monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention),

*Concerned* by the continued existence of declared stockpiles amounting to more than 13,000 metric tonnes of chemical weapons,

*Stressing* the need for universal adherence to the ban on the use of chemical weapons,

*Recalling* the Chemical Weapons Convention, to which 189 States are party, and the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare,

*Noting* the IPU resolution entitled *Enforcing the responsibility to protect: The role of parliament in safeguarding civilians' lives*,

*Recognizing* the accession by the Syrian Arab Republic to the Chemical Weapons Convention, and *stressing* the need for full compliance with the provisions of the Convention,

1. *Calls upon* all parliaments to condemn the use of chemical weapons and contribute to an environment of zero tolerance for the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons;
2. *Urges* parliaments to request status reports from their national authorities responsible for the administration of the Chemical Weapons Convention;
3. *Also urges* parliaments to check their national legislation concerning chemical weapons and to exercise their oversight powers so as to ensure effective implementation;
4. *Encourages* parliaments to demand that their respective governments act to sign and ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention;



5. *Calls upon* parliaments to demand the speedy destruction of any declared stockpiles of chemical weapons, including abandoned stockpiles, and stresses the need for compliance with the deadlines stipulated in the Chemical Weapons Convention;
6. *Requests* parliaments to support and fully comply with the invaluable work being done by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons;
7. *Urges* all States that are not yet party to the Chemical Weapons Convention to ratify or accede to it as a matter of urgency and without any preconditions;
8. *Encourages* the international community to look for sources of funding to be used for the safe destruction of stockpiles of chemical weapons.

## 12.2 Report on the outcome of deliberations of the Committee on United Nations Affairs

*Noted by the 129<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in Geneva, on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2013*

The Committee on United Nations Affairs met in Geneva on 7 and 9 October 2013, during the 129th IPU Assembly, and had a full and comprehensive agenda before it.

During its first session, on the morning of 7 October, the Committee discussed interaction between national parliaments and UN country teams. It also examined, specifically, the work conducted in national parliaments to follow up the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

The discussion was informed by the Report of the latest mission of the Advisory Group of the Committee on United Nations Affairs to Côte d'Ivoire, in June 2013, which sought to assess cooperation between the Parliament and the United Nations in support of peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts there. Previous field missions to the United Republic of Tanzania (2008), Viet Nam (2009), Sierra Leone and Ghana (2011) and Albania and Montenegro (2012) had assessed progress in the implementation of One UN reform in those countries, in particular in terms of greater coherence and effectiveness of UN interventions.

Organized as an interactive debate with the head of the UN country team in Burkina Faso, the discussion started with the first subject, with the participants sharing their experience with the UN teams in their respective countries and making recommendations with a view to improving their cooperation with them.

Turning to the action of UN country teams in the field, the participants pointed out that the teams were not evenly distributed geographically. In some countries they had a significant presence; in others they were practically non-existent. This made it difficult for the national parliament in those countries to interact with them. To remedy that problem, the participants advocated that UN country teams be present in every country.

UN programmes and policies were designed for people, who were represented by parliamentarians. Parliamentarians were therefore well placed to know people's real needs and to define their priorities. By the same token, in line with their prerogatives as the people's elected representatives, parliamentarians could ensure respect for international commitments, notably those undertaken in the context of the United Nations. They played an equally decisive part in the implementation of the major resolutions and decisions produced by international meetings, such as the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda. Their contribution could take the form of action to arrange the legislative framework in such a way as to reflect the relevant provisions.

This crucial parliamentary contribution notwithstanding, the participants deplored the fact that members of parliament were neither informed nor consulted about the various activities undertaken by the United Nations in their countries. They also deplored the fact that UN programmes were often predefined and did not reflect the population's real needs and priorities.

The participants stressed that, in order to remedy that shortcoming, the United Nations had to inform parliamentarians of its activities by sending national parliaments annual reports and important decisions and resolutions. In the same vein, the participants recommended that the United Nations consult with parliamentarians earlier in the programme-development process. In that regard, the United Nations could prepare an annual summary of its objectives. Because they were in constant contact with their constituents, parliamentarians could convey their needs to the United Nations, which in turn could incorporate them into its programmes. In addition, the population's concerns had to be taken into account from the outset and reflected in the decisions taken by international bodies.

While it was true that UN country teams had to interact with national parliaments, parliaments, for their part, had to take steps to facilitate such interaction. As a preliminary step, the participants suggested that the internal dialogue between parliament and government be improved, with a view to facilitating the flow of information between the two.

In addition, the participants pointed to the need for the national parliament, the executive branch and the United Nations to have a vision. Combining those visions would allow parliament to play its role and adopt a methodological approach to the preparation of an appropriate strategy for interaction with UN country teams. The participants recommended that the strategy comprise the following components:

1. the establishment within national parliaments of bodies tasked with coordinating the work of the committees dealing with UN affairs; to that end, they proposed that the IPU draw up an inventory of existing bodies of that kind so as to facilitate the exchange of best practices;
2. the appointment of a parliamentary focal point entrusted with conveying UN decisions and resolutions;
3. the elaboration of guidelines that could help structure interaction between national parliaments and UN country teams;
4. the institutionalization of an annual reporting exercise by UN country teams to the national parliament of the country in which they were operating, which



would include an overview of UN operations conducted in the country during the year and plans for the year ahead.

The Committee also took stock of the progress made in implementing the Istanbul Programme of Action, in a discussion in which the UN High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the Speaker of the National Assembly of the United Republic of Tanzania, the UNDP Resident Coordinator in Burkina Faso and the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations Office at Geneva all participated.

There were 49 least developed countries: roughly two thirds in Africa, one third in Asia, and one – Haiti – in the Caribbean. The population of approximately 900 million was affected by low income, poor social development and high vulnerability; they were essentially at the bottom of the development ladder. The very ambitious goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action was to lift half of the least developed countries out of that category by 2021.

Going forward, parliaments would have a critical role to play in advancing the Istanbul Programme of Action through national development plans while at the same time continuing to provide input to the General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. While the process should focus on real action at the national level, it should also remain bidirectional; national input should be provided for global discussions and consultations, and vice versa.

The Committee underscored the need for parliaments to take the Istanbul Programme of Action into consideration when debating investment laws. It also highlighted the difficulties faced by donor countries, particularly in the current climate of financial crisis. It suggested that greater efficiency and transparency on the part of UN agencies would foster more trust among donors. The Committee proposed that a set of indicators be developed specifically for the Programme, as had been for the Millennium Development Goals. What was important now was what all stakeholders were willing to do both to implement the Programme and to take it to the next level and ensure that the least developed countries had every opportunity to graduate from that category.

At its second session, in the afternoon of 7 October, the Committee focused on important developments at the United Nations in the area of non-proliferation, in particular the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty in April 2013 and efforts aimed at enhancing implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors, an issue of particular relevance in the context of the dramatic situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.

As the panellists highlighted during the session, the Arms Trade Treaty was a landmark agreement adopted by an overwhelming majority (154 States in favour, 3 against, 23 abstentions). It sought to regulate the international trade in conventional weapons and establish common standards to assess international weapons transfers. In practice, the Treaty aimed to prevent weapons transfers in situations where there was evidence that those would lead to grave violations of international human rights law or international humanitarian law, or would adversely affect sustainable development. In so doing, the

Treaty aimed to provide a new multilateral framework for transparency and accountability in the arms trade.

Over 75 countries had signed the Treaty in the first month after it was opened for signature in early June (113 by 1 October), with the first ratification by Iceland on 2 July. The Treaty would come into force 90 days after it was ratified by the fiftieth signatory State, which it was believed would occur sometime in the latter part of 2014. All parliaments were called upon to play a pivotal role in both ratification and implementation, adapting national legislation as required, allocating resources and monitoring progress in meeting the commitments undertaken.

As highlighted during the debate, the potential impact of the Arms Trade Treaty was far-reaching: fostering peace and security by regulating arms flows to conflict regions, preventing human rights and international humanitarian law abusers from being supplied with arms, and keeping warlords, pirates and gangs from acquiring weapons. The Treaty would therefore significantly boost efforts to protect women and children in situations of armed conflict or widespread armed violence. Monitoring mechanisms would also be put in place, accompanied by an annual reporting exercise. Several governments were already contributing to the UN Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation, a funding mechanism for assistance programmes to help develop new policy and legislation.

The participants discussed the good practices that could be implemented to reinforce the aim of the Treaty, create clear accountability mechanisms and ensure greater transparency of arms transfers. They referred to the establishment of national control processes, official administrative guidelines, national inspectorates and practical enforcement measures, including punitive measures for those that did not comply with regulations on the transfer of arms.

Despite its limitations – including the fact that it did not go as far as might have been hoped and that a small group of countries contested its adoption in the absence of unanimous support – the Treaty filled an obvious gap in the global conventional arms control system, and that was preferable by far to the current lack of regulation.

Many delegations expressed the hope that the new Arms Trade Treaty would help curb the immense suffering caused by what until now had been a poorly regulated arms trade. As noted by the President of the Senate of Kenya, the huge quantities available of unregulated guns had represented true weapons of mass destruction for the African continent, a situation that had to change. All States – and all parliaments – had a responsibility to make sure the new Arms Trade Treaty became an effective and workable tool for achieving that shared objective.

The Committee also welcomed the participation at its session of the Chair of the Security Council 1540 Committee and of prominent experts from the academic world and civil society, who presented Security Council resolution 1540 on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors, the context in which the resolution had come about, its main provisions and implications, and the benefits of implementation. First adopted in 2004 and then renewed in 2011, the resolution in essence obliged all UN member States to: (a) refrain from providing any form of support to non-State actors that attempted to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear,



chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery; (b) adopt and enforce appropriate and effective laws to prohibit and prosecute such activities by non-State actors; and (c) establish domestic controls over materials, equipment and technology which could be used for the design, development, production or use of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Given the transnational nature of organized crime, action to counter the proliferation of such weapons was only as strong as its weakest link.

During the presentations and discussion, the Committee underscored the key role that legislators were called upon to play in ensuring that the necessary legal instruments were in place to help protect their citizens from terrorism with potentially devastating effects. Resolution 1540 had a strong legislative component, as it called for the establishment of national legal frameworks to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery. Several areas of national legislation were concerned, including criminal law, export-import laws, strategic goods and transfers control, regulatory systems for dual-use materials, and the requisite enforcement measures.

Under the resolution, each State could decide the type of implementing measures it required in accordance with its constitutional processes. Such measures could take various forms: the adoption of stand-alone laws on specific categories of weapons of mass destruction.

Irrespective of how resolution 1540 had come about and the objections of a limited number of States, ultimately it was the responsibility of all parliamentarians to do their utmost to enhance the security of their citizens. Implementing Security Council resolutions – which were legally binding on all States – was one sure way to do that. In addition, the implementation of resolution 1540 presented a number of other benefits: strengthening the capacity of States to investigate and prosecute any offences (including preparatory acts) associated with nuclear, chemical and biological weapons or related materials by non-State actors; strengthening the capacity of States to monitor and supervise any activities related to weapons of mass destruction; enhancing public health and safety and national security; strengthening border control; sending a strong signal to potential investors that they were a safe and responsible place to do business; better equipping States to meet their other obligations related to weapons of mass destruction and comply effectively with international reporting requirements.

The point was that, even though resolution 1540 was a non-proliferation and counter-terrorism measure, if properly implemented it could strengthen the rule of law and foster development. The Committee therefore called on all parliaments to pay careful attention to this very important resolution and to do their utmost to ensure its effective implementation. The Committee President and the Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly also recommended that the IPU and the UN Security Council continue to cooperate on raising awareness of the resolution at regional level, including by convening regional events and providing support for the establishment of regional action plans.

At its last session, on the morning of 9 October, the Committee focused on promoting international commitments and defending the rights of vulnerable groups, in particular indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities. Despite the adoption in 2007 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, indigenous peoples

remained among the most vulnerable members of society. Their level of participation and representation in decision-making, including in parliaments, remained extremely low, even though parliaments had to be truly representative of all sectors of society in order to carry out their constitutional mandate of legislating and holding government to account.

Since 2007, the IPU had conducted extensive research on the presence of indigenous representatives in parliament; it had convened an international parliamentary conference in 2010 to debate those issues. The resulting Chiapas Declaration contained key recommendations for ensuring effective participation by indigenous peoples in politics.

The session underscored that it was parliament's duty to recognize the specific identity and culture of indigenous peoples and enhance understanding of the particular problems they faced, to raise awareness in society and thereby combat prejudice, and to take special measures to promote and protect indigenous people's rights. Moreover, parliaments should make sure that the right to free, prior and informed consent was observed at all stages leading up to the adoption of legislative and administrative measures potentially affecting indigenous peoples.

The World Conference on Indigenous Peoples was scheduled to take place at UN headquarters in New York in September 2014, and it was important to ensure that the deliberations incorporated a parliamentary perspective. For that purpose, the IPU would continue to encourage parliaments to be more inclusive both in terms of their composition and of their working modalities, and would convene a parliamentary meeting in the Plurinational State of Bolivia in April 2014 to enable them to share their experiences. It was convinced that those developments could inspire other countries that had yet to take steps to ensure that the views of indigenous peoples were taken into account when developing public policies.

Similarly, protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities warranted the particular attention of parliamentarians around the world. According to the World Health Organization-World Bank 2011 World Report on Disability, there were about 1 billion persons with disabilities worldwide. Their rights were enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which had been ratified by over 130 States and took a human rights-based approach to disability. Article 29 guaranteed the right to participate in political and public life of all persons with disabilities.

In order to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities, the IPU had developed a handbook for parliamentarians in 2007, recommending the Convention's ratification and its translation into national laws and policies. In keeping with its fundamental principle of "full democratic and political participation", in 2008 the IPU had adopted the Policy to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

During the discussion, participating legislators exchanged views with the representatives of several UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (the International Disability Alliance and the World Future Council) and further explored the role of parliamentarians and parliaments to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, in particular the right to political participation. The participants shared their experiences, spoke of initiatives being taken in their countries, and highlighted good practices, such as:



1. rendering information about election processes, candidates and their political platforms accessible in plain language (so that persons with intellectual disabilities could make informed voting choices);
2. reserving seats in parliament for disabled candidates;
3. providing the right to vote in secret with assistance from someone chosen by the disabled person;
4. securing budget allocations for the political participation of persons with disabilities;
5. establishing parliamentary committees on the rights of persons with disabilities and ensuring disabled persons had access to elections, both as voters and as candidates.

The Committee also formulated a number of recommendations:

1. The universal ratification of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol;
2. The abrogation of constitutional and legal provisions denying persons with disabilities the right to vote and to stand for election;
3. The systematic consultation of disabled persons and their representative organizations in all legislative processes;
4. The allocation of budgets to pursue programmes for the promotion of disability rights, including through the provision of reasonable accommodation;
5. Parliamentary oversight of the Convention's implementation and of disability right programmes;
6. The adoption of measures that would allow persons with disabilities to stand for election and participate in the decision-making process ("nothing about us without us").

The Committee also endorsed the Call to Act (see Annex) submitted by a group of parliamentarians, which identified a series of measures that could and should be adopted by the IPU and by its Member Parliaments in order to ensure that persons with disabilities were better able to fulfil their potential in political and public life. This, in turn, would go a long way towards establishing truly accessible and inclusive parliaments.

At the conclusion of its deliberations, the Committee requested that its Report be circulated widely among all national parliaments and within the United Nations system.

### 12.3 Call to Act: Ensuring the participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life.

The first ever World Report on Disability, produced jointly by the World Health Organization and the World Bank in 2011, suggests that more than one billion people in the world today are living with a disability. Their rights are enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which has been ratified by over 130 States to date and takes a human rights-based approach to disability. Article 29 of the Convention guarantees the right to participation in political and public life of all persons with disabilities.

With a view to promoting and protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, the IPU published a handbook for parliamentarians in 2007 in which it recommended the ratification of the Convention and its translation into national laws and policies. On the basis of its fundamental principle of "full democratic and political participation", in 2008 the IPU adopted

the Policy to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, according to which the IPU will

1. Implement practical measures to create inclusive, barrier-free environments to enable the participation of persons with disabilities in its work;
2. Encourage Member Parliaments to take action so that persons with disabilities can achieve the transition from exclusion to equality; and
3. Seek a representative Secretariat that is open to persons with disabilities, where opportunities in work are based on merit and all employees feel included and valued.

With the present statement, we renew the IPU's commitment to the participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life and to make sure that this principle does not remain a dead letter but is translated into action. Like women and indigenous peoples, people with disabilities should speak with their own voice and take their place in parliament: Nothing about us without us!

We therefore encourage the IPU to:

1. Designate one or more contact points in the IPU Secretariat who can act as reference persons for all parliamentarians concerning the rights of persons with disabilities;
2. Recommend to all Member Parliaments and Associate Members that they harmonize their legislation in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in particular Article 29, and ratify the Convention and with its Optional Protocol (should they not yet have done so);
3. Draw up a questionnaire with the aim of collecting information on the participation of persons with disabilities in politics and the legislative, physical, communication, informational, technological or other barriers they face, to be answered by all Member Parliaments and Associate Members;
4. Publish the data collected in a section of the IPU website dedicated to parliamentary action on the rights of persons with disabilities, which is to be conceived and programmed in such a way that it serves as a virtual meeting place and as a space where IPU's disability work, initiatives and documentation about good practices and experiences can be consulted and downloaded;
5. Undertake all necessary steps to establish and institutionalize a working group that is composed of parliamentarians engaged in the rights of persons with disabilities and includes parliamentarians with disabilities, that meets at least once a year and that has its own resources;
6. Amend the IPU Statutes to ensure that parliamentary delegations include parliamentarians with disabilities;
7. Pledge to include the rights of persons with disabilities as an item on the IPU's yearly agenda; and
8. Report annually about progress on the aforementioned points to all Members.

We encourage the IPU's Member Parliaments to:

1. Ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol (should they not yet have done so);
2. Make sure that parliamentary bodies, processes and programmes have internalized parliament's oversight role with regard to the Convention's implementation across all committee work, constituency work, etc.;
3. Establish parliamentary disability rights committees or ensure that disability rights as an issue are integrated into parliamentary human rights committees;



4. Ensure that all new legislation is coherent with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and that legislation that is not in line with the Convention is duly amended or repealed;
5. Adopt disability-friendly budgeting;
6. Adopt positive concrete measures to become disability-inclusive parliaments, including by rendering their environment, information, communications and technologies accessible and providing reasonable accommodation so that persons with disabilities can inter alia participate in the work of parliaments, take part in inclusive and accessible elections as both voters and candidates, be consulted, follow parliamentary debates and hearings, and be employed on an equal basis with others;
7. Enhance cooperation between parliaments, government coordination mechanisms and focal points on disability, national human rights institutions, independent monitoring frameworks and civil society organizations, in particular organizations representing persons with disabilities, as set out in Articles 4(3) and 33 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
8. Strengthen the involvement of parliaments in the work of the UN human rights monitoring mechanisms, including the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other treaty bodies, the Human Rights Council and the Universal Periodic Review reporting procedure;
9. Forward the present recommendations to their members' respective political parties, to ensure that they enable persons with disabilities to participate in and be supported by the party, including by making available campaign resources and placing them higher on electoral lists, that they include disability-specific activities in their plans for and reports on constituency work, that they add disability issues to their oversight list and that they have disability-specific indicators when they plan individual or collective oversight visits;
10. Report annually on progress on the aforementioned points to the IPU.

Giving effect to the human rights of persons with disabilities means enabling them to participate on an equal basis with others, at all levels.

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